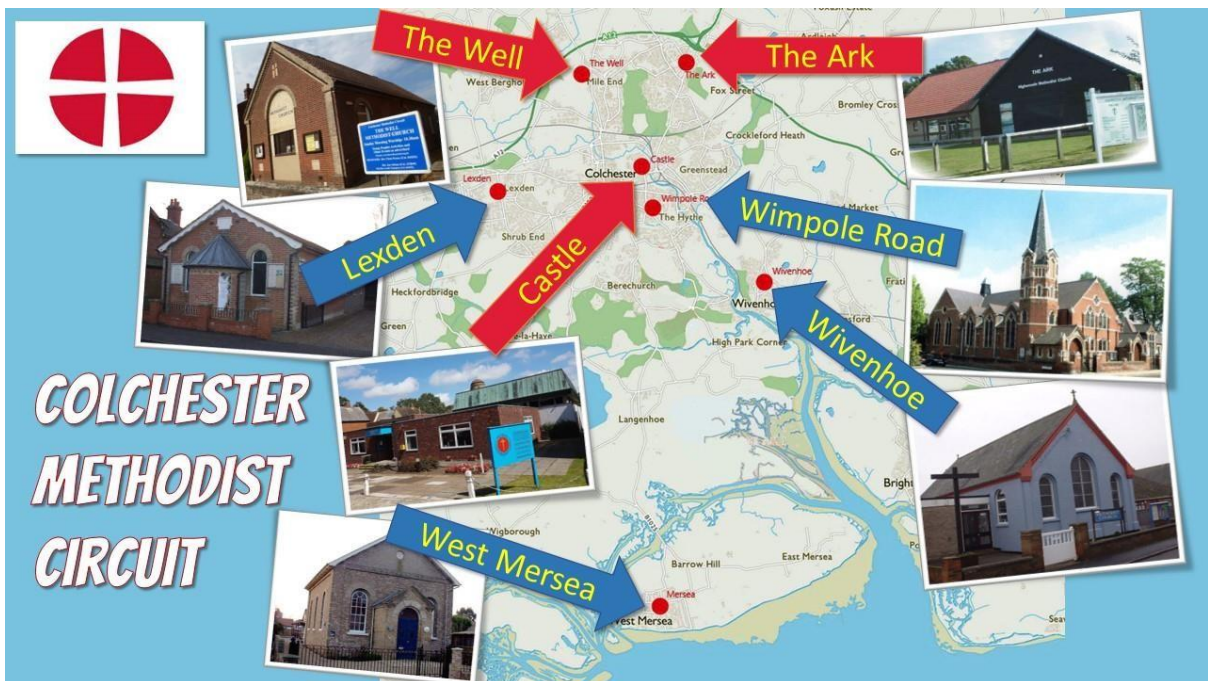


Colchester Methodist Circuit

Newsletter

Edition 10 – June 2025



Letter from the Chair of Beds, Essex and Herts Methodist District,
Rev Dr David Chapman

Dear Friends,

I recently visited the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge to see their latest exhibition entitled *Rise Up: Resistance, Revolution, Abolition*. This exhibition explores the history of the battle to end transatlantic slavery through the stories of the people, communities and anti-slavery movements who campaigned between 1750 and 1850 to abolish the British slave trade and end enslavement. The exhibition focusses on the individuals whose contributions were vital to the British abolition story, including the often-forgotten Black Georgians and Victorians.

One such figure was the Nigerian-born writer and abolitionist Olaudah Equiano (c1745-1797). His personal experience of enslavement and ardent Christian faith drove him to become a fearless and outspoken anti-slavery lobbyist. The average working week for enslaved African people on British plantations in the Caribbean was 72 hours for six days out of seven in dangerous and inhumane conditions. After publishing his autobiography in 1789, Equiano travelled round Britain to promote abolition and Black rights. His powerful testimony was vital in the British anti-slavery campaign, which led to the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. It is estimated that nearly three and a half million African people were trafficked by British colonial slaving ships on 12,103 slaving voyages mounted from British and British colonial ports. It is a sobering fact that Britain was responsible for trafficking over a quarter of all enslaved people during the 400-year history of the slave trade.

Despite the significant achievement of the 1807 Act in the face of fierce opposition, it was not until 1833 that slavery was finally abolished in British territories after the British government borrowed £20million to compensate more than 4,000 British enslavers for loss of their 'property'. The government's loan was not finally paid off until 2015. Yet no compensation was ever paid to any trafficked African person for their experience of enslavement.

