



**Burnham URC**



**Southminster  
Christ Church URC**



# *Vision*-UPBEAT

October 2015

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### **Jottings from the minister:**

What have we been doing through the 9 months of this year, would we say, 'More of the same', or 'Just another year'? I think not!

I have been starting work at Christ Church in our sharing agreement, and working towards 'Bringing the Gospel into the heart of her community', with the Duckling's, and setting up a partnership with ECC youth team RYC, (Reformed Youth Club). But why am I mentioning Christ Church, when I started Upbeat it was about Burnham. The simple answer is that we want to know what is going on at both ends of the pastorate. We are one church in two places, even though there are times when the three miles I drive between the two seems more like trying to cross the Grand Canyon!

We accept that every Church, every community has a peculiarity, and as I write this I can almost picture some saying, 'You're not joking', yes we do and that is something to be celebrated and should never come between sharing the Gospel of Christ, even if that is the only thing that is common to both.

At Burnham, the number of Baptisms has increased and we have had two weddings this year. We have looked at the opening of worship, have an introit and are again always reforming the way we do things. Change is never easy, especially for some who can stray into the idea that change is only good if they have thought of it. That is not an issue, as long as people are able to look past themselves and realise that we are more likely to change our wallpaper, three piece suite or kitchen before changing what we have done for the last ten years; (and we didn't like it then, that is, when it was changed).

Christ Church voted to uproot the pews three years ago, and finally three weeks ago, all but one of the pews is left for a project that helps damaged teenagers have a simple goal by renovating furniture. Brad told me a tale of one of the pews being stripped by a youngster beautifully, but when another youth on the programme sat on it, well let's just say there was an ownership issue! We know they have lived a useful life where they were, but now we have a wonderful space, the freedom to hold the youth club in the church, to have a concert venue, in fact, to worship, have the community involved, do nearly anything in this space, just as spaces were used for public gatherings before, during and after the time of Christ. WE do have to remember that it was in the Victorian age that multipurpose chapels/school rooms/health clinics/emergency housing, food banks and clothing handouts became 'Holy sanctuaries' for the good and the well-heeled, pledged and submissive. Yes we all like a clean and defined worship area, and who would not agree with that if we were worshipping 22 hours a day seven days a week.

The work of Christ in both communities is a challenge, human resources are, despite 'The apparent numbers of people who make things happen' a problem to both churches, especially for vision led activists. I must remind you all that there is no age or experience qualification to being engaged with activities beyond the familiar; you

## Weekly Events

Tuesday:

Ducklings 10-12

Pilots 6.15-7.30

Fury 7.30-9

Women's Guild:

Every Wed at

2.30 in the

Church

Men's Forum:

Thursday 2.15 in

middle Hall

Bible Study: 1st

and 2nd Sat;

10.30 –11.30 and

Thursday after

Iona worship

Charity lunches:

2nd Saturday of

the month

Traidcraft: 2nd

Saturday of the

month

**HAVE YOUR SAY!**

**HERE IS YOUR OWN SOAP BOX:**

**Use it and speak your mind**

would never be left alone to do mission impossible.

We are now looking towards autumn and winter, with the new church year starting on the first week of advent, then will be Christmas, Epiphany and so on, but whatever we plan to do for the 'Festivals' we cannot bypass the day to day living that is our Christian Hole given through the Death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which calls us to be loved back to him on the ordinary Sundays, and more importantly our everyday lives.

Has the church traditionally been seen publicly on these high days and holidays? Yes is the answer, but so many people work in ordinary ways bringing the church into the heart of the community on a daily basis, and we struggle to make a transition from the gospel work to the gospel being shared in fellowship together.

Maybe it is time to rethink what our worship life is within our churches, Sunday is Sunday and will be, however, if we were running the church with all the people as a break-even business (not for profit) we would have plans in place to be open for Christ's business for 7 whole days, as I have always had a problem with the concept that God rested and lay back on his white fluffy cloud and was not involved in doing on a seventh day.

A question to be asked is 'Where does the worship life of the church differ from the worship life of the Gospel?' Is not the worship life of the Gospel then intertwined with our being a Christian fellowship working within the community, thus Christians are one in Christ in all communities?

Did Christ stay and try to change his Jewish faith only or was his Gospel an inclusive one for all of God's creation?

If we can answer the previous with an inclusive answer that Christ is in the world through us and the Holy Spirit then I can see no reason why we should not be able to love one another in Christ. We are one Church in two places; one church in many communities, one Church, one faith and one Lord for the bringing of the Good news of Christ's love who do not recognise him, or who are afraid to profess him. We are to open our richness of what we have, our education, our wealth, our fine buildings for the glory of God. Finally, try to remember that God was glorified through the utter human destruction of Christ, but the temple, (His body) was rebuilt not by humankind, but by God alone.

Please think as we plan for more festivals, events, the Crib service and so on, just think how the faith given to us impacts on brothers and sisters in Christ as well as those who look in and wonder, 'What's it all about, are they really happy together, or just like us, out for what we can get'?

