

# Contact

September 2023



**Isaiah 41:10** - "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

**The Borough, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 1NL**

*[www.hinckleyurc.org.uk](http://www.hinckleyurc.org.uk)*

*Minister*

☎ 01455 634398 / 07725 747936

*Youth & Family Worker*

☎ 07930 628011

*Church*

☎ 01455 637518

Rev Andrew Mudharara

[revandrew@hinckleyurc.org.uk](mailto:revandrew@hinckleyurc.org.uk)

Rachel Cobb

[repoclehcarr@hotmail.com](mailto:repoclehcarr@hotmail.com)

[church@hinckleyurc.org.uk](mailto:church@hinckleyurc.org.uk)

## Contact Information

*Please take great care when sharing these contact details with other people. This information will not appear in the version of Contact on the church website.*

Church Secretary	Christine Thomas	
Treasurer	Sally Leggat	
Premises	Malcolm Hooke	
Children and Youth Work	Chris Sharrock	
Pulpit Supply	David Crick	
Music	David Crick	
Notices	Christine & Tony Thomas	
Flowers	Kathy Smith	
Catering	Carole Wallis	
Contact Magazine	Penny Randriamahavorisoa	

## Worship in September (10.45 am unless stated)

3 <sup>rd</sup> September	Rev Andrew Mudharara
10 <sup>th</sup> September	Richard Benham
17 <sup>th</sup> September	Rev Andrew Mudharara ( <i>including Holy Communion</i> )
24 <sup>th</sup> September	John Moore
1 <sup>st</sup> October	Rev Andrew Mudharara (Harvest/Parade)

## **Minister's letter August September 2023**

Greetings to you all and your families in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who has assured us in His word that "...and lo, I am with you always [remaining with you perpetually-regardless of circumstances, and on every occasion], even to the end of the age" [ Amplified [ Mathew 28:20. We serve a God who is always with us and walking alongside us always.

My encouragement to us all is for us to model the God we serve by being there for other people. It is useful for us to try our best to support one another as Church and community. I desire that each and every one of us would feel that their brothers and sisters in Christ are there for them. We have to go beyond telling people that we are there for them by making sure we show and live what we say. I should however, acknowledge that a lot of times we do well in supporting one another but we could do more as a community of faith and as communities in general. It is important for us to pray with one another and share words of comfort, assurance and support with our church family. Spending time with one another is paramount to our survival as Church "as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" Proverbs 27:17 through the Word.

Look out for each other as members of the body of Christ and community in general in a world that seems to encourage us to focus on our own challenges more. Let us endeavour to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" Galatians 6:2. On the other hand, let us feel free to share challenges, needs and areas of concerns with our sisters and brothers in Christ so that we can be helped where ever possible by our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Jesus said our support and care for each other will cause the world to know that we the followers of Christ (John 13:35). We witness to the world the Gospel as we support and look after each other. We need to check on each other as a community and church in particular. Let us be each other's keeper as we serve God in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rev Andrew Mudharara

## **News of the Family**

Please remember in your prayers:

Ruth and her family following the passing of her Mum on 25<sup>th</sup> June. A service of thanksgiving for Paddy took place on 24<sup>th</sup> July in the church and was a reminder of all Paddy had achieved in her long life.

John and Julie P and Julie's mum Beryl: Beryl has been in and out of hospital after several falls and is in need of more care.

Sue D: is very poorly and moving to the Loros Hospice. Sue is at peace with her situation. We pray for her and her family.

Trevor L: is in hospital with a chest infection.

We think of Jane C who has had back issues again.

We also think of:

Ann M, Betty H, Betty L, Dennis, Ethel, Ian S, Jan and Brian B, Jean C, Joan, Joyce, Joyce and Arthur, Keith G, Keith H, Lily S, Margaret and Peter, Nanette S, Nessa, Muriel, Paul and Annette, Pat J, Sue T, Wendy and Malcolm, Margaret and Peter G.

Please contact me if you or someone you know is in need of prayer and would like to go on the prayer list, respecting their privacy and seeking permission first.