Following the lead of John Wesley, who condemned slavery, the Methodist Church has a strong heritage in support of the abolition movement. However, the proceeds of slavery will inevitably have contributed to financing Methodist activities. As the Church of England has found, support for reparations in the form of an apology and financial redress draws strong opposition. The intention of reparations is not to pay off a debt – an incalculable sum – but rather to offer a meaningful response in a tangible form that seeks to address the legacy of disadvantage that has affected many of the descendants of enslaved peoples. The Methodist Church is beginning to face up to its own ambiguous history in relation to the transatlantic slave trade. How might Methodists engage in a respectful conversation about reparations that are long overdue?

Grace and Peace
David Chapman



**Our Superintendent Minister Rev Chris Preece is currently on sabbatical.
David is acting Superintendent Minister while Chris is away.**

NEWS: from The Circuit

ORDINATION OF REV HANNAH

Rev Hannah Chun is to be received into full connexion at the Methodist Conference meeting in Telford on Sunday 29th June at 10.30am and ordained later that afternoon at St. Chad's Church in Shrewsbury at 4pm.

Rev Hannah's reception into full connexion and her ordination will be live-streamed on the day and members of her congregations and the rest of the circuit will be able to watch the two events from Wimpole Road Methodist Church.

Congratulations to Hannah for this wonderful achievement. The circuit is proud to have been able to be with her on this part of her journey since she joined as a probationary presbyter nearly two years ago.

In advance of her ordination, a District Ordinand's Testimony Service was held at Wimpole Road on 11th May, when Rev Hannah shared her testimony and part of her faith journey with members from around the circuit and family and visitors. This service was led by the chair of the District, Rev Dr David Chapman, assisted by Rev Paul Howes, and Rev Chris Preece was given dispensation to preach while on sabbatical.

LENT RETREAT DAY

MORE THAN 20 people from around the Circuit took part in a day of quiet reflection for Lent, held at Mersea and led by the very able and experienced Rev Dr Sheryl Anderson, on the theme of Penitence. Some of those who attended were apprehensive about the theme, and the styling of the event as a retreat day, but feedback from the event was so positive that another similar event is planned for next March under the banner of Colchester Circuit Together: A Day for Reflection.

Throughout the day there was opportunity to sit in silent reflection, consider responses to questions posed by the speaker, or simply take a walk in the sunshine, as well as the opportunity to share experiences and thoughts and join in fellowship over lunch.

One of those who attended wrote afterwards: "One of three things I took away from the Circuit Retreat Day was the beauty of silence. During the day we had three 30-minute sessions of silence, the first session was for me somewhat strange but by the time we enjoyed the third session I started to feel and sense the beauty of silence.

Today I decided to have a few minutes of silence looking out of the bedroom window and I was amazed at the beauty I saw in the garden. The lush green grass, the yellow of the forsythia and daffodils, the myriad of colours of the primulas, the pink of the blossom on the cherry trees with the bees buzzing around and the different shades of green as bushes and other trees come in to life with the birds darting from one to another.

I know we mustn't forget the images we see on the television of war, homelessness, violence, poverty etc. Likewise, we know many live in areas where there are no gardens or trees, but just take a few minutes in silence and look in the garden and see the beauty of God's creation at its best. You may be surprised at what you see."

A short day of reflection in increasingly busy and often frantic lives is a blessing to cherish and take advantage of. Look out for more news of next year's event nearer the time, and take some time to reflect together.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2025: COLCHESTER CIRCUIT ELECTRONIC ENVELOPE

Donations to the total of £587.50 (including gift aid) were made through the CA electronic envelope. This is a very pleasing amount and thanks go to all who contributed.

Jan Casey

CIRCUIT PRAYER GROUP: THE FUTURE

IN Matthew 18:20 Jesus says: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

This verse emphasises the power of prayer and unity, and our Circuit Prayer Group monthly meetings are an opportunity for us to gather to pray for our Circuit, our Circuit Mission, our churches and concerns for the wider world.

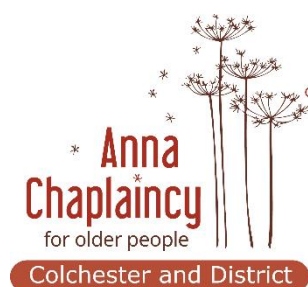
Unfortunately, despite publicity, these monthly meetings are poorly attended, which is disappointing. I hope that by highlighting this verse we can encourage each other that when we gather in the name of Jesus, we are also gathered in unity and support for one another.

