

PRAYER FOCUS

Autumn 2019



UNION OF
EVANGELICAL
CHURCHES

sharing God's love and truth where we are

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Keith Britton

The last time I wrote the foreword (which was also my first time as UEC Chairman) I encouraged you to use the publication, not just read it. This time round, I am doing exactly the same. As interesting as it is to read about what is going on in our group of Churches, unless we lift them up in prayer, it is simply information.



So can I suggest that, as you learn of a Church's highlights and its needs, that you silently say, "Lord, thank You for what is going on this Church" or maybe, "Lord, these folk really need Your help with this problem – won't You supply that need?"

Perhaps you are not too familiar with the folk in your sister Churches. If that is the case then ask your Minister about them – or possibly even visit the Church. We try and provide opportunities for such get-togethers, in the form of Faith Matters Days and the annual UEC Family Day. Unfortunately we tend to live busy lives and therefore often miss out on these times. Why not suggest, if it's not your Church's normal practice, to advertise your Anniversary? Like personal birthdays, they should be the time of much blessing – and gratitude for another year of witness to the community.

But above all, pray! Prayer knows no boundaries and, as we come before the Throne of Grace with our praise and petitions, power is released. Graham Kendrick's hymn, *All Heaven Waits With Bated Breath* describes the effect that faithful prayer can achieve in our lives and in the life of our Churches.

So I really urge you to put my request into action. Make the time to prayerfully read through the following pages, use it at your prayer meeting and keep it to hand for future reference. May God move in response to the desire of His people.

WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE

Christine Oxenham

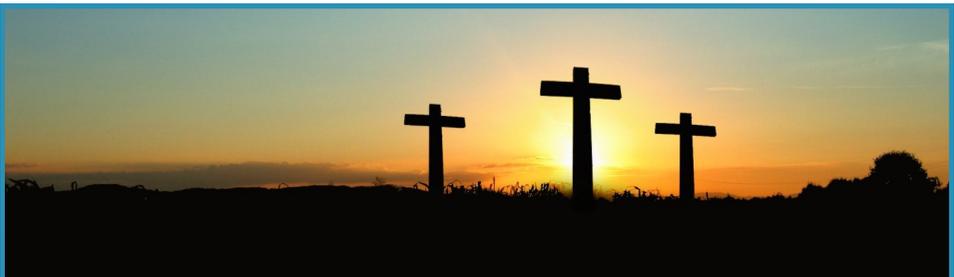
On Saturday 8th June armed with sat navs and mobile phones the ladies set off for Cressing, hoping we would find Cressing Evangelical Church in time to enjoy coffee before the start time of the conference! We all safely arrived to a very warm welcome at the beginning of what proved to be a wonderful day together.

Our speaker was Ann Benton. She is a Pastor's wife and often supports her husband's role at the London Seminary, meeting and mentoring pastors and their wives. She has written a number of books on family issues. Ann chose to speak to us about being Children of the Promise seen through the story of Abraham, giving us challenges to hold onto and share. For example:

- Faith Expressed—Laying hold of God, being not afraid of sharing faith because we have been chosen;
- Faith Stretched—Our expectations of God can never be too high. Our expectations of man can never be too low. Our communication with God can never be too high;
- Faith Vindicated—Have confidence in Christ, don't lose faith, for the Lord will provide.

At the end of the day we returned home thanking God for our time together learning, sharing and being truly thankful for the love shown to us all by the fellowship at Cressing Evangelical Church.

We hope to return to Cressing for a Ladies' Conference in 2020, hopefully earlier in May.



CAMBERWELL

Fred Hintze, Camberwell Evangelical Church

Greetings to our sister Churches in the UEC.

We are pleased to report that I am now recovered and in much better health.

We are also very pleased to tell you, for your prayers, of four people who were baptised here recently. Pray that their ongoing walk with the Lord will be positive and peaceful.

