

# Connect

## Summer Edition

June to August 2025



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### Editor's Greeting

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I wonder what Summer brings to mind? Warm weather? Seaside escapes? Time off school? The bright Summer days are, for many folk, a real tonic - time to enjoy light evenings and top up on Vitamin D.

The season also brings challenges – hot weather presents risks and we need to take care to avoid over exposure to the sun, aim to drink plenty to avoid dehydration and keep cool when the thermometer is pushing up the limits. Those who are keen on their gardens also face the challenge of ensuring that plants avoid drying out.

Summer can be a quieter time in the life and times of our churches and the Christian calendar rests into the "Trinity Green Season" with no particular high days or holidays to prepare for and celebrate. Some of our groups and activities take a break for the Summer and in some cases, a number of tasks to do with building maintenance are scheduled into the space.

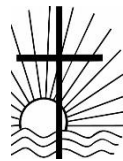
In this edition of Connect we share news of the pastorate churches and look ahead to some forthcoming events. Read on. I hope you have a good Summer.

Revd Adam Earle

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### News from the Churches

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#### St John's United Reformed Church

##### Swift & Small Bird Boxes

As part of our Caring for Creation activities, we have joined our friends at Felixstowe and LSUC with the installation of Swift Boxes. Thanks to a local chimney sweep, our boxes are up. They are situated below the eaves on the south wall of the hall, overlooking the car park.



Just below the centre bar of the window on the right, in this photo, you can see a broadcast box playing 'swift songs' to encourage the birds to think it is a good place to be. This operates, automatically, for about two hours each morning. Swift calls are high pitched and piercing. We hope to welcome some tenants soon but understand that this can take some time.



We have made provision of some suitable accommodation for some bluetits should they find it a desirable location.

On the front of the church, near the garden area in Spring Road, Adrian has installed a bird box of the requisite variety. Let's hope we welcome some feathered residents in due course.

### Christian Aid Week



House to house distribution and collection of envelopes is increasingly difficult for many churches to organise.

However, we continue our commitment to raising money for this vital organisation. On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May, we took the opportunity to expand our monthly Community Coffee with a range of sale items including plants, books, jigsaws and cakes. We are pleased to report that £264.00 was raised.

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May Peter Dawson led our morning service, sharing more of the Christian Aid theme. Envelopes with additional contribution were gathered. We are awaiting confirmation of the sum collected in this way.

### Floor Project

We are please to announce that, following an application to the Synod for funding to attend to some maintenance and improvement projects (highlighted by our Quinquennial Report), we have been provided with a grant to cover half of the cost of some essential work to floor coverings in the building. We are planning to replace a number of significantly worn areas of floor covering. We continue to seek

donations from the church family and friends to meet the remainder of the substantial cost.

### Creating & Singing for Fun

We have recently launched two new, monthly activity opportunities to provide some creative fun and fellowship.



On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May we held our first "Creating for Fun" session. No particular skills are required and sessions are open to all. Folk may bring their own art or craft activity (Knitting, Sewing, Painting, Colouring) or make use of the range of equipment and resources that are available and perhaps try something new.

Refreshments are provided, including some tasty biscuits. There is no charge – although donations are welcome. At our first session we enjoyed creating fold and print butterflies, woolly sheep and a couple of greetings cards. We also enjoyed a jolly good chat.

We would be delighted to welcome folk from other churches and the wider community.

We meet from 14:00 to 15:30, although you are welcome to join for part of the session if you prefer. Forthcoming dates for "Creating for Fun" are: Wednesdays 18<sup>th</sup> June, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 15<sup>th</sup> October and 19<sup>th</sup> November. There's no meeting in July.



On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June we held our first “Singing for Fun” session. A small but determined “founding” group gathered in the church and enjoyed singing a range of songs including such delights as: This Little Light of Mine, Bring Me Sunshine, Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head and Moon River. We followed this with refreshments and some tasty chocolate biscuits. We also enjoyed a good chat and there was plenty of banter and reminiscing along the way.

Again, these sessions are open to anyone. There’s No need to read music and no need to have the voice of an angel. There is no charge.

Sessions take place on a Wednesday from 14:00 to 15:15 in the church. Future dates are Wednesdays 18<sup>th</sup> June, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 15<sup>th</sup> October and 19<sup>th</sup> November.

