

PRAYER FOCUS

Spring 2018



UNION OF
EVANGELICAL
CHURCHES

sharing God's love and truth where we are

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Brian Wood

It is my privilege to introduce this edition of our biannual publication of news and prayer requests from the 14, soon to be 15, Churches that together form the Union of Evangelical Churches.



On the front cover is the phrase, *“sharing God’s love and truth where we are,”* that summarises our collective response to our Saviour’s teaching on the role of His Church as custodians of the truth that alone sets free. We are channels of His love that knows no bounds, who are committed to *“going and making disciples of all nations.”*

The situations of the individual Churches vary considerably from inner city to rural. These, coupled with differing ethnicities, result in a wide variety of approaches and styles as congregations seek ways of engaging with their local communities at a time when secularism is rampant.

Some observers may question the role of the UEC, arguing that we are only held together by a piece of paper referred to as the ACP (Agreement For Common Purposes). However, they do an injustice to all the unsung heroes who invest their time and gifting in administration, teaching, training, mentoring, moderating, organising and the like, not forgetting those who support through taking intercessory prayer seriously. A big THANK YOU to you all.

At the heart of our support for kindred Churches in the UEC is recognition that encouragement has played a significant part in the Christian Church since the first century AD. For example take a look at what Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-23.

We were disappointed at having to postpone the Fraternal Vision Day in March due to inclement weather, but the new date of 22 September will give opportunity for us to be better prepared.

Enjoy reading the contributions, and keep this booklet to hand so that you can share through prayer in the ministry of all the Churches.

Yours in Him, who *“does exceedingly abundantly...”*

CAMBERWELL

Fred Hintze

By the Grace of God, Church life and activities go on much as before—and there have been some encouragements! Having been Pastor here for 45 years, I have seen many “ups” and “downs” and God is good in all these times.



Numbers at our Sunday services are holding up well. From time to time new people visit us and some stay. Recently, we welcomed a lady from Bulgaria—she has moved to Britain to run a company and has found her spiritual home here at Camberwell. Attendance at midweek meetings fluctuate—it is a feature of our local community—but numbers at our five youth clubs and young people's groups continue to be around 12 to 30.

Our Easter Holiday Club for children and young people went very well, with up to 100 attending. As well as having a good time, they hear the Gospel message, and are encouraged to attend the regular weekly activities we put on.

As we pray for you, so we ask that you pray for us:

- Camberwell continues to be a challenging area to live in. Please pray for the safety of all our members, especially the young people;
- Although we are a busy Church, we need to hear and understand God's will for us at this time. Please pray for us as we consider how to reach out to the young people in our part of south-east London;
- The faithfulness of our older folk is much appreciated, although most are in good health, some of them have concerns;
- Please pray that God will encourage our younger folk to be willing to take on various leadership roles in due course.

CANNING TOWN

Leandro Merigio, Cliff Walk Church

Our challenge for 2018 is to follow the example of the early Church that we read about in Acts 2:42-47. How we hunger for Cliff Walk Church to be marked by worship, maturity, fellowship, service and witness, so that the people of Canning Town are in awe of our God.

Since the previous edition of UEC's *Prayer Focus*, eight of us were privileged to visit Malawi with Zambesi Mission. We learnt so much from our Christian brothers and sisters who are poor materially but so rich spiritually. The distances they walk to church, their vibrant worship without instruments, and their hunger to hear and read the Bible were a humbling example.

In early February we baptised four people in the presence of families and friends—and we discovered that we can get 130 seats into the chapel!

Please pray for:

- The coffee outreach each Saturday on four busy street corners where we offer drinks, food and literature to passers-by;
- The new daytime group, seeking to bring together for fun and fellowship people who are on their own;
- People to lead the work amongst the young people;
- Leandro as he studies at the London School of Theology;
- The reality of God's presence each time we meet together.

The photos show the group that went to Malawi and the coffee outreach team at the end of a busy morning.