As is our usual programme, we have received friends from Holland – teenagers who visit us with their teachers. This year we were privileged to have two separate visits.

Our plans for the autumn are taking shape. By the time you read this, our Harvest Thanksgiving services will have taken place. Our Christmas Carol Service will take place, which we will advertise widely, together with our usual Christmas Social.

Life goes on, and we thank God for continuing blessings in teaching, preaching, outreach and the social life of Camberwell Evangelical Church.

CANNING TOWN

Trevor Matthews, Cliff Walk Church

We are continuing with our challenge for 2019 as we seek to build lives that are “effective and productive” in the Lord Jesus Christ, based on 2 Peter 1:5-8. We long for Cliff Walk Church to be marked by faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, Godliness, mutual affection and love in increasing measure.

As usual the summer has been a busy time, with increased opportunities for sharing the Gospel and serving our community outside the building. The good weather helped increase the numbers attending our BBQ and our Fun Day and our coffee outreach has at times been overwhelmed by customers stopping for a drink/biscuit/fruit. We seek wisdom about what next for all these people we are contacting so that we may introduce them to our Saviour.



Our new English as an Additional Language classes have been full, reaching people who do not come regularly to the church.

During October we have been hosting on five Wednesdays the Newham Churches Homeless Persons Shelter. This has been a wonderful opportunity for Church members to live out the call of Jesus to meet the needs of the “hungry, the thirsty and the stranger”.

On 31st October we ran a Light Party for children and on 5th November provided hot dogs and fireworks for the community.

Please pray for:

- The housing and other practical needs of many who come to the church;
- The reality of God’s presence each and every time we meet together;
- Our hosting on 15th – 17th November the Trustees of the Zambesi Mission as they consider the strategic priorities for their work in Malawi and Mozambique, countries that are very close to our heart;
- Outreach across the Christmas and New Year;
- God’s focus and priorities for us in 2020.

Here are two photos showing: our coffee outreach team one Saturday morning, and the face painting and craft area at our fun day in Star Park.

CHELMSFORD

Mark Parrott, Grove Road Evangelical Church

Praise God for the appointment of Sam Gardner and John Pond as Elders, and Paul Adams and Winsome Davies as Deacons in Grove Road (recognition of the part they already play on the Leadership Team of the Church).

A second long-standing attendee has also come into membership, for which we give thanks.

We praise God for the addition of a lovely couple from Mexico, although they both have busy lives (the husband is a trainee surgeon).

We were pleased to open up the Church building for the National Heritage Week on a couple of successive Sundays. We had a good number of visitors over the two Sundays, some of whom had family links with the Peculiar People. One of our members organized a 'Peculiar Walk' which consisted of a walk from Grove Road to a former chapel in Great Baddow. Pray that some may be drawn to return to their family roots.

We have undertaken some work at the front of the church, which included taking a hedge out (to stop drug users hiding behind it) and some new raised beds and plants.

At time of writing we are in need of a new boiler, and look to the LORD for His provision in this matter.

Pray for our Pastor, who has reduced his days working for the Church from four to two, to help ease any financial burden. He has now secured work with a teaching agency and tutors out-of-school pupils five mornings a week. He continues to head-up Gospel First Ministries and to visit some of the key Mosques with his team in London every Friday.

Pray for an up-coming Craft Fair at the end of November where we will host a number of stalls in the church. Pray that this would lead to useful contact with the local community.

Pray that we would have wisdom to know how to reach the many volunteers and staff at the new Jehovah's Witness administrative headquarters just outside the city, due to open very soon. Also, the Chelmsford Muslim Society are in the process of raising funds for a brand new Islamic Centre and only

need a further £400,000. Pray that this will be an opportunity for further outreach.

Pray for all our services and the opportunities they provide for sharing the Gospel over the Christmas period.

If you would like to receive the News & Prayer Letter about Mark's ministry amongst Muslims, then please contact him directly via e-mail (mark@grecuk.co.uk). He is available to share about this work at any of our Churches.

