

CHRIST CHURCH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024



**A prayer for the New Year:
Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,
and I will observe it to the end.**

Psalm 119 v33



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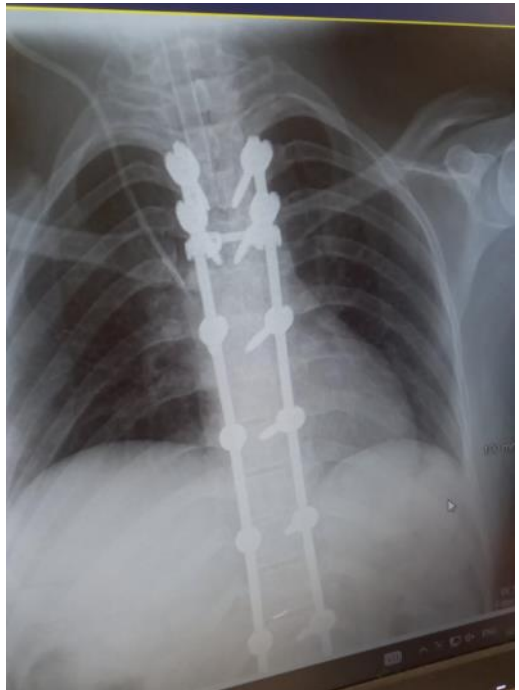
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SOMEONE WAS PRAYING, WAS THAT SOMEONE YOU?

A few months ago Trish and Trevor shared with the church the news that Elin required major spinal surgery. A date was given for the surgery of Wednesday 13th December. Trish would go with Elin to the Royal National Orthopaedic hospital the previous day and stay with her throughout her time in hospital. Meanwhile Trevor would remain at home looking after Samuel, Grace and the family's two dogs. If everything went according to plan, it was hoped Elin would be discharged home on Thursday 21st December.

The church family was informed of the dates and asked to keep Elin and the rest of the family in their prayers.

As December began, many prayed: at home; at Thursday prayers, and at regular services for God's peace for the family, uncomplicated surgery and that God would guide the professionals caring for Elin. Elin, Trish and two carers travelled to the hospital on Tuesday 12th December, the carers returned with Elin's van leaving Trish and Elin at the hospital. On the Tuesday night Trevor had the privilege of praying for the anaesthetist over the phone and she was visibly moved by this. On Wednesday morning Trish accompanied Elin, to the anaesthetic room. All appeared to proceed according to plan, as many prayed faithfully throughout the day. The surgery took about



Straightened spine, from neck to pelvis

an hour longer than expected as the curvature in Elin's was worse than the X-rays had led the team to expect, In fact her spine was in a C-shape and could be felt through the front of her abdomen, behind her navel, but there is photographic (X-ray) evidence that the surgical team have produced a phenomenal result!

Later that evening, Trish and Trevor were informed there had been an episode at the very end of the operation where her brain activity flatlined for about 30 seconds, and her heart rate elevated alarmingly. However, her oxygen level remained stable, and everything appeared to have returned to normal. None of the team had witnessed anything like this before and it was thought Elin may have suffered a seizure. Nothing could be confirmed until she was properly out of the anaesthetic, about midday the following day. This was the beginning of what Trevor has already described as a roller coaster ride lasting not just minutes but several days.

The next morning, as usual, a small group met in the church to pray, and Trevor updated us. Elin was slowly coming out of the anaesthetic. She was also in a great deal of pain and suffering muscular spasms all considered not unusual due to the length and nature of the surgery, Also, whatever had occurred the previous day did not appear to have caused any damage. Those at prayers and many at home, as news spread around gave thanks for progress so far and continuing recovery. All felt God had already answered our prayers, and we simply had to be patiently faithful.

By Friday morning the news was less encouraging: Elin might need another blood transfusion (She received it later that day) and blood tests showed low levels of magnesium and phosphates. Also Elin was still in a lot of pain and showing evidence of a chest infection. By this time Trish was very concerned that Elin would be moved from Intensive Care before she was well enough. A number joined her in prayer concerning this.