CHELMSFORD

Grove Road Evangelical Church

Church life here at Grove Road keeps jogging along, and we remain a fairly positive congregation.

Some families are under pressure at the moment (health issues etc.), but we have 15 to 20 people every Sunday morning, plus visitors occasionally come and worship with us. Our mid-week Ladies' Meeting is well attended, and we have one or two young people as well.

Pastor Mark is busy with his outreach ministry to Muslims, both here in Chelmsford and also in East London. If you would like to receive his Prayer Letter, please contact him direct at mark@grecuk.co.uk. There are also opportunities for street witness in Chelmsford. The Contenders course, which we run jointly with Wickford EC, is well-supported—indeed, one lady explained the problems she had with the Koran and she was helped at the meeting.

Our outreach event before Christmas—a Craft Day—was fairly well-supported, and we also had good numbers at our Christmas Carol Service. We are looking forward to what God will do here at Grove Road in future days, and so we ask for your prayers for:

- Encouragement for our members and visitors;
- Pastor Mark's outreach ministry to Muslims;
- Encouragement for our young people;
- The Contenders Course.



BOOK REVIEW

Howard Gardner

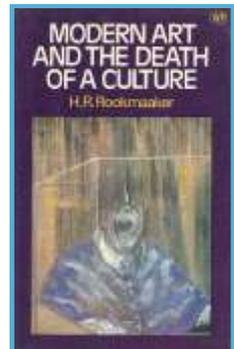
When I was a student in the 1970s, one of the books that helped me understand present-day culture was *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*. It has informed my values and work ever since.

This book was written by Dr Hans Rookmaaker, then Professor in History of Art at the Free University of Amsterdam, and published in 1970. He was a member of the L'Abri Fellowship and associated with Dr Francis Schaeffer. He shows – with much evidence – how modern art reflects the whole culture of Europe – and describes it as a “dying culture”. His analysis of music, pop art, protest and revolution were at the time devastating; he viewed the decline in belief in absolute values as the death-knell of European culture, and modern art pictured this decline so well.

An example of this decline is the front cover picture of the book – and if you are disturbed by it, then you are showing your Christian values accurately. The painter, Francis Bacon, reworked a famous painting by Velasquez, portraying the person (representing humanity) as gradually decaying, declining and (artistically) horrible. A great painting became a cry of despair for lost values, for humanity deprived of its freedom and love.

Dr Rookmaaker builds up a message for our times which is profoundly helpful and positive. He sees the relevance and potential of Christian values – to people, to society, to freedom and to the whole of reality. I found this of great help as I made my way through the 1970s and 80s. But as modernism gave way to post-modernism, it seemed that something was missing in this message. Francis Schaeffer felt this too and didn't have an answer. How do you relate the Gospel to people who have never had absolute values to live by?

For me, the answer is not more facts thrust at people, but first an understanding of contemporary society, then learn how to relate the Gospel to people in ways they can understand and experience for themselves, and then an affirming of their spiritual journey to the one Jesus, Who is The Way, The Truth and The Life. Because of this style (i.e. the content hasn't changed, only the style), the book is out of date, but it certainly helped me early on.



CORRINGHAM

June White

We are thanking God for the many activities that take place here at Corringham.

In November we celebrated the baptism of Josh, which was our third baptismal service during 2017. We thank God for the witness of all those who were baptised.

As a fellowship we again supported the work of Operation Christmas Child and made up a total of 72 shoeboxes.



Also in November we went litter picking around the area of the church, and held our annual Kids' Zone event—an afternoon for children taking part in different crafts. It was well attended.

On a Sunday in December we were due to go Carol Singing around the streets. Although it snowed this still went ahead and gave the opportunity to knock on doors and invite people to our Carol Service which was being held the following Sunday evening.

We would value your prayers for further outreach being planned this year:

- A new *Christianity Explored* course starts in April, this year being led by Chris Mayers;
- Litter Picking;
- Church Summer Party;
- Church Family Picnic.

