

# Chelmsford Circuit

Issue 28

Newsletter Date: January & February 2024



Because of the itinerant nature of our lives we have always been one of those annoying families who've included a 'round robin' Christmas letter in with Christmas cards, mainly to keep friends and relatives who aren't on social media vaguely abreast with what's happening in our lives.

As is mandatory this has included shameless bragging about the fact that Sheridan and I have raised two geniuses, toured the Seychelles etc, etc; although we always went the extra smug mile by doing so very much tongue-in-cheek!

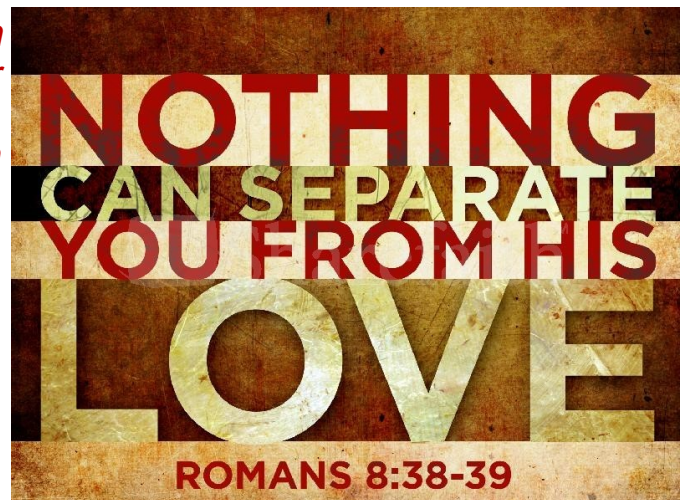
This year however we didn't really feel like writing such a letter; it's been a hard year, with the death of my Mum and 3 other significant bereavements of close friends. When I say 'we' didn't feel like writing it, that is of course the royal 'we'! It's invariably Sheridan who gets landed with the job. However after reflection she did write a shorter version of the letter which had a somewhat less jocular tone to it than normal.

Perhaps you'll be looking back on this year and hoping that 2024 has less challenges as well? Whether it's been a good year or not, our letter writing challenge was a reminder that through thick and thin, through good and bad we are still, in our different ways, in relationship with those we are connected with (our card recipients in my example). Those who surround us with love and care as friends or family, want to be there for the rough as well as the smooth. My faith sees this as a human echo of the heart of God's love. May that loving heartbeat help keep you moving along in this coming year.

*For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.*

Romans 8: 38

**Blessings, Mark**



## Romans Bible Study

On the penultimate day of February 2024 we will, as a circuit, be embarking on another Bible Study. We enjoyed the Bible Course in 2022 and we 'survived' our study of the Book of Revelation last year and now it's the turn of book of Romans.

Dr Andrew Ollerton, who wrote and presented the Bible Course has written and presented this new Bible Study. The format will be similar to before. In each session there are:

- Two short videos to watch
- Questions to discuss and answer
- A time for reflection

Between the sessions there are Bible verses to read to help us understand where the next session is going.

To paraphrase Match of the Day, this time it's a game of two halves. The whole study comprises ten sessions in all and we are going to do the first five sessions before Easter and the second five sessions from mid-September onwards.

The table below shows the dates of the sessions. Once again it will be possible to move between Zoom and Face to Face formats as you need to, to meet other commitments.

Face to Face Date Wednesdays at 2pm in the Link at Trinity	Session and Subject	Zoom Date Tuesdays at 7:30pm
28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Session 1: The Gospel	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Session 2: Sin	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Session 3: Salvation	12 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Session 4: Peace	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Session 5: Freedom	26 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
We will have a break for the summer		
11 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	Session 6: Hope	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	Session 7: Mystery	17 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	Session 8: Devotion	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024	Session 9: Community	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2024
9 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	Session 10: Mission	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2024

The Bible Society have produced a study guide which I have downloaded and which we will be printing in colour for each participant. To help defray the costs we would be grateful if participants could make a £6 contribution to cover the cost of the printing.

