

CONNECT

SPRING EDITION

MARCH to MAY 2024



EDITOR'S GREETING

Revd Adam Earle

Edition Number 6 of Connect is upon us. We find ourselves, at the start of March, in the middle of Lent and heading rapidly towards Easter. The days are lengthening (the source of the word Lent) and we are able to enjoy the displays of spring flowers as the bulbs that have laid dormant through the cooler months poke their shoots through the soil and burst forth with colour. There is nothing more pleasing than a flourish of snow-drops, crocuses or daffodils. We have quite a few tete-a-tete growing around the external walls of my study.

Easter is, of course, the season of new life. Check out the various ways that the churches will be marking and celebrating the events of Holy Week and Easter. The fourth Sunday in Lent is also the day we share "Mothering Sunday". All of our pastorate churches will be marking the day in various ways.

In April we will have the first of two "Caring for Creation" Sundays with all the churches sharing worship using similar materials and the theme of caring for creation. Further details are given later.

In May we mark the festival of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of a new chapter in God's plan for the world. The following week is Trinity Sunday which, unlike other festivals does not celebrate a festival or event in the life of Christ or the Church but rather a way of thinking and believing about God.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

LEISTON UNITED CHURCH



PARTNERSHIP at Leiston, as is increasingly the case for all of us, is a major feature of the mission section of our Mission Action Plan. We have identified a number of ways to build mission through partnership. Partners, in addition to the other churches of the Ipswich and East URC Pastorate, include Saxmundham URC, Local Community Projects such as Project 47 (in a neighbouring property) and Leiston Christians together.

We are continuing to hold discussions with Saxmundham as we move forward and joint services are now an established feature in

our plans for worship. We make the most of these opportunities to share special moments and hear from different worship leaders.



Through **LEISTON CHRISTIANS TOGETHER** we are meeting monthly to pray together. In January we gathered at Leiston Baptist Church although we arrived half an hour early but thankfully the folk there were ready to provide a welcome mug of coffee whilst others joined us. In February we met in the small side chapel at St Margaret's church and focussed in particular on a passage of scripture, marking the beginning of the Lenten period. On **Tuesday 12th March (10:00am)** we will gather at the Quaker Meeting House and on **Tuesday 9th March (10:00am)** at All Saints RC Church and on **Tuesday 14th May (10:00am)** we will be hosting the meeting at the United Church.



After a considerable period of discussion regarding the wording of the agreement we are pleased to report that the legal team representing the URC Eastern Synod Trust have accepted the "**ACCESS AGREEMENT**" to enable the crossing of church ground to access the premises of the exciting **Project40Seven**.

The project provides a variety of opportunities for local artists, crafters and artisans as well as providing a "Library of Things" such as tools and devices, that people can borrow for various projects and then return for others to use. There is also a regular repair shop and the building hosts a Community Pantry which complements the work of the Leiston Food Bank (hosted by LUC) and we are working in partnership in sourcing and sharing food. They also house

the refill shop offering an eco-friendly option.



The **FOOD BANK**, which is open every week from 10:00 – 11:30am on Friday and Saturday, is always grateful to receive donations both of food and finance. We wish to extend our thanks to all those who continue to contribute on a regular or occasional basis to help us keep the shelves stocked.

We would like to acknowledge, in particular, a generous donation from the Rabble Chorus, who nominated us as one of the food bank projects they supported with collections taken at their Christmas concerts last year (2023). They sent us over £1300 which is a real boost and will enable us to continue to support those in need of extra help.

If you'd like to find out more about the Rabble Chorus, a local singing group with many members, they have a website which you can find here:

<https://therabblechorus.co.uk/home>

SAXMUNDHAM URC



We are continuing with our "**START THE WEEK WITH A CUPPA**" on a Monday morning once each month. In January we shared some interesting games and activities which included a word game called "Zip-It". Each player rolls twelve letter dice and attempts to construct words in a "crossword" layout. It's a race to be the first to use all the letters – both players play simultaneously. We explored a magnetic construction set with surprisingly powerful little magnets. To cap it all we played a game which involved throwing two plastic

pigs (yes you did read that correctly); scoring points depending on how they landed.

You are always welcome to join us and invite others. Our next few meetings will be as shown below. All are welcome to join us.