The prayer meetings are held usually on the second Saturday of each month from 9am to 10am at various venues. The next meeting is at Wivenhoe Methodist Church on Saturday 14th June which will be led by Phil Bingham. The July meeting will be on Saturday 12th July at Wimpole Road, led by Keith Thompson, and on 9th August I will lead prayers at The Well, again from 9am to 10am. Do please consider spending an hour of your time in this important time of prayer.

Sally Crafer

ANNA CHAPLAIN

ADVERTISING for this new Circuit lay appointment has started and short-listing of candidates is intended to take place early in July. Your continued prayers for this Circuit mission project are invited. It is intended that the person appointed, who will work in the Circuit for 20 hours a week to support older people, will take up the post in September. A copy of the advertisement appears at the end of this newsletter.



from Lexden:

ON Maundy Thursday we had our Love Feast service led by Rev Hannah Chun. This is a simple service where we share sweet bread and juice instead of bread and wine. We were very lucky to have a piano player join us and accompany hymn singing. Following the service we had a simple meal of bread and fruit. This service has always been a very popular part of our church year and everyone left feeling spiritually refreshed.

OUR toilets have been twinned with toilets in Malawi, Nepal and South Sudan. We are delighted to be part of the scheme by Tearfund to provide these. Did you know almost one in three people living in the world don't have a safe place to go to the loo? Not only does this make daily life unpleasant and uncomfortable, but it presents a huge risk. There are thousands of deaths every year due to poor sanitation, which fosters water borne diseases such as cholera and intestinal worms.

from Castle:

AT our church general meeting earlier in the year, we started a review of our mission statement. We split into groups and discussed how we can ensure we are fulfilling our existing aims and adding further goals for the future. Rev Chris collated the results and produced a document, which we will discuss at our next leadership team meeting and Church council meetings when Rev Chris returns from her sabbatical.

WE shared in an enjoyable time of fellowship at our pancake party on Shrove Tuesday. Many pancakes were enjoyed and the sum of £187.56 was raised for the wonderful work of St. Helena Hospice.

IT was a joy to welcome our friends from The Ark and other circuit churches to our worship on Good Friday. Our District Chair, the Rev Dr David Chapman led us in a service of readings and meditation as we focused on the events of that day. Thank you for your support and the fellowship we shared over coffee and hot cross buns afterwards.

MEMBERS of our Eco team have met for the first time with our local councillor. They discussed the installation of a dog bin, solar panels, funding streams and support for the local community. We hope this will become a regular meeting.

WE plan on holding our now annual Picnic in the Park in the next few months and will circulate the date once decided.

from The Ark:

OUR contemplative act of worship for the evening of Maundy Thursday was led by Rachel van Staveren. We started with fellowship and refreshments of hot cross buns and left the building in silence at the close of worship.

It was a great privilege for many of us to join our friends at Castle for a service on Good Friday led by the chair of the district, Rev Dr David Chapman – who then made a trip to The Ark on Easter Sunday to lead us in an early act of communion followed by breakfast before our service at the usual time which was led by Eddie Lansdown. We all miss Rev Chris while she is on sabbatical, but it has been a pleasure to get to know the Chair of the District so much better and we are thankful for the kind attention he is giving to the Circuit.

Our efforts towards becoming a carbon neutral church continue; we have had the taps in both ladies' and gents' toilets changed to percussion taps which turn off automatically after use. These are in addition to the installation of LED lights in the worship area and vestibule and motion sensor lights

in the toilets. We have plans to install a rainwater butt to assist with our eco-friendly planting schemes.

THE Churches 'Count on Nature' event takes place on 7-15 June, where churches are asked to count the wildlife, particularly in Churchyards. Rachel van Staveren is leading worship on 8 June and hopes to weave this into the service. We also have plans to locate a donated bug hotel at the church. These small steps are hoped to help make a big difference.

WE were pleased to welcome friends from elsewhere in the Circuit to our Christian Aid fund-raising social event of a Beetle Drive and game of Scattergories which was hosted by Sally and Graham Crafer, with refreshments of cake donated by church members. This event alone raised about £140 and we are grateful to Sally and Graham for their help.