On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December we will hold a joint Creating and Singing for Fun session in the form of a “Just for Fun” Christmas Party with singing, Christmas crafts and some tasty seasonal treats.

### **Taste Community Café**

For over fourteen years now, a number of St John’s folk, have been involved in running the Taste Community Café in Woodbridge Road. It is a place where people feel safe, welcomed, listened to and above all where people can encounter what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

The project involves Christians from several local churches, aiming to bring the Good News to people who may not otherwise hear. Activities include formal sessions such as “Refresh” and individual discussions with those that we get to know.



The cafe is open each weekday morning from 9:00 to 12:00 except Tuesdays when it is open until 12.30 and on Saturdays when it is open from 10:00 to 12:00. We are closed on Sundays. Come and enjoy freshly made coffee, tea and cakes. You may also buy sandwiches from the bakery next door and we'll provide space to sit and a plate alongside your drink!

The Taste Cafe is staffed by volunteers and can be found among local shops at 426 Woodbridge Road. If you happen to be passing, the team would be happy to welcome you. They are also in search of volunteers to help keep things running smoothly if anyone is interested and available to help out.



**Leiston & Saxmundham  
United Church (LSUC)**

### **One Church – Two Locations**

We are making encouraging progress in our new life together as one church. There have, inevitably, been some challenges especially in terms of the transition to new bank and finance arrangements. However,



we have a clear list of actions and these are being reviewed, on a regular basis, by the officers and elders of the church. We now have an established pattern of elders' and church meetings.

Over the coming months we will be further developing our pattern of services to simplify arrangements and include more afternoon services in place of morning worship in either location. This helps us in the ever-present challenge of finding people to lead worship – a reality across the pastorate.

### **Building Developments & Plans**

We have been very fortunate with Saxmundham Chapel which has not presented us with any significant concerns in terms of repairs or maintenance over the last few months. However there has been a different story at Leiston Church.



Here are continuing with the project to declutter and enhance the building. Recently we upgraded the shelving and storage. Revd David, Revd Adam and Gillian installed the new fixtures, clearing space and helped to organise the stock. Since then, Marion, David and the Food Bank team have been sorted and organised the store to ensure things are accessible and logically arranged.

Unfortunately, we have suffered a significant flood problem causing damage to the ceiling and floor in the hall. Marion and David arrived at the church on a Saturday morning to discover water pouring through the ceiling and the carpet soaked with a layer of water. This was due to the failure of an under-sink water heating unit in the upstairs' kitchen.



Having turned off the water supply, work began to clear up the water. Thankfully the Vax carpet cleaner, which we purchased second-hand a couple of years ago, helped Helen, Gillian and Adam to remove many litres of water and a surprising amount of dirt from the carpet. The carpet is now largely dry and the use of the hall has been resumed. The insurance company have visited and agreed that a claim is appropriate so the flooring and ceiling can be attended to.

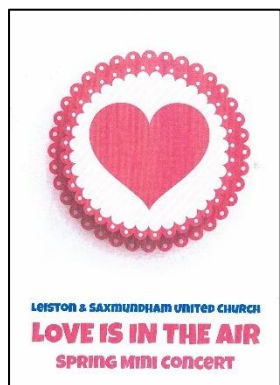
We are very grateful to the plumber Darren, who came out, drained, removed and capped of the pipework meaning that the water supply to the rest of the building could safely be restored. Will can certainly recommend him to others if the need arises.

At our elders meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, we agreed to pursue a building development project for the Leiston building which will enhance the space and use of the ground floor areas of the church. Plans for the upper floor, above the hall, will also be part of the development considerations.

Also on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June Marion, David S., Gillian, Adam and David R. worked to clear clutter and unwanted furniture from the vestry, paving the way for its use as the church office and base for the Town Pastors. There are still a number of items to be relocated or disposed of but it was pleasing to see the space freed up.

### May Mini-Concert & Afternoon Tea

Following the success of the concerts we held in 2024, we have two such events in this year's calendar. The first was held on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May.



The theme was "Love is in the Air" and the programme included a variety of music, songs and instrumental elements with a few sing-a-long moments. The varied list of items covered organ music

often heard at weddings such as The Bridal Chorus and Pachelbel's Canon in D, a selection of songs from the musical "Me and My Girl", Gillian played her recorder for "Some Enchanted Evening" and "Unchained Melody" and everyone joined in with "True Love" by Cole Porter and "Love Me Tender". We all enjoyed a hearty tea and gathered about £60 in donations.

