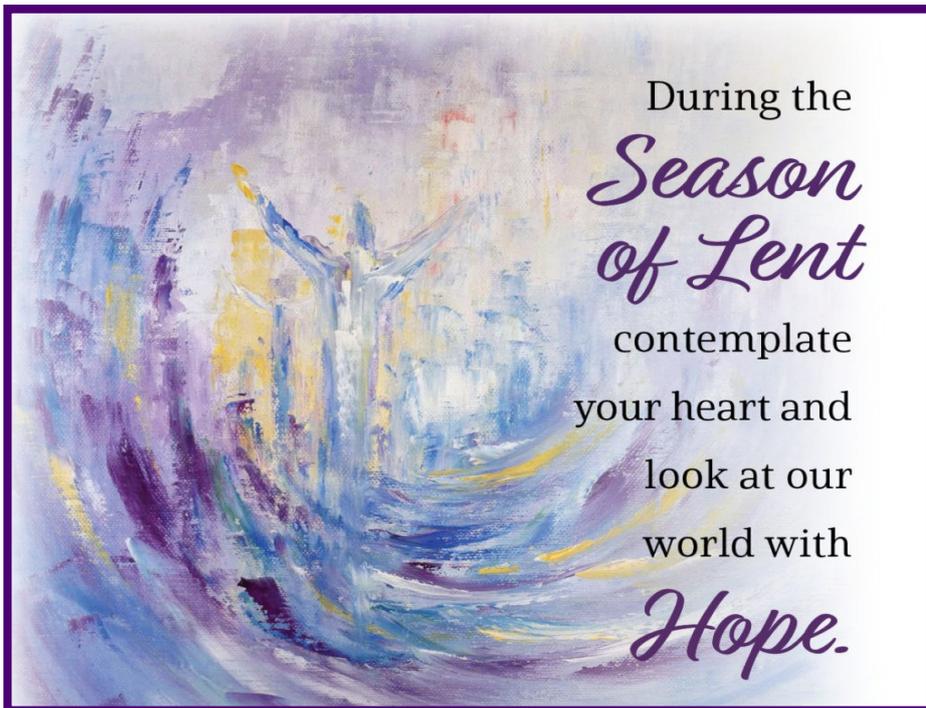


# CHELMSFORD METHODIST CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER

March & April 2026 Volume 41



During the  
*Season  
of Lent*  
contemplate  
your heart and  
look at our  
world with  
*Hope.*

Fun and  
laughter at  
Halstead's  
Sunday  
School

Are you called to service your  
Circuit as a Circuit Steward?

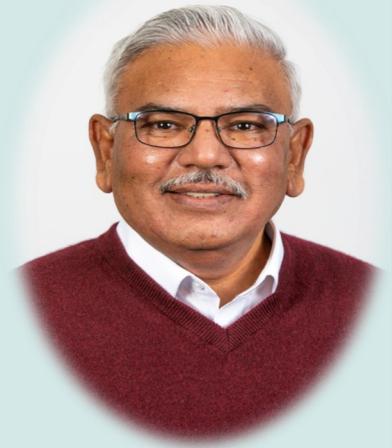
**DEMENTIA  
TRAINING FOR  
EVERYONE.**  
**Saturday 28th March  
2026. Book your place..**  
*(This is very different from our  
previous awareness day). P5*



# From the Superintendent Minister

## Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace to you as we journey together through this holy season of Lent towards the joy of Easter. Lent is never simply about giving something up. It is about learning something deeper. It is a season in which God gently strips away our illusions, our self-reliance, and even our anxieties so that we may see more clearly that He alone is our salvation our strength and story as Lent is a season of sharing our stories.



And if we are honest, many of us carry quiet concerns in our hearts. We look at attendance figures. We notice something unusual empty pews and chairs. We compare the present with the past. We wonder what the future holds for the Church in Chelmsford, in Essex, in Britain.

Yet perhaps, just perhaps, this is precisely the lesson God wants to teach us.

Gideon and the Lesson of the Book of Judges<sup>7</sup>. During the period of the Judges, Israel faced overwhelming opposition. The Midianites and Amalekites gathered in vast numbers. God called a young and hesitant leader Gideon, to stand in the gap.

Gideon assembled 32,000 soldiers. It looked respectable. It looked strong. It looked ready. But the Lord said to him something unusual, “The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’” . God told Gideon to release any soldiers who were afraid.

First, 22,000 left, stayed to their homes

Then 9,700 furthermore were released from their duties through an unusual test  
What remained? Three hundred.

Humanly speaking, it was reduction.

Spiritually speaking, it was refinement.

God was not weakening Israel.

He was purifying their dependence.

And through those 300, the Lord brought victory.

What Might God Be Teaching Us Today?

In days when numbers are not increasing, when buildings feel larger than congregations, when statistics can trouble our sleep could it be that God is teaching us again the lesson of Gideon?

Not despair.

Not decline.

But dependence.

Continued/ .....

The late evangelist John E. Haggai was known for saying:

“Attempt something so great for God it is doomed to failure unless God be in it.”

In other words, make sure it is obvious that God is the source of success. Perhaps God is refining His Church, not to shrink it into insignificance, but to free it from self-confidence. Not to remove His blessing but to reveal His power.

The Church Does Not Live by Numbers

The Church is not sustained by attendance charts.

The Church is not defined by headcounts.

The Church is the Body of Christ.

And Christ is alive.

If He lives, His Body lives.

Our Lord declared, “Because I live, you also will live.” The resurrection is not merely an event we celebrate; it is the life we participate in. The victory over death and the grave is not symbolic; it is decisive.

The Church in Chelmsford will not die.

The Church in Britain all over the world will not die.

Why? Because Jesus Christ is risen.

