



**March 2025**

**Minister: Rev. Hannah Chun**

**Mob: 07935 612 414**

Dear Friends,

I am writing to you from a remotely peaceful place called Launde Abbey in Leicester for my Probationers Retreat. My mind was filled with a mixture of emotions before I came. It was mainly because I wrestled with everything I would have to leave behind and lay aside for a few days, especially my family and, of course, all of you! However, I have found this time beneficial and a much-needed space for reflection and stillness. One of the things I love about this place is the vast number of sheep that dot the hills and grounds surrounding the beautiful abbey. Some of you will know by now that I love animals; therefore, watching sheep so closely has been delightful.

Two things crossed my mind as I observed them. Firstly, they give so much. I looked at their heavy wool coats and felt gratitude for the wool they provide for humans. I was reminded of my favourite wool cardigan, which helps keep me warm in the cold winter months. Sheep give so much to us humans, and wool is only one of the many things on that list. Secondly, they know how to graze and relax. It was wonderful watching them calmly grazing upon green pastures and beside quiet waters and streams. I cannot tell you how peaceful and content their faces looked as they sat there chewing away. Psalm 23 was re-enacted right before my eyes.

These sheep have enabled me to reflect on what it means to give as well as rest upon green pastures. All of us give of ourselves in one way or another to others. It may be our time, energy, talents or resources. We may constantly spend time giving of ourselves. However, if we don't take the space and time to rest and lay aside some of our responsibilities for a while, it will affect our spiritual, mental and physical well-being.

Even Jesus needed time away from people to rest, pray and recharge. During the retreat, we examined the stories of Jesus healing the man with leprosy in Luke 5 and Jesus' Transfiguration in Luke 9. In both passages, Jesus withdraws to quiet places to pray alone. We were asked to ponder the question, 'As a busy minister, what kind of space or location do you intentionally seek out as a place to pray?'

So, I want to leave that question and a couple of others with you, especially as you navigate this upcoming season of Lent and take that journey toward Easter.

As a busy .... (fill in the space), what kind of space or location do you intentionally seek out as a place to pray? How might you make time and space to be still and alone with God? What might God be asking you to lay aside so you can rest with God upon green pastures? I hope those questions can help you as you walk through Lent, and may you find the place for stillness to find God and yourself.

God bless,

*Hannah*

### **NOTES FROM THE VESTRY**

Dear Friends,

This will be my last attempt to report on church activities from a Steward's point of view – do I hear a sigh of relief – or was that just me? Nevertheless I was delighted and honoured to be asked to be a Church Steward, however many years ago. I was happy setting up the church for services etc. and being 'on duty' for special occasions, learning the necessities of the Fire Drill, and warmly welcoming our visiting preachers. But I am worse than useless on committees and find the task of greeting everyone from the lectern, and giving out notices on a Sunday morning increasingly daunting. I'm no good without a script! As you will all know (and are probably bored by) I'm always happy to read when asked. Most importantly, I now have memory issues, which apart from being intensely annoying for my fellow Stewards, might actually be dangerous in a tricky situation.

So PLEASE – if there is anyone out there, and there must be, who is happy to join the jolly band of Stewards – now is your moment!!

February has been the month of JONAH, as decreed by the powers that be, and we have been reading the four chapters from the Old Testament Sunday by Sunday.

How very opportune that at this time a goodlooking gentleman called Adrian Simancas was swallowed (albeit briefly ) by a whale while kayaking in Chile. Fabulous footage on the BBC website, You Tube etc.. I'm glad to report he's safe and sound, but as the news reports continue we learn that he and his father, in a kayak nearby, should never have been within 100 yards of that whale. Tut tut.

So back to us... Week One was Joan Alone (Gomer) and a very fine job she did too with the exciting story of Jonah fleeing from the instructions of The Lord, and being swallowed by a whale as he tried to escape to Tarshish.

Week Two found Jonathan Sparkes dealing with poor Jonah INSIDE the whale praying to The Lord for forgiveness, and thankfully getting spat out on dry land.

Week Three and our Worship Leaders led us through Jonah's continued tribulations with The Lord, having done as He ordered and faced up to the King of Nineveh, and seen the people obey The Lord's demands and turn away from their evil ways.

Week Four – with Joe Navoka , and wonderful pictures of himself with the actual whale monument in Joppa, Israel.

In chapter four The Lord sees the penitence of the people of Nineveh and takes no further action. Jonah says 'I always knew you were a merciful God – I might as well have STAYED AT HOME!' and went and sulked outside the city. But The Lord provided a leafy plant to shelter him from the blazing sun – which then withered and died the next day... Shock horror!