Contact me by email or telephone. Sue S

## **Birthdays & Anniversaries**

*Congratulations to all those celebrating birthdays in September:*

*Nessa M and Joyce M (on the 4<sup>th</sup>), Sue S (on the 5<sup>th</sup>), Hazel C (on the 21<sup>st</sup>), Pat J (on the 22<sup>nd</sup>), Samantha C and Marilyn P (on the 24<sup>th</sup>).*

*And best wishes to those celebrating their Wedding Anniversaries:*

*George and Betty L (on the 2<sup>nd</sup>), Jan and Jimmy A (on the 8<sup>th</sup>), John and Marion H (on the 12<sup>th</sup>), Brian and Jan B (on the 19<sup>th</sup>), Richard and Malvolia B (on the 21<sup>st</sup>), Ferrand and Penny R (on the 24<sup>th</sup>).*

*Apologies to anyone we may have missed. Thanks to Kathy for maintaining these records. If we haven't got your information, please speak to Kathy.*

*A very big thank you to Kathy and the team for the lovely colourful bunch of flowers that I received recently in celebration of my birthday. God bless. Tony*

## **Outreach Worker**

We welcome Paul Wake to our fellowship as he begins his role as Outreach Worker in September. Paul, and his wife Kate, will be moving to the Hinckley area in the coming weeks and we pray God's blessing on them both and in particular Paul's work among us. Please support and help Paul and Kate settle into church life as much as you are able and support Paul's work as we seek to reach out into the community and grow God's church.

## **Bible Study**

The Church weekly Bible study takes place on a Tuesday evening. The study runs from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm. The study starts with fellowship, and where appropriate, prayers for about 20 minutes, then worship for about 40 minutes, reading and discussing scripture 45 mins and prayer 15 minutes. The study operates through the medium of zoom and so participation is from your own home. The study can be joined at any point in the evening and each session stands alone and so it does not matter if you cannot make every week.

At present the participants are Steve W, James H, Malvolia and Richard B. In our studies we are currently working our way through the minor prophets one chapter at a time, and this is likely to occupy us for the rest of the year. These often neglected books of the Bible are providing interesting and relevant topics on the Christian life for us to discuss each week and all of us are gaining benefits from it. Everyone is welcome to join us on a regular or occasional basis and if you want to know more, please speak to any of the bible study members.

## Be an Angel

How many times have you been asked, “To be an Angel?”

All the Apostles were in prison for preaching the Gospel of the living Lord Jesus. The Scripture tells us that the Authorities were jealous. (Read Acts 5.) And so the Apostles were put in the public jail.

During the night an “Angel of the Lord” opened the doors and let the Apostles out. They were told to stand in the Temple courts and tell the people the full message of the new life.

The next morning the authorities told the jailers to bring the prisoners to them. “Sir, they are not there!” Some tell-tale came and reported the people who they put in prison were in the Temple courts preaching. It was the High Priest who questioned the prisoners. I wonder if the High Priest was hopping mad by now; he was being made to look a fool.

The Scripture says, “We (The High Priest) gave you strict orders not to teach in this name (Jesus),” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” It is now Peter to the rescue, and he told the Authorities exactly what they were preaching and why they were preaching about Jesus. He started with a question, “Who should we obey”, You or God?”

It was suggested the Apostles be put to death, but there appears another Angel appears. This time we know his name. Gamaliel. He was a well-respected Teacher and he reminded “the authorities that other men had come and suggested they were the Messiah and had attracted many followers. Then when the man died the followers dispersed. “Just wait and see what happens with Jesus. It may just fizzle out, so take your time and be patient.” The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

We have no idea who the first tell-tale was, he just did the job he thought he should do. The writer of my Bible reading notes suggests that the words used in v19 “An angel of the Lord,” should not lead us to imagine a heavenly being as depicted in art or literature. It also means messenger or servant of God.

Have you had a Guardian Angel rescue you or have you been someone else’s guardian? You may never know what you have done for other people. You may also believe that you are just a servant of God, doing something that seems right at the time. In all of this there is one thing certain and that is “That God uses ordinary people to help Him in His work!” The Hungry people by the lake may have said to the young boy who brought the 5 loaves and 2 fish, “You are an angel!”