MONDAY 25th MARCH

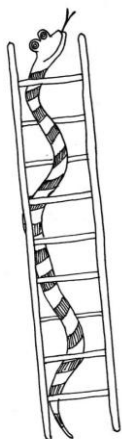
10:00 – 11:30



As well as our usual refreshments and conversation, Revd Adam will be giving us a short recital on the organ. It's an unusual little instrument with a single manual and pedals. It is small but surprisingly versatile. There will be (albeit slightly ahead of time) some hot crossed buns to enjoy and a fun game of bingo with Easter themed prizes.

MONDAY 29th APRIL

10:00 – 11:30



On this day we will have the opportunity to play some traditional games including the ever-popular Snakes and Ladders – expect excitement and frustration in equal measure. There may also be a game of Scrabble – be prepared for a challenge as we have several enthusiasts in our number.

MONDAY 27th MAY

10:00 – 11:30



We are always open to suggestions for ways to share fun and fellowship together. If you have any suggestions we'd love

to hear. Or just come along and share your interests and enthusiasms with us.



On **Saturday 24th February** we held our first, for a very long time, **FILM AFTERNOON**. Our Video Licence permits us to show films although we cannot advertise them in advance in public contexts. We can report, after the fact, that the first film we watched was **“The Great Escaper”** - starring Michael Caine, Glenda Jackson and Wolf Kahler. It tells the true story of Bernard Jordan who escaped from his care home to attend the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in France. Afterwards we shared bacon (or vegetarian sausage) sandwich rolls and apple pies.

Our next film afternoon will be in April and will feature a “Golden Oldie” but we cannot say which one! We will let folk know the date and arrangements once they are confirmed.

CASTLE HILL URC



Last Autumn we launched a new initiative called **WARM WELCOME – Coffee & Chat**. Every Tuesday morning from 10:00am to 12:00pm we open up the kitchen and meeting room to serve refreshments and snacks for any who wish to join for a time of friendship, conversation and some activities.

This builds on the monthly Coffee and Cake which still takes place on the first Tuesday and continues, incorporating the Warm Welcome. There is always an excellent choice of cakes to tickle the tastebuds and plenty of people to share in conversation.

It has been great to welcome so many folk and we hope to continue this as a regular thing going forward.



Once each month, on a Friday, Castle Hill are glad to host **FISH-N-CHIP FRIDAY**. Organized by Headway, with support from folk at Castle

Hill, it is an opportunity for those living with Dementia and their carers to get together and share in activities and entertainment. As the name suggests, each gathering includes a delicious meal of fish and chips. Sessions cost £10 which includes the food, tea, coffee and biscuits as well as any activities or entertainment. There is no need to book in advance as food is ordered and collected once numbers attending have been confirmed.

On 22nd December (2023), Fish-n-Chip Friday included a most enjoyable sing-a-long of Christmas carols. After our meal, with the addition of a cheeky mince-pie, an entertainer and friend of the group, gave us a seasonally inspired performance of music and song.



Beginning in January we are hosting a regular **AFTERNOON SERVICE** at Castle Hill at **16:00** in the meeting room. This is a service for anyone, across

the pastorate, to join in with. There had been a number of requests from folk at Castle Hill for this, we decided to give it a go.

Everyone is welcome to attend in person or you can log in to Zoom to participate. The next service will be on **Sunday 14th April**. (We are not holding one in March as we have the Lent service series).

To join via Zoom you can login to the Castle Hill Zoom Room ID: **889 953 6542**. You will be most welcome.

CAFÉ STYLE SERVICE continues to be a regular part of our worship plan. The church is laid out with tables and chairs and drinks and snack are available throughout the worship time. We hold these about once a quarter.



Our most recent service of this type was held on Sunday 11th February. Our theme (as this was the last Sunday before Lent) was the Transfiguration which we explored through paintings (such as the one shown here) and examined the account of the events found in Mark's Gospel. The service included a short drama sketch, time for reflection and open prayer. One special treat was the sharing of pies, apparently a Transfiguration custom as the contents are hidden until broken open to reveal the filling.



Our February half-term gathering of **"WONDERFUL WORLD"**, an activity for Primary and Lower secondary aged children was held on Thursday 22nd February. Our theme this time was "The Human Body – Excellent Engineering Inside and Out". We reflected on Psalm 139 especially verses 13

and 14, "You made my whole being. You formed me in my mother's body. I praise you because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way. What you have done is wonderful. I know this very well."

We discovered many things about our bodies and how they work. We explored our eyes by making pin-hole cameras and puzzling over optical illusions. We experimented with writing and drawing with both hands, explored the symmetry of our faces (no they aren't symmetrical) and attempted a range of challenges to see what we could or could not do.

