



June 2025

Minister: Rev. Hannah Chun

Mob: 07935 612 414

*{In place of Hannah's monthly letter, she kindly supplied the following sermon,
for the church service on Sunday 25 May.}*

About this time last year, I visited Beth Chatto Gardens at Elmstead Market. If you have been there, you may agree that it's an absolutely stunning and glorious garden. I was amazed by the beauty, balance and harmony this garden exuded, but I was even more impressed to find out that the garden had been made out of scratch by Beth Chatto and her late husband, Andrew Chatto. Then, to further add to my surprise, I discovered that the garden had been built on a wasteland.

In 1960, the Chatto family built their new home on that wasteland that had been part of their fruit farm. It had not been farmed before as the soil was considered to be too dry in places, too wet in others, and so the whole area had been left to grow wild.

The land presented many difficulties for starting a garden, but together with their knowledge and research, they were able to select unusual plants that could thrive under the differing and varied conditions that the land provided.

Eventually, the Chatto's were able to create a thriving garden out of land considered a 'problem' using plants in her words which were 'adapted by nature to those very conditions'.

How could a garden built on a wasteland thrive and flourish?

Well, the Chatto's have proved it can be possible, and it shows that at times the things we may consider as being nothing or lacking potential can be the very ground upon which life and fruitfulness takes place.

In our Acts passage, when interrogated by the religious leaders after a night in prison, Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 saying, 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone'. It speaks of Jesus as the rejected and discarded stone but who became the cornerstone, the keystone and the most important stone for the structure of a building.

I don't know much about buildings, but it would seem without a solid, sturdy cornerstone a building may not be stable. And Peter is emphasising that although Jesus was disregarded by the world and seen as nothing, he became the crucial element and ground from where salvation for the world sprung forth.

Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit and speaks boldly pointing all power and authority to Jesus who was rejected and died but rose to be that all-important cornerstone.

What in the world has happened to Peter? He is certainly not the same Peter we knew in the gospels when he denied Jesus and hid in fear. Given his track record, we may have expected him to wilt in the face of the religious leaders. But no, here he speaks with boldness and courage like we've not seen in him before.

Peter may have disregarded and denied Jesus in the past, afraid for his life and reputation, but after experiencing the resurrection in his very bones he seemed to have discovered who the very cornerstone of his life was. Through the Holy Spirit he now knew that his life needed to be built upon Jesus and not upon his human fears.

Beth Chatto could have built her garden on fertile and rich soil, yet she chose to build it upon a once ignored and neglected wasteland.

Let's have a think about where we might be building our lives upon? Do we look to anything in our world that promise fruitfulness and prosperity but find it is sometimes the things we take for granted or see as being worthless that can help us build or empower our lives?

Do we ever give ourselves little credit and potential perhaps that we view ourselves as being a bit like a 'wasteland' perhaps? Might God see potential, growth, flourishing and life in us and our church that we may fail to see?

Have you ever caved into your fears like Peter did? In such instances, do you look to Christ to take hold of your fears or do you rely on something else that seems more credible? What would you say are the foundation and building bricks of your life?

Jesus seems to give us some guidance in our gospel passage about how we might rely on the right building blocks or foundations for our lives. Jesus says he is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. On the other hand, the hired hand sees a wolf coming, leaves the sheep and runs away. The hired hand outwardly may have the credentials or

appearance of a shepherd but in the face of danger will run for his/her own life without caring for the sheep. Jesus also points out that the sheep who have not yet joined his fold listen to his voice. They listen to his voice.

Whose voice are we listening to - to help build us up in our lives? What are the voices we listen to when we feel lost and need direction? Which voices do we succumb to in times of need and desperation? Who is your sat nav or GPS?