I do hope that you will come and join our growing band of students for these sessions, which do not require any previous knowledge or qualification in anything to join us. Just bring your brain and an open mind. At the end of the study you even get a certificate as well!

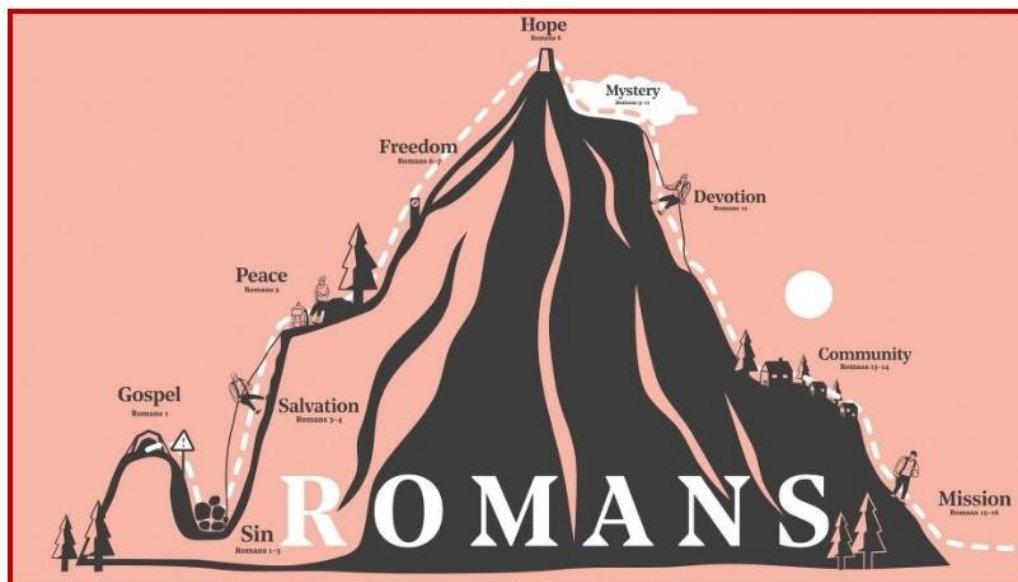
### ***Sessions at Witham, Maldon and Halstead***

In addition to the centrally organised study sessions, Rev Barry is organising face to face study sessions for the congregations at Witham and Maldon and I am talking to Rev Sue King to start up face to face study sessions at Halstead at dates to be agreed.

### ***Not only but also!***

During February and March Rev Barry is attempting to organise our preachers leading services at Hatfield Peverel, Witham, Maldon and South Woodham Ferrers to follow the structure of the Bible Study, the next plan will confirm exactly what is happening.

Finally, the graphic below is the one used by the Bible Society for this study



Andrew Ollerton has also written a book to partner the bible study, not surprisingly it's called "Romans".

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to give me a ring on 01245-328337 or email me [mikefogg@btinternet.com](mailto:mikefogg@btinternet.com)

*Mike*

Payment: £6.00 per study guide can be made by **cash or cheque** in an envelope and dropped off in the post box or posted to

Trinity Methodist Church, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB.

Cheques Payable: **The Methodist Church Chelmsford Circuit**. Please DO NOT write on the back of the cheque. Please include a slip of paper with your name/details.

All envelopes to be addressed to: Karen Murrell please.

[karen.murrell@chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk](mailto:karen.murrell@chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk)

# Circuit Refugee Crisis Fund

This fund was launched in 2021 and since then we have helped seven Ukrainian families find a home in the Chelmsford and surrounding areas when they were at risk of becoming homeless after sponsorship arrangements broke down or ended. The families have suffered trauma of war destroying their homes and lives and managed to escape to the UK for the duration of the war in their country.

We have been working closely with Chelmsford City Council to fund new homes for these families. We have just completed the seventh grant to pay a rental deposit family whose landlord decided to sell their home after 6 months of moving them in! No doubt the Landlord is seeing rents rise rapidly and will re-let at a higher rental.