SPRING SALE

Saturday

23rd March 2024

14:00 – 16:00



Coming up in March we have a **SPRING SALE**. Unlike our Christmas Fayre, this will be an opportunity for local crafters, artisans and sellers to book tables and sell their products. The church will be providing refreshments.

You are all welcome to come and join the fun and find a few interesting items to purchase.

Looking a little further ahead, to the week after Easter, we have our **HOLIDAY CLUB**. This is being held on **Wednesday 3rd April**

from **10:00am to 12:30pm**. Our theme this year is **Bright Sparks** and will focus on three Parables of Jesus – The Lost Sheep, The Pearl of Great Price and The Two Builders.

There are a limited number of places as in previous years, but if you know anyone who might be interested do let them know.



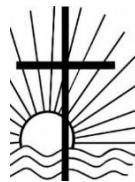
HOLIDAY CLUB

WEDNESDAY 3rd APRIL 2024

10:00am – 12:30pm

If anyone wants further details or to request a sign-up form please contact Revd Adam via email: revaje@outlook.com and he will send one in return.

ST JOHN'S URC



The **FRONT GARDEN** on the Spring Road has now received further attention. We have installed a smart new bench, adjacent to the bus stop. The bench is fixed to a concrete base and will, hopefully, provide a welcome resting place for folk waiting for the bus.



The bench, manufactured by **MARMAX** is made from recycled plastic milk bottles. These benches are highly resistant to wear

and, unlike timber, will not decay over time. Each bench uses several thousand milk bottles which are melted down, coloured and extruded to form the different elements and them screwed and bonded together. You may recall that one reason for the need to develop the garden was damage done to the plants by a road accident in which an ambulance was forced off the road. Thankfully the dense bushes that were there absorbed much of the force of the collision, avoiding damage to the building.

Unfortunately in the early morning on Saturday 2nd December another road accident occurred, due to icy conditions. This time two cars were in collision and one was forced over the remaining bushes at the corner of Spring Road and Cowper Street. The car struck the corner of the church building damaging the fire exit door and shunting part of the wall inwards. We are now awaiting repair of the wall which will, at least in part, have to be rebuilt and a new fire escape door fitted.

COMMUNITY COFFEE continues to be a regular feature in our monthly calendar. This takes place on the second Saturday of each month from 10:30am to 12:00pm. There are often bacon butties alongside cakes and biscuits to be enjoyed and it provides a great opportunity for conversation and fellowship.

Forthcoming dates are:

SATURDAY 9th MARCH
SATURDAY 13th APRIL
SATURDAY 11th MAY

Following receipt of the **QUINQUENNIAL REPORT** on our building we, like several other



churches in the pastorate, are considering the work that has been recommended and prioritising tasks according to what can be done by our hard working in-house team and what will require professional input. For some of the more manageable tasks we have set aside a few “Work Mornings” which coincide with days when we have Community Coffee. The next one will be in April.

As with the other churches in the pastorate we have been continuing to work on our **MISSION ACTION**



PLAN and to explore ways in which we can develop our Worship, Nurture (pastoral care and discipleship) and Mission. At our February Church meeting we looked, in particular, at the Worship section of the MAP and considered ways in which different elements such as poetry, drama and art work and different formats, such as Café Style Worship might be explored. We will also consider ways of engaging further with the uniformed organisations (Brownies and Rainbows) who make use of the premises.



Those who participated and those who enjoyed the contributions from the Joint (Castle Hill & St John’s) Singers at the Advent Service (held at St Johns) and the Candlelit Carol Service (at Castle Hill) were keen that we should find other opportunities to sing and make music together.

In April, at St Johns, we are planning to hold another **HYMN SING**, to which, we hope, the joint singers will contribute. This will be on **Saturday 20th April at 15:00**, followed by refreshments. All are invited to come and join in. Further details will be shared shortly

and Revd Adam will be in contact with those who took part in the joint singers as well as any others who would like to join the group, to make arrangements for a rehearsal.

FELIXSTOWE URC



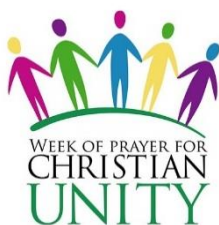
On the second and fourth Tuesday of each month we hold a time of informal worship, in the small hall, entitled **REFLECTIONS**. These are led by various folk and usually include questions on different themes, with discussions and sharing of ideas. In addition, Scripture Readings, Hymns and Songs, Prayers and other elements are included.