Jonah was furious about the plant dying, and said he wished he were dead. And God rightly said – 'You are concerned about a plant? Why shouldn't I be concerned about the great city of Ninevah?' Lesson learned. Great stuff.

Deep in our hearts we generally know the right thing to do, but sometimes we don't listen to The Lord and go our own way. I pray that my decision to walk away from being a Steward will be the right move, and that I am replaced by someone (with their brain in gear) answering The Lord's call!

God bless you all.

*Debby Floy*

## **THE 'PROJECT' UPDATE**

The Church Council unanimously voted to continue with the proposed project and have chosen the contractors to carry out the necessary works.

A recap on the work:

- To install a small kitchenette at the rear of the church building on the right hand side as you enter. This will include a sink and water supply, cupboards for storage of cups and supplies and a water heater.
- Move the technology desk forward to allow room for the above.
- To install a new and up to date visual and audio system, which will include a large monitor on both sides at the front of the church. This will enable a clear view of the screen from all points in the congregational seating area.

- The choir monitor will remain in the same position and a small screen will be added for the organist to see by the organ.
- Three pews will be removed from all three sections at the back of the church to accommodate the kitchenette, tech. station, some tables and chairs and room for a small children's area on the left hand side.
- These pews will be used to make the cabinets etc. to keep the working area as discreet as possible and in keeping with the rest of the church, as well as cutting down on waste and cost by recycling the material.
- The minister's toilet and the vestry will undergo some changes to allow an accessible toilet to be built.

This means that when both halls are being hired the church can be used independently for meetings, without having to enter the school rooms or toilets, as required in safeguarding guidance.

The aim of the whole project is to use our church premises as best we can to encourage further fellowship as part of our Sunday worship; to cut down on heating bills in the winter and be able to incorporate other forms of worship perhaps in the week.

Cook and Long have been chosen from the three quotations received to complete the building work.

D & M Music Ltd, a company specialising in church building Audio Visual work, were selected from the four quotations received.

The next steps:

Notification of the proposed works needs to be added to the circuit and district database and the circuit meeting notified before the next meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

Grant forms to the circuit and the district need to be completed and submitted by 20<sup>th</sup> March ready for the circuit grants committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

The district grant deadline is 27<sup>th</sup> May. We are applying for £10,000 from each .

If all of the above is successful, we can then begin the work.

Please keep all those involved in your prayers and most importantly the reason we are embarking on this venture so that we have as many opportunities as possible to bring people into God's kingdom, to support and encourage one another and share our faith together.

***Christine Firmin***

## LETTER FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

Over the past week or so, I have undertaken a variety of different journeys. On two occasions, I needed to travel to Hoddesdon for particular meetings. Having established it would be about 1.5 hours to where I was needing to be, I allowed myself ample time. On the first occasion, it took 3 hours 20 minutes and on the second occasion 1.5 hours. Quite a difference in so many ways.

The same journey felt very different each time. The first had left me very sorry for others who had had a worse day than me, otherwise the motorway wouldn't have been closed in the first place. At the same time, there was some frustration that I couldn't make progress and be where I needed to be. The second journey saw me arrive with nearly an hour to spare and feeling much more at peace as a consequence.

As we enter March, Lent begins during the first week. Lent is a period in the church where we journey together in our discipleship as we then approach Holy Week and Easter which, this year, fall in April. Sometimes our discipleship journeys are easier than others, but we can rest assured knowing that Jesus is with us through the Holy Spirit in whatever situation we find ourselves in.

Our journey of faith is ongoing and sometimes we may find that we see this from different perspectives. There are times where it is difficult and other times where things seem to be a bit easier. Wherever we are in ourselves and with God, we know that Jesus is walking alongside us. In Philippians 3, Paul writes about the need to 'press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.' We know that God's grace is there for all who turn to Jesus and that this is assured. We can rest easy in that. At the same time, we will want to seek to become more like Christ, and to share the message of salvation with others so they can come to know Jesus for themselves. There are times where this is easier than at others.

As we enter Lent, and a period of preparation ahead of Holy Week and Easter, let's use it as a time and season for learning more about how God is working in our life and in the life of the communities in which we live. We do this by drawing close to God and allowing Jesus to work in us, to help to shape our character, and to recognise how the Holy Spirit is working. If we are feeling that we are in a difficult season, let's stop to notice all that is going on around us. If we are in a time of feeling more at peace, then let's not be afraid to share this with others. As we come alongside others, they may also be encouraged in their own journey of discipleship.