We thank God for the increase in numbers in The Junior Church (TJC). Our prayer is they will understand the Bible stories being told week by week and they will give their hearts to the Lord while they are young.

CRESSING

Dennis Ivey

If I had to describe the time from the previous *Prayer Focus* to the current *Prayer Focus* I would use the words from a children's song that goes 'Chip, chip, chipping away'. And that's what we are doing. No revival, no queues at the church door on a Sunday, but we have been chipping away doing what we hope will one day have folk queuing up to get in!

On Easter Sunday evening ten of us went to see the *Kingdom of Heaven* at the London Palladium where we became a part of the queue that I guess would number over 1,000! What a witness to the Christian faith: normally the queues outside the theatre are to see a star; we queued to worship the One that made all the stars that light up the dark skies.

As many will know, with help of the UEC, we have completely re-built the church and are well on the way to finishing the church hall. During that time we have continued the outreach of the Church to the local community. We continue to try to think outside the box to try and get people into the church; often these events are purely fun events. No gospel message, but they do get an invitation to come to Café Church which can be their first step on the road to knowing God as their Saviour and Redeemer. Our Café Church is often their first experience of Church and continues to attract a high attendance.

We continue the work of the Work Place chaplaincy, and visit two primary schools on a regular basis. Some of the Church are involved with Cressing Events Group which put on lunches for older folk. These lunches attract over 50 people on a regular basis and when the building work is finished some of the lunches and other events will be held in the church hall. We have a craft group that meets every week (in a home) which provides another venue for folks to meet and enjoy time together. We plan to do an outreach event every month. Please pray for:

- Opportunities to use the church hall so that it becomes a village hub;
- The restarting of the youth clubs and Sunday club;
- That we will have the right people to lead these;
- That the idea of 'Not the Sunday Service' (which will be on Tuesday after school has finished) will come to fruition.

DAWS HEATH

Chris Banks

We are thankful to the Lord for His continued goodness to us as a fellowship, and would value prayer for the following:

- A couple of our people have difficult work situations which are affecting their health;
- We have several elderly people who are becoming frail and need the Lord's help;
- A new family has started attending, for which we thank God, and pray they may settle with us;
- Pray for the Lord's blessing to rest upon our monthly evangelism in the area.



If you are interested in supporting the Union of Evangelical Churches by getting involved in the promotion of events and the UEC please contact Dave Partridge via the UEC Office. We are particularly interested in expanding our use of Social Media, the UEC website and graphic design.

EASTWOOD

Simon Werrett

“The local Church is the hope of the world” has been our focus for 2018 and we have been immersing ourselves in the local community. We hold regular prayer meetings in our local café, building relationships with the owner, staff, and other customers. The bacon rolls are popular, so it is good that some of our members were up early on a chilly Easter Sunday morning to hand out Easter eggs to over 120 children at our local junior parkrun.



The “Beast from the East” brought us so many opportunities to open the church despite the snow. Mums & Tots involved snowball fights with the older kids, a place of refuge for the parents and opportunity to chat. Our winter Bake Off was popular, raising money for a local teenager who had suffered a heart attack and was in a serious condition— we have been praying for Alfie since Christmas.



“If you remain silent...” is our text for the year as we are studying Esther, and our Church is not remaining silent. We held a day of prayer in January which included teaching, group work and time to pray. We have listened to challenging preaching podcasts from Danielle Strickland and Sarah Richards challenging us that the time is now to share the good news of Jesus.

As we are “the hope of the world”, we have been making sure we are fit for purpose with First Aid and Safeguarding training for all members. It is important to provide a safe place for children, adults at risk, and volunteers,

especially as we are seeing record numbers at our Kids on Monday club. Using Social Media we have attracted new parents to our Mums & Tots group, and YouTube is a great asset in them learning new Christian songs.