This is what Natalia, the latest family to be helped, says:

*Thankyou very much for helping our family. I am very grateful for your help in renting an apartment. You saved us from homelessness and I hope that one year we will have a home [in Ukraine]. I am grateful that you are involved in other people's lives and help those in need,*

*Best regards*

*Natalia*

In addition to rental deposit grants we have helped fund language classes at Broomfield Methodist for 14 ladies over the summer. Natalia has benefited and from speaking little English has progressed to be able to write this letter. She also works hard as does her mother and daughter to be able to pay the rent on the apartment.

We still have £7658 and the Just Giving page set up by the Circuit is still open to receive donations. <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/chelmsfordcircuitrefugeecrisisfund>

*The data about donations on this Just giving page is a bit misleading as there were problems setting up the page correctly meaning earlier data was lost..*

We know that at least 6 Ukrainian families are urgently seeking new homes in the area where their children are going to school, they have found work and friendships, making a life for themselves out of the harm from Russian missiles.

Rents continue to rise in Essex making the chances of independent renting without help from funding such as we have been able to provide is almost impossible..

The average rent for a two bed apartment in Chelmsford is now between £1200-£1500 per month. A rental deposit is required of between £1500 - £1875

We are open to receive applications for help from the many Afghan families still in hotel accommodation, but so far have not received any.

**David Hodgkinson**

**Broomfield Methodist Church**

## **EDI and Unconscious Bias training**

You may be wondering why we are having training on Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). Well we are not! Local Preachers, Ministers and church leadership teams have been asked to undergo training in the area of *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* and also *Unconscious Bias*. The Methodist Church has provided on-line training modules for us undertake to make us aware of how we might inadvertently react or cause distress to others through what we do or say.

In a classic faux pas, by making the training on-line, the powers that be excluded people who don't use those new-fangled computer thingies. To include everyone who needs to undertake the training we have therefore organised a face-to-face session in the Link at Trinity Church in Chelmsford on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2024 from 10:00 aiming to be finished before 3pm.



Everyone who is mandated to complete this training has been contacted and consulted, however there is space in the room for a few more people if anyone else would like to attend. The session is being led by the District lead on this subject and will be interactive and not "heavy". At the end you will get a certificate!

It costs nothing to attend and we are each bringing cold food for a shared lunch. If you would like to join the session please contact Mike Fogg or Karen Murrell and we will add you to the list.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to give me a ring on 01245-328337 or email me [mikefogg@btinternet.com](mailto:mikefogg@btinternet.com) or [karen.murrell@chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk](mailto:karen.murrell@chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk)

Mike



## **Hopes and Dreams of Methodist Women in Britain**

In our personal lives, we all have hopes and dreams and strive towards their fulfilment.

As Methodist Women in Britain and the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting

Church Women, we also have hopes and dreams. Our aim is 'To know Christ and to make him known'. What we find impossible to achieve individually, together, we can begin to make a difference. We dream of a fairer world: a world of gender equality, where poverty and slavery are eradicated, a world where everyone receives a welcome

There are four aspects of our work: Creative Spirituality, World Church Focus, Social Action and Resourcing and Enabling. We see MWIB as a charity rooted in prayer. through our Prayer Diary, Weekly Prayers and Reflections on our Website, Easter Offering Service and by creating new resources as the needs arise to support our work. We offer these and other worship materials to support the growth of the Methodist way of life.

Issues of social action have always been at the core of MWIB. Core issues include gender violence, gender empowerment and gender equality. MWIB hopes and dreams in these areas would be in its purest form, that we would be virtually redundant, not needing to raise awareness or campaign for women. Although those hopes and dreams may yet be far off MWIB is committed to continue to strive to achieve them.

For example, we have raised awareness of domestic violence by our "Thursdays in Black" initiative and continue to call out both overt and covert examples of bias and misogyny in the way such situations as bullying and safeguarding are handled.