Give Glory Where It Belongs

Let us not be dismayed by smaller numbers.

Let us instead honour the faithful there is life in our churches.

Those who pray quietly.

Those who serve sacrificially.

Those who give generously.

Those who show up consistently.

Those who shine brightly.

Three hundred faithful were enough in Gideon’s day.

God does not require crowds.

He seeks consecrated hearts.

Let us give all credit to the One who has called us, who has placed in our hearts the assurance of resurrection hope, who sustains us by His Spirit.

Victory belongs to Him. It needs to be said clearly and courageously.

Lent: A Season of Realignment

In this holy season, may we:

- Fast from fear.
- Repent of self-reliance.
- Deepen our prayer life.

Continued/ .....

- Renew our trust in God's power.

Attempt great things that require divine intervention.

Let this Lent reshape our perspective.

Easter: A Season of Resurrection  
Confidence

Easter declares that the grave is empty.  
Easter proclaims that death has been defeated.

Easter assures us that the future belongs to Christ.

We live not counting numbers,  
but counting on Him.

We live victoriously because He conquered.  
We live vicariously because His life is our life.

Beloved Circuit family, thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for your resilience. Thank you for your love for Christ and for His Church. Your presence in churches shows the presences of the risen Christ in our churches.

May this Lent deepen your dependence.

May this Easter renew your courage.

May the risen Lord receive all the glory He deserves.

With prayers for a blessed Lent and a joyful Easter,

In His deathless love,

**Revd Asif Karam**



Book asap...  
020 7654 3809

Methodist Central Hall Westminster

"My Story, My Song"

# DAFFODIL DAY 2026

MCHW'S SPRING FESTIVAL FOR CHRISTIAN ENCOURAGEMENT AND RENEWAL

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

**SATURDAY 7 MARCH**  
1.40PM FOR 2PM

**SPECIAL GUESTS INCLUDE:**  
Pam Rhodes  
President & Vice President of Conference  
Co-Chair of MWIB  
Revd Anando Mukerjee  
Frances Miles  
MCHW's Choir and Staff Team  
And more!

mchw.live t: 020 7654 3809

# Working out Worship

An informal enjoyable morning giving you confidence to support your church.

For all those involved with Local Arrangements, Own Arrangements and helping with worship. If you are thinking of worship leading or preaching in the future, this is also for you.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**10am till midday**

**Witham Methodist Church CM8 1BJ**

*Large public car park Newlands Drive CM8 2AP*

*Event Hosted by:*

*Val Carter, Chemsford Methodist Church*

*Local Preacher Trainer*

Together, strengthening  
our faith and community

Book your place with Karen Murrell  
[karen.murrell@chelsfordcircuit.org.uk](mailto:karen.murrell@chelsfordcircuit.org.uk)

**All our events  
are listed on the  
Circuit Website**

<https://www.chelsfordcircuit.co.uk/>

**Bookings contact  
Karen Murrell**

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

## Increase Your Understanding of Dementia

### Enhance Your Care

Join our **Dementia Care Session** and equip yourself with knowledge and awareness to communicate with and understand those affected by dementia, their families and carers

**\*New\*** This is very different from our previous dementia awareness day



**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**9.30am till 12.30pm**

*Arrive 9am for refreshments*

**Holy Trinity Church**

**Trinity Square**

**South Woodham Ferrers**

**Essex CM3 5JX**

<https://www.holytrinityswf.org.uk/welcome-to-holy-trinity-church/how-to-find-us/>



Book with Karen Murrell  
Chelsford Methodist Circuit Administrator  
[karen.murrell@chelsfordcircuit.org.uk](mailto:karen.murrell@chelsfordcircuit.org.uk)

## Chelsford Methodist Circuit Church Stewards Gathering

**Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> 10am till Midday**

*Hosted by Rev Asif Karam, Rev Dr Jennifer Walters  
and Local Preacher/Anna Chaplain Val Carter*



**Join us for fellowship**

**Witham Methodist Church CM8 1BJ**

**Pay & Display Car Park Newlands Drive CM8 2AP Witham**  
(5 mins walk to church)

Please let Karen Murrell know if you can join us  
[karen.murrell@chelsfordcircuit.org.uk](mailto:karen.murrell@chelsfordcircuit.org.uk)

## Seven Words from the Cross (Tune: Rockingham – LM When I survey)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1.<br/>         Father, forgive their blinded eyes,<br/>         They know not what their hands have done;<br/>         Love speaks where hatred crucifies,<br/>         And mercy pleads before the throne.</p> | <p>6.<br/>         “It is fulfilled,” the Saviour cries,<br/>         The debt of sin is fully paid;<br/>         No further price is left unpaid,<br/>         In finished grace our hope is stayed.</p>   |
| <p>2.<br/>         Today with Me in paradise<br/>         You shall not die in dark despair;<br/>         Grace opens heaven to the lost,<br/>         His presence answers dying prayer.</p>                       | <p>7.<br/>         Into Your hands My spirit goes,<br/>         The Son entrusts His life to You;<br/>         From yielded breath salvation flows,<br/>         And death gives way to life made new.</p>  |
| <p>3.<br/>         Woman, behold your faithful Son;<br/>         Beloved, see your mother near;<br/>         At cross a family is born,<br/>         In love that conquers every fear.</p>                          | <p>8. (Easter Doxology)<br/>         Now risen Lord, in glory bright,<br/>         Your cross becomes our living song;<br/>         From death You bring eternal light,<br/>         And turn our mourning into dawn.</p>                           |
| <p>4.<br/>         My God, why leave Me in this night?<br/>         The sin of all on Me is laid;<br/>         Yet still I cling to You in plight,<br/>         Through darkest hour My trust is stayed.</p>        | <p>Alternative Easter Doxology:<br/>         All praise to Christ, the risen King,<br/>         Whose cross has conquered sin and grave;<br/>         Let heaven and earth together sing,<br/>         The Lamb once slain, now strong to save.</p> |
| <p>5.<br/>         I thirst beneath the scorching sky,<br/>         The Lord of streams and living well;<br/>         In human weakness hear His cry,<br/>         Our deepest thirst He knows so well.</p>         |   |

# BECOME A CIRCUIT STEWARD

CHELMSFORD METHODIST CIRCUIT

## Serve. Support. Connect.

We're looking for dedicated individuals to join our circuit leadership team. As a Circuit Steward, you'll:

- Support the spiritual and practical needs of our churches
- Help manage circuit resources and finances
- Work alongside ministers and lay leaders
- Be part of a welcoming and supportive community

### Is God calling you to serve?

Contact your Minister or Nigel today to find out more.