At both our Christmas and Mother's Day Café Church services we had record numbers, the church being full on both occasions as Graham led thoughts on Bees and Simon on Esther. It is so encouraging that the Rainbows, Brownies, kids and parents support these outreaches and provide us an ideal opportunity to share about Jesus, the hope of the world.

We thank God for so much answered prayer, but do ask for ongoing prayer for our older folk, our leaders as they consider how we deliver Church in 2018. The local community has changed and we need to adapt our methods to that, without changing the message of hope.

Faith Matters Days

Sue Blamey

On 4 November 2017 we looked at the subject "Why should Christians care about God's Creation?" Three representatives from the Green Christian organisation gave presentations on the Biblical perspective on care and concern for God's world, some of the work being carried out by the organisation and ways in which we can help and improve our environment. These were followed by some lively Q&A sessions.

On 24 March 2018 Steve Morley spoke on the subject of "I want to tell you a story". Steve is an itinerant evangelist from Basildon, based at Manor Mission Church with 30 years' experience, gave us a panoramic view of the parable of the prodigal son demonstrating that the Lord Jesus is the master storyteller. Steve talked about the power of stories in the lives of people of all generations and encouraged us to think about our own story of how we came to faith in the Lord Jesus.

On next Faith Matters Day is on 30 June 2018 with the title "What's Your View?" Our speaker is Dr John Benton, Managing Editor of the Christian publication and website, *Evangelicals Now!*, and involved in the pastoral support of Church Ministers and Pastors at the Pastors' Academy. He will offer us a Biblical perspective on current affairs as well as insight into what is happening with God's people worldwide.

GREAT WAKERING

Steve Farrow

Once again we enjoyed a good Christmas season at GWEC. Great Waking Community Choir returned to hold a Christmas Concert in the church, which was well-attended. We also saw increased numbers at our Christmas services, and as usual took to the streets to sing carols. The Choir will be returning again in May for a Spring Concert.

In March, Malcolm and Doreen Hammond celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary—they were married in our church in 1958 and have constantly been very involved in the life of the Church for even longer. It was a joy for us as their Church family to celebrate with them, and to welcome their family and friends for a special service.

As I am writing this we have just enjoyed another Easter weekend, celebrating the fact that Jesus is Alive. We had a time of reflection on the Lord's crucifixion at our Maundy Thursday Communion service and joined with the other Churches in the village for the Good Friday Walk of Witness. On Easter Saturday we held our usual Fish & Chip Supper & Social. Then came our Easter Sunday services, beginning with a short open air Son Rise Service, at which we were joined by our friends from the Methodist Church.

After various delays we now have a date for the commencement of building work on the front entrance to the church and, by the next issue of *Prayer Focus*, hope that the work will be nearing completion.

We are blessed by the numbers we see at our midweek activities (both young and not so young) but it would be wonderful to see more of these folk joining us for worship on Sundays. Life both in and out of Church continues to be busy for all of us, and our motto text for 2018 reminds us of our source of help: **"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength..."** (Isaiah 40:31).



LITTLE TOTHAM

David Brewer

The past few months have seen both challenges and encouragements. Winter weather has brought problems with older people unable to get out, and planned services and events having to be cancelled. The health of others has also restricted some of our plans. On a positive note, however, last October we had a visit to one of our Village Teas from Charity Quinn a gifted singer/songwriter who sang with bits of testimony between her songs. We also bought some of her CDs and this was appreciated by all who were there. Our next Village Tea had to be cancelled due to weather at the time. These teas have proved to be an effective outreach in the village and those who come regularly do ask about the next one.

We've had visits from Jean-Louis Kassis who is a good friend of Little Totham. He preached a challenging message about praying with expectation, reminding us that when we pray we should expect something.

On Palm Sunday we had our annual Palm Sunday Walk with All Saints Church also in Little Totham. Each year on Palm Sunday the congregations from both Churches walk from our church to All Saints a distance of just over a mile, praying and singing on the way, endeavouring to give a joint witness to the village. The All Saints congregation will return to us on Pentecost Sunday in May.