CRESSING

Wendy Tilbury, Cressing Evangelical Church

There has been a lot happening since the last *Prayer Focus*. First was the Rededication Service. After what seems a very long three years the new church is finished and the ribbon was cut by Lilian Orton who is the oldest member of our Church. The rebuilding of the church and hall could have not happened without God's guiding, the commitment of the Church and support of the UEC. This is not just a facility for Cressing but is available for all UEC Churches to use.

The second special event was the baptism of Neil Hull. Neil was the main building contractor, whose skill is very evident in the standard of workmanship which included the baptistery used for his baptism.

Ongoing events include 'Litter Picking in the village' all wearing hi-vis safety gear with Cressing Evangelical Church and the UEC logo on the back.

This year we held our first 'Scare Crow Festival' which was well supported and new contacts were made. Our Local Parish Council who are trying to make the parish more community-spirited, sponsored the prizes, and we hope they will come on board with our annual Christmas Tree Festival as well.

Our outreach continues with weekly Coffee & Craft events and working with Cressing Events Volunteers who provide a monthly social lunch for the community; the Chaplaincy at Braintree Shopping Village and Liberty Castings in Witham and two local primary schools. This autumn has seen the start of our involvement with Cressing School's Breakfast Club. Yet despite all this input, we do not seem to be able to get the children into Sunday Club.

The Church continues weekly Bible Study and Prayer meetings and monthly Café Church. We are planning next summer's outreach called Crossing by the Sea! Fundraising events continue with film nights, Beetle Drives and Quiz Nights and our next big event is the Christmas Tree Festival.

Prayer Points:

- That the weekly prayer meeting gains a higher priority;
- That the school work will produce a harvest and youth clubs will start;
- Discernment regarding changing the name of the Church or staying as we are.



CORRINGHAM

June White, Corringham Evangelical Church

We continue to thank God for His love and goodness to us as a fellowship, and the faithful teaching of Gods' word.

Over the Easter weekend the children had an Egg Hunt and due to the increase in numbers over recent years two sessions were held on Saturday morning. In the evening at 6.00pm our Night of Prayer began



and concluded at the "Son Rise" service on Easter morning.

We held our Church Fellowship Picnic in July. We also held a Friends & Family Sunday on Sunday 7th September. We were encouraged to invite people who do not normally go to Church to come to our Family Service, stay for tea/ coffee and then we had a BBQ afterwards. We praise God because we saw new people who had been invited attend the service. We continue to pray for those who were invited but declined the offer.

The following Sunday we celebrated another year of God's goodness in our Harvest Service., This was led by James Tredgett from the London City Mission and he took the food back to the Isle of Dogs, where he works, to hand out to needy families.

Please pray for:

- Richard, Chris and the Oversight as they lead the fellowship;
- A new meeting which started on Saturday 5th October: Who Let the Dads Out. This is a morning for dads/male carers with children under the age of six;
- Our 105th Church Anniversary in October;
- Shoebox Sunday in November;
- Carol Singing/Christmas services.



DAWS HEATH

Chris Banks, Daws Heath Evangelical Church

We give thanks to God for His continued goodness to us week by week.

Back in July we were, for the first time, able to have a stall at the Daws Heath Village Fair. Some of the people who stopped and spoke to us already have some form of Church connection but there were some non-Christians we were able to talk to and give Gospel literature to. We felt this was profitable and God willing we hope to do the same again next year.

We were saddened by the home call of our sister Grace Blake in September aged 91 years. The Lord had blessed her with a long life despite not having the best of health for many years. She has had lifelong connections with the Church and for around 30 years was one of our organists. A number of people from the village attended her funeral service and heard the Gospel, which we pray the Lord will take and use.

Please continue to pray for a move of God's Spirit in the village of Daws Heath and the surrounding area that will bring people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer would also be appreciated for one of our older members, Irene Potter, who is now quite frail. At the other end of the age scale we would value prayer for the children as they meet every week in the Sunday School. We would love to see other children come along to that too.



