

WELCOME to the March edition of CONTACT, the newsletter for those associated with Hinckley United Reformed Church.

Try Praying

The month of March is a time for reflection in our relationship with Jesus. It contains Mothering Sunday, which began as celebrating the mother church in each diocese. Of course, it also marks the beginning of the period of Lent as we prepare our hearts for the good news of Easter, highlight of the Christian calendar. This time of reflection should be mirrored in our prayer life.

Yet most honest Christians would admit they do not pray enough. Prayer is not just talking to God, but listening too.

Many who would not call themselves a Christian pray without a thought.

www.trypraying.org



Look to the terraces when England are about to take a penalty or look to the faces of those with a seriously poorly loved one. Prayer is built into our nature, whether we acknowledge who we are praying to or not.

This month we invite you to pray with us or simply to take one of our 7 page booklets to help you in your prayer life. It may just change your life.

We also invite you to our weekly Friday morning prayer group (10am) or our monthly prayer walk through the town (9am top of Castle St) on the last Friday of every month.

Secretary's report for 2024 (Christine Thomas)

I sense, and I guess you do too, that there is increasing awareness and anxiety about the future of the church here in Hinckley and indeed in the wider community. It is sometimes hard to think positively and trust in God to show us the way forward. There have been many different initiatives over the last few years to try and address this. Looking back at previous reports, in 2015 we began looking at "What is the Spirit saying to the churches". We also had meetings to 'Dream Big', we discussed 'Mission Shaped Intro' and looked at Vision 2020. The time, thought and prayer given to our searching led us to employ Rachel Cobb to work with children and she continues to serve as our family worker and we are very grateful for her commitment which far exceeds the hours she is paid for. Last year The 'Theos' report, was circulated - the result of a denomination wide survey which examined the situation of the church in today's society and we contributed to that survey.

So how have we moved forward in Hinckley during 2024?

The opening statement of the 'Theos' report 'The United Reformed Church: A Paradoxical Church at a Crossroads' (by Nathan Mladin) acknowledges that religion in the UK is changing - and changing fast - but it is not a simple story of declining church attendance; the picture is much more complicated and the landscape of faith today is more complex and dynamic than this. During the past year the URC has moved on to look at how we need to deal with change. 'What makes the church thrive?' is a question that has been raised and the May edition of 'Reform' included an article in which individuals from different URC churches expressed their thoughts. The elders of Hinckley and Daventry looked at this on their Away Day in June. Copies available. Rob ran a 'Contagious Christians' course and Paul a 'Missio Dei' workshop. Currently we are being challenged to 'Lead your church into growth' and the Synod has organised a 3 day course which Paul and I will be attending at the end of this month.

We are good at welcoming people and practical outreach. We have employed an outreach worker, Paul Wake, who joined us in September of last year. He and his wife Kate have made themselves at home with us and we now have several new outreach projects going on. The Grays Drama Academy have joined us. They support young people, some of whom have problems, and they are encouraged to express themselves through drama which helps them to develop their confidence. We provide a space for 'Falcon', a council run project to enable their employees to meet with people who need help. Paul is involved with sport projects for young people and goes into schools to talk in ethics classes. He also connects with those in the town who are homeless or have other problems and we are able to provide backpacks and basic provisions for those who need them and invite them in to worship with us. More recently Paul has started a prayer walk which takes place on a Friday once a month and finishes at our church where the Friday prayer group meets.

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Rachel does a great job in building bridges with families through the two groups which meet on our premises on a Monday and Wednesday mornings and she continues to visit schools and run the 'Sprouts' group on a Sunday morning. Paul and Kate also help with these and there are plans to include some Christian input into the Monday group in the new year. Rachel liaises with the council on community projects like 'Snapdragon' and St George's Day and we are able to support these too, as well as the annual Car Rally, the Xmas Lights switch-on and the Car Trail which enables those who would not otherwise get to see the lights to ride down Castle Street and see them and also enjoy a drink and mince pie.

The Thursday drop-in session, which Carole Wallis leads and which others from our congregation are engaged in, is proving very popular and provides a safe space for those who need to find a listening ear and some companionship. The International Friendship Centre provides support for those who need some help with understanding English and want to practise conversation. Thank you to all those who are involved.

