



November 2026

Minister: Rev. Hannah Chun
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Dear Friends,

As we move into the colder, darker months of the year, I always find this brings a degree of loss and change. The leaves are beginning to fall away, the evenings draw in, and the warmth and brightness of summer seem like a distant memory. The world around us begins to slow down and prepare for winter.

Change can leave us feeling exposed and vulnerable, much like the bare branches of a tree standing amid the winter sky. We can wonder what has been lost, what remains, and whether anything new will ever grow in its place. But perhaps this is where the seasons have something important to teach us about the faithfulness of God. The trees that will soon stand bare are not dead. Beneath the surface life will continue. Roots will remain firmly planted in the ground, and within what appears lifeless, the quiet work of renewal will take place. The outward appearance may suggest an ending, but the story beneath the surface is one of preparation for new life to emerge.

With our recent Church Council behind us, I find myself thinking about the life of our church and the changes that may lie ahead in futures to come. We may recognise that our congregation is not as it once was. We may find it increasingly difficult to fill certain roles, particularly as our congregation ages, and we may have questions about what the future of our church will look like. Such realities can bring feelings of uncertainty, sadness and even fear. Yet perhaps the image of the bare tree can offer us some encouragement. Just because we cannot see new growth does not mean that life is absent. There is still life in our church, in the relationships we share, in the care we offer one another, in our worship and prayer, and in the small, often unnoticed ways we seek to serve our community. God is at work in these things, even when the

fruits of that work are not immediately apparent. And we can trust that at the right time God will equip us with what we need.

So, as the days grow shorter and the trees shed their leaves, perhaps we might take a little time to look beneath the surface of our own lives and the life of our church. Where do you see God at work in your life at present? Where might you see God at work in our church? Where are the quiet stirrings of life and possibility taking place, even if they are not yet fully visible?

As we journey through these darker months, may we find comfort in the knowledge that God is with us in every season. May we keep our roots firmly planted in God's love, remain attentive to the work of the Spirit among us, and hold on to the hope that, even when much is hidden from view, God is still at work.

God bless,
Hannah

Dear all,

You may remember that earlier this year, Christine Firmin asked in *Newsround* for your thoughts on exploring the possibility of starting a Prayer and Bible Study gathering. This is something that has also been discussed at various Church Council meetings and is now included in our Mission Plan as one of our priorities to explore under '*Learning and Caring*' and '*Evangelism*'.

The idea grew out of a desire to find more opportunities to connect our Sunday worship with our lives and faith throughout the week, as well as to create space for people to come together for fellowship, reflection and prayer.

Following the feedback and suggestions we have received, we have decided to take our first steps by offering a few sessions during Advent. These will take place on **1st, 8th and 15th December at 2.30 pm**, in the church vestry or at the back of the church, depending on numbers.

We will be using the Methodist Advent resource ***Don't Be Afraid*** as the starting point for our time together. The sessions will offer an opportunity to explore the themes through conversation, share our thoughts and reflections, and spend some time in prayer.

We are very much at the exploratory stage, so we will see how things develop and where this might lead. There is no need to have any particular knowledge or experience of Bible study or prayer groups, simply come as you are, ready to share, listen and reflect together.

It would be lovely to see you there, and please feel free to invite friends along too. We hope this might be the beginning of something that helps us grow in faith and deepen our connections with one another as we journey through Advent together.

God bless,
Hannah

NEWS FROM THE VESTRY

At the time of writing work has begun in the Hall and Parlour to install Phase 1 of the new heating and windows, as well as increasing the insulation. This work will be ongoing for the next few weeks, but is necessary to enable the areas to be viable for their many and varied uses. In order to prepare the Hall for this work, the large wooden cupboards at the far end had to be taken down, (once emptied!) This has resulted in the large windows being revealed in full, and the amount of daylight and resulting aesthetic enhancement of the room is dramatic. The demolition of the cupboards took place one Saturday afternoon and our grateful thanks to Anthony and Edward, who led proceedings, and to Graham D, Graham C, Kwame, Akua and Matthew who assisted them.