EASTWOOD

Malcolm Richards, Eastwood Evangelical Church

We are three quarters of the way through another year. What a past six months it has been with many challenging national and world events. What of Eastwood? Well, at Easter, we joined with Eastwood's Parish Church, St David's, and Eastwood Baptist on a Walk of Witness.

Our Brownies and Rainbows and Mums & Tots still come to our Café Church services and we now have a monthly Family Service/Sunday Club. For our Harvest this year we held a Macmillan Coffee Morning on 27th September to lead into our Harvest weekend. The Harvest gifts were donated to Southend HARP and Off the Streets, both Charities who work with the homeless.

As to our regular activities, Leighfields Ladies still meet fortnightly. We have a regular core of children who attend our Kids on Monday Club, Mums & Tots is still well attended, as is Ispycraft hosted by Linda Werrett. We have an enthusiastic group of helpers for these events drawn from the community as well as from the Church, for which we are very grateful.

We are continuing our "Prayer Space" - otherwise known as "Sunago" on Tuesday mornings. We are seeing many answers to prayers, and we thank God for this.

In the Summer, we were able to hold a combined service with Eastwood Baptist and we enjoyed fellowship together.

Our services during the past six months have been taken by our Ministry Team of Simon, Graham and Malcolm, ably assisted by Philip Baden. These have all linked well together and included a "Back to School" themed morning led by Simon at the start of the School Autumn term.

Our prayer is that those who come occasionally to our community events will make the transition to regular attendance.



GREAT WAKERING

Steve Farrow, Great Waking Evangelical Church

We had hoped that by now our building project would be complete and the new entrance would be open, but sad to report there has been very little progress since the last *Prayer Focus*, owing to circumstances outside of our control. We hope that the building work will be completed this side of Christmas, but are looking to the Lord for grace and patience in the meantime!

However, our regular activities have continued unhindered, along with special events. In June we celebrated our 174th Church Anniversary, with services led by David Cordle, and a cream tea.

Our Holiday Club at the end of August was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by the children who came along. Our theme was Waste Watchers and there was a mixture of games, singing, Bible stories and learning about looking after our world. We are already planning to run another Summer Holiday Club in 2020.

As always at the end of September we had our weekend of Harvest celebrations, with our Harvest Supper on the Saturday which also featured entertainment in the form of quizzes, poems and sketches, and our Harvest Thanksgiving services on the Sunday. Over the weekend we collected food which was sent to HARP, Southend's homeless charity, as well as money for Tearfund's harvest appeal.



We were also able to support Macmillan Cancer Support's Big Coffee Morning again this year on 26 September and were able to raise £143.70 for this very worthwhile cause.

Looking forward, we have a return visit by the village Community Choir to hold a Christmas concert in the church on 14



December. We also plan to hold our J.A.M. (Junior Church) Christmas Service and Carols by Candlelight Service on the Sunday before Christmas. We generally find that the concerts and these services are very well attended and bring in folk who may not normally come into the church - a great opportunity to make them welcome, let them know that we are here and what we are believe.

Our regular activities continue to be fairly well attended, from Boys' Club and Girls' Brigade, to the teenage Youth Club, and Ladies' Night and Coffee Hour. We meet with many people of all ages in the village through these activities, but still so many of them do not join with us on Sundays. We value your prayers as we seek to reach out to our community in Wakering, and faithfully preach the Good News about our Saviour. And please be assured that we continue to pray regularly for all the UEC Churches.

SHOEBURY

Howard Gardner

At the time of writing (October 2019) we have some different news about the work at Shoebury.

Sadly, Mark Hobbs decided to remove his Sunday service back to his offices in Southend with immediate effect. It is possible that some folk will remain here at Shoebury, and so a worshipping community can continue. Discussions are ongoing with the UEC Finance Committee and the Ministerial Committee.