The Hope into Action project, which has been on the slow burner for a while, has finally been able to move forward and the house will soon be decorated, furnished and will hopefully have tenants in the new year. Karen Jones and the team are looking forward to engaging with the new occupants and we thank all those involved for all the work that has been put into this. If you are not able to be involved in any of these outreach initiatives for one reason or another, please ask questions and find out about what is happening. All of our prayers are vital as is any support in giving help where we can.

We are grateful to God for all these projects and for those who make them happen but we are also painfully aware that we are an ageing fellowship, declining in numbers and in health in many cases. Sadly we have lost three members of our fellowship in 2024, Ethel Farmer, Richard Parkin and Keith Griffiths. On a more positive note we have welcomed three people as members during the year and we hope for more in 2025. Historically the URC has not been very proactive in actively engaging in public evangelism and many of us find talking about our faith to others difficult. This is something that we are trying to address – to encourage all of us to talk to each other more about faith and to explore and pray about how we can share God's love with others, not just in practical and caring ways, which we are good at, but also in a spiritual understanding of what it means to be a child of God.

Our minister Andrew has actively encouraged us, and been a part of all of this and the news that he is moving on to Colchester in the new year came as a surprise and also a sadness for us.

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We have been blessed to be ministered to by him and to embrace him and Candid and Tavonga in our church family. The birth of Tavonga was such a happy event, a gift from God, and we have had the privilege of seeing her grow up and develop as a wonderful, unique little person. We thank God for them and pray that they will continue to be blessed and be a blessing in their new churches and home in Colchester.

I would like to thank all of those who play a role in keeping our church running, vibrant and relevant, ministering to those who are members of our church family and those outside who we come into contact with in one way or another. The work goes on and God knows who we are and walks alongside us.

2025 is going to present us with more challenges as we move into an unknown future. We have stepped out in faith with plans to improve the buildings and refurbish Steptoe's Yard which we hope will be completed next year. We are aware that our financial resources are diminishing and so is our congregation. We don't know what kind of ministerial support we will have in the future and so we must continue to have faith in God's guidance. So, let us be grateful to God for the blessings we have as we move into the new year and beyond.

Christine Thomas (church secretary)



CONTACT DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions and information for the April edition of Contact will be Wednesday 19th March. The next edition will be available from Sunday 30th March.

FOOD BANK DONATIONS

We collect items for the local food bank and for vulnerable people in the community, sometimes sleeping rough.

Are you able to donate? Our local community food bank has a particular need for these items:

baked beans, pasta sauce, biscuits, small tins of fruit and veg, 400g tins of veg, fruit juice, chocolate, confectionary.





CHURCH RAMBLE (Tony T)
Next walk announced soon
Please watch the weekly notices.

As our church prepares to grow in serving God by serving and loving our community & seeking His word, please join us in our prayer for growth...

*God of Mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give Vision to our
planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.

BACKPACK APPEAL



Do you have a backpack you seldom use? Do you have toiletries, a torch, a sleeping bag, some new socks, hat or gloves to put in it? Please donate your items to Paul (Community & Outreach)) so we can put together backpacks for those in our community sleeping rough, especially as the nights get colder.

News from The Vine - we are gearing up for Lent and Easter and now have everything you might want in stock including Easter cards as singles and packs (our packs of cards are in aid of Compassion and The Leprosy Mission), Mothering Sunday cards, books for Lent and Easter. The new selection of books from "Take Note" has arrived with some excellent titles including books suitable for Mothering Sunday gifts, devotionals, biographies, books on prayer as well as titles for Lent and Easter. The new "Kids Corner" books should have arrived by the time you read this which will have lots of titles for Easter as well as Bible story books, activity books and lots more. On Tuesday 4th March it is Shrove Tuesday and we will celebrate Pancake Day once again with a one-off pancake menu! We hope to see you soon



The March Monthly Prayer Walk will take place on Friday 28th (9am) at the top of Castle Street, Hinckley (where the pedestrian area starts).