Church Council has approved the purchase of some recorded music (organ and piano accompaniments to traditional hymns and some worship songs). This will enable them to be used during services, as an aid to worship (as and when needed). We extend our good wishes and prayers to Peter (our organist), but will be advertising for a deputy organist. If anyone is able to help or knows someone who might be interested, please do ask them to get in touch.

Advent is fast approaching and we are delighted that Hannah has agreed to lead a few sessions of Bible study and prayer (as outlined in her letter). Please do try and support this enterprise if you are able, and bring a friend!

Also, this year, we are offering the opportunity to sponsor one of the candles used in the church's Advent Wreath in memory of a loved one. If you would like to make a donation in this way, or would like to know more about this, please do speak to one of the Stewards.

Our Book of Remembrance has been updated with some new entries and is now back in the Prayer Corner. We are now incorporating the names from the preceding week into our Prayers of Intercession, as the book when opened on a Sunday only displays four days at a time. This ensures that everyone is remembered by name and never forgotten.

Finally, at this time of year there is always a lot to do, so if you are able or considering helping in any way, we will be delighted to have you 'on board'. Your Church Needs You!

So, your patience and prayers are needed as we acclimatise to these changes.

Thank you.

Alison Ablewhite

HARVEST

Celebrating harvest is an important way of expressing appreciation for our local farming community and for farmers and agricultural workers to find support and encouragement in knowing that they are remembered in our prayers, not just at Harvest but throughout the year.

It is also a wonderful way to nurture an attitude of gratitude in our hearts as we give thanks for all God's gifts to us in creation and for all the people who work so hard to grow and produce the food on our plates. *{From the Layer de la Haye Parish Gazette}*

LETTER FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Friends,

There was a time where we only really saw wreaths at funerals, Remembrance and on doors approaching Christmas. It seems there has now been a shift with less seen perhaps at funerals and more seen on front doors all year round. The wreaths found on people's doors tend to be seasonal and so, at the moment, there are a lot of vibrant autumn colours around. These will change over the next month or so to incorporate more evergreen foliage, red, silver and gold colours.

As we move into November, there will be the traditional service at the Cenotaph in London on Remembrance Sunday and many other services around the country as well. The wreaths honour those who have given so much to, and for, others. Wreaths have a range of purposes, including decorative, symbolic, and commemorative. Wreaths are used symbolically at different points in life and, in their own way, represent the circle of life and eternity.

As we come to the end of one liturgical year and begin a new one with Advent Sunday, we are recognising the circle of life and the eternal kingdom as we look ahead to Jesus' coming again to earth. With Jesus we can have eternal life which is a life of fullness, completeness and wholeness. It is a life which we are offered and for which we don't need to strive, and it encircles everything we do and all that we are.

To live with Jesus for eternity is something we should embrace. It is not only for the future, but for this present moment as well. This is something in which we should rejoice! When we sing songs such as 'there is a higher throne' we notice the rich imagery of precious stones, thrones, and the heavenly hosts who are singing around the throne of God. Eternity is a place of richness and goes beyond words. This is the kingdom of God which is there now and forevermore.

The wreaths we see may have many different meanings for specific points in ours, and others, lives. Together, they make up the circle of life. We know that Jesus' presence is assured now and always and we can truly depend on that. To know that we can rely on Jesus wherever we are in our lives at this time is so important. A wreath is a continuous circle. It has no beginning and no end. It symbolises God's eternal nature and the everlasting life which is promised through Jesus Christ.

As we look at wreaths at Remembrance, Advent or to mark the seasons or as a welcome to someone's home, let us remember that Jesus offers us everlasting life. We should rejoice in that for today, for ourselves, those we love and with those whom we come into contact for any reason.

God bless,

Chris

PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

Help us Lord to turn to what is good;
that we act justly, love mercy
and walk humbly with you, our God.

{Micah 6:8}

THURSDAY CIRCLE

Our final week in September was a talk by myself on three people who had interested me:

- Firstly, Joseph Pujol ('Le Pétomane' whose unusual music act was 'breaking wind!')
- Secondly, Sir John MacLean, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, who built my house on Hythe Hill.
- Thirdly, Donald McGill – 'King of the Saucy Seaside Postcard'.