Nigel Murrell- Senior Circuit Steward

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

[www.chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk)

Could you support your Circuit?

Speak to your Minister or

Email Senior Steward Nigel Murrell to  
arrange an informal chat.

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

## Transfiguration Sunday at Broomfield.

### 'Good News' comments from a visitor

Dear friends,

I attended your service last Sunday and must say how enjoyable it was !

I was pleased to see so many people taking an active part, namely the 2 ladies doing an explanation about how people's facial identity can be changed by a few items like glasses and a hat plus the lovely lady ( with coloured hair ! ) doing a very moving dance movement with swirling banner in time with the singing...I thought it was very moving and wonderful to watch, and aided the sense of worship.....plus of course the minister's address.

Please convey my appreciation to those involved and I'd really be interested to know who the " dancing lady " was and how she can perform something so very appropriate for the occasional.

Thank you very much....all of you !

I'll definitely come again.

Clive

# Christ Our Hope in Chelmsford

*(Tune: Easter Hymn)*

**1.**

Christ our hope in Chelmsford's streets, Alleluia!  
Where each generation meets, Alleluia!  
Trinity and Broomfield sing, Alleluia!  
Moulsham Lodge new praise shall bring, Alleluia!

**2.**

In our schools and neighbourhoods, Alleluia!  
Sharing grace in practical goods, Alleluia!  
Messy Church and friendship care, Alleluia!  
Christ in welcome, work and prayer, Alleluia!

**3.**

Circuit family, strong and kind, Alleluia!  
One in heart and soul and mind, Alleluia!  
Till our city joins the praise, Alleluia!  
Christ be glorified always, Alleluia!

**4.**

Spirit, fall on young and old, Alleluia!  
Make us brave and make us bold, Alleluia!  
Send us out in word and deed, Alleluia!  
Christ in thought and act and creed, Alleluia!

# Spring Always comes

There is something quietly hopeful about this time of year. Even before the weather fully warms, we begin to notice small signs of change:

lighter evenings, buds on bare branches, birdsong returning after winter's hush. Spring never arrives all at once, but it comes steadily, patiently, often before we feel ready to believe in it.

The Church's journey through Lent reflects something of that same rhythm. Lent is not rushed. It is a season of waiting, noticing, and sometimes discomfort. It invites us to slow down, to be honest about what is hard or unfinished in our lives and in our world. Lent reminds us that hope is not about pretending everything is fine, but about trusting that God is at work even when things feel uncertain or fragile.

Easter joy does not cancel Lent; it grows out of it. Resurrection comes after the wilderness, not instead of it. Just as new life in spring pushes up through cold soil, Easter hope rises out of prayer, reflection, repentance, and longing. The cross stands firmly between Ash Wednesday and Easter morning, reminding us that God's love meets us in suffering as well as celebration.

For many of us, life feels more like Lent than Easter right now. We carry worries about the world, about conflict and injustice, about our communities, our churches, and our own lives. The good news is that the Christian story makes space for all of this. Lent tells us we are not alone in our questioning.

Easter promises that despair does not have the final word.

As spring unfolds around us, may it gently remind us of God's faithfulness. May we have the courage to walk through Lent honestly, trusting that God is quietly bringing new life where we least expect it. And when Easter arrives, may its joy feel deeper and truer because we did not rush past the journey that led us there.

After all, spring always comes—and so does resurrection.



**Rev Dr Jennifer Walters**

# The Greatest Story Ever Told

This book, written by Bear Grylls, is the story of Jesus's life, from the perspective of five different people who would have known Him well at the time. At times I could not put it down! It was actually a birthday present on another big "0" birthday last December!

Bear Grylls is one of the most famous adventurers in the world and has written over 100 books. He previously served in the SAS, is often seen in television exploring and adventure programmes and was once Chief Scout. He said about this book that it would be different, saying "I literally woke up one morning and knew I was going to write this thing, with utter conviction" and "I couldn't have not written it".

Although he is a high profile character, he has a quiet but real faith and admits he hasn't got all the answers.