GDL

## ***Free Church Choirs Festival of Church Music***

***Saturday 14th October 7.00pm***

### ***St Albans Cathedral***

*Members of our choir will be joining singers from across the country in a Festival of hymns, anthems and readings. The theme is 'Hope and Reconciliation'. Previous festivals have been joyous and uplifting occasions. If you are interested in attending, please see David Crick. Depending on numbers, we hope to be able to arrange transport.*

## **A letter from East Midlands Synod**

To: Ministers, Elders and Members of local churches June 2023

Dear Friends,

I confess that writing this annual letter is one of the tasks to which I least look forward. I am well aware of the scale of challenges facing The United Reformed Church – both in terms of what feels like a scarcity of money and of people. Few if any of us have escaped the need to prioritise and cut back as a response to the enormous rise in the cost of living – with the result that appeals to sustain giving beyond our own doors are even harder to make.

At times such as these the phrase, “Charity begins at home”, can become the dominant response. Back in 2008 an article in the Sunday Times observed, “It is only understandable that, in straitened circumstances, people hug the thought that charity begins at home”. So easily, when it comes to “home” in the church context, the local church, that immediate

family of faith to which we belong, becomes the place we see as being most worthy of our giving and support. By contrast, the wider church family, at Synod and denominational level, can be relegated – particularly if we regard them as “distant family” to whom we struggle to relate. The United Reformed Church, however, operates on the basis of being a family. And I write, essentially, not so much as Synod Moderator but as one member of the family writing to the wider family to highlight the interdependency embodied in our shared support of the Ministry and Mission Fund.

The Ministry and Mission Fund is the means for sustaining the witness and mission of the whole church – the family of The United Reformed

Church - enabling the training and stipends of ministers/Church Related Community Workers, the administration and mission of the church across the United Kingdom. We are urged to pay not for what we perceive we get in return within our own postcode but as a sacrificial offering across the map.

We acknowledge the pressure on local church finances as a result of the increased fuel costs and have responded by creating a fund to assist local churches. Please make contact with your Finance Networker or Synod Finance and Governance Officer if you have not received the details.

Please be assured that there is no “us and them”. Those who oversee the finances of the wider Church are themselves committed to their local fellowship and very much aware of the pressures posed. We really are in this together – and it is a challenging time for every part of the Church.

I commend words of the late Michael Forster to frame our response:

*Let love be real, in giving and receiving,  
without the need to manage and to own,  
a haven free from posing and pretending,  
where every weakness may be safely known.*

*Give me your hand, along the desert pathway,  
give me your love wherever we may go.*

*As God loves us, so let us love each other:*

*with no demands, just open hands and space to grow.*

*(Michael Forster (1946-2023). © 1995 Kevin Mayhew Ltd.)*

As God loves us, so let us love ... and, if I might add, As God gives to us, so let us give ...

I take this opportunity to thank all in our churches who oversee the finances of the Church – whether willingly or reluctantly – and to assure that your service and the challenges you face are not insignificant. Thank you. May God, the source of bread sufficient for the day, enable each of us to respond with generosity for the mission and ministry of the United Reformed Church.

Yours in Christ, Geoffrey Clarke

## Hope into Action House

The purchase of the Hope into Action House is completed!!!  
Some of us have been to see the house which is in really good condition. I would certainly be happy to live there. There are some structural issues which Hope into Action will sort out and then we will be able to get in to decorate and furnish ready for tenants.

The final list of things needed is on the noticeboard in the vestibule. Please look at it. Even if all you have is a spare tin opener it will be gratefully received. If you do donate something, please put your name on the list so that we know who we need to collect from.

Any further questions to Karen, Lesley, Richard, James or Carole

## Tuesday Lunch Event: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The lunch in September will be soup, roll and a dessert.  
Please let me know if you would like to attend, thank you.  
Sue S

## Commitment for Life

Commitment  
for **Life**

It's that time of year again when you are asked to dig deep in your pockets to support our Commitment for Life partners in Bangladesh. Money given in the last year has been used to provide clean water and sanitation for the thousands of Rohingya refugees who have fled persecution in Myanmar. Bangladesh is a poor country which is doing its best to support these refugees. Bangladesh has problems of its own, especially flooding, so any help we can give will be greatly appreciated. The money is channelled through Christian Aid in Bangladesh.

You will find donation envelopes at various places in church. If you can't find one, ask me.