EVERY Friday morning a number of us gather on Zoom for a virtual coffee morning, for one hour of church fellowship between 11am and 12noon. This is something we started during Covid lockdown and it continued by popular demand. The topics covered during conversation are far too wide and varied to list, and none of it is scripted or planned, and invariably the chat leads to a lot of laughter. And when the subject matter is more sombre, we are able to give each other comfort and support. The fellowship is not restricted to members of the Ark. We do allow folk from other churches in the circuit through our virtual doorway and really enjoy their company! The beauty of it being on Zoom is that even those who are away from home still join in from wherever they happen to be when they have access to the internet. Do let us know if you would like a link to join us for an hour and you will be made more than welcome.

from Wimpole Road:

WITH the joy of Easter still evident within our worship, we are thankful for the additional services we had during Holy Week to lead us into a glorious Easter Day. Gathering together for a contemplative act of worship with communion on Maundy Thursday evening, we left the building in silence having stripped it bare to prepare for the stark truth of the following day's events.

We met again on Good Friday morning to join in a service of reflection and meditation, and although we left in sombre mood, the atmosphere was fitting for the occasion. 'Then bursting forth' on Easter Day, we celebrated Christ's resurrection with an early communion and a joyful act of worship at our usual service time.

STILL in celebratory mode we look forward to our Church Anniversary on Pentecost Sunday, with an open-air service on the Recreation Ground with our friends from St. Stephen's and anyone else who would like to join us. What a special day for a Church Anniversary!

SPRING is a recognised time for renewal and dusting away the cobwebs from the winter. Well, at Wimpole Road we had more than a light dusting from the previous winter but a jolly good clear out of rubbish that had accumulated over several years. Some of our congregation hadn't seen the walls in the Harsnett Road entrance before (due to our historical collection), but now it's clean and tidy for the time being at least. (Which is more than we were when we had finished!)

OVER the past few months we have been trying to encourage each other to pray together in a slightly different way by adding a short prayer for the month in our Newsround. We say the prayer at the beginning of our morning worship and hope that at some point during each day that prayer will be used by those who have the Newsround, uniting us together as we think of each other.

Our Prayer Box outside the church is still being used and so our prayer extends into our community, as people ask us to pray for situations they find difficult.

YOU will see from the circuit plan that we will be receiving the live-streaming of both the ordination services on June 29th and we will be delighted if you would like to come and share either or both of those with us - you will be very welcome.

We send our love to Rev Hannah and pray God's continued blessing upon her and her family.

from The Well:

ON Palm Sunday, as part of Myland Churches Together, representatives of our denominations met at St Joseph's Catholic church at 9.30am for the blessing of Palm Crosses. Rev Hazel Greenland from St Michael's gave the Homily and Ron Firmin (who was taking our service at The Well) kindly read the Scriptures. We each took Palm Crosses to share with our respective congregations.

WE have submitted a 'preliminary enquiry application' of our building plans to Colchester City Council. This is to give us information as to the Council's views on the project before we proceed any further.

CONSENT has been given by the Connexional Council for Cornerstone Pentecostal Church to use our premises weekly, for their own Sunday services. They meet in the afternoon and their first service was on 18th May.

AS reported last December, our hall gas heaters were condemned. We have now replaced them with six flat nanocrystalline infrared heaters – a relatively new technology. We are now monitoring their effectiveness and running costs, compared to gas.

IF anyone would like to join us, then the next two monthly Charity Coffee Mornings are:

- Saturday 21st June – Methodist Homes
- Saturday 19th July – Action for Children

We look forward to the return of Rev Chris at the beginning July!

from Wivenhoe:

LIFE has gone on much as usual in Wivenhoe Methodist Church over the last months. About 25 of us regularly join together for Sunday morning worship, which is followed by tea, coffee and biscuits. People are generally in no rush to leave. Several of our congregation are frail or housebound. Others are sick or bereaved. So pastoral care through visits and phone calls remains an essential part of our mission, as it always has.

OUR monthly Saturday Coffee Mornings remain popular, with as many as 50 people attending – from all local Churches and none. The Thursday afternoon 'Knit and Natter' and Fellowship meetings continue to be a good source of outreach as they are popular not only with members but with other local friends from the town.

CHURCHES Together in Wivenhoe is a strong unifying force in Wivenhoe, with all five churches actively involved. Various activities took place during Lent, including a Lent Lunch and a film. On Good Friday we joined together for a 'Walk of Witness' followed by worship at the Catholic Church.

On Whitsunday we will all join together after morning worship to share cake and coffee, chat and renew our vows of unity.