Our next Mini-Concert and tea will take place in **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October** beginning at **14:00** and will be held at Saxmundham Chapel. All are welcome to join us so please do pop the date in your diaries so you don't miss out.

### Start The Week with A Cuppa

Our regular monthly meeting at Saxmundham Chapel continues. Our most recent meeting, on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May, included a series of games of dominoes. Although competitive it was tremendous fun. Our gathering concluded with some music.



Our next meeting is at **10:00am on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June** when we will be joined by a guest to share wartime memories. Some of us are, of course, not old enough to remember the war in person but will have thoughts from family members to share.

We will also have meetings on **Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July** and **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August**.

### Film Lunch



We held our most recent film lunch at Saxmundham Chapel on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May. We enjoyed a ploughman's style lunch and fruited tea loaf. The film, based on a real life story, was "Florence Foster Jenkins". Florence was American music enthusiast and socialite who is celebrated as the world's worst but much-loved opera singer. The film starred Meryl Streep in the title role, Hugh Grant as the husband of Florence and Simon Helberg (of Big Bang Theory) as the pianist Cosme McMoon.

Our next film lunch will be at **13:00 on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August**. The film is yet to be decided but all are welcome to come and join us food is served first and then we settle to enjoy the film.

## 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration



In September LSUC will be celebrating the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of Saxmundham Chapel in 1850. We will be holding a weekend of

events and invitations with full details will be circulated nearer the time. On **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September** we will have a **Celebration Party** with tea and entertainments. On **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September** Revd David will lead celebration worship and on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September** we will continue the celebration with a special "Start the Week" Coffee event. Please do pencil these things into your diary – all are welcome to join us.



### Felixstowe United Reformed Church



In this 80th year since the charity began, we nominated Christian Aid as our May charity. On

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May, in support of the work, we joined our friends from Felixstowe Methodist Church to host a coffee morning. A similar event was held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May at the nearby St John's Church.

At the Annual Church Meeting, on 15th April, the decision was taken to close the deposit account which the church held with Shared Interest. There was only £103 in the account. The Meeting voted to donate this money to Christian Aid's Emergency Appeal for Myanmar, following the devastating earthquake which has left many in a precarious position.

## Church 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Our big news, which also comes by way of an invitation, is that at **15:00 on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June** we will be holding a special service of praise and

thanksgiving to mark 125 years since the opening of our church building – initially as St George's Presbyterian Church. We would like to invite you all to join us for this joyful occasion. The service will be led by our ministers, with Revd Adam providing musical accompaniment. This will be followed by tea. We very much look forward to welcoming you.

### Our New Website

After many years of commitment to building and maintaining our church website, Jackie March decided it was time to step down. We very much appreciate all she has done in this respect and thank her for her work.



The new website, now hosted by iChurch, the URC's own web host and support service, went live in April. The address from



the previous website was transferred so our URL remains the same:

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

There is still some work to do in populating some of the pages but we hope you will find the new site useful and make use of it as you are able. Websites have become, increasingly, the shop window of our churches with many folk seeking information accessing this via the internet.



## Hadleigh United Reformed Church Great Meeting

Looking forward in faith is part of our Christian Commitment – seeking God's will and purposes for us and for our church communities is essential. The elders at Hadleigh (and not forgetting Monks Eleigh), are in the process of reviewing the Mission Action Plan for the church. Mission, in many forms, is at the heart of the purpose for the worldwide church.



David and Adam led our Away Morning on Saturday 26th April at Monks Eleigh Chapel. There were eleven elders present. We began with

coffee and cake. Worship was at the heart of the morning and we enjoyed singing hymns, praising God in prayer and having a time of quiet reflection. We each took a stone and visualised placing our burdens on the stones and then placed them by the cross.

We reflected on the blessings and challenges of our church, using a Venn Diagram to display our thoughts. It was

interesting to consider how some things can be both a blessing and a challenge – for example our buildings.

There was time for another coffee and chat before we turned to discuss our thoughts and hopes for Mission. We recorded these ideas on a large sheet. We finished the morning in prayer.

Revd Adam has written up a record of our discussions and we have planned another Away Morning on **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June** to discern further God's will for mission.