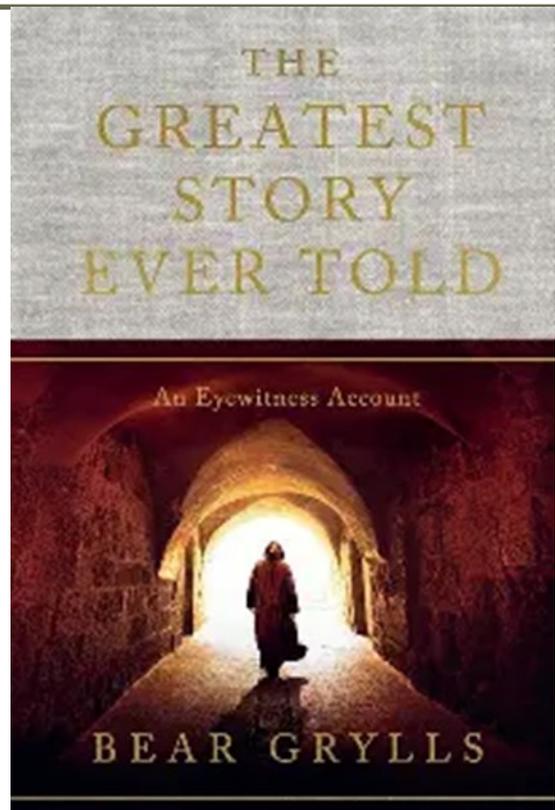
Grylls wanted the book to be faithful to the Gospel stories so there is no dialogue from Jesus that is made up, all the words can be found in various versions of the New Testament. Of course the dialogue of others is assumed. The way the book was written, chronologically and in the cultural setting of the time really brings the story to life. He uses Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic names for people and places, making it so close to those times. For instance Jesus is referred to as Yeshua. However places visited and other names can soon be figured out!

Grylls wrote the last words on the back cover before he'd even started the book, 'May the light and love of the Almighty fill your life with truth, peace and strength. Nothing can ever steal Christ's presence from you...'

This book is a No.1 Sunday Times bestseller. I believe that it will appeal to believers and non-believers alike, bringing those times and events that we read in the Testaments to real life. As some congregations might remember, I have read some of the events in the book as a sermon illustration to bring congregations closer to New Testament events as we journey through the Lectionary, and I expect to use it in future when the opportunity arises.

If you really want to go back into Christ's time and be at His side, then this is one book that will take you there!

**Clive Pickett**



# Morning Worship at Halstead on 22nd February 2026

After the drama of my last visit to Halstead (see previous newsletter), the service proceeded quite calmly apart from the tempo from the CD player seeming much too fast.

When singing: 'Sent by the Lord I am', there was hardly time to draw breath between verse and chorus. It will be lovely when the kind gift of a piano from Trinity is in regular use.

One of the members enthused to me about Bear Grylls new book: '*The Greatest Story ever Told*', seeing as Jenny and I met through the Scout/Guide movement 50 years ago, perhaps it's right to share that enthusiasm into the Newsletter. Also, if you are a fan of Jesus Christ Superstar get tickets for Witham Public Hall on the dates in the advert.

Now let's have a different narrative of Sunday's gospel reading: 'Jesus tempted in the desert'.

Setting the scene: there are various deserts in Australia, but generally the centre is known as '*the big red empty*': No visible life, very different spiky vegetation if any, hostile terrain, dust, sand dunes, survival is difficult, deprivation is certain.



In Palestine there is also the problem of salt infiltration in the soil, the wilderness worsened by paralyzing heat, dehydration, blinding sun. Here is Jesus, on his own, sorry for himself knowing that God *tests*, as outlined with Adam and Eve at the beginning of the Bible.

We should know that Jesus is not going to meet a pantomime devil with a red coat, horns and a scaly tail like a snake, this might be someone wandering in the desert just like Jesus, their Arab style dress would be much the same, if they could find enough water to look into together they could even look like the same person.

After being lonely Jesus might be glad to find someone to talk to, particularly when this guy seems to know about Jesus.

Continued/....

When they meet he says: 'You are the Son of God - Just a small thing, see these big pebbles beside us that look like bread rolls, how would it be if you actually changed them into bread so we could have a little snack together?'

The question hangs in the dusty air, after a moment of indecision, Jesus looks at his companion and tells him he is going to leave things as they are, after all we don't just need bread to live the right way; we need the word of God.

The Devil smiles and suggests they sit back for a moment and look at the sky. He asks Jesus if he remembers seeing the Temple in Jerusalem, and how that stood 45 metres high in the city; then a sharp drop to the south east. He tells Jesus, in the future, men will design wings like sails, so they can fly safely down from such a height, but for now he could ask for God's command to his angels to ensure he landed safely.

Jesus answers more abruptly this time: in the future, there will be proper risk assessment: ***Do not put the Lord your God to the test.***

The Devil reassures him, and they walk together to the high mountain that has dominated the scenery for the last 40 days.

The breeze takes away the dust, and the evening sunshine makes the landscape glow, and highlights the contours, vegetation patterns and colours. At the very top the view is breathtaking and one would feel there could be nothing better than this.

'You know who I am' said the Devil: 'All this I will give you, if you bow down and worship me'. Jesus shakes himself as if coming out of trance: 'Away from me Satan!' he says 'for it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'. Then, Matthew's Gospel goes on: 'the devil left him, and angels came and attended him'.

*JRClemo 23.3.26*



**JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR**  
**Monday 20th April to**  
**Saturday 25th April 2026**

Witham Public Hall, Collingwood Road,  
Witham CM8 2DY. Performances  
nightly at 7:30pm, Saturday matinee  
2:30pm. Doors open 30 minutes  
before curtain up (No admission  
before 2pm or 7pm).

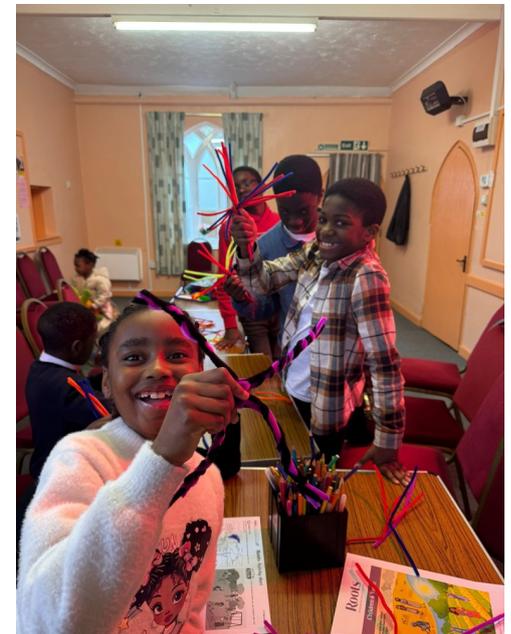
# Halstead Methodist Church Sunday School

Recently the Sunday School (February 1<sup>st</sup>) at Halstead were studying and discussing what God requires us to do as Christians.