For anyone wishing to have fellowship with us in prayer we would make request for:

- Those who are older and/or in poor health who are unable to get out as often as they would like;
- We want to re-commence a Sunday School sometime soon but need workers and children to come along. We also need guidance on that matter for ourselves;
- Anything else mentioned in this report.

Lastly, we have been encouraged by the addition of another couple who have recently joined us. Their help has already been invaluable and we look forward to benefitting further from their fellowship in the future.

YOUTH CONNECT

Keith Britton

Our latest Youth Connect event was Lasertag, at the Rayleigh Megazone.

If you are wondering what Lasertag is, it's where teams of young people shoot each other. Not quite the thing that Christians should be encouraging, you may be thinking, but it is perfectly safe with the only ammunition being a ray of light—and lots of fun into the bargain. 38 young people and leaders were present – a great turnout !

Youth Connect is the name given to the joint youth events that are arranged three times a year for all young people in our UEC Churches.

Our next one is the annual archery tournament and games, to be held at Ardleigh on Saturday 14 July. Look out for details in due course.

Please pray for the youth work. Young people today have so many other competing attractions. Christianity is no longer considered attractive or relevant to them. Youth Connect is designed to bring our youth groups together as well as being a vehicle for promoting the Gospel in their lives.

Further details can be obtained from the UEC office.



RAYLEIGH

Jason Content

Greetings from everyone at Rayleigh Evangelical Church, also known as “REC”!

Looking back over the past few months, we can see God at work here. The classical music event and the Christmas Celebration event were both very well-attended with young people stepping across the threshold of REC. Sunday morning services did indeed begin, although the evening services are better attended—20 or so. We appreciate the support of friends from other UEC Churches and value their presence at this time of change.

Looking to the future, a *Spring Programme 2018* brochure has been distributed to all the homes within a 5-minute walk of REC. Our prayer is that as we reach out into the local community, we will listen properly to their felt needs and so earn the right to tell of our experiences of Jesus. We have regular events such as 18-30s Nights, Alpha, Career Talks, and one-off events such as a Toy Sale & Puppet Show. The weekly Prayer Meeting is still well-supported and will continue – and has grown into house groups meeting every other week.

REC now has its own website and a presence on Facebook and Twitter. This is a good way of making contact with younger people. Indeed most of those who attend the Sunday evening services are under 35. We are also in the process of forming a music group. Is REC different to how it used to be? Yes it is—our style needs to be relevant to those around us, but the content of the Gospel preached and acted out has not changed; the timing is now.

Please pray for us:

- That people attending the services will experience Jesus afresh in their lives;
- That older friends will continue to support REC despite the changes;
- That finances will improve (they are beginning to!);
- That the Holy Spirit will equip us all for the tasks ahead.



SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

Bill & Nola Hoggard

We are now into our fifth year at Southend Evangelical, and the past few months have been busy. We are still seeing lots of growth in terms of numbers, but more important is the spiritual growth Nola and I are seeing in the congregation, and we pray it will continue. We have been blessed beyond belief, and now have the problem of where do we put everybody when it comes to Church lunches and parties? We are running out of room!

Sadly on Christmas Eve we lost our oldest member, Joyce Muncey, who was 97. She was an absolute delight to visit, always honest and outspoken, and Nola and I miss her. Joyce was the first of several deaths we have had since Christmas, so this has been quite a stressful time.

Two birthdays were celebrated recently, one for Freda Leswell who has reached the age of 90, and Rowena Muldal, who turned 60. Amazingly, we managed to seat 52 people in our small back room which was a miracle in itself.

We have been blessed with a number of people who are musically, technically and artistically gifted and of course, we are making good use of those talents. We now have Easter banners up and one in progress based on the armour of God.

We have more baptisms coming up in the next month, more people wanting to become members and the Church is thriving, praise God. He is good... all the time.