Progress towards creating a world where women feel confident and safe has been slow and among our hopes and dreams would be to see an environment where women would be protected and empowered through legislation and cultural enlightenment. Evidence would seem to indicate that the level of domestic violence, harassment, stalking, and rape remains unacceptably high.

Linked to that is the trafficking of vulnerable girls and women that locks women into a life of fear and degradation. MWIB has worked to raise awareness of how this trade operates and exploits vulnerable women. By investing in and empowering women we hope that those who are vulnerable to exploitation will have choices and opportunities for their future. Much of the cost of this exploitation remains hidden and among our hopes and dreams is a desire to shine a light on this exploitation and make it difficult for these activities to continue,

MWIB continues to raise awareness of cultural issues that lead to violence against women, The complexities around FMG and child brides for example means that that solutions are not found easily but our hope is that through education and empowerment women can be freed from the continued mutilation and pain that is inflicted for cultural and traditional purposes and endangering women's health. Alongside this, cultural issues

of dowry and child brides continue to limit opportunities. Our hope is for women's bodies to be appreciated for what they are and not mutilated to satisfy cultural or patriarchal desires.

Empowering women to develop skills for independence and self-promotion has been another area of action for MWIB, in particular, in relation to independence, business and entrepreneurship. Our hopes and dreams of true equality for women worldwide remain a driving force.

### Resourcing and Enabling

MWIB has a commitment to finding ways to raise awareness and empower churches to meet the challenges that come from the social issues of the world, through partnerships and gifts. Included in that is creating opportunities for women to learn and grow through district days, retreats and pilgrimage. Our commitment remains, as stated in our strapline, "for women, for justice, for Christ" for all our activities.

We are aware that there is a need to raise awareness and explore issues of women's health and wellbeing and to that end we have begun a series of webinars to meet that need. One of our hopes and dreams could be seen as a desire for greater awareness of issues such as the menopause and for further research and development into women's health and health promotion. Women's issues matter and impact on the wider society

Another of our hopes and dreams is to see that gender empowerment will ensure that women everywhere can reach their full potential and not be held back by a lack of access to education or work opportunities. Although some progress has been made, there are still too many women banging their head on the glass ceiling. Developing ways to empower women, creating a climate where they can achieve their goals, is a key principle and aspiration of MWIB.

Our hopes and dreams for the development of the work of MWIB come together to form a vision for a world where gender based issues are no longer an issue. We are a small charity, but we have a big vision and we are growing again post covid. Forming partnerships with other agencies and charities such as All We Can, Action for Children, methodist Homes for the Aged etc. enables us to be more effective. We feel we have a lot to offer to the Methodist Church not only in our gift of the Easter Offering but in our involvement in all aspects of the life of the church at all levels.

*Maggie Woods – Co-Chair South*

*Ruth Parrott – Co-Chair North*

<https://mwib.org.uk/>

# DAFFODIL DAY 2024

A SPRING FESTIVAL FOR CHRISTIAN ENCOURAGEMENT AND RENEWAL

**SAVE THE DATE: SAT 2ND MARCH 2024**

1:40PM for 2PM start -

Methodist Central Hall, Storey's Gate, Westminster SW1H 9NH

WITH

Pam Rhodes - Broadcaster & Author

Rev'd Gill Newton - President of the Methodist Conference

and a host of Special Guests



The four Methodist Churches in Chelmsford have raised £418.00 for the Christian Aid Middle East Crisis Appeal.

Well done to Hall St, Moulsham Lodge, Broomfield and Trinity Methodist Churches.



WEB MCHW.LIVE TEL 020 7654 3809

## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING

(this is part of the EDI Module—have you completed this as well?)

Some people who have done the EDI module are realising they also need to complete unconscious bias training, and are asking for opportunities. In response to this, the Learning Network are putting on an extra online zoom session on unconscious bias.