Back in South Korea in April 2014 a tragic incident took place there, which shook the whole nation to the core and sent the country into a state of mourning and grief. It was the disastrous sinking of the Sewol Ferry that took the lives of 304 people of which 250 of them were secondary school-aged children all from one high school who had been on a school trip. Here is an image of hundreds of yellow paper boats laid by people as a gesture to offer their prayers and tributes to the victims.

Investigations showed that one of the things that exacerbated the situation was the captain's orders given to the passengers to stay put in their cabins, even as the ship sank.

In Korea, one of the key values ingrained in children is that they ought to listen to their elders or those who are older. The part that broke my heart into pieces was the fact that many of the children perished whilst obeying these orders by staying in their cabins, where they waited for further orders, which never came. It was found out later that the captain had fled the ship before giving out evacuation orders.

As I recalled this tragic accident, it made me think about the voices we listen to and who we might look to - to give us life and lead us to a place of freedom and green pasture. The children in that situation listened to the captain's voice because they trusted him to guide them, but did they lack the capacity to listen to their inner voice which may have told them otherwise?

Friends, we live in an age of marketing and brands that try to influence what we cling to for stability. We are also surrounded by the media and news that constantly try to tell us what to believe and who to listen to. What is the voice of the Good Shepherd and the voice of the hired hand in our lives?

In a world where many opposing voices are trying to grab our attention, may we learn to decipher and listen out for the voice that speaks life and hope into us. To listen out for the voice of our shepherd that knows us through and through, knows us by name and lays down his life for us.

Finally, as God desires to shepherd and gather all to his own, we are called to be living stones or stepping stones to all who are searching to build their lives upon Jesus, who longs to be the Cornerstone.

He is your cornerstone, my cornerstone and our cornerstone. Amen

NOTES FROM THE VESTRY

Before we look forward to the month ahead, a brief reflection on May, when we were delighted to host Rev. Hannah's Testimony Service on Sunday 11th. It was lovely to see so many here. If you were unable to attend, a recording of the livestream is available to view from the church Facebook page.

Our Church Anniversary is on Sunday 8th June and this is also our Pentecost Service with St. Stephen's, to be held on the Recreation Ground (weather permitting) with Rev. Hannah leading the worship - all are welcome!

On Sunday 29th June, although no services are planned at Wimpole Road the church will be open for the live streaming of Rev. Hannah's Reception into full Connexion at Telford International Centre from 10.30 a.m. (for a 10.45 a.m. start), and again in the afternoon for her Ordination Service at St. Chad's Church in Shrewsbury from 3.45 p.m. (for a 4 p.m. start). Again, all are welcome and it is lovely to be able to share in the worship and support Hannah in this way.

Following the recent loss of Yoon's father, we continue to hold Hannah, Yoon and their family in our thoughts and prayers.

Further to Christine's appeal in last month's Newsround, we still have vacancies for additional Stewards, Communion Stewards and a Cradle Roll Secretary. Are you willing to consider this opportunity to contribute further to the life of our Church? Please don't hesitate to speak with any of the Stewards who will answer any questions you have about these roles.

I would like to reiterate our gratitude to Debbie for her dedication, service and invaluable contribution as part of the Steward's team over many years and hope that she will now be able to enjoy some well-deserved free time!

Finally, as you may be aware, our dear friends Rev. Joe and Dave will be getting married on 21st June and I'm sure you will join me in sending our heartfelt congratulations on their wedding!

God bless,

Juliet

PRAYER CORNER

Pentecost prayers often focus on seeking the Holy Spirit's presence and power,
and asking for guidance in mission and ministry.

Methodist prayers for Pentecost may include requests for renewal,
a vision for serving God,
and strength to be faithful messengers of the Gospel.

FLOWERS

How colourless our lives would be
Without the joy of flowers:
Their beauty and their perfume
So enrich this world of ours.

They brighten up our city parks
With colour and with scent
And make the daily working grind
Seem somehow more well spent!

Flowers comfort us in time of grief
When hearts are filled with pain:
Their fragile beauty makes us hope
That we'll find peace again.