## Hadleigh Show



The Hadleigh Show is a longstanding tradition in the community. This year it took place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May – the 186<sup>th</sup> show. It is a significant event for the community and is one of the oldest agricultural shows in the country. There are competitions, displays, items for sale and a rich variety of food and drink to enjoy.

Hadleigh United Reformed Church was beautifully represented at the event offering tea, coffee, cakes, sweets and space to sit and chat. Thanks are due to everyone who organised the marquee and provisions and all who supported us on the day.

## The Ansell Centre



On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May a special event was held marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Ansell Centre as a charitable trust for the benefit of the community.

Many folk gathered to share in a celebratory tea with scones and cake to share. There was plenty to chat about and a montage of photographs displayed on the screen.

Ruth Rowland, the current chair of the Ansell Centre Charity shared the following potted history:

“Back in the 1830s, members of the United Reformed Church (then the Congregational Church) opened a school to offer weekday education to the poorer children of Hadleigh. In 1863, with the help of John Ansell, a wealthy local businessman, the school was moved into a new, purpose-built building – now the Ansell Centre. When the hall was no longer needed for use as a school, it was used by the URC for various activities and was known as the ‘school hall’.

In 2005, the name of the hall was changed to the Ansell Centre, to be used for the good of the wider community. In 2017, the Ansell Community Centre became known as the Ansell Centre Charity.

Many changes have taken place over the years, from extensive improvements to the building to developments in the way the charity is organised and operated.



The ACC now runs four very successful groups – a digital cinema, two monthly lunch clubs and a weekly memories café. The centre is regularly used by a variety of groups and organisations and is also hired out for parties and other functions. Although the groups run by the ACC are overseen by the trustees, none of them could manage without the continued support and input of our amazing group of volunteers – more would always be welcome.”



Ruth went on to reflect on past and future and expressed thanks to those who have supported the work of the ACC over the years and those who had worked hard to make the celebration event a success.





## Raising Money for Uganda

In the last edition of Connect we mentioned the Quiz Night to raise funds for the FNKD project supporting children in Uganda. This took place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The event, organised by Mark and Fiona Ward, raised £480.50, which included money from the sale of Ugandan crafts and the raffle.



In addition we are working to raise money to pay for the provision of modern toilet facilities in the school and other projects supported by FNKD. This is a new round of the "Spend-A-Penny" collection with novelty collecting boxes made available. The collection ends on 30<sup>th</sup> June – alternatively a donation can be made by electronic transfer via the Castle Hill URC account or card machine.



## Easter Messy Church

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April we held our first Messy Church event for some years. This was in place of the Holiday Club that we have held in previous years. The theme for the session was "Palm Sunday" and there were a number of different activities to enjoy. These included building the "gateway

to Jerusalem" using only a stack of cardboard boxes. This points to Jesus entering through the East gate, riding on a donkey.



We created palm trees from fruit and cereal to remind us of the palm branches that the people waved as they shouted "Hosanna!".

We also "repaired" and decorated broken biscuits, made domino chains, created tear prayers and experimented with milk and food colourings to reflect on how the disciples fled when Jesus was arrested.

The session concluded with a short time of celebratory worship and was followed by a tasty lunch with burgers and ice-cream to follow. The Hosanna! banner shown here was also created during the session and is shown here displayed on the front of the communion table ready for our Café Style worship on Palm Sunday morning.



## Good Friday Walk

Castle Hill have a long-standing tradition of a "Good Friday" walk. This year folk gathered at the Manor Terrace Car Park in Felixstowe. The walk began at 14:30. The route took us



along the sea front ending at “Sea You”, a rather splendid café, where we enjoyed welcome refreshments.



## The In Between Club

The In Between Club was established in 1994 – so named as it was intended for those who were “too old” to be part of the Castle Hill Amateur Players but “too young” for the “Tuesday Fellowship”. The group has continued under the leadership of various folk and members have many precious memories of happy times and activities shared together.



The group meets nine times each year on the first Friday of the month. They enjoy time together with various talks, entertainments and presentations, and share tea and cake. We pleased that the group will be able to continue for the foreseeable future and have plans in place.



At our meeting on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, we marked the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory In Europe (VE) day. We enjoyed a tremendous musical presentation and entertainment and joined in the singing with enthusiasm.