By Friday night a CT scan revealed Elin was very poorly with pneumonia in both lungs, and additional fluid around the lungs causing

additional complications. She was on antibiotics and her lungs were not working properly so she was placed on high oxygen therapy. There was a three-way conversation between the consultant, Trevor and Trish. As a result, Trevor arranged to free himself for the weekend, taking Grace and Samuel to stay with his brother and family he travelled to be with Trish, all this accompanied by much prayer.

There was some improvement over night: Elin's oxygen levels and her breathing had improved; she (and Trish) had managed to sleep more. But the medical staff warned there might be further 'blips.' Trish and Trevor were facing the possibility of Elin, and therefore Trish being in ICU over Christmas

At the same time, Trish was encouraged by a Facebook post concerning Romans 8:18 "The pain that you have been feeling can't be compared to the joy that's coming and by a quote from Elisabeth Elliot "We are not adrift in chaos. We're held in the Everlasting Arms." See Deuteronomy 33:27 - "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

By Saturday morning Elin was slowly progressing in the right direction. She was still on oxygen but at a reduced volume but she still wasn't tolerating her milk feeds.

Trevor and Trish felt sufficiently relaxed for him to return to Clacton on Sunday with Grace and Samuel to be ready for school on Monday morning!



Sunday evening brought the blip of a nasty reaction to an anti-sickness drug. But Monday brought more gentle progress and a hint of more to come! Wednesday was even better – a move out of ICU onto a ward. Elin was breathing by herself with no

On the ward

oxygen support.

Thursday morning and the best news: home by ambulance on Saturday afternoon – an ambulance was needed as Elin could not sit for the length of the journey (2 hours plus.

Finally Saturday afternoon and 5* transport

Back to the title of this summary – if you were praying, please be encouraged, God moved amazingly in the ups and downs of those 12 days and it was such a blessing to see amazing answers to prayer.

Going home!



Revd Trevor will be back with his pastoral letter in February but after the past few busy and eventful weeks he has taken a little time to be with and support his family.
we all hope they had a very Happy Christmas,
and send love and prayers for much blessing and a very Happy New Year!

Following Vic's sudden death in September Pamela very kindly agreed to write the Family News until the end of the Year and we are very grateful to her. In fact we are doubly grateful to her, because following an appeal for a new writer of the Family News Pamela and Derrick have agreed to share the task, writing for alternate months! So this month we welcome, with our thanks—Derrick!

Family News



Well first of all let me say that I hope that you had a wonderful Christmas. We all know the significance of this time of year. Yes Christmas Day is the day that “Christ our Saviour” was born. Christ Church had many Christmas services. Carols by candle light was on 17th December at 16.30. (4.30pm in real money). The Nativity service was on 24th December during the regular Sunday Service. There was also a Midnight service starting at 23.30 (11.30pm). Of course there was a Christmas Day Service on 25th December. I do hope that you managed to attend any or all of these celebration services. It is, to me, a terrific time of the year because it means that “Christ was born”

We all celebrate by buying gifts and cards for each other. It is great to watch children opening presents on Christmas Day. I feel that we must remind them the reason why these presents have been given to them.

This is the first News Letter of 2024 so I will reminisce a little. In 2023 we lost Jessie Fowler and Vic Russell both very well known to us all. They, we hope, are with our father in heaven. There, of course, have been the deaths of a number of other people during the year, but there have also been some baptisms and weddings. We formed a choir called “The Christ Church Fellowship Singers”.

This was organised by Gerry and Heather. The singers have sung a Gospel evening, various hymns during church services, at the Christmas Fayre and also for Haven Lodge nursing home. The church garden has been given a new lease of life. This is an ongoing plan again with the help of Gerry and Heather plus Yvonne, Alan and Jackie all overseen by Howard the Elder responsible for the church fabric. We have also had a good number of people become full enrolled members of Christ Church.