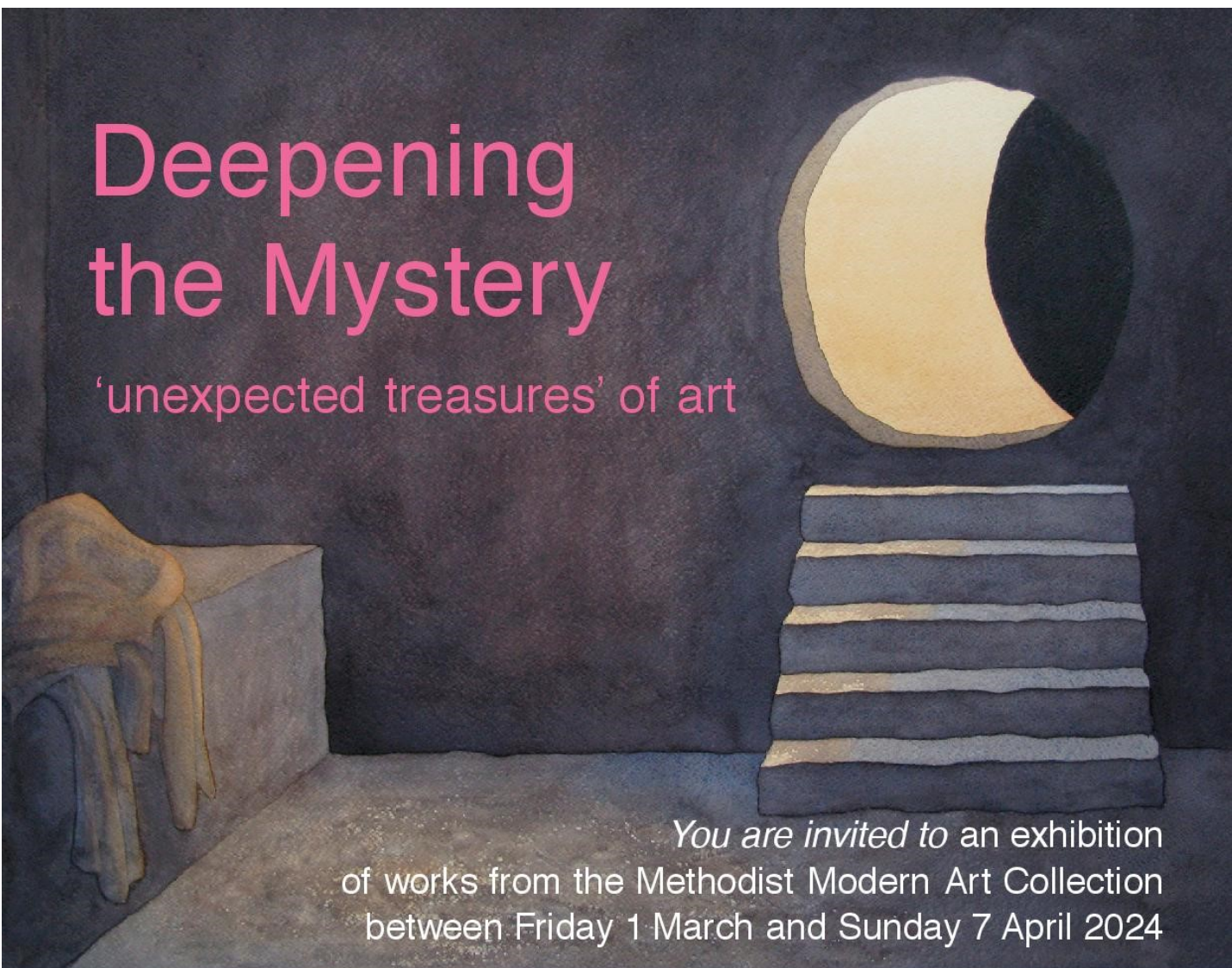
If you have not yet completed this training, please sign up here!

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/unconscious-bias-training-tickets-775589949417?aff=oddtcreator>

There are three dates to choose from. January 31st, March 5th and June 7th 2024.