As part of the discussion we talked about Saint Brigid of Ireland, who loved helping the poor and animals. She became a nun and founded the famous Kildare monastery. We learnt that on February 1<sup>st</sup> she is celebrated for her generosity and miracles.

We made the Saint Brigid's Cross which when hung over the doorways it wards off evil, fire and hunger. We decided that God wanted us to follow him by helping and supporting all God's creatures in any way that we can.

## Heather Williams



# Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party at Maldon, Bringing Our Community Together



At Maldon Methodist Church we celebrated Shrove Tuesday with a pancake party! Members from our Sunday congregation joined with families from our thriving toddler group to enjoy some fun pancake-themed activities and games, and loved decorating and eating their own pancake creations. There was definitely more chocolate spread on little faces than there was left in the jar! What a wonderful way for human beings from 8 months to 80 years to experience community and belonging together.

Rev Jennifer Walters

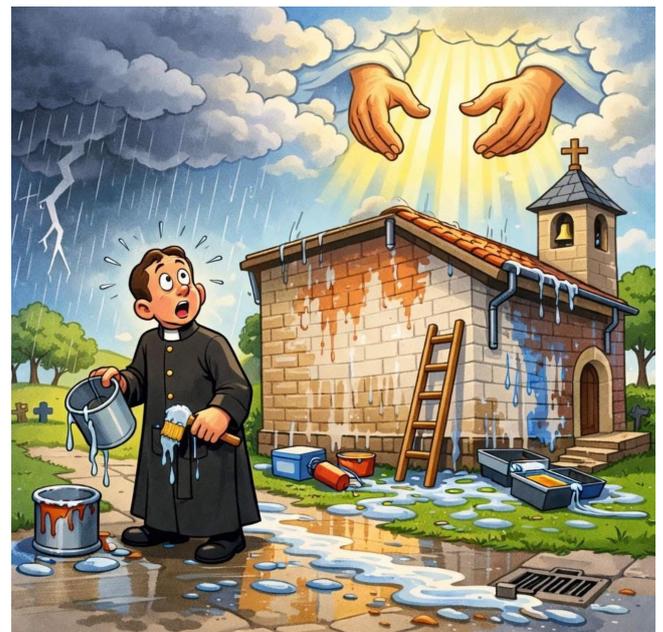
A vicar decides to freshen up the church exterior and sets about repainting the whole building.

Halfway through, he notices the tin is running low. Not wanting to waste a trip to the hardware shop, he stretches it out by mixing in a generous splash of water.

He just manages to cover the last wall when the sky suddenly darkens. Out of nowhere, a torrential downpour begins, and within minutes all the watered-down paint streams off the bricks and into the gutters.

As the storm clears, a booming voice rolls down from the heavens:

“Repaint, and thin no more.”





## New Places for New People: NPNP

*Something exciting is happening in the Methodist Church.*

God is calling ordinary people to begin new forms of church, and we're investing millions of pounds over the next seven years to make that a reality. All churches are invited to start NPNPs as part of their ministry. These new communities may not need funding, or may be funded in different ways through district, circuit or connexional funds.

As a circuit we have started to reflect on how we might respond to God's call and we are in the early stages of drawing up a proposal based on the idea of a **Mobile Community Hub**.

With all the new housing developments in our circuit, we have been thinking about how to help create a sense of community amongst the people moving into those estates.

*The plan is to convert a double-decker bus into a mobile community hub. Reaching out to all in our Local communities.*

Purpose-built community spaces are rarely included in the development plans, so we started to think about the different ways we could provide a community space and focus.

The idea behind the Mobile Community Hub is that it is a flexible space which can travel to different locations. These could include a number of different housing developments, but also other difficult to reach spaces such as the

Wethersfield Camp.

We see a need for this hub because people moving to new areas can be isolated, and there is no obvious space provided to meet new people.

We envisage that the people moving into the new housing developments tend to be young professionals. In the daytime, the community hub could reach people working from home, parents and grandparents caring for pre-school aged children. Later in the afternoon, there could potentially be children returning from school.

Continued/.....

The community hub could be used in the evenings to provide a safe place for young people to congregate and offer support with homework, snacks (e.g. toast and milkshakes) in a similar way to the previous bus at SWF in Asda carpark.

The plan is to convert a double-decker bus into a mobile community hub. The bus could be fitted out to provide the following facilities:

- ◆ Café area with drinks and cakes etc.
- ◆ An area suitable for adults with babies and very young children
- ◆ An area suitable for young people to relax and complete homework
- ◆ An information point with lots of practical local information – GPs, bin collections, churches, community groups, etc
- ◆ A side awning for an outdoor space
- ◆ Storage space for clothing and resources to support people staying at the refugee camp