Looking to the future the church is forming a youth group for young people from the age of eight to seventeen. A bible study group to follow on from the very successful "Alpha" course. There are going to be some improvements made to the church building over the next twelve months. To quote from our Minister, Trevor, "This Church is on the move".

I hope that you have enjoyed this article even though it is short. If any of you have any news that you would like to be included in future Family news the please email me on derrick.potter@hotmail.co.uk.

God bless and keep you all.

Derrick.

SPOTTED ON FACEBOOK

An alcoholic friend of Philip Yancey once said to him: "When I'm late to church, people turn around and stare at me with frowns of disapproval. I get the clear message that I'm not as responsible as they are. When I'm late to AA, the meeting comes to a halt and everyone jumps up to hug and welcome me. They realise my lateness may be a sign that I almost didn't make it. When I show up, it proves that my desperate need for them won over my desperate need for alcohol.



Youth Group



Starts Tuesday 16th January 2024
Every Tuesday term time only
Christ Church United Reformed
6 Carnarvon Road
Clacton-on-Sea
CO15 6PH



7pm-8:15pm
Tuesdays



Age
8-17

COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 3rd February

10am-12pm



Book Stall Bacon Rolls

CD & DVD Stall

Raffle

Refreshments





**For Families with Children and Adults
with Additional Needs & Disabilities**

Saturday 20th January

10.30 am – 12.30 pm

**Venue – Christ Church URC, Carnarvon Rd,
Clacton, CO15 6PH**

Messy Fun for all the family, Parents, Siblings & Carers

Crafts, Music, Interactive Sensory Story, Sensory Messy Play

Lunch provided

Contact Trish Hahn: 01255 483288

Facebook: Messy Church S.E.N.D. / Christ Church URC

Future dates: 10th February, 16th March, 20th April

WINTER DELIVERY FOR MOLDOVA

Sixty boxes left Christ Church on 13th December. They contained clothing, new knitted items, thirty individual gift bags for boys and thirty for girls. The journey to Moldova will begin on 30th December.

With thanks as always to everyone who continues to support the TEECH trips.

The Moldova Team







Reverend Chris Wood

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9th December 2023

Re: 40th Anniversary of Ordination



The Rev'd Chris Wood is celebrating his 40th Anniversary of Ordination by taking a service at Brackenhall URC, Huddersfield this coming Sunday afternoon.

Brought up at Lightcliffe United Reformed Church, Halifax under the guidance of the Rev'ds Pat Smailes and Hugh Neems, Chris was encouraged to undertake a course in Community & Youth Work at Westhill College, Birmingham to test out his calling to ministry, that may also provide valuable understanding and experience should it lead to ordained ministry.

Four years were subsequently spent on Merseyside, the first two working at the Rock Church Centre in Everton, a Mission Project originally created by the Merseyside Presbyterian Church. From there he moved to Charing Cross Methodist Church in Birkenhead, where he worshipped at Tranmere URC whose minister was Tony Bradshaw. Amazingly, Peter Jenkinson – the twin brother to John Jenkinson (now a retired URC minister living locally and who share a strong friendship) – was on his Management Committee representing Social Services.

After successfully candidating through the Yorkshire Synod, Chris trained at Westminster College, Cambridge, before being Ordained at Brackenhall URC, Huddersfield on 10th December 1983, having been called to the Special Category position of Brackenhall and Sheepridge Community Ministry. This involved living on the estate – the only 'professional' that did – with oversight of the churches on the Brackenhall estate as well as Wiggan Lane Methodist Church situated in the village of Sheepridge. It was while in Huddersfield that he played the part of Jesus in a Circuit production of Godspel.

After 5 years, Chris moved to the South Leeds Team Ministry, whose Team Leader at the time was Rev⁴ David Marsden. Chris's role was the

oversight of Belle Isle United Reformed Church as well as the work of the two Day Centres and pastoral link to the Youth Hostel in Beeston. He was also the Team link to Cottingley LEP serving on their Management Committee and the taking of occasional services.