Thanks in anticipation, Carole.

## **Commitment for Life Prayer for the month**

### *Action Prayer with Greta – Bangladesh*

#### **Lego Prayers**

Using some building blocks or lego, build yourself a sturdy house. Amen.

#### **Prayer**

Dear God, we thank you for our homes, which are made of solid brick. We remember those who live in countries such as Bangladesh, whose homes and livelihoods, due to the climate crisis, are easily destroyed through floods and strong winds. Amen.

#### **Christian Aid News.**



The Christian Aid Charity Curry night held at the Winsor Tiffin in Burbage on Wednesday 26th July raised a total of £907 from ticket sales, donations and from the raffle. All tickets were taken and a great evening was enjoyed by over 70 people.

Malcolm Hooke

#### **Church Rambles**

The July walk was at Hartshill and for once in July it had stopped raining! About 10 of us got together for a stroll and a chat followed by a picnic lunch in the country park. The walk was about 3½ miles long and quite hilly in places so everyone should feel proud that they managed to complete the challenge.

The August walk was at the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood near Heather. This is part of the National Forest and is ideal for an easy wander with a bench part way round overlooking the lake. 17 people joined this walk - a record number! Afterwards we retired to the Sunnyside Garden Centre in Ibstock for lunch.

The next walk will be on Tuesday 19th September. If anyone has suggestions on where to walk, please talk to Tony.

## Opening Reflection by the Revd Geoffrey Clarke Moderator of the East Midlands Synod

### URC Future and Finance in focus at General Assembly



Geoffrey (back row centre) with other General Assembly 2023 attendees from the East Midlands

A significant proportion of the agenda of General Assembly, held at the beginning of the month, was devoted to receiving the reports of the **Church Life Review Group**. Ministers, elders and members are encouraged to read the reports as they give a comprehensive insight into the state of The United Reformed Church, its congregations and finances. There are plans to distribute copies of ***The United Reformed Church: A Paradoxical Church at a Crossroads*** (the Report produced by *Theos*) to each congregation and serving minister and to arrange for gatherings for engaging with its content. Paper N4, **Local Churches Flourishing Through Good Governance**, also poses important questions for consideration by every church. (It is hoped that the Church Life Review Group will issue a more user-friendly version of this for use in local church discussions.) Please take a look at the papers and encourage your church to engage with them: see the section of Reports prefixed 'N' at <https://urc.org.uk/general-assembly-executive-assembly-committees/general-assembly/general-assembly-papers/>

**News from The Vine** – we hope you are having a good summer despite the disappointing weather! We have been busy restocking our gift corner with some lovely items from a small, independent company called “God at my House”. They do lovely cards, which you’ll find in the card spinner as you enter the shop, and a lovely range of tiles, small framed prints, A4 prints, mugs and magnets. These make great gifts for occasions such as Christenings, Dedications, Baptisms, Confirmations, First Communions or birthdays. Check out the photo on our Facebook page and gallery page of our website. This month we’ll be ordering new Hannah Dunnett stock, including the 2024 Calendars – these are very popular so if you know you will want any please either buy early or let us know in advance (other calendars will be in stock next month). This year, instead of being A4 sized they are a more classic 12 by 12-inch square that opens out when hung up.

As usual we’ll be closed for the August bank holiday Monday. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

God Bless  
Jessica Harrison  
Manager

### **History made with Moderator at General Assembly**



History was made at the 2023 United Reformed Church (URC) General Assembly when its first black and ethnically-minoritised Moderator was inducted. Ordained in 2018, the Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson became Moderator at the annual meeting held from 30 June to 3 July at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire.



# **Hinckley United Reformed Church**

**The Church in the Borough**

## **Thanksgiving Service**

**To remember those we have lost**

**Sunday November 5th 2023 at 10-45am**

During the service we will give thanks and praise God for the memories of those who have died during the past year. Candles will be provided for you to light and



If you know of anyone who has died recently and you would like them to be included in the service, please contact George L.

There will be another dimension to the service this year. We will remember and thank God for all those who have left money to the Church and thank Him for those who have given of their time and talents to the Church over the years.