Meanwhile the weekday activities provided or hosted by MyTownSouthend (MTS) continue – and indeed grow. Last month an Open Day was held, when people from the locality were invited to have a look at what MTS provides. These include a range of club activities, sharing and support activities, interview techniques, listening to combat loneliness, free and confidential help with housing issues, rent arrears, benefits, technology assistance, community projects – and simply a space to meet. All of these are provided by MTS – and are a testimony to the vision first shared with the UEC by Brian Wood.

All these activities take place Mondays to Fridays and sometimes Saturdays. Once we know what is happening with activities (services) on Sundays, we will share the details with you.

MEN'S BREAKFASTS

Steve Hensley

Our latest Men's Breakfast was held on 15th June 2019. Martin Riddall from Armed Forces Christian Union (AFCU) was our speaker and he spoke about being a Christian in the military services. He talked openly about the work within the military but also on how people outside the military can support this organisation. We had 35 guys on the day who all got something from what Martin was speaking on. It was a great event to bring guys who have a military background along to.



Our next event is on 9th November 2019, again having the normal format of breakfast and a speaker. Our speaker is Matt Baker from an organisation called Sports Chaplaincy UK. These are men and women who want to make Jesus known in sports clubs covering from football, rugby, athletics etc.



These events are free (there is a donation box) but it is advisable to book as we do have a maximum limit (and catering).

Please keep covering these events in prayer for the speakers and the men that come along. I would also like to say a BIG thank you to everyone who helps to make these events work.

To God be the glory.

LITTLE TOTHAM

David Brewer, Little Totham Evangelical Church

Historically our Church has been regarded as “The Chapel” and All Saints Church down the road, with whom we have a good relationship, is regarded as “The Church”.



On 24th June this year we had a real opportunity to raise the profile of our Church when our Parish Council organised a special centennial anniversary event to mark the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War One. Two “Tommys” were unveiled on the common outside the Church. Local dignitaries were in attendance; amongst the guests were The Lord Lieutenant of Essex Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, the local MP the Rt Hon Priti Patel, local District Councillors and the designer of the Tommys that appeared nationally last November. I was asked to join the greeting party on behalf of Little Totham Evangelical Church which also provided the essential facilities plus refreshments.

It was good meeting and talking with various people from high places on behalf of the Church and inviting them to visit us again sometime. It is important that we pray for those in authority, and it’s never more important than it is now.

We’ve been praying for two of our fellowship who have been in hospital for several weeks. Both are described as having “special needs” but each make a real contribution to the life of the Church and are missed when absent. We’ve also felt the need to pray for our families as many of us seem to have issues and concerns for those dear to us.

As we approach the Autumn we plan to continue our Craft & Cookies group and our Village Teas, but our vision is greater than our resources, meaning we would like to reach out a whole lot more and be an effective witness in our area.



RAYLEIGH

Jason Content, REC Church

This is an update of what is taking place here at REC Church. Over the past six months (since the previous edition of *Prayer Focus*), there have been several changes, as we look to God for His guidance.

Holding the Sunday services at 4.00pm is proving helpful, but we would like the numbers attending to increase. The letting of rooms is stabilising our income (in addition to other giving), and we are building up good relations with the users. We are looking at new ways of reaching out into the community besides visiting, and the Foodbank is proving popular – and necessary – for needy families, some of whom come along on a Sunday. We are making connections with other Churches in Rayleigh to set up a CAP Centre (Christians Against Poverty).

The re-ordering and repair works are complete, and we have a building that is more “fit for purpose” than it has been for many years. Plans for a new disabled toilet etc. have been put on hold pending a better specification, but the kitchen and existing cloakrooms are “looking good”! We have not made progress with the re-ordering of the old Youth Room apart from strengthening the back wall with steel ties, but are bearing this in mind for next year.