It was while at Belle Isle that Chris met Jayne, who had been challenged to take on board the girl's uniformed organisations by the District Guiding Association following the resignation of their Guide Leader. Chris recalls that their first encounter didn't go too well. He'd been told they had a new Guide Leader so called in to introduce himself and was told in no uncertain terms to get out and wait in the entrance hall. The girls were confused: 'But that's Chris, Miss' to which Jayne replied: 'I don't care who he is, I don't know him – so he can wait until I'm free to speak to him!' (she's always been a stickler for Good Practice!) Despite of that strange beginning, they were eventually married at Dewsbury Road URC on Sunday 5 November 1995 with over 300 family and friends in attendance. They were blessed with a son, Aaron Jowett, on 5 August 1998.

In 1999, much to the amazement of family, friends and church members, Chris, Jayne and Aaron moved away from their beloved Yorkshire to the Eastern Synod. They spent 13 very happy years at Clacton-on-Sea where we were commended by the wider church for 'bucking the trend' and by the time we left there was an average congregation of 104 people of all ages and having spent £250,000 to refurbish their premises. While there, Chris was also the URC link person to three LEPs on the Tendring Peninsula, that had Methodist oversight, although in his last year his responsibilities were extended to include the oversight of Dovercourt Central LEP, approximately 40 minutes drive away along country lanes!

His final pastorate was in Central Suffolk where he had responsibilities for a URC within a market town, and four villages. It was while serving these five churches that Chris was also appointed by the Synod to the role of Pastoral Convener of Mid and East Suffolk which sought to encourage and develop a strategy for the 22 churches in Suffolk with five stipendiary ministers over a large geographical area to work more closely together. This meant endless meeting and travelling many miles in the process, and yet, with the loss of District Councils, they were able to maintain healthy relationships and built on what had previously been achieved. He recalls 'I couldn't have managed without the full support of a group of dedicated and committed ministers, Elders and members. I experienced team work at its best!'

In an article for the SPACE Newsletter, Chris writes: 'In preparing to

celebrate 40 years within ministry, I've always seen it as something of a privilege and blessing. It took many years to reconcile myself to a calling, but once accepted and embraced I have sought to serve the Lord wholly and faithfully and go wherever His prompting has taken me. I am extremely grateful to those who have supported and encouraged me, especially my wife Jayne and son Aaron, as well as the many critics who have challenged but equally enabled me to grow in the things of the Kingdom'.

In retirement, Chris and Jayne have moved back to West Yorkshire and transferred their membership to Norristhorpe URC, Liversedge. He has also been appointed Yorkshire Synod Companion to Heywood URC, Northowram, a Chapel close to the area he grew up in, where he has had links since his childhood. Indeed, at Lightcliffe the children and young people were constantly reminded of the example of Oliver Heywood who lost his living in Coley, imprisoned and hounded by the authorities but who would eventually set up a non-conformist fellowship in Northowram in 1672 which still serves the village and community today.

(*) attached photo on the first page was taken at Stowmarket URC

(**) attached photo (below) taken at Norristhorpe URC

Chris is to take the service at Brackenhall United Reformed Church on Sunday 10th December 2023 at 2.30pm, exactly 40 years to the day of his Ordination. This is now situated on Norfolk Avenue, Brackenhall, Huddersfield. HD2 1GS. Material will be drawn from previous Induction services, and include key readings/poems and hymns – one of which is in memory of his late 'big' sister, Christine.



NOTE: Pamela Wood represented Christ Church at Chris's Anniversary services and presented him with a cad signed by members who ha known him.

BAPTISM FAMILIES

2019: Jayla , Sienna-May and Francis;

2020: Rose and her Dad, Dennis;

2021: Allyon, Naia, Heath-Hunter, Kane, Jacob and Luna.

2022: Jack, Ralph, Arlo, Noah, Myles, Brodie.

2023: Hunter-Stanley, Billie-Rae Mitchell,

Isabella-Bau, Freya, Lily and Oliver,

Please pray regularly for these children and their families.

Who knows, you may be the only person praying for them today, that God will guard them and guide them and that they will discover the Good News of God's love for them before they are much older.