Blessings;

JON



**Bible Study:**

The group has flourished spiritually and through the learning and discussions held. Many have said that the Sunday service means more to them in understanding due to having looked at; context, history, geography and our own take on what might have been passed down from Sunday School to a new way of looking at a passage, and more importantly, a new way of applying what is said through the service through the lives of their lives.

I implore more people to wise up to the living and learning gospel we have by coming to the Bible studies. They are not heavy, but realistic, not stale but enlivening and most of all, it is about getting the most out of what is a living faith that is not just about Sunday, but every day. We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and last Saturday of the month at 10.30, with tea or coffee. However, I am willing to have one on a Thursday evening twice a month if the desire arises. Do please ask folk who look forward to studies about how they find it and see if it is something you could do with.

Please let me know if anyone is unwell or would like a visit. Sometimes I don't get to hear and I don't want to miss anyone.

The Minister can be contacted on:

01621786789

07876123264

Leave a message on:

01621-783393

Or email:

morganjon902@gmail.com

Who is My Elder? If you're not sure, then contact Sylvia for the name and contact number.

Traidcraft stall will run on the second Saturday of the month from 10.30 - 12.00. It will also be open on the second Sunday of the month after the service. Christmas orders now being taken.

## Welcome to the United Reformed Church (Burnham & Southminster)

Firstly a reminder that our Christmas Tree Festival will take place on 4th - 6th December. This year it will sparkle more than ever with an abundance of trees, decorated by local businesses, schools and local organisation. So please Put These Dates In Your Diary! On the Friday evening there will be great entertainment, along with a jewellery stall, homemade produce and cakes. Plus activities for youngsters.

Before Christmas there is Halloween which is always celebrated by junior schools. The ugliest costume appears to always win! Trick and Treat is fun but children should always be accompanied by adults. After Halloween comes Guy Fawkes, and we hope that the majority of families will attend sponsored Firework parties and enjoy the fun.

The Church notices will be updated with further information as it becomes available.

Watch for our next Edition of Upbeat which will have details of all the Christmas events at the URC, including our Nativity with real donkeys!

If you or a member of your family / friends are looking for a venue to hold a function, please consider our fabulous Clark-Lewis Hall. This venue is very reasonably priced? Hire is available to adults, no teenage parties due to past experiences sadly. If you are interested please telephone 784741 for further info.



**Ducklings:** It seems a long time ago since Donna Carruthers and I had a walk whilst the Pilots and Fury groups were picking strawberries up at the Limes farm, and I asked her about what she thought about opening a Parent Carer and Toddler group. It was in September four years ago in 2011 that we opened. Being part of our outreach alongside all the other work, it continues to go from strength to strength with now the next batch of siblings to the original toddlers and babies as well as new faces, enjoying the fellowship of the group.

In May of this year, Burnham Ducklings has a sister group, which meant that I could not be at both groups, even though it was difficult to let go it had to be left in the capable hands of seasoned helpers, Ray, Pat and Ruth.

Southminster Ducklings started and is also proving to be a growing and lively fellowship with possibly more men attending than at Burnham. We are always looking for helpers as new ideas and faces are welcoming and inspiring.

### From Rupert: Treasurer at Christ Church

For some time now we at Christ Church have been looking at how we witness to the Community. With the profile of the Sunday Morning Congregation it became obvious that the status quo was not an option. Looking around at our assets it was clear that one of our biggest was our building. Unfortunately the largest part of it was only being regularly used for Sunday worship and Tuesday Coffee mornings. That was until we decided to use it as the venue for Reformed Youth Club. This was a challenge as it involved shifting our pews to the walls of the church.

One Tuesday I was having a conversation with Jon and in the course of this conversation, I expressed the opinion that perhaps now was the time to take the bull by the horns and complete the job we started and sell the remainder of the pews. This was formally agreed at a Church Meeting. We did however decide to keep one at the back of the church as it proved practical and would give us that sense of continuity with those who had had visions for their time who had gone before us.

The decision itself was a leap of faith because we had no firm offers for the pews and had not looked at any seating to replace them.

However, God moves in a mysterious way because we received and accepted a good offer on the pews and at about the same time Rayleigh URC were offering some church chairs for free. We therefore snapped up the offer and went and collected them.

We are now reaping the benefits of a large flexible space with easily moveable chairs. This has meant that on Sunday mornings we can worship more flexibly and so far have usually adopted worship in the round.

### **Singing and Making Music:**

We have many forms of music now in our worship including an introit. The sung Lord's Prayer is greeted with joy by the vast majority and even sung at the Civic Service in June to much excited comment by people not usually in our church. This is in no small part down to the singing group, often scattered within the congregation on a Sunday, but a group learning new works and helping to lead the congregation through Hymns and Songs. We are pleased to be able to announce that a group will be meeting on a Thursday Morning from 10 -11 every other week. (Commencing first Thursday in October). 90 percent singing and 10 percent nattering or whichever seems to be wanted at the time. We hope to grow and encourage others to join us and then be able to introduce our youth to the group including the establishment of an instrumental group for our worship and festivals, and music making fun.

If you think that you don't frighten the neighbours when singing in the shower, then come and join us, and if you play anything then let me know so we can arrange a time to look at some music.