We have two members who are battling advanced stage cancer, and we welcome your prayers for them.



STANFORD-LE-HOPE

Graham Marshall, Fresh Hope Community

The journey that we at Fresh Hope Community are making from being a “fresh expression” of the Church of England to membership of the UEC has been one that we can only say has been marked with encouragements and blessings. We began by quickly losing two longstanding Godly couples, both of whom retired and moved away. We felt confident however that the Lord would replace them. Why else was He opening doors for us, so that we could continue as a new fellowship, if He did not intend to bless us and help us to grow? Over the past 15 months, the Lord has indeed added to our number, and there were perhaps 30 adults on Easter Sunday.

Most Sundays, after the service we sit down together for a communal meal, sharing fellowship until perhaps 4.00pm. We will be reducing this to fortnightly now with everyone bringing something simple to share together.

Bible studies are well-attended (average of 13 people) and a recent Praise Evening attracted 19 people! We are trying to keep things simple, seeking to draw closer to Jesus, to take the Bible seriously, as the Word of God, and trying to live according to its commands and standards. Most of all, we want to see God at work amongst us, in our hearts and lives and ministries, and to make the prayers of the Bible our prayers, such as Paul’s here:

“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 holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:16-19).

Three more verses sum up my heart for FHC:

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.” (John 3:16)

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart.” (Matthew 22:37)

“Beloved let us love one another.” (1 John 4:7)

Surely the Bible and all the commandments are summed up in these wonderful verses! That’s a statement, not a question.

STANWAY

Barbara Ratcliffe

Warmest greetings from us all here at Stanway Evangelical Church.

How quickly time passes by! Christmas is but a distant memory now, but we continue to pray that the seeds sown through the many events that took place will in due time bear fruit. It was a joy and a delight to welcome the local primary school into the church for two carol services which were packed out. We also went carol singing at Sainsbury's—so well-received by staff and customers alike. These are just a few events that took place.

The Light Party (31 October) also gave us opportunities to show the truth that Jesus is the Light of the World. We symbolised this by the release of more than 40 balloons, all with lights in. Parents and children alike were excited at the sight of them as they floated high in the sky on the late night breeze over Stanway and into the distance: it just was so lovely to watch.

By the time this is read Easter will have been and gone and people's thoughts will turn to holidays near or far. Because time does fly by it is easy to miss sometimes what God is doing, and we praise Him that He is at work. It was such a thrill to hear that one of our Parent & Toddler Group mums asked the Lord Jesus into her heart. How good God is.

Hannah, our Youth & Children's Worker, is doing a great job both with our own young people and children and with the local schools.

Sadly we have recently seen three of our older members passing into heaven itself. Much loved and sadly missed but sharing in their joy of heaven's rest.



There are changes in our leadership as Pastor Eric steps down in April after many years leading and caring for the fellowship, and this will bring challenges but also opportunities. The leadership will continue under the care of the Pastoral Team who have all the skills and gifts to ensure the work continues to flourish. This is an exciting time for us as we sense God moving amongst us. Our Sunday worship, our many activities during the week supported by ever-increasing prayer meetings all contribute to our desire to see God at work.

Our text for the year shown below is both a challenge and an encouragement to us all as we recognise who we are in Christ Jesus and as we seek to be the people God wants us to be.

Please continue to pray for us as we pray for you, and may we all know God's richest blessings.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” (Colossians 3:12-14)

SHOEBURY

Phil South

As a reminder, let me explain that Brian Wood represents the Ministerial Committee and I represent the Finance Committee in all the UEC dealings with MyTownSouthend (MTS). This is a not-for-profit organisation that manages the events and courses and meetings that take place at Shoebury.

At the recent Finance Committee meeting, I was able to report modest progress by MTS in growing the usage of the premises, and there have also been some management changes at MTS.