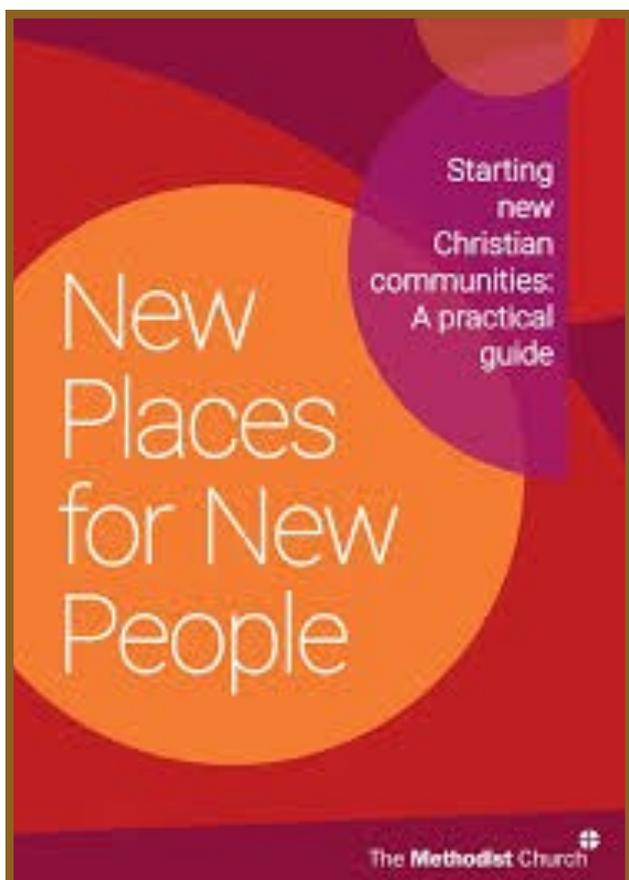
Currently this idea is not much more than that and it will need a team to help develop it into a legitimate and realistic funding proposal.

***Would you like to be part of that team?***

**To find out more, please contact**

**Rev Jennifer [Jennifer.Walters@methodist.org.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Walters@methodist.org.uk) or**

**Val carter [val\\_carter08@hotmail.com](mailto:val_carter08@hotmail.com)**



<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/evangelism-growth/new-places-for-new-people/>

## **Our Young Adult Mission Placement Scheme offers funded placements in partnership with churches and organisations.**



**YAMPS is for churches, circuits, districts and Methodist-connected projects that are called to assist young adults (18–30-year-olds) to explore skills and vocation, experience mission and ministry, discover new gifts, and make a difference in the world.**

**Placements are flexible, contextual and responsive to the passions and callings of young adults. They can be voluntary or paid, are supported by mentors and co-designed with young adults: they are not about filling roles but about formation, creativity and community.**

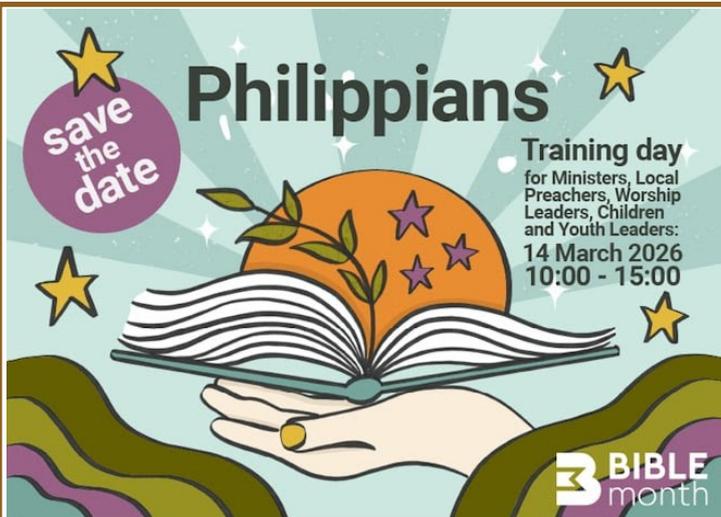
**Placement hosts will offer a placement where a young adult can explore vocation, deepen discipleship and contribute meaningfully to the life and mission of the Church all while supported by a mentor from their local context. YAMPS partners with churches who want to invest in young adults—co-designing meaningful mission opportunities that strengthen both vocational learning and community impact. Placements are part-funded to help hosts create high-quality experiences.**

**Find out more or sign up as a young adult, host church or mentor at [Young Adult Mission Placement Scheme \(YAMPS\) - The Methodist Church](https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/children-youth-family-ministry/methodist-young-adults/yamps/)**"

Joel Baldry, connexional Young Adults Vocation and Placements  
Development Officer.

**Click here for the link..**

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/children-youth-family-ministry/methodist-young-adults/yamps/>



**It's that time of year again: the Bible Month Training day approaches, and this year, we're streaming live from Cliff College on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 10am-3pm, and you can watch via YouTube.**

Bookings are now live. You can book as an individual, or for your church or Circuit, here: <https://bible-month-training-2026.eventbrite.co.uk>.

Once you've booked, and you're hosting a venue for others, you can [find resources to promote it here](#).

### **About Bible Month**

This year, Bible Month **invites churches and small groups to dive into one of the most joyful and encouraging letters in the New Testament: Philippians**. Written by Paul from prison, this short epistle overflows with warmth, hope, and practical wisdom for living a Christ-shaped life.

### **How to join in?**

It's very simple. You can watch the live-stream at home, or with others in your church or Circuit by registering here: <https://bible-month-training-2026.eventbrite.co.uk>. You don't need any special technical knowledge: if you can watch a YouTube video at home or at your church, you can join in.

Once you've registered, we'll share the stream link with you, plus other materials if you're planning to host a bunch of people in your church or Circuit.

### **Promoting the Training Day in Circuit**

You can [download here a few resources to promote the training day](#). These include:

- An A4 Flyer (image)
- An editable A4 Flyer (MS Word)
- A Microsoft PowerPoint Slide, and
- A slide (image)
- A 4:5 socials image

### **Got questions?**

Questions for Bible Month will be handled by Jon White from the Learning Network. You can email him at [whitej@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:whitej@methodistchurch.org.uk).