As we journey through life, may we continue to recognise the peace and presence of Jesus in all we do.

God bless,

*Chris*

## PRAYER FOR THIS MONTH

**Merciful father, equip us with your Grace to face the challenges  
this month may bring.**

**Grant us wisdom in difficulties,  
strength in trials and peace in the storms.**

**In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

### James 1:2-3

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,  
because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance “.

---

## THURSDAY CIRCLE

Following a break for Christmas and the New Year, Thursday Circle opened up on 30 January, when we played HOY. Pat brought along the photos she had taken of our Christmas Party and these are now on the notice board for anyone to look at.

Our AGM on 6 February was followed by Janet Rayner reading her poetry and then by others reading favourite poems.

On the following week members brought along CD's and we had a relaxing afternoon listening to music of all sorts and types; from jazz to 'You'll Never Walk Alone'; from 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters' to 'Big Girls Don't Cry'.

On 20 February we had a good attendance for our third talk by our favourite Chinese lecturer, Jie. This time she considered how differently dragons are perceived in Chinese and Western Culture.

Coming up:

- 6 March** Do come and support member Pat Farrow as she reads her poetry.
- 13 March** A Quiz Afternoon to raise money for East Anglian Children's Hospice – a very worthwhile cause.
- 20 March** Another talk by the very witty broadcaster and after dinner speaker, Brian Carline. This one entitled 'Our Street', is about things they did in the street up North where he grew up.
- 27 March** Visit by our very own minister, Rev. Hannah.

If you are free, do come along and join us on Thursday afternoons  
at 2.30 p.m. We would love to see you!

*Joan Gomer Secretary*

## ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

Spring is in the air. Seeds are being sowed; the snowdrops are peeking through, and we give thanks to our Creator God who made all things great and small. In churches throughout our Circuit there is a hive of activity go on to show that Colchester Methodist Circuit cares for creation and climate justice.

Many of our churches are using **A Rocha** UK's **Eco Church** programme to care for creation and the survey covers five key areas of church life:

- Worship and teaching
- Buildings and energy
- Land and nature
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

Here at Wimpole Road Methodist Church we need to celebrate being awarded the Silver Eco Church Award.



We have achieved this by hosting external speakers belonging to the Green Christian movement and were delighted they have led worship with us. We always include care of creation in our intercession's prayers and one of the hymns of weekly Sunday worship is praising God and creation.

We are planning to set targets for reducing the carbon footprint for our church. We now have a water butt for rainwater collection facilities, We now use water saving devices in all our toilets so less water is needed for each flush. We are considering using recycled toilet paper in the future, which today is as soft and strong as any other type! We now have cycle racks on our church premises to promote people using our church to cycle instead of using cars, although we have discovered that most people in New Town walk to church.

We want to stress we have very little land other than our church building. We are talking about less than 4 metres square (please see Google Maps)

We have put out planters, we are particularly proud of repurposing a step ladder and making it a multiple planter where wild flower seeds have been sown.

We have been advised against putting food stations for wildlife because of rat's infestations. Possibilities we could consider would be a bird box or bug hotel. Partaking wildlife survey on our land e.g. RSPB great British bird count.

We could consider growing strawberries and tomatoes in pot containers this coming year.

We are also keen to extend our planters to the side of the church on Harsnett Road, but require help to weed this area and to lay down a weed membrane and provide stones.

We have a Recreational Ground next door to the church, which is owned by the council but we use it for outdoor ecumenical worship e.g. Pentecostal services and for Community Fun Day. I am sure we could make better use of this gift of God by arranging our local people to join us on a walk around it to notice nature or do some litter picking.

We could commit our church to pray for a specific oversea environmental project. We could continue to raise funds to be able to twin more of our toilets.

We need to consider as a church whether we could promote the personal use and consumption of Fairtrade/ethically sourced goods, Is it going too far to encourage ethical investment of personal savings? I think that we could include practical lifestyle tips and advice on caring for God's earth in our church newsletter and/on our church website.

As I began let's work together as a church, as a circuit and even as a district to and continue to keep 'All things Bright and Beautiful' to prevent further damage to Earth and become better custodians of God's beautiful creation.

*Sally Crafer*

### **THE PROMISE OF SPRING**

As yet it's cold and frosty but Spring is on it's way.  
I've seen snowdrops and cyclamens just the other day.

There's still a bitter wind, "*Keep wrapped up warm*" I say.  
I've seen the catkins on the bough – yes, the other day.