**Rotas** *If you can help on the Door Steward rota, please see Penny Randriamahavorisoa; if you can help on the Coffee rota, please see Carole Wallis. If you are unable to fulfil your duty, please arrange a swap.*

	<b><i>Duty Elder</i></b>	<b><i>Door Steward</i></b>
<b><i>Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September</i></b>	Roger Moseley	Sally Leggat Julie Payne
<b><i>Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September</i></b>	Sue Saunders	Jacqui Brown Heather Crick
<b><i>Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September</i></b>	Karen Jones	Richard Benham Sue Saunders
<b><i>Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September</i></b>	Christine Thomas	Paul Deeming Ann Martin
<b><i>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October</i></b>	David Crick	Kathy Smith Sue Thain
	<b><i>Coffee</i></b>	<b><i>Flowers</i></b>
<b><i>Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September</i></b>	Sylvia Ellis Chris Sharrock	
<b><i>Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September</i></b>	Ruth Griffiths Karen Jones	J.Payne
<b><i>Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September</i></b>	Carole Wallis Jacqui Brown	
<b><i>Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September</i></b>	Marilyn & Crawford Payne	J.Brown
<b><i>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October</i></b>	Christine Thomas Ann Martin	

## Wednesday at One

September 6th	Rev Malcolm Clarke	Hinckley Baptist
September 13th	Rev Robin Handsford	Hinckley Great Meeting
September 20th	Rev Daniel Cheyne	Hinckley URC
September 27th	Rev Anthony Thacker	St. Mary, Hinckley

## Warm Space Drop-in (Thursday pm)

September 7<sup>th</sup> Ruth and Sylvia  
September 14<sup>th</sup> Kathy and Ann  
September 21<sup>st</sup> Sue and Phillip  
September 28<sup>th</sup> Chris and Sylvia

October 5<sup>th</sup> Ruth and Ann

---

Recalling the Ministry for June - August 2023  
(As largely seen on the Church Web Site as THE WEDNESDAY WORD)  
*Click on the links to read the Bible readings*

-----OOO-----

In reflection on the message for Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

Call to Worship, Psalm 100, Shout for joy to the LORD all the earth.

Extracts from Romans, Ch. 5, v1-8, Peace and Hope.

<https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=559820791>

Ch. 4, v24-25 introduces the reading:

...Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins And raised to life for our justification.

Sermon. We are justified through Faith in Christ Jesus and redeemed of our sins. We become righteous members of the body of Christ, his Church, receiving the peace of God. God's love and faithfulness are poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. By our Faith in Jesus, we are gifted with Eternal Life.

The congregation joined in Communion together.

In reflection on the message for Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

Call to Worship, from the Psalms.

Story. Today's story was about an Indian watercarrier, whose job was to bring water up a path to the house in two pots on a yoke across his shoulders. One pot was sound, the other was cracked and leaked water over one side of the path. The good pot was proud of its work. The other pot, the crackpot, was ashamed of its flaw. But the watercarrier pointed out that there were pretty flowers on the crackpot's side of the path. He said he knew of the crackpot's flaw and had planted seeds on his side of the path, which his leak watered, and the seeds grew into the flowers.

All of us have flaws, but we take each other for what we are – beings., like the crackpot.

Extracts from Matthew, Ch. 21, v33-46, The Parable of the Tenants.

<https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=559820884>

Ch 21. v23, introduces the reading:

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him, "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked, "and who gave you this authority?"

...

Sermon. Jesus relates the parable to the Chief Priests and Pharisees, which is an allegory about what is the "business as usual" procedure of an absentee landlord, taking his "rent" – whereas in the parable the tenants have laboured to produce the crop, The temple hierarchy are cast as the landlord. Jesus introduces the scripture in which they do not get their "rent." "The Kingdom of God will be taken from you." The "fruit" will ill go to the people who follow Jesus (the cornerstone) and aspire to the Kingdom of God. It's up to us crackpots to do our bit for God.

-----000-----

In reflection on the message for Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023.  
Call to Worship, Psalm 89

I will sing of the LORD's great love for ever.  
tracts from Romans, Ch. 6, v12-23, Sin and Salvation.

v12: Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

v13: Do not offer any part of yourself as an instrument of weakness, but rather offer yourself to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.

v14: For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law but under grace.