Previously, the Ministerial Committee had considered requesting an extension of the licence for MTS to use Shoebury until June 2019. The Finance Committee agreed to this, and would even consider a 5-year licence. It was further confirmed that MTS should continue to pay all the utility bills and the UEC pays for the buildings insurance. Repairs to the building would be the responsibility of the UEC, being the owners. The Finance Committee continues to support the aim of this project, of providing support and friendship to the local community.

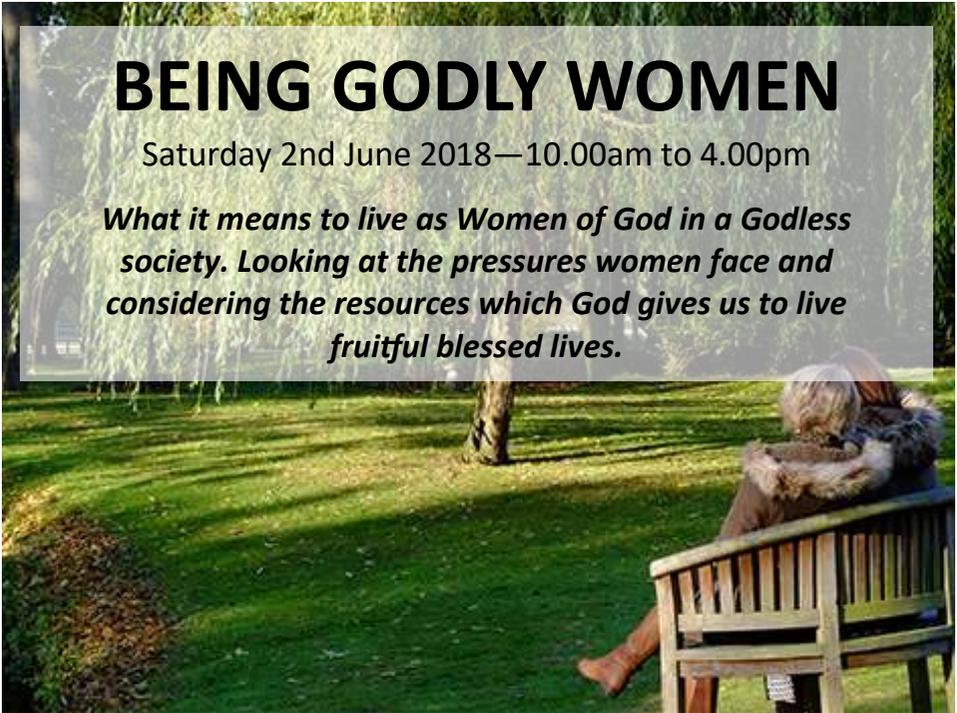
WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE

Ruth Parrott

BEING GODLY WOMEN

Saturday 2nd June 2018—10.00am to 4.00pm

What it means to live as Women of God in a Godless society. Looking at the pressures women face and considering the resources which God gives us to live fruitful blessed lives.



With 2 June fast approaching, could I encourage all ladies to consider booking on to our Women's Day Conference? This takes place at Mulberry House. It will be an amazing day, sharing fellowship and receiving teaching and encouragement from our gifted speaker, Carole Evans.

Carole works alongside her husband David, who is the Minister of a vibrant multi-ethnic Church in Harlow. They feel very blessed to be serving the Lord in this particular part of Essex.

Mulberry House is a Christian conference centre in the heart of the Essex countryside. The events it runs are aimed at helping men, women and young people to have a closer walk with the Lord and to strengthen them in their spiritual lives.

Spaces are limited, so early booking is advised. You can book online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/UECUK or by contacting the UEC office.

WICKFORD

Keith Britton

Greetings from the Church at Wickford.

Although we have no photo of a notable event to offer, it is still with gratitude that we can report the continuation of our regular services, together with the ongoing outreach to the local community.