And weddings would not be the same
Without bright flowers galore,
So flowers enrich each part of life -
A joy for ever more.

{From 'The Friendship Book'}

THE RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

I've been avidly watching this year's show on television. One gentleman had a wonderful display of sweet peas – this brought back many memories for me.

Happy memories of when my late husband, Dennis, grew his own from seed, starting in December! He grew them and I picked them. I always gave the first bunch to my mum (they reminded her of her wedding day, as she chose sweet pea colours for her bridesmaids, one pink, one mauve, one blue etc.)

We used to sell them at the front, leaving an honesty box if we went out.

Sweet peas are my favourite flowers – they have such a wonderful perfume and make a lovely display indoors.

We did go to the show (before we had our daughters) as it was always near Dennis's birthday. Quite an event – we always came back with many ideas, most too big to carry out!

Pat Farrow

PRAYER FOR THIS MONTH

Almighty God, inspire us with your Spirit
and fill our hearts with the fire of your love;
that we may use it for your glory and the good of others.

*‘They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated
and came to rest on each of them.’*

Acts 2:3

THURSDAY CIRCLE

We began May with a visit by story teller Jan Williams, who told us some Essex Folk Tales.

The following Thursday being the 80th Anniversary of V.E. Day, we spent a relaxing afternoon listening to music from the 1940’s, such as ‘In the Mood’, ‘Run, Rabbit, Run’ and concluding with Dame Vera Lynn singing ‘We’ll Meet Again’.

In Christian Aid Week we had a quiz afternoon, which raised £45. Thank you to all who contributed to that total.

The following week saw a return visit by Liz White, Secretary of the Lexden History Society, and she gave a most informative talk on ‘Life in Victorian Colchester’.

Coming up:

- 5 June** Seated activities with Gunni Graygoose
- 12 June** Di Bignell, a Blue Badge guide, will tell us about the history of New Town.
- 19 June** I will be talking about my family during the period 1927 to late 1940’s.
- 26 June** A pre-booked Cream Tea at Stanway Garden Centre.

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

DIARY DATES

Saturday 14 June at Wivenhoe 9.00 a.m. – 10.00 a.m.

‘Serving the Present Age?’ - Circuit Prayer Group, led by Phil Bingham.

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

Colchester Methodist Circuit - Inviting Words.

Exploring skills and opportunities for faith sharing **on Zoom Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m.**

led by Rev. Paul Howes 3 June, 10 June, 24 June

Deep Sea Divers Holiday Club - 25 – 28 August 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

To book your place(s), please click on the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeGWCKyCqYsNyYOrmra260d4XnTuIKN0EWTE27eX93vzmw6tg/viewform?usp=dialog>

WIMPOLE ROAD CHURCH SERVICES FOR JUNE

Sunday mornings at 11.00 a.m.

1 June	Rev. Robin Spittle
8 June	United Pentecost Service led by Rev. Hannah on the Recreation Ground with St. Stephen’s
15 June	Trinity Sunday - Local Arrangement
22 June	Rev. Paul Howes - Holy Communion
29 June	Rev. Hannah’s Ordination <i>All are welcome to attend the livestreaming of Rev. Hannah Chun being received into full connexion (10:30am for 10:45am start) and ordained (3:45pm for 4pm start)</i>

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.*

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FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

*All those known to us who have ongoing health problems
and any who are in need of support at this time,*

*We especially think of Hannah and Yoon Chun and their family
following the recent unexpected death of Yoon’s father.*



WORKING TOGETHER



PRAYER MEETING Tuesday 10.00 - 10.30 a.m.

Please email: wimpoleroadmc@gmail.com for access details.

‘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/2025/05/2025-06-June-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

KEEP UP TO DATE ON OUR WEBSITE:

www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk

SEEKING GUIDANCE

Holy Spirit, guide us in our actions and speech,
that we may be a blessing to those around us.