# Just another Sunday at Halstead !



4<sup>th</sup> January 2026 was a bitter cold day and when we arrived at our little church we were not surprised to see quite a few people still sitting in the school room where it was warmer than in the area of the church. Then we were informed that everyone needed to stay out of the church as there had been a break-in via the vestry door. The kitchen was also out of bounds as the intruders had been in there also. The Police had, of course, been informed of the situation so we were confined to the school room.

However, our preacher on that day was John Clemo and he had brought an Oral keyboard with him so in true Methodist joy we were not dismayed and our service took place in the school room (very cosy!)

Our Senior Steward, Helen, took control and her husband Phil came along to make the damaged door safe and assisted with the clear-up after the police had been. A big “thank you” to Helen and Phil for taking control on this unusual day. We had thought the intruder could be someone desperate to get into the building out of the cold and find a hot drink, but it does not look like that was the scenario.

Whilst we thank our Lord that all turned out better than it could have been, we must reflect that we all have our cosy beds, warm homes and food on the table. We are grateful for these gifts and pray for those poor people sleeping in shop doorways with no warmth or comfort; who feel they cannot go home to family for safety. May God not overlook them just because they are destitute but let there be others, and the Lord, that will watch over them and keep them safe. How thankful we are. (Wendy)

## A moral reflection

**Perhaps the meaning of life is not in the having but in the being.**

**Not in what you build, but in who you become building it. And, maybe, just maybe, meaning is found not in escaping the cycle, but in walking it with open eyes with intention, love and grace!**

Chrissie Armitage

Halstead



## Local Arrangement? No Problem!

That is what we thought up to a few months ago, as one of our lovely Local Preachers (we are lucky to have four at Moulsham Lodge) would always offer to take it on for us.

But things changed, preachers are stretched to their limit, so using them was no longer an option.

Clive Pickett, in a morning service, introduced the idea of 'do it yourself' services and illustrated the use of materials available to us to assist in worship preparation. There is so much on line if you know where to look, as well as the Methodist Worship book and other publications. Videos are plentiful on YouTube. This was really helpful and inspired a few of us to have a go.

Our first service was the first Sunday in Advent. A small group, based on the Thursday morning prayer group, decided on the theme of Christingle and worked on a service using material from the All we Can website. In some ways we were rather over ambitious, but the service went well and was much enjoyed and appreciated by the congregation.

We share worship several times during the year with our local parish church, St. Luke's, so when our next LA was planned we arranged for them to join us and this had the great advantage of their priest offering to preach. We organized the service, involving five people leading, plus projectionist and four musicians, two from each church. The service was very well received, there was a clear message, good music, no hitches, and it ended spot on 11.30!

Looking to the future, we plan to base a service on charities supported by the church.

**As a church we are grateful to those who are prepared to be a part of this initiative and we hope that more people will have the confidence to participate in the planning and leading of worship.**

Local arrangement? No problem.

Jean Brown

# New Sensory Family Room at The Church in Great Notley

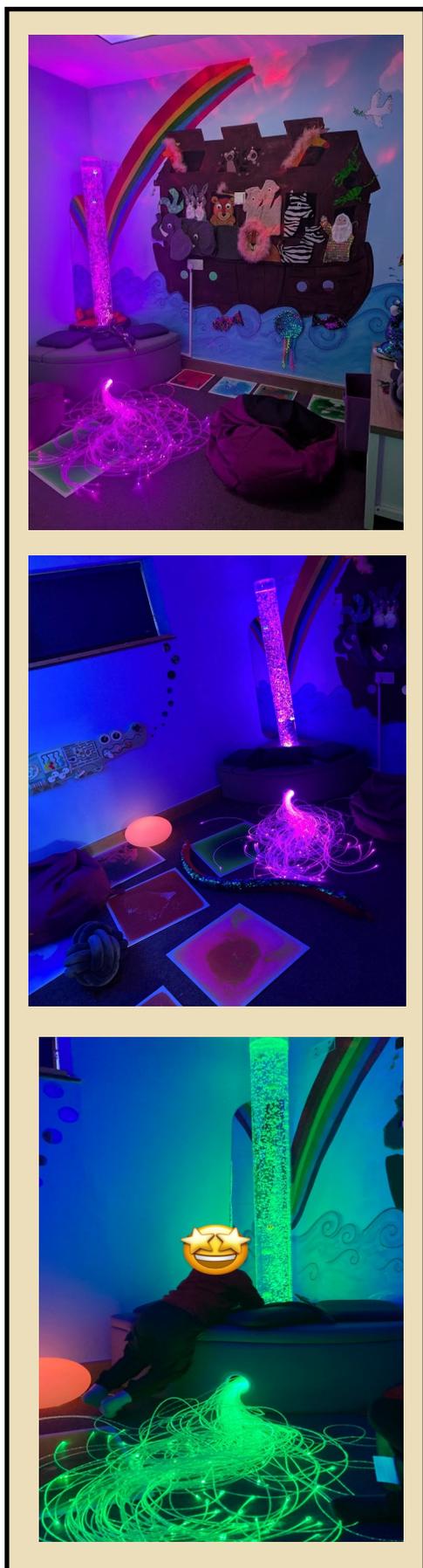
Within our Church in Great Notley, a room that was once simply known as the family room has been lovingly transformed into something much more, a sensory room created especially for those who need calm, comfort, and a place of peace. What was once an ordinary space has become a sanctuary, shaped with care and prayer, so that children and individuals with additional needs can feel safe, supported, and fully included in the life of the church.

Some ideas begin as plans, and others begin as something quieter, a gentle nudge on the heart. The sensory room was one of those. It came from seeing the needs around us and wanting every child, every family, and every individual to know that they belong here, just as they are.