One day it's cold and bright, another dull with rain and grey.  
My magnolia tree is now in bud - I noticed it today.

January has now passed - February (white with frost today).  
I've seen a Muntjac and a squirrel – Spring must be on it's way!

*Pat Farrow*



## LENT COURSE

Rev. Anna is running a 5 weeks Lent course called 'Exploring God's Mercy'. She will be running the same course at different times and locations to ensure that people are able to attend either during the day or in the evening.

The course will be on Tuesday evenings at St. Stephen's, starting at 7 pm on 11 March and at St Margaret's on a Wednesday morning at 10:30 from 12 March.

Anybody is welcome to join these courses (and don't be put off if you can't make each session) with a special invitation extended to us here at Wimpole Road.

### **CIRCUIT LENT RETREAT DAY - Saturday 22 March**

We are delighted to welcome Rev. Dr Sheryl Anderson to lead our first Circuit Retreat Day, which will be held at Mersea Methodist Church on Saturday 22 March. Sheryl was until last summer, Chair of the Liverpool District, and is an experienced retreat leader.

We will gather from 9.45 a.m. for a 10.15 a.m. start and will finish at around 3 p.m. Please bring your own lunch.

The theme of the day will be around penitence, as we explore our discipleship during Lent. There will be some brief input in each of the sessions and then opportunity for reflection.

I hope you will be able to come along and share in this day together as a Circuit.

*Rev. Chris Preece*

### **DIARY DATES**

**Saturday 8 March at The Ark 9.00 a.m. – 10.00 a.m.**

**'Serving the Present Age?' - Circuit Prayer Group, led by Rev. Chris Preece.**

To support God's mission for our churches in Colchester. All welcome

### **NEW TOWN COMMUNITY DAY 2025 – Initial Planning Meeting**

The *provisional* date for this year's Community Day is **Saturday 30 August 2025.**

Our initial planning meeting will be on **Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 7.30 p.m.** in the Church Parlour and we do hope you will be able to come along.

If you are unable to attend but have any ideas / comments / suggestions, please let me know.

*Juliet Balls*

## WIMPOLE ROAD CHURCH SERVICES FOR MARCH

Sunday mornings at 11.00 a.m.

2 March	Rev. Hannah Chun. Holy Communion
9 March	Ron Firmin
16 March	Jonathan Sparkes
23 March	Rev. David Moody
30 March	Rev. Hannah Chun. Mothering Sunday

### A WARM WELCOME AWAITS

*Join us after the service for coffee/tea and biscuits in the church parlour for a time of fellowship and refreshments.*

### FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

*All those known to us who have ongoing health problems and any who are in need of support at this time, especially Daniel's family and friends..*

\*\*\*

**Daniel Sackey** – a good friend and loyal church member, sadly passed away on Sunday 16 February.

His funeral will be at **Wimpole Road Church on Monday 7 April**, (exact time to be confirmed) followed by a burial at 2.00 p.m.

### A CORNER FOR PRAYER

Dear Loving Lord,

During these weeks of Lent we think of your dear Son who journeyed to Jerusalem, and who suffered and died for our sake.

We remember the pain and the sadness of those days and of the joy of Easter Sunday when Jesus rose from the grave.

Dear Lord, we pray for those who grieve for the loss of a loved one, that they may know the promise of life eternal, through your dear Son, who lives and reigns for ever in Your Kingdom.

Amen



## WORKING TOGETHER



**PRAYER MEETING Tuesday 10.00 - 10.30 a.m.**  
Meeting number: 195 594 506 password 011904

\*\*\*

### **'THREE TOGETHER' ONLINE FACEBOOK SERVICE EVERY SUNDAY at 6.30 p.m.**

Ecumenical worship led by and shared with all three churches, Wimpole Road, St. Stephen's and St. Margaret's.

\*\*\*

### **LINK TO ST. STEPHEN'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

<http://ststephens-colchester.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-03-March-2025-Newsletter-Compressed-V01.00.pdf>

\*\*\*

### **FUTURE NEWSROUNDS**

Please don't forget, if you have stories, items or prayer requests that you would like to contribute to a future monthly Newsround - please contact me by telephone, e-mail or post.

Tel: (01206) 869505 or e-mail: [alison.ablewhite@btinternet.com](mailto:alison.ablewhite@btinternet.com)

**KEEP UP TO DATE ON OUR WEBSITE:**  
[www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk](http://www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk)

.....  
Love will find a way.

Indifference will find an excuse.

*{St. John's Lutheran Church, Minneapolis}*