Slaves to Righteousness

v15f: What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourself to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience which leads to righteousness?

v17f: But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has claimed your allegiance, and have become slaves to righteousness.

v23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sermon. Remember who we are. As humans with freewill, we have an opportunity to be slaves of impurity and wickedness, or choose to become Christians and become slaves to righteousness. Making the choice to become Children of God and servants of Jesus Christ we must lose the self-interest which leads to sinning. Instead, in fellowship with other Christians, we must help other humans according to their needs. With slavery to righteousness, not slavery to sin, God gifts us with Eternal Life.

-----000-----

In reflection on the message for Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

Call to Worship, Psalm 145, 8-14

The LORD is gracious and compassionate...

Introduction to Theme. Seafarers Sunday: the hymns were chosen throughout with reference to aspects of the sea. We remember the Mission to Seafarers, which looks after the welfare and wellbeing, both emotional and spiritual, of all those at sea.

Extracts from Zechariah, Ch 9, v9-12, The Coming of Zion's King.  
Zechariah prophesies.

V9: Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you.

Extracts from Romans, Ch. 7, v15-25a, The Law and Sin.

v15: I do not understand what to do.....

v20: Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is the sin living in me that does it.

v24: What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

v25: Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Extracts from Matthew, Ch, 11, v16-19 & 25-30, Jesus is Preaching ...

v16: "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children and sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others.

v25: I praise you, Father. Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

v28f: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Reflection. The difficult passage in Romans was interpreted for us (including related parts in Paul's epistle). Remembering that Paul was a sinner before his conversion, the Romans passage considers that all people sin, but because Christ died for them their sins are forgiven.

Now, as Christians, we can put sin behind us – we are redeemed for ever by God. We have no need to struggle against sin, but we must love God and walk in his path day by day. Then, "Putting Sin Behind Us" we can begin living redeemed lives of joy.

The Matthew passage suggests that our lives can be lived like those of children (of God) who live joyfully in innocence, and Jesus will deal with our troubles when we are weary and burdened.

-----000-----  
In reflection on the message for Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

Call to Worship, Ephesians 3, v14-21. A Prayer for the Ephesians.

v14: For this reason, I kneel before the Father,

v15: from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

v16f: I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

v21: To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Extracts from Ephesians 4, v1-6. Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ.

v1: As a prisoner of the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

v2: Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love.

v3: Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

v4: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you are called to one hope;

v5: one Lord, one faith, one baptism:

v6: one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Sermon. The church we ought to be – what Christ intended us to be as church members; i.e. a church living a life worthy of God. Called as church members, we need to maintain worthiness. We all need to show humility before God and one with each other, as instructed in v2 of the reading: allowing for people to be themselves, with different views: “Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love.” As v3-4, our church should be as one body unified in the Holy Spirit in peace and hope. The same concepts should apply to our views of churches of other Christian denominations, including worldwide.

Our church joined together in Communion.

-----000-----

In reflection on the message for Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023.

Songs including Open the eyes of my heart Lord (MP 1100) were sung before the service.

Call to Worship, Psalm 19, read responsively...

The heavens declare the glory of God...

Introduction to Theme. The importance of the word Heart.

Extracts from Luke, Ch 10, v38-42, At the Home of Martha and Mary.

v39: Martha's sister Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening, while Martha was making preparations.

Martha came to Jesus and asked him, "Tell Mary to help me."

v41f: "Martha, Martha," The Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one.

Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Extracts from Acts, Ch. 16, v13-15, Lydia's Conversion in Philippi.

v13: On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to talk to the women who had gathered there.

v14: One of those listening was a woman from Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

v15: When she and her household were baptised, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house". And she persuaded us.

Talk and Reflections: Open Your Heart.

How marvellous is the success of open-heart surgery these days. There is a spiritual equivalent of open-heart surgery. It is the hope of salvation for the recipient. This happened to Lydia in the Acts reading. In the Luke reading of Jesus meeting Martha and Mary, Mary listens to Jesus and Jesus tells Martha that Mary had chosen what is better, which may be interpreted as opening her heart directly to Jesus as Lydia had done in Acts. . It is not easy for Martha to strike the balance between prioritising the tradition of providing hospitality and opening-up to Jesus' message. We should always open our hearts to Jesus.