THE following Sunday being Trinity Sunday we are meeting together at 2.30pm on the King George playing field for an act of worship to celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the production of the Nicene Creed; a statement of faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

FINALLY, what a joy it was to meet together for Rev Hannah's Testimony Service. It was a joyful, uplifting time. Well done to both Hannah and Rev Chris. Both spoke well. We now look forward to Hannah's ordination.

from West Mersea:

GOOD News! We have been successful in gaining our Bronze Award as an Eco-Church!

In the category for Worship and Teaching we achieved gold standard. For Buildings and Energy - silver standard and for the other three categories of Land and Nature, Community and Global Engagement and Lifestyle - above bronze but not quite silver. So, a work in progress.

AS we continue to work through our Mission Plan, we have focused on maintaining a visible presence in our community by having leaflets printed to distribute to new residents on Mersea. Within the church we offer a quiet space for prayer and have started a singing group to enable mutual growth and learning in faith through music.

OUR Warm Spaces venture continues on Wednesdays from 11am until 1.30pm at the request of our guests. It has now become a Community Lunch, where mums can bring their babies/preschool children to meet up with other adults in our community. We have the opportunity, together with members of our congregation for lunch and a chat.

OUR Baby and Toddler group continues to meet on Thursdays from 9 until 11.30 and is well supported. We have a full morning with some parents/carers dropping in after the school run and others including grandparents drifting in throughout the morning.

WE are involved in Churches Together in Mersea and we have been busy planning our annual Beach Club event which will be held in the school summer holidays from 28th July to 1st August on the beach at the bottom of Empress Avenue from 10am to 12 noon. We are hoping for fine weather! In the event of rain we will be based in churches on the island. The Methodist Church will host a craft group in the church and a games event in the hall.

IN May we hosted a coffee morning and sale for Essex Air Ambulance with an opportunity for the Mersea Community Shop to be involved.

OUR church anniversary will be celebrated on the weekend of 19th and 20th July. On the Saturday we will be having a quiz night and food. All are welcome, and more details will be distributed around the Circuit later.

FROM THE CIRCUIT DIARY:

14th June	Circuit monthly Prayer Meeting at Wivenhoe 9 – 10am
23 rd June	Next Circuit Grants application deadline
29 th June	Live streaming to Wimpole Road of Rev Hannah Chun being received into full connexion (10:30am for 10:45am start) and ordained (3:45pm for 4pm start). All are welcome to attend and share this special occasion.
12 th July	Circuit monthly Prayer Meeting at Wimpole Road 9 – 10am
14 th July	Circuit Meeting at Castle from 7:30pm
9 th August	Circuit monthly Prayer Meeting at The Well 9 – 10am

In addition:

Circuit Evening 'Zoom' services take place on the 1st, 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month from 6:30pm

Circuit Bible Study takes place on many Tuesday evenings throughout the year (via Zoom)

All are very welcome and further information on any of the above is available from our Circuit Administrator at colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com or by viewing the Circuit diary at <https://colchestermethodists.org.uk>

DEADLINES

Please submit your plan requests for Sept/Oct/Nov by 10th July via our Circuit Administrator at colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com

The next newsletter will be distributed at the beginning of September so please let Judith have your church news by 18th August via judith.winward@talk21.com

Lay Worker - Anna Chaplain

Colchester Methodist Circuit is seeking to employ an Anna Chaplain to reach out to older people across Colchester and the surrounding areas. This is a new and exciting role to develop and extend the work and mission of the Circuit.

- Does your Christian faith motivate you to support older people in different community settings?
- Are you a strong networker who can build relationships with other people working in this area?
- Do you have proven experience in developing new ideas and initiatives?

If so, this could be the opportunity for you.

- 20 hours per week to be worked flexibly in negotiation with the line manager and which could include some occasional evenings.
- 4-year fixed-term contract (with the possibility of an extension beyond the initial term – dependent on further funds becoming available).
- Salary up to £18,061 (part-time) – dependent on experience.
- A contributory pension scheme to which eligible lay employees will be auto-enrolled.
- 5.6 weeks' holiday a year, inclusive of any bank/public holidays.
- In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, it is a Genuine Occupational Requirement that the successful candidate is a practising Christian.

This role will include working with existing groups within the church and in the wider community, in addition to identifying new opportunities for work and outreach. The post is home-based, with travel to locations around the Circuit. Anna Chaplaincy training will be provided as part of the induction process.

The appointment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, including an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosure.

For further information and an application form, please contact Helen Hunt (Circuit Administrator) at colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com

Closing date: 23rd June 2025

Interviews: Week Commencing 14th July 2025