We are pleased to host a range of events here, including the various UEC committees that meet regularly. The recent Family Day was a great success, and the Faith Matters Days and Men’s Breakfasts are always welcome. We are planning some special events leading up to Christmas.

As we pray for you, please pray for us:

- That you would consider attending REC Church for a while, to encourage us, and for visitors to see a chapel with people in it!
- That we would continue to build good relationships with those using our rooms;
- That the Leadership Team and I continue to listen to the Holy Spirit and work together well;
- That we go forward together and watch the Lord Jesus “build His Church”.

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

Bill & Nola Hoggard, Southend Evangelical Church

Here at Southend we continue to see new folk regularly, and are greatly encouraged that God keeps adding to our number; two weeks ago we had a young lady give her life to the Lord at the end of our morning service and were rejoicing with the angels on this wonderful occasion. It is so good to know that all heaven rejoices with us at the salvation of one soul (Luke 15:10).

The photographs here show our BBQ/Quiz Day at Cressing, which was held in August. We had a lovely day, great weather, great food and fantastic company; we are very grateful to the folk at Cressing Evangelical for once again letting us use their building and lovely garden.

We have recently done some evangelism training with a small group in church who are keen to see souls won for the kingdom in these last desperate days – they are hopefully soon going to ‘hit the streets’ of Southend!

In Sunday School our young folk have been examining the facts on which we base our faith – looking at the evidence that Jesus was a man who walked the earth, and looking at the life He led, including big events in His life that began His ministry, like His baptism and temptation.

Sadly in May this year we said a very sad farewell to Linda Holmes, who had been a member of the Church for most of her life and gave her life to the Lord as a very young girl in the days of the Lambert Street Chapel. We all miss Linda, but are content in the knowledge that she is now eternally with the Lord Who she dearly loved.



YOUTH CONNECT

Karen Farrow

The last Youth Connect event took place alongside and as part of the UEC Family Day on Saturday 28th September (the previous Archery event having to be cancelled due to lack of interest from Churches).

The event started with all the youth meeting at MegaCentre in Rayleigh which has a Laser Tag zone, and the young people enjoyed three games. The age range for the laser tag was reduced due to less teenagers attending than hoped from all the UEC Churches. Fun was certainly had by all.



The young people were then transported back to REC and enjoyed the lunch provided, alongside all those attending the Family Day, and it was a pleasure to see the youth from different Churches interacting with each other and seeming very comfortable in each other's company.

The afternoon event was "The Cube" organised by Stephen and Cynthia Walker (Guest Speakers for the Family Day). This took the format of the television programme with the youth divided into two teams but individually carrying out different tasks which included placing wooden bricks on top of each other with one hand within 15 seconds, a rebound type of game, and trying to walk along a path marked out without stepping outside the lines whilst having a blindfold helmet on. The youth all added up their points, which represented how many attempts they made to complete the challenge. It was very much enjoyed by all.

Whilst the youth that do attend have bonded well, generally there are only ever four out of the 15 UEC Churches represented which is disappointing. Youth Connect was set up to bring youth from all Churches together, whether one young person from a Church up to a youth group of several youngsters. It would be good to see representatives from other Churches attending, which hopefully will also help their youth grow and make new friendships.



STANFORD-LE-HOPE

Graham Marshall, Fresh Hope Community Church

I was pleased to return to the Leadership Team after a 6-month sabbatical, following a short period of ill health. I am really grateful to our Leadership Team of Steve, Christine and Roy, who stepped up and took on all of the main responsibilities. Returning in September, I hope to share the leadership role more than I had been previously.

Our average weekly Sunday attendance is about 24. We also have one child who attends regularly, and three or four others attend occasionally. We need to find ways of attracting and keeping young people. But we are encouraged that our recent Sunday services did give us some ideas – solid and sound preaching, and passionate worship, are vital ingredients, so that people attending must encounter the risen Lord Jesus through the power of His Holy Spirit.