The latter takes the form of a fortnightly CommuniTea where food and companionship are available to anyone and everyone, and has attracted several regular visitors. Our free First Aid course (leading to a recognised certification) has also been popular. Sadly, the advertised *Christianity Explored* course failed to attract delegates but is still on our website and Facebook page.

A Good Friday breakfast and communion service took place this year, with an Easter Family service on the Sunday. A Church Away Day is planned for 21 April.

Could we also bring to your attention the next 'Contenders' session (a monthly event run jointly by Grove Road and Wickford) on Sunday 6 May at 6.30 pm here at Wickford, when Tim Dieppe from Christian Concern will be addressing the controversial Transgender issue? All are welcome to join us, if you have no evening service yourselves.

Our prayer requests are:

- For a greater awareness and interest in the gospel from people in the area;
- For an increase in our Junior Church and youth numbers;
- For the continued fellowship between our Union of Churches.



CommuniTEA
Open now!
Fortnightly on Tuesday
5.30pm—7.30pm

Please join us in the rear hall at
Wickford Evangelical Church.
A warm welcome awaits you.

UoC UNION OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

WITHAM

David Howson, Valley Church

The text for our Easter Sunday morning service was Isaiah 43:18-19: “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wastelands.”

This has very much been our experience at Valley Church over the past year. God has moved us on to a way in the wilderness, and just as the River Brain runs past our church He has provided the freshness of His Spirit in our fellowship.

Just as God did a “New Thing” in Jesus at Easter, so He really has done a New Thing with us at the Valley. We can see His hand working in all areas of the Church—even in those areas on the periphery. As we hand ourselves over to Him and His will so we see Him leading us into new paths and along new streams.

Prayer:

- For fellowship members with serious health problems;
- For wisdom and insight in dealing with family breakdown, substance abuse and behavioural problems, that we may be able to point them to Jesus so He can work in their hearts and situations;
- For the growth of each member that we may move into a continually maturing walk with Christ. We have been much challenged by our study of Hebrews;
- For the opportunity to speak to people about Jesus’ love for them. And that we would see many more coming to faith.

God is good.



UEC MEN'S BREAKFAST REVIEW

Steve Hensley

In November we had our Men's Breakfast with speaker Simon Pinchbeck from Christian Vision for Men (CVM). He gave his testimony: Copper, Criminal, Christian. 41 men attended this event.

Our most recent event was a joint venture. We hosted a CVM event called Going Against The Grain. The purpose of this was to inspire and encourage men to commit or recommit their walk with Jesus. This event went out to other CVM men's groups in the area plus local Churches.

There were 91 men on the day; if you include the CVM team, it was just over 100.

Just like to thank everyone who came along; God blessed the event and those that came.

Our Next Event is on Saturday 16 June and goes back to our normal style men's breakfast starting at 8.30am. The speaker is Peter Wilson from Restored.

Keep Praying for these events, give God the Glory.



FORTHCOMING DATES

For your diary

Date	Time	Location
Sat 17 March	5.30pm	Youth Connect: Megazone, Rayleigh
Sat 24 March	9.45am	Faith Matters Day: "I want to tell you a story", Rayleigh
20 to 27 May	All week	UEC Week of Prayer
Sat 2 June	10.00am	Women's Day Conference, High Ongar
Sat 16 June	8.30am	Men's Breakfast, Rayleigh
Sat 30 June	9.45am	Faith Matters Day: "What's your view?", Rayleigh
Sat 14 July	TBC	Youth Connect: Archery and Games, Ardleigh
Sat 22 September	10.00am	Ministers' Fraternal Vision Day, Billericay
Sat 6 October	10.00am	UEC Family Day, Rayleigh
Sat 3 November	9.45am	Faith Matters Day: TBC, Rayleigh
Sat 17 November	8.30am	Men's Breakfast, Rayleigh

Prayer Focus magazine, Autumn 2018

The copy date for our next publication is 1 September 2018. Please enter this in your diary so that we receive your article and pictures in good time.



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