-----OOO-----  
In reflection on the message for Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

## “Songs of Praise”

Songs/Hymns chosen by members of the congregation.  
Members, during the service, introduced the hymn they had chosen.  
Call to Worship, Psalm 105, read responsively...  
O give thanks to the LORD...sing to him, sing praises to him.

### Hymns from Mission Praise (MP):

MP 683 There's a wideness in God's mercy.  
MP 1116 There is a higher throne.  
MP 1008 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.  
Anthem: Proclaim, proclaim the story.  
MP 266 I cannot tell why He, whom angels worship, Should set his love upon the sons of men.  
Reading: Isaiah 6, v1-8.  
MP 857 I, the Lord of sea and sky.  
MP1072 In Christ alone my hope is found.  
Reading: Romans 8, v26-39.  
MP 501 O Jesus, I have promised, To serve thee to the end.  
MP 396 Just as I am, without one plea.  
The Lord's Prayer – sung.

MP 31 And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood.  
MP 796 You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.  
The Grace was shared together.

-----OOO-----  
In reflection on the message for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

Call to Worship, Extracts from Psalm 100. Shout for joy to the Lord...  
For the Lord is good and his love endures for ever.  
Extracts from Matthew 14, v13-21. Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand.

v13: When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

v14: When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed the sick.

v15f: As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves food.” Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

v17f: “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fishes,” they answered. “Bring them here to me,” he said.

v19: And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people.

v20f: They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Sermon. - “Things Can Happen” – When we get God to help us Imagine Possibilities. We have to allow ourselves to believe that God can do things beyond our imagination. It should be part of our Faith that we should realise that if we allow God to work with us, we can achieve better, more ambitious, objectives, and church goals. Like, Jesus in feeding 5000, who felt compassion for the people, compassion can, for us, be a driving force towards achievements in advancing our church missions. We should Believe that God will partner with us in achieving mighty things when the need arises. Momentum towards church goals will progress by partnering with Jesus in compassionate activities.

-----000-----

In reflection on the message for Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

Call to Worship Psalm 46, God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.

Extracts from 1 Peter 2, v 1-10. The Living Stone and a Chosen People. Peter writes v1f: Therefore, rid yourselves from all malice and deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind... Now you have tasted that the Lord is good.

v4f: As you came to him, the living stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

v6: For in scripture it says, “See I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

V9f: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession...

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God;  
Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Extracts from Ephesians 3, v1-21.

God's Marvellous Plan for the Gentiles.

v1: For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles... (can explain that)

v6: Through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus.

v7f: I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace...

...This grace was given to me: to preach to the gentiles the boundless riches of Christ.

v12: In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence...

A Prayer for the Ephesians.

v14: For this reason, I kneel before the Father,

v15: from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

v16f: I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

v21: To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen.

. Sermon. God is Father of All – Yes. The bible suggests all should belong to 'One Church' but – No. That is certainly not the case. There are so many denominations and schisms. Much effort has been applied to bringing churches together, but with very little success. Churches should not be like clubs – with one interest. Church denominations should be like human families where differences are put aside, and attention paid to each other's needs. There is great need for churches to continue to make efforts to bring about ecumenical cooperation and look for ways to compromise on vested interests.

-----000-----

*Thanks to Brian Beagley for summarising these services for us.*

## Dates for your Diary

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September Hinckley BID Classic Car Show – *If you are interested in helping on the day, please speak to one of the elders.*

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September – Fellowship Walk

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October – Free Church Choirs Festival of Church Music

## Regular Meetings

Every **Monday** Chat and Prayer session on Zoom - log in after 6.45pm for a 7.00pm start and ending about 8.00pm

**Tuesday** Weekly Bible Study Group – see Richard Benham for details

**Wednesday-at-One** – Wednesday 1.00pm

### **Wednesday Monthly House Group**

7.30pm at the Crick's on the 13<sup>th</sup> September

**Thursday** – Prayer meeting for future of the church 11.00 Front Foyer

**Thursday 7.30** Music group practice - all welcome

**Friday** Prayer Group 10.00am (in the church).

*If you need any help using Zoom, please contact Tony Thomas.*

Please submit material for the September edition of Contact by Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September. Articles can be emailed. The next edition of Contact will be available by Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September.