We began October with a concert by 'The Hoolies', a Wivenhoe Shanty Crew, who gave us a lively hour of sea shanties.

The following week Jastine Diaz talked about his work as the Circuit's Anna Chaplain, and encouraged us to think positively about the older members of society.

The next week was another visit by Peter Jones, this time to talk about 'The Life and Times of the Eastern Counties Railway'. He will be giving another talk about railways in our 2027 programme.

This was followed by a very witty talk by popular speaker and broadcaster, Brian Carline, on gardening – entitled 'Soil, Sweat and Tears'.

Coming up:

5 November	Di Bignall, tour guide, talking about the Roman Circus
12 November	Myself, talking about 1 st World War Popular Art
19 November	Another fun afternoon with seated activities led by Gunni Graygoose
26 November	A Talk on 'The History of Food' by Liz White, Secretary of the Lexden Historical Society

No matter who you are,
we would love to see you at our meetings on Thursday afternoons at 2.30 p.m.

Joan Gomer

Secretary

PRAYER CARDS

As always, it was a real privilege to join you for worship last Sunday (27 September). It was Andrew's reading of the prayer cards, dropped onto the box outside the church, that get me every time and has led me to write the following, as to why this small, simple act at the start of each service affects me so much.

When we first installed the prayer box, I could see the outreach value but never expected it to affect me in the way it does.

Since the start, I have tried to imagine what each user has had to go through to get to the point of dropping a card in the box.

Taking their steps backwards and in the case of the mother requesting our prayers last Sunday for her two sons:

- To drop the card into the box, she would have left the house probably at a time calculated to have less people out and about, maybe dinner time or early morning before the dog walkers were up.
- Before leaving her house, she'd have retrieved the card from a place that was tucked away, not left out on a work counter for unintended eyes to see.
- The writing of the card would have been done at a time when she was on her own - a time guaranteed of no interruptions. Time to empty that burden in one last cry for help.
- It is this moment that affects me the most. This is the point that we know there is someone in our community close to our church (they could have been closer to the lectern, sitting in their front room when their prayer was read out, than the coffee machine in the far corner) who inwardly feels utterly desperate and in need of help - someone who is at that moment feeling spiritually alone. But in that moment as she writes, she is making her first (or a renewed) connection with God.
- Before she writes anything, she'll have had to have retrieved the card from the bottom of her handbag, having been put there after a fast dash past the card dispenser on an impulse of desperation.

Maybe on a number of occasions, she had walked past the box having noticed it on the wall. The first time she saw it, she may have inwardly mocked the idea of needing God for anything (as we all do at times).

Or just maybe she was walking past the box for the first time, interested in why a red box was outside a church and thought I could do with a prayer, took a card out, leant against the wall, wrote out her concerns and dropped it in the box.

I know what it would have been like for me, but either way however this card found its way into our prayers on Sunday morning - we have a huge responsibility to hold these prayers (especially) close to our hearts.

So please once you've finished reading this, say another prayer for this lady and her two sons, so she is lifted up by the power of God and knows that it was her bravery to put pen to paper as to why she now feels God's love around her.

Thank you and thank God for opening another avenue into the lives of our community around us.

God bless, Jonathan Sparkes

PSALM 121 - THE KING JAMES VERSION

Following on from Jonathan's service at Wimpole Road at the end of September, I felt moved to write a piece in the Newsround on my own thoughts on Psalm 121.

In a Bible given to me by my mother for my birthday on December 26 1959 she highlighted inside the front cover a reference to Psalm 121 as one to keep in mind whenever its wise and thoughtful words were needed.

Her words *"To Dear Graham, Love from Mummy December 26 1959. Psalm 121."*

The late Don Baker always said, *"And I am reading from the King James Version"* - well I would like to quote the words from the same version:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper: The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

**The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth,
and even for evermore."**

‘CRICKET AT WIMPOLE LANE’

I bought a book entitled ‘Gentlemen Cricketers of Maldon’ and the story of two hundred and fifty years of cricket in an Essex town.