At first, it felt like something that might take a very long time. We talked about funding, about possibilities, and about how wonderful it would be “one day.” But that day came much sooner than we expected. Through the generosity of the Essex Community Foundation, the Friends of Braintree Community Hospital Fund, the local pub the Prince Louis and some private donations everything came together so quickly. It was hard not to see God’s hand in it quietly making a way. It brought to mind the words, *“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine...”* (Ephesians 3:20).

The room itself has been shaped with love and care. The Noah’s Ark theme reminds us of safety, promise, and God’s faithfulness. There is an interactive ark where textured animals can be touched and explored, a bubble tube with its gentle, rising light, and soft, beautiful lighting that fills the space with calm.

On the wall are the words “Peace, be still.” Words Jesus spoke to calm the storm, and words that continue to calm hearts today.



Already, this space is doing exactly what it was hoped it would do. Members of the congregation who once found services overwhelming are now able to remain part of worship, using the room when they need quiet and regulation, but still belonging fully to the life of the church. There is something deeply moving about knowing that no one has to step away completely they can still be present, still included.

Sensory bags have also been made, filled with ear defenders, fidget toys, and sensory resources. These small, thoughtful items are helping individuals remain comfortable during services, removing barriers that may once have made things difficult.

It has been especially touching to see a local nursery begin using the space. Knowing that children with additional needs are finding calm here, feeling safe, and being supported, is a reminder of why this was placed on our hearts in the first place.

This room is not just walls, lights, or equipment. It is a reflection of love in action. It is a reminder that Jesus always made space for those who needed gentleness, those who were overlooked, and those who needed peace. And now, in this small room, His words remain:

### *Peace, be still.*

**In this quiet room, Lord, You are near,  
In every light, in every softened fear.  
Where restless hands and anxious hearts may come,  
Your gentle voice speaks peace to everyone.**

**Within these walls, let calm and comfort grow,  
A place of refuge from the world below.  
Where every child and soul can safely be,  
Held in Your love, accepted, fully free.**

**As Noah's ark carried life through storm and wave,  
Let this room be the shelter that You gave.  
A place of promise, hope, and sacred rest,  
Where weary hearts feel held and truly blessed.**

**Remain here, Lord, in stillness soft and deep,  
Watch over all who enter, guard, and keep.  
And may each person, loved just as they are,  
Feel heaven's peace never distant, never far.**

**Amen.**

Emma Church  
Gt Notley

# 3 GENERATE 2-4TH OCTOBER 2026

## \*\* SAVE THE DATE \*\*

Are you 8-18yrs old? Do you want to meet other young Christians? Then 3Gen might be for you.

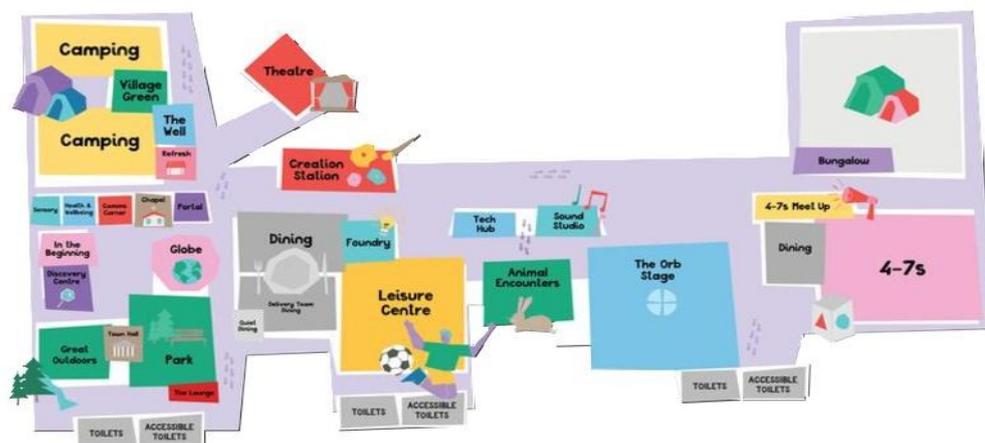
3Generate, the children's and youth assembly of the Methodist Church, aims to create an inclusive and diverse space for the prophetic voice of children and young people to emerge and be heard.

3Generate 2026 promises to be a huge party—celebrating the joy of being together after so long apart. You wouldn't want to miss it! From the big launch happening on Friday, through to the energetic mass worship on Sunday and plenty of activities, workshops and talks in between, 3Gen is a blast!

Last year there were 6 new venues:

- **Orb Stage** - for even bigger performances and communal worship
- **Sound Studio** - hosting music workshops and spaces for free-play and jamming
- **The Lounge** - for those in school year 11+ to go deeper on key topics that relate to them
- **In The Beginning** - a storytelling-focused venue hosting workshops and talks from authors
- **Leisure Centre** - an even bigger sports venue with lots more space to get involved
- **Comms Corner** - a space for young people to learn about all things social media and communications, from influencing to consuming media responsibly

There is also a Great Outdoors, Leisure Centre and Park space within our 3Generate Town, which will be home to a range of all ability sports activities throughout the weekend.



Accommodation is indoors in groups in the accommodation village which is within very large, well-ventilated halls. Each group will have an assigned plot in the village with plenty of space for the group and space between groups. Tents will be provided and will be put up before arrival.

If you would interested in being a part of group going to 3Gen from Chelmsford Circuit or you would like some more information, please get in touch with Rev Jennifer [Jennifer.Walters@methodist.org.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Walters@methodist.org.uk)

# THE CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER

This is **YOUR** newsletter.

By contributing to the circuit newsletter, you play a vital role in enriching the spiritual life of the entire circuit. Your articles can inspire others to take action, provide comfort in times of need, and encourage a deeper understanding of faith.

Moreover, your contributions help to create a vibrant and dynamic newsletter that reflects the diversity and richness of our church communities.

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WE WANT TO  
HEAR FROM YOU



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