Jon and Margaret

### Notes from Brad: Church Secretary: Christ Church: **CHURCH IS FOR LIFE NOT JUST SUNDAYS**

Walk into Christ Church Southminster today and you can't help noticing one thing...space, and lots of it. Some visitors have even taken a few moments to realise the reason why...THE PEWS HAVE GONE. At an Elder's meeting we took the decision to open up the church to the community, 7 days a week where we could, as we felt we were being led towards a new future where we would become a true Community Church. Many churches claim to be this as long as the 'community' turns up on Sunday, but this is not for us! We had a vision of a church where people with needs could come and offload their burdens for a while and receive Ministry, (and not always from someone with a dog collar on). To start off with this would be through a new Ducklings Group and a Youth Club which would add to the good work and contact with the people of Southminster already being achieved by the Food Pantry team. The vision also included seeing the church 'sanctuary' being a large wasted space that could be used for so much more but! The pews had to go and go they went. Where have they gone? Well I'm glad to say that they have gone to a community project in Norwich. The man who runs the project fosters teenagers on a short term basis and while they are with him he tries to teach them some life skills and restoring our old pews for re-sale, to fund further projects, is the latest idea that is already showing fruit. He has already told me of one young lad, who has problems relating to people, showing real improvement since he was given a pew to sand down ready for polishing so now our church is influencing people as far away as Norfolk.

What about our village though? Well currently we have seen break through in 3 areas in working with the Community.

#### FOOD PANTRY

Although this is really a case of the Church running something on behalf of local councils etc., a number of Churches have seen this as a great opportunity to make contact and get involved with their communities, I am glad to say that we have really embraced this in Southminster. People coming to the food pantry often stop for coffee and a chat and some have developed friendships with others who are in the same boat and realise they are not alone. We have even had one family bring their children for baptism in the Church!

#### RYC (Reformed Youth Club)

This is not, as the title may imply, a place for reformed youth, but a place where youth can be reformed. We started the youth club a few months ago in partnership with Essex Youth Services, with a vision of providing a safe place for youngsters to meet, who felt they had nowhere to go or unable to attend similar clubs for one reason or another. Already we have a core of young people who attend on a regular basis, play pool, table football, table tennis, basketball, (yes, we have a hoop in the Church) and take part in some organised activities. So far we have organised some art/craft evenings, cupcake decorating and last week decided to teach a bit of social responsibility by getting them to litter pick the newly cleared area, left of the church, which had become overgrown.

#### PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

Well, who knows what God has in store for us but we are already looking at using the Church for concerts, (the acoustics are superb), luncheon clubs for the elderly/singles etc. and some mid-week services for those who can't make a Sunday.

#### FOOTNOTE ON THE PEWS

Was this the right thing to do, a number of people who haven't been to the church for a long time, and I suspect have no intention of ever going again, complained that it doesn't look like a church but then, what is a Church supposed to look like? The big issue was "But what will we have to sit on?" The plan was to use the existing plastic chairs until we had got the money from the pews to buy new chairs, but God had other ideas, as you have need. The cost— time and van hire to collect them from Rayleigh, (thanks Jon) and now we have the money from the pews to put towards more outreach into the village.



**‘Iona Style Worship’ - Reflective and Sensory Worship**

Iona Style worship with recommence on the second Thursday of the month at 6.30pm in the church.

This style of worship is quiet and reflective, it does not contain a sermon, just reflection and should be thought provoking as well as comforting. The spirituality behind it is Celtic, that is simply engaging with all of creation, earth, sea and sky, remembering that we are a part of a whole creation and therefore fit into a pattern that involves the whole of creation and not just ourselves. Do come and join the small group and relax through song and prayer.

**‘Be a bright flame before me, O God a guiding star above me.**

**Be a smooth path below me, a kindly shepherd behind me  
today, tonight, and for ever. Alone with none but you, my God I journey on my way;  
what need I fear when you are near, O Lord of night and day? More secure am I  
within your hand than if a multitude did round me stand.’ Amen**

The minister will be in the study at Church every Thursday evening between 6.30-7.30 for a chat. No appointment is needed, just drop in.



Can you help with pastoral visiting, or would you and a friend like to visit with the minister someone who cannot get to church? Please contact an Elder or the Minister

**Dates for October/November 2015**

- 3rd October—Bible Study—10.30am
- 7th October—Maintenance Committee—4.00pm
- 10th October—Traidcraft Stall—10.30am
- 10th October—URC Eastern Synod at Colchester
- 14th October—Meeting concerning Christmas Tree Festival—7.30pm
- 18th October—Start of One World Week
- 21st October—Elders Meeting—7.30pm
- 27th October—Methodist Women in Britain. Meeting at Chelmsford—10.00am
- 31st October—Bible Study—7.30pm
- 7th November—Bible Study—10.30am
- 8th November—Remembrance Sunday
- 11th November—Mid Essex URC Partnership Meeting Chelmsford—7.30pm
- 25th November—Church Meeting—7.30pm

To have your say in the next issue of *Vision* - **UPBEAT**  
email [vision4burnhamurc@gmail.com](mailto:vision4burnhamurc@gmail.com)