We have two Bible Studies every Thursday, with about 10 attending each. Our Monday morning “open door” outreach called T’n’Toast has sadly not been successful in drawing new people in, but it has been great for our own personal relationships and fellowship, as well as being a good time to do odd jobs and DIY together. I am very keen that we adopt powerful and inspiring vision and mission statements to help guide us in our efforts to preach Christ crucified, and to evangelise our local community, going forward.

Our Leadership Team now meets every two weeks, and I am confident that this will help us take some really important steps forward: actually, taking decisive action is often where Churches fall short, despite lots of talking! I hope that we can put that right, by maintaining these more frequent meetings, so that action points are routinely visited and followed up!

Do please pray for us, brothers and sisters. We want to see the Name of Jesus lifted high and glorified. We want to become known as a place where the Spirit of God is at work in a powerful way, and where men, women, boys and girls come to a real and life-changing faith in Jesus.

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

May the Lord bless you all.

STANWAY

Barbara Martin, Stanway Evangelical Church

Matthew 6:9-13: “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Where is the time going? It is true what they say: days and months fly by as you get older. This is why as Christians we should be more diligent and alert in our walk with Jesus. We get so wrapped up in our everyday busy lives we forget what's important, which is to make time for God in prayer each day, read His Word and grow in our relationship with Jesus.

We are disciples, followers of Jesus and our goal is to spread the Good News of salvation to all who will listen. We have a race to run, a course to complete, as the Apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:7-9 and we will be rewarded at the end. We are His “Church”, the “Bride of Christ”, that He is returning for one day. Let us be like the six wise virgins who had oil for their lamps, ready when the bridegroom came.

A number of our members attend Spring Harvest every year and return inspired and on fire for God and are able to share with us who remain at home, all the teachings, new songs and blessings they received there.

“Easter Unwrapped” in our Church was exciting this year. The name itself was exciting, wondering what's coming. It involved parents and children taking part in various activities over a couple of days, building up to Easter Sunday, which was a wonderful service for the children and parents being entertained with a Puppet Show in Church. The Church was full, not a spare seat, and the atmosphere was electric we all came away with uplifted hearts and full of joy celebrating Christ's resurrection.

Another wonderful day was our Community Fun Day, for which we at Stanway Evangelical Church take part in every year since it started. Over 400 people attended on the green which is located to the side of our church. It was an incredibly hot day that day, and those of us working on the BBQ were roasting! It was a huge success, everyone—young and old—enjoyed the day with gymnastics, dog show, puppet show, bouncy castle, musicians, choirs all taking part. This was a community effort and everyone contributed to it so it was free for all (except for the burgers and hotdogs which cost £1). Not bad, I thought.

We have just completed a 3-day Holiday Club in the Church for children in our community. We had 56 children in attendance and a joyous time was had by one and all. The volunteers for this Holiday Club made this event a success.

There's more to come, the year has not ended. There's Harvest Festival, Halloween and Christmas to plan for. Please pray that the Lord will continue to bless our efforts in spreading His good news and love in our community as we seek to serve Him.

WITHAM

David Howson, Valley Church

What strange times we are living through! Nothing seems to be stable and it is difficult to rely on anything or anyone. What a privilege to serve a great God. We are kings and priests to our God and Father and we have to remember that we shall reign on Earth (Revelation 1:6 and 5:10).

We have recently changed our evening service time to 5.00pm to accommodate those with younger ones and those who don't want to be out after dark. We are starting a monthly study called Living Christianity – Following Jesus in every area of life. This is a very practical study on how to shine into and flavour the world around us.

The process of finding a Pastor has also started and we are very much seeking God's face in this very important activity. God is good and knows exactly what we need and when. We pray that God will lead us into His perfect will.

Several of our Church family have known the loss of loved ones in the last few months. God continues to comfort and uphold those who are sad. Such occasions also allow other family members to be reached with Jesus' love.