## Mussbach Twinning Visit

Castle Hill Church has a longstanding partnership with the church in Mussbach. Alternating year by year friends from Castle Hill travel to Mussbach or friends from Mussbach come to Castle Hill. This year we welcomed our Mussbach friends, from 1<sup>st</sup> May.

We had an action packed and entertaining few days which including a visit to Levington for a walk to enjoy views of the Orwell, followed by lunch at The Ship. On the Saturday we visited Kentwell Hall in Long Melford including a Tudor May Day re-enactment with dancing. In the evening we shared a delicious meal at Castle Hill and a social evening with fun and laughter shared.



On Sunday morning we shared worship and communion led by Revd David. Monday was a free day for host families entertain their

guests. On Tuesday we all met at the Pier in Felixstowe and enjoyed a walk together.

## Christian Aid



We are always pleased to support the work of Christian Aid. In addition to the envelope contributions, which raised over £350, we're very grateful to everyone who supported

the Cake sale, by providing or purchasing cakes. This was held after our morning service on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May. A very pleasing £185 was raised.



The sessions were overseen by Robin Baden, Director of Church Resource Development at Westminster College. He introduced speakers, kept things on track and helped to draw together the different strands.

There were daily Bible studies led by Hannah Fytche, Associate Tutor in New Testament at Westminster College. She led folk to consider some of the characters who worked with Paul in the writing and delivery of his letters and in continuing the mission. Some of these characters only get a very brief mention but, with the aid of various pieces of artwork those present were able to engage with them and reflect further.

The main sessions reflected on intersectional thinking – identifying the places where people's lives and experiences crossed over. Folk also considered the realities of intergenerational and intercultural church life and service and the distinction between welcome and inclusion.

The various speakers deployed different ways of presenting and engaging with those attending. One session involved the use of lego to explore concepts and metaphors. It sounds complex but it was very useful.



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## News

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### Ministers' Spring School 2025

Each year, working in partnership with Thames North Synod, the Eastern Synod organises a Ministers' Spring School to support their ongoing training and equipping them for service. They also enjoy time with colleagues to exchange ideas and encouragement.



This year, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May, around forty ministers and synod officers gathered at Highgate House in Northamptonshire. This is a new venue made available by the Christian Conference Trust who also operate High Leigh (Hertfordshire) and The Hayes (Derbyshire).



Evening entertainments included a Quiz and the opportunity to “go back in time” to enjoy a primary school singing assembly with many old favourites included.

The venue, facilities and food were much appreciated and the team have already booked to hold next years’ Spring School there.

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## Caring for Creation – Eco Church

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### How does your garden grow?

Looking ahead to the Autumn, around the season of harvest, we will have our next round of Caring for Creation services. Unlike the Spring services these won’t all take place on the same Sunday, but will instead be held in each church when either Revd David or Revd Adam will be leading worship.



Our theme for these will be “How does your garden grow?” and we will explore ways in which the things we grow and our gardening habits impact on the

environment. Not everyone has a garden of course, maybe just a balcony, a window-box or even a window-sill, but even these can make a difference. We will also reflect on some of things that we are doing as churches to promote good practice in gardening and encourage biodiversity.

In readiness for this it would be really good to have pictures and ideas as examples to share. If you are able to provide any

photographs of ways to make the most of small spaces or ways to increase the positive environmental impact of your garden then please do let Revd Adam have them. You can email images and ideas to him on [revaje@outlook.com](mailto:revaje@outlook.com) or let him have them on paper if you prefer. We can then celebrate and share some of things we are already doing.

### Replace or Repair



During the war years folk were encouraged to make do and mend, and many folk developed

good habits regarding environmentally friendly living. Repairing things we already own is a fantastic way to reduce waste, conserve natural resources and lower our carbon footprint. Every item saved from landfill helps protect the planet.

Before you throw away that faulty hairdryer or discard that silent alarm clock, consider taking it to the Suffolk Repair Shed. Skilled volunteers might be able to bring it back to life – saving you money and reducing waste. If your item can be fixed you can make a donation or your choice, if not there is no charge.

You can find the local Repair Shed at Unit 15 Martlesham Creek, Sandy Lane, Woodbridge IP12 4SD. Find out more by visiting the website: [www.suffolkrepairshed.org](http://www.suffolkrepairshed.org)