# Deepening the Mystery

'unexpected treasures' of art



*You are invited to an exhibition  
of works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection  
between Friday 1 March and Sunday 7 April 2024*

## **Focolare Centre for Unity**

**69 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6JG**

**The Methodist Modern Art Collection**

*'... one of the art world's unexpected treasures, including some of the most  
powerful and arresting religious art of the 20th and 21st centuries.'*

Tim Marlow, Chief Executive and Director of the Design Museum, London,  
and former Artistic Director of the Royal Academy

The Collection includes exhibits by key figures of 20th and 21st century British art (such as Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink), as well as works by international artists. The exhibition will include a programme of workshops and lectures for all ages.

For more information, see Facebook: **Art 2024 at WGC**  
or contact [art2024@focolare.org.uk](mailto:art2024@focolare.org.uk)

*'The Empty Tomb'* by Richard Bavin. Image from the Methodist Modern Art Collection  
© Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.



**1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 & asked, "Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose & have come to worship Him."**

**3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed & all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief**

**priests & teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:**

**6 "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel."**

**7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly & found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem & said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find Him, report to me, so that I too may go & worship Him."**

**9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way & the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary & they bowed down & worshipped Him. Then they opened their treasures & presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense & myrrh. 12 & having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. Matthew 2:1-12.**

*Dear Friends*

*How serious are we about pursuing & taking hold of the greatest gift known to man? A gift given, for the sake of us all. A gift which finds it's truest expression in the reality of a God who longs to be found. As Jesus, Himself, says in Matthew 7:7 - "Keep on asking & you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking & you will find. Keep on knocking & the door will be opened to you." NLT. What door? The door of faith that leads us straight to Him. I.e. To the One & only Saviour of the world, whose waiting arms are ever open to welcome & to save us. No matter the depth of our prison, the greatness of our error or the fear we may feel. Nb. 'All that the Father gives Me will come to Me; & the one who comes to Me I will most certainly not cast out. I will never, never reject anyone who follows Me. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but to do the will of Him who sent Me.' John 6:37-39. AMP.*

*When my wife Anne-Marie was just a little girl, (probably around the age of 5), she decided, for reasons known only to her, it was time to leave home for good. So, with her dad's help she packed her tiny suitcase, including her favourite dolly, made her way to the front door & after a somewhat hesitant goodbye, stepped out into the cold night air. What do you suppose happened next? Within a matter of seconds, she was back on the doorstep asking to come back in, 'because it's very dark out here, daddy.' How do you imagine her dad responded to such a request? Anne-Marie tells me, 'He scooped me up into his arms, kissed me & took me off into the kitchen to make me a hot chocolate.' In like manner will our beloved Heavenly Father receive us when we dare to knock on His front door, asking Him to let us in.*

*Have you ever played, 'Hide & seek?' Remember I said, 'Hide & seek not, 'Knock down ginger.' That's a different game altogether. Let me remind you how it's played.*

*Nb. Your friends count to a hundred, while you go off & hide. At the end of the count they shout, 'Coming, ready or not!' If, within the allotted time frame, they can't find you, you're the winner. If not, it's game over for you! Guess what? God's not very good @ 'Hide & seek!' When everyone else is hidden away amongst the bushes, eager not be seen, His will be the head high above the shrubbery, eagerly waiting for you to discover His whereabouts, bursting with excitement @ the thought that when eventually you do, you'll immediately realise just how deeply & sincerely He loves you!! I.e. Far too precious, in His sight, to ever be ignored. Far too valuable, in His estimation, to not be worth saving.' As Pastor Max Lucado puts it - 'If God had a refrigerator your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet your picture would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring & a sunrise every morning. Face it, friend. He is crazy about you!'*

***Nb. Just as you have been looking for Him, so too has He been looking for you. Long before you were a twinkle in your mother's eye. Far in advance of the creation of the heavens & the earth. The point @ which He set His love upon you & determined in His heart that, come what may, He would one day lead you straight back to Himself.***

***To the place where angels gather & sing & rich & poor alike, kneel before His eternal throne, @ once a crib, @ once a cross, @ once the seat of His Heavenly rule.***

***With love from us all here @ Christ Church,  
John.***



## Halstead Methodist Church organ and a Young Man!

2024 is going to see the start of a special year for Halstead. We will be celebrating 150 years since the laying of the foundation stone in 1874. In this issue I am covering predominantly the history of our Historical Listed Bevington Pipe Organ which was previously installed in what was the Halstead Adams Brewery Chapel behind Trinity House, Trinity Street.