A Prayer you may like to use

Lord, we thank you for each of children,
made and loved by you.

We thank you for their families, God-parents and friends,
each one made and loved by you.

You know their needs better than we do,
and you care for them even more than we do.

Their names are carved on the palms of your hands.

Take our prayers, we ask you,
and use them to bring about the things that are best for them.

Keep us faithful in praying regularly for them,
and doing all that we can to support them.

We ask all this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

(In the palm of God's hands

by John Pritchard

IMPORTANT BITS & PIECES!

COFFEE MORNING

Our next coffee morning is on Saturday 6th January from 10 - 12.
and will be for the URC's Commitment for Life charity

All welcome.

Chris, Eileen & Yvonne

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Christmas Fayre Saturday 2nd December

It was lovely to see so many braved the weather to join us for the Christmas Fayre. The choir sang carols in the Transept whilst people had lunch ,which was really appreciated.

We would like to thank everyone for coming together with all those who donated items and helped with the various stalls.

The total raised was £681.75 for Church funds.

Chris, Eileen & Yvonne

COFFEE AFTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday 6 th January	Yvonne, Alan & Meagan
Sunday 13 th January	Daphne and Ronnie
Sunday 20 th January	Jackie and Jayne
Sunday 27 th January	Isobel and Barbara

CHILDREN AND FAMILY WORKER

Beth's new WORK number is: 07391 286 248 (as on inside front cover)

CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARD

The Church Christmas Card raised £140 which is being donated to Clacton & District Stroke Association. We would like to thank Sue for putting this together and for all the printing.

Chris & Yvonne

FROM THE CHURCH SECRETARY

A BIG THANK-YOU

to all involved with decorating the church for Christmas; the carol singing at Haven Lodge; leading worship; working with the youngsters for the nativity service; and the Messy Church Christmas celebration ! We are so grateful to all who put so much time and effort into all these tasks.

John.

A DATE FOR YOUR 2024 DIARY.

On Saturday, 8th June 2024 the URC Eastern Synod, of which we are part, is due to hold another BIG DAY OUT at the Suffolk Show ground, near Ipswich. This is always an enjoyable and happy occasion, well worth attending. More info about arrangements nearer the time.

John.

DIARY – JANUARY

Wed 3rd	09.30	No Little Angels—school holidays	
Thu 4th	09.30	Prayers	<i>John White</i>
	10-12	Coffee & Chat	
tSat 6th	10.-12	Coffee Morning in aid of Commitment for Life	
Sun 7th	10.25	Morning Worship with communion	
			<i>Gordon Doyle</i>
Mon 8th	10.00	World Day of Prayer at Salvation Army	
Wed 10th	09.30	Little Angels	
Thu 11th	09.00	Prayers	<i>Sue Russell</i>
	10-12	Coffee & Chat	
Sun 14th	10.25	Morning Worship	<i>Peter Wright</i>
	1 – 4pm	Warm Hub	
		Deadline for items for Febuary Newsletter	
Tue 16th	10.00	Elders Meeting	
	18.300	Alpha Week 14	
	19.00	Youth GRoup	
Wed 17th	09.30	Little Angels	
		Homemakers Christmas meal	
Thu 18th	09.00	Prayers	<i>Gerry & Heather</i>
	10-12	Coffee & Chat	
Sat 20th	10,30	Messy Church	
Sun 21st	10.25	Morning Worship	<i>Revd Trevor</i>
Tue 23rd	18.30	Alpha week 15	
	19.00	Youth Group	
Wed 24th	09.30	Little Angels	
Thu 25th	09.30	Prayers	<i>Gordon Doyle</i>
	10-12	Coffee & Chat	
Fri 26th	18,30	Leades; worship	
Sun 28th	10.25	Morning Worship	<i>Revd Trevor</i>
	13.15	Church Meeting (BYO lunch)	
Tue 30th	18.30	Bible Course	
	19.00	Youth Group	
Weds 31^{ost}	09.30	Little Angels	