Chapter 9 featured matches between Colchester and Maldon.

The first paragraph may be of interest not only to cricket fans but also to local historians.

‘Colchester was attracting many of the County's leading players, to the extent that, in 1865, a county club of Essex was formed at Colchester's new ground of Wimpole Lane.’

Do you think the ground was on the Recreation Ground or in some other location?

Does anyone know the answer?

Thank you for letting me share these pieces with you.

God Bless, Graham Duthie

WIMPOLE ROAD (HEATING TEAM) FOOTBALL CLUB

After attending the Special Church Council meeting to discuss the heating project I arrived home and thought I would (in my imagination) form a football team – Wimpole Road (Heating Team FC.

The team has successfully negotiated the qualifying and group rounds and we are now into the final stages of our own World Cup Heating Project.

HERE IS MY TEAM:

Head Coach: Hannah Chun. Hannah has shown calmness, a cool head and dogged determination to lead her team into this stage of the competition. Well done!

Team Captain: Edward Pentney. Who else! Edward has always put the team first and his hard work and determination has paid off.

Assistant Team Captain: Beryl Pentney. A calming influence on the team and on Edward in particular.

Goalkeeper: Christine Firmin. A safe pair of hands and with her catering experience a possible team dietician - if she agrees to take on that role.

Defence Back Four:

Peter Broom: Left sided and with considerable international leadership qualities.

Andrew Topple: At the heart of the defence and another player with leadership skills and a 'never-give-up' attitude.

Anthony Gutteridge: Alongside Andrew, his craftsmanship background should add to our creative capabilities and as sailing partners they should be able to navigate any choppy waters that may lie ahead.

Graham Duthie: A good team member.

Mid Field:

Sally Crafer, Jeanette Gutteridge and Margaret Clubb. A strong line-up with all three having a wide knowledge of safeguarding and helping others, and should bridge the gap between our defence and attack. Their on-field and off-field advice should prove invaluable for the team's wellbeing and morale.

Forwards:

Alison Ablewhite, Juliet Balls and Edward Pentney (Team Captain). With their outstanding organisational abilities and their close family ties Alison and Juliet should be able to bring the best out of the team, and to take on the responsibility of ensuring that Edward does not take on too much of the work himself, by passing onto others to share the load, as our leader of the forward line.

Summing up: A good strong and dependable team, whose skills and character should lead us through Phase One of the Heating Project and onto to Phase Two and beyond.

Three late signings in Akua, Kwame and Matthew should add positivity and skills to the squad in going forward to the next phase.

But our NUMBER ONE supporter has to be **GOD**, watching on the touchline and coaching us as we move forward together.

Graham Duthie

WIMPOLE ROAD CHURCH SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER

Sunday mornings at 11.00 a.m.

1 November Phil Bingham

8 November 10.45 a.m. Remembrance Sunday Rev. Hannah Chun / Holy Communion

15 November Joanne Eckersley

22 November Ron Firmin

29 November Local Arrangement

A WARM WELCOME AWAITS

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

DIARY DATES

Saturday 14 November at Wimpole Road 9.00 a.m. – 10.00 a.m.

‘Serving the Present Age?’ - Circuit Prayer Group, led by Keith Thompson.

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

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

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

If you would like to make a donation towards our work here at Wimpole Road,
and within our wider community, you can do so by using the QR code below:



There is also a card reader situated at the back of the church.



WORKING TOGETHER



PRAYER MEETING Tuesday 10.00 - 10.30 a.m.

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

LINK TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/WimpoleRoadMethodists>

LINK TO ST. STEPHEN'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

<http://ststephens-colchester.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/2026-11-November-2026-Newsletter-Compressed-V01.00.pdf>

FUTURE NEWSROUNDS

If you have any items that you would like to contribute to a future monthly Newsround –
please e-mail:

alison.ablewhite@btinternet.com

KEEP UP TO DATE ON OUR WEBSITE:

www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk

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