Thomas Francis Adams, who worked for the City of London Brewery for 26 years bought the Halstead Brewery in September 1876. He and his wife, Mary, moved to Halstead with their two sons, Edgar, a registered lay preacher, and Percy, an accomplished organist.

Thomas died in 1878 and in 1883 his widow and his sons built a chapel (the little church) in his memory, in the grounds of the brewery. The building was used as a reading room and for Sunday afternoon services for the brewery workmen and their families, these services having previously been conducted in the corner of the brewery granary.

In July 1883 Percy's organ was installed and in subsequent editions of the Halstead Gazette frequently referred to "organ solos by Mr Percy Adams" The edition of 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1890 records:- "This room (the reading room chapel) was very prettily decorated for the Christmas Festival Above the organ, in white letters on a crimson ground, was the text "Unto you is born this day a Saviour" and on the organ was a silver star..."

In 1939 the brewery was sold to Isherwood, Foster and Stacey, a subsidiary of Fremfils, but the family retained ownership of the Chapel. For the next 20 years the chapel, and consequently the organ, remained unused. In 1960, David Shearmur, a member of the Halstead Methodist Church, and himself an organist, arranged to buy the organ for £100. It was subsequently moved to the Methodist Church in New Street, its removal and renovation, including the fitting of an electric blower, cost a further £350. It is believed that Bishop & Son of Beethoven Street, London carried out the removal. Certainly they tuned the organ in the following year and have maintained it up to the present time.

A dedication service took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1961, a recital being given by Mr Hedley Norfolk, then organist and choirmaster of the Braintree Methodist Church. On the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1975 the Centenary of the Church was marked, among other events, by an Organ Recital by Mr Jack Smith A.R.C.O. of Steeton, Yorkshire.

Graffiti on the end of the organ, adjacent to the “blowers” position, records several names and dates. Some of these were probably young teenagers, the older brewery workers being engaged in the 1914/18 war.

Moving on into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century we were honoured to have an organist from Westminster Abbey playing the organ for his friend's wedding in our church in 2021 and it was such an honour to have someone of his calibre playing the organ to its greatest potential and had it not been for the Covid restrictions being slowly lifted back then would have been heard by a greater number of people who would have heard this delightful performance rather than the limited number of just 30 at the time.

To this day the organ has been regularly used by our organist Keith and also young Elliott who has become very confident playing our organ some weeks and certainly played for the whole service on Christmas Eve. Elliott has become impressively confident playing on one occasion in the summer at our special service organised by our Ghanaian family when we had around 55 at the service.

This leads me on to Elliott's appearance at the Remembrance Day Parade in Chelmsford in November. Elliott lead the parade on behalf of the Combined Cadet Force, CCF, from the King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford where he is in his last year. To his Mum's total surprise on the day he was actually leading the band.

Elliott has been a part of our church all of his life and we are also very proud just as his family are of him.

Well done, Elliott, keep up the good work!



Many thanks for all those who have supported the Circuit Newsletter by sending in articles and sharing the newsletter with colleagues, friends and family.

I really appreciate your support.

Karen



Future Dates for our Circuit Meeting

**Thursday 22nd February 2024**

**Coggeshall**

**Wednesday 15th May 2024**

**Witham**

7.15pm for 7.30pm

Circuit Administrator: Karen Murrell.

Email: [karen.murrell@chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk](mailto:karen.murrell@chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk)

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

<http://www.chelmsfordcircuit.co.uk>

***'Share your news'***

**Deadline for**

**March & April by**

**Mid February at latest.**