Our prayer outreach onto the Humber Estate in Witham continues with several interesting contacts being made. One of the side effects of our digital age is the loneliness that some people suffer. We try to offer a support family in the Church. Please pray:

- For an ever-closer walk with Jesus;
- For wisdom as a Church as we seek God's will regarding the pastorate;
- For guidance in reaching out to those around us and also in the various church user groups. God is good.

WICKFORD

Keith Britton, Wickford Evangelical Church

It's good to be able to once again share some of what has been happening at Wickford.

We thank God for the continuance of our Sunday and mid-week events and His faithfulness to us in these opportunities of sharing the Gospel.

The photo on the right shows our Youth Group at their annual outing (Go-Ape at Leeds Castle). Since that time, William (far left) has moved to Scotland, to start a new job in beef farming. Please pray for him; he will be sorely missed. Also in the picture, Eddie and Anais, have started at University. They too will be greatly missed. On the plus side we have the prospect of two new boys joining the group. So we are starting the new term with a different age set, but they get on well together.



More recently, we have celebrated our Harvest Thanksgiving, when a number of new folk (mostly from our fortnightly CommuniTea event) came to the service and then joined us for a buffet lunch in the rear hall.

Our Ladies' Evening, which runs on the last Thursday of the month, has recently been blessed by a significant increase in numbers. Although unexpected (and requiring extra effort from those who run it) we are delighted by it and pray that lives may be changed through what they hear.

We did not hold our usual Church Away Day this year but arranged, through Day One, to have a guided tour of the British Museum in October. We did this two years ago and those who went learned much about the Old Testament history. I recommend such tours.

Our prayer requests are for additional resources, especially in the young people's areas (Junior Church and the Youth Group), plus for God to work on the hearts of the people in our community as we seek to make known the glorious message of salvation. Likewise we pray for you, our sister Churches of the UEC, in your areas of need.

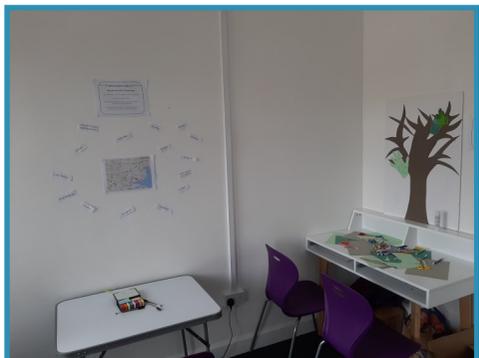
UEC Family Day

Howard Gardner

On Saturday 28th September, the UEC Family Day took place. This followed months of planning by the Promotion Committee and the Youth Connect Committee.

This year, the programme was refreshed by including specific activities for young people, as well as the usual (usual?) workshops, lunch and Closing Worship. The thinking – indeed, inspiration - was that if we could include specific activities for young people, including those who don't regularly attend Church – then they would see that we can have a very good time, and hear some good teaching, and take part in good and uplifting worship.

And so it was, that the Youth Connect Committee organised a visit to the local MegaCentre where about 30 young people took part in Laser Tag – a sort of imaginary wargame with light guns – see Karen's article for the details! All very exhausting for the youth leaders, we reckon! Meanwhile, back at REC Church (the new name for Rayleigh Evangelical Church), the rest of us attended various workshops, all of which were well supported. Little children also had their own "workshop" programme, which was great.



The young people joined us for lunch – and what a spread it was! About 80 people in all, queuing up to choose their buffet lunch and drinks, then off to more workshops. The young people played games based on The Cube (as seen on TV) hosted by Steve and Cynthia Walker, who run the Faith Mission Activity Centre near Stowmarket in Suffolk.



The day ended with Closing Worship led by the music group from Cliff Walk Church, and a Bible reading and message from Cynthia and Stephen Walker. All in all, it was an excellent day. Did the event lose money? Of course it did. Was it worthwhile? Absolutely. And we may well do the same next year: watch this space!



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