This is an opportunity for us to come together, regardless of whatever church (or none) we attend, to pray for our community & the people in it.

The prayer walk ends at 9:45am at our church where you can have some refreshments & are welcome to join our ecumenical prayer group at 10am.

Church Life Youth



At Rochelle, our aim is to provide children and adults of all ages with training and confidence to achieve their goals within a friendly, fun and hard working environment. Various classes are held in Ballet, Tap, Musical Theatre, Modern Jazz, Freestyle, Acrobatics, Theatrecraft, Hip Hop as well as Insanity and Stretching and Limbering.

rochelle-dance.co.uk

Tel 0794 912 1442

At Grays Drama Academy CIC we are passionate about teaching the key elements of Acting, Singing and Music for stage and screen. We cater for students from 6 years upwards and our classes are fun, educational, exciting, and fully engaging for pupils of all ages.



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From Independent Chapel to Hinckley United Reformed Church

(part 8) By Phillip Lindley



Renovation underway in the rear hall

A thanksgiving service for the renovation of the rear halls took place on 3rd December 1989.

The Organ

The organ was built by the London organ builder George Maydwell Holdich, to the design of Henry John Gauntlett, in 1867 for the Union Chapel, Islington.

It was purchased by the Hinckley chapel in 1878 for £600 and installed in the gallery.



In 1903, at a cost of £400, the organ was moved to the front of the chapel.

Contacts & Social Media

HINCKLEY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
The Borough | Hinckley | Leicestershire | LE10 1NL



www.hinckleyurc.org.uk



Hinckley United Reformed Church “The Borough Church”



[hinckley_urc](https://www.instagram.com/hinckley_urc)

ROLE	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
FAMILY	Rachel Cobb	07930 628011	repooolehcar@hotmail.com
OUTREACH & COMMUNITY	Paul Wake	07591 527942	community@hinckleyurc.org.uk
SAFEGUARDING	Chris Sharrock	-	chris.sharrock@ntl.world

MARCH SUNDAY SERVICES

Speakers for Sunday Services, starting 10:45am

9th Margaret Marshall

16th Rev Lesley Mosley (including Holy Communion)

23rd Rae Morrall

30th Richard & Malvolia Benham (Mothering Sunday)

6th April Rev Daniel Cheyne



Organ Recital

@ Hinckley United Reformed Church
Saturday 24th May 3pm

*on the historic Holdich organ given
by Rachel Mahon (Organist and Director of
Music, Coventry Cathedral)
.....Keep the date free!!!*

What's On

- MONDAYS** **STAY & PLAY** | Children's Playgroup
Welcome to all with children 5yrs & under
10am-noon (side entrance). Term-time only.
INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE | Help &
support with practising English for speakers of other
languages. noon—2pm (side entrance)
- WEDNESDAYS** **SPARKLERS** | Children's Playgroup (5yrs & below)
Group primarily for childminders with 5yrs & under
9:30-11:30am (side entrance). Term-time only.
WEDNESDAY @ONE | ecumenical service for all
1pm-1:30pm (front entrance)
- THURSDAYS** **DROP-IN** Chat & Coffee/Tea. All welcome
2-4pm (front entrance)
- FRIDAYS** **PRAYER GROUP** | All welcome
10-11am (front entrance)
- SUNDAYS** **SERVICE** | All welcome. Children's group.
10:45am-noon (front entrance)

MONTHLY PRAYER WALK | All welcome

Friday 28th March at the top of Castle Street, Hinckley.
Ending at the church @9:45am.

HOUSEGROUP Please see David Crick & Rob Cobb for details.

Wednesday @One Services

Wednesday at One services are a half hour ecumenical service available to all, regardless of church or doctrine. Starting at 1pm.

Wednesday, 5th March Anthony Thacker, St Mary's, Hinckley

Wednesday, 12th March Robin Lister Wednesday at One Organist

Wednesday, 19th March To be confirmed Wednesday, 26th March Fr
Frank Daley, St Peter's, Hinckley

For more information, please contact Charles Leggat 07754702241

All are welcome with teas & coffees served after the 30-minute service.