These gatherings are open to all and begin at **10:30**, usually lasting no more than an hour including a welcome time for refreshments and fellowship after worship. Dates for this quarter are:

TUESDAY 12th & TUESDAY 26th MARCH

TUESDAY 9th & TUESDAY 23rd APRIL

TUESDAY 14th & TUESDAY 28th MAY



On Sunday 21st January, to mark the **WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY** the annual United Service organised by Churches Together in Felixstowe, of which we are part, was held at St Peter and St Paul Church, Old Felixstowe. This event brought together Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Salvation Army, and United Reformed Church congregations.

This year's theme, drawn from the parable of the Good Samaritan, posed a poignant question: "Who is my neighbour?" It aimed to prompt reflection on the essence of Christian love and its manifestation as sacrificial selflessness.

Bishop Peter Collins (Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of East Anglia), despite a challenging journey from Norwich that was doubled in time due to severe weather conditions, delivered a moving address. *'If I do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.'* He spoke to the ecumenical congregation of *'Christian love having the potential for being the sublime expression of sacrificial selflessness.'*

The service underscored the commitment of Churches Together in Felixstowe to fostering unity and cooperation among the town's diverse Christian communities. It served as a vibrant platform for dialogue, prayer, and worship, encapsulating the event's core message of love and unity.



SAFEGUARDING is an important part of the work and commitment of each of our churches and part of the legal responsibilities overseen by the elders. On 22nd

January, a number of folk, all part of our pastoral team, undertook the foundation stage training, available as an online course, together.

The training material has been adapted following the launch of the new "Good Practice 6" the latest guidelines and policy for safeguarding published by the URC. The training ensured that we were up to date and refreshed our understanding of the key elements and procedures for securing safeguarding for all.



Felixstowe URC are also, as part of our **MISSION ACTION PLAN** seeking to develop partnership in mission in a variety of ways.

We continue to support the local Ukraine 2 Felixstowe project with the Hub Facility. They also now have a monthly, Sunday afternoon, gathering known as C4 – Coffee, Cake, Craft and Chat. They have undertaken a number of projects, there are activities for children and a bike repair service as required. Part of the reason for establishing this was to ensure that our Ukrainian guests have the opportunity to practice speaking English, with English folk, in an informal manner.



FELIXSTOWE
methodist church

We are also continuing to explore further activities and

partnership **FELIXSTOWE METHODIST CHURCH**. The churches, formerly known as the Felixstowe Peninsula Methodist Churches, have now joined to form one church in four locations, known simply as Felixstowe Methodist Church. They have one set of officers and stewards and one finance lead with resources shared.

As part of our Mission Action Plan, we have agreed to pursue a closer relationship and missional activities with the following objectives in mind:

- Ensuring inclusion of (at least) quarterly joint worship opportunities at either FURC of FMC (Trinity Site) in addition to Good Friday and Christmas Day. N.B. Our next joint service will be on Sunday 5th May.
- Share publicity regarding events and collaborate in longer term planning to

avoid duplication, increase mutual support of events and activities and compliment what is offered.

- Identify some key collaborative missional projects in which to engage in partnership.
- Increase awareness and fellowship between members of the churches and share prayer needs for regular inclusion in worship and other prayer times.
- Investigate shared publicity opportunities for raising awareness of both churches in the community e.g. representation in simple ways at community events.



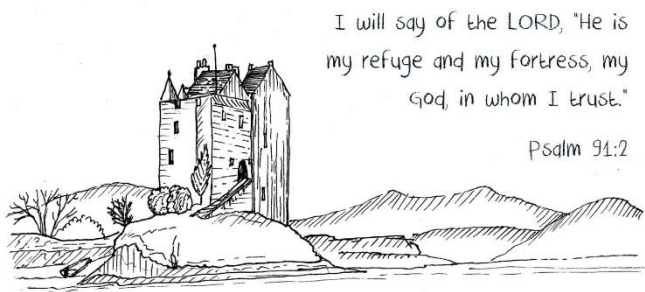
In early April we are planning to hold a **CHARITY AFTERNOON TEA**. This will be on a Saturday and the arrangements will be

confirmed following some enquiries about the activities of other local churches and availability of folk to participate. We will let the other churches in the Pastorate know once details have been confirmed and would be delighted to welcome friends from far and wide to join us and help support us and the nominated charities.



As with all the pastorate churches we like to make our **BUILDINGS** available

to other organisations. We now have a regular, weekly (throughout the year) booking for the large hall, each Saturday morning from 8:00am for a Slimming World Group. This has got off to a flying start with encouraging uptake and consideration is being given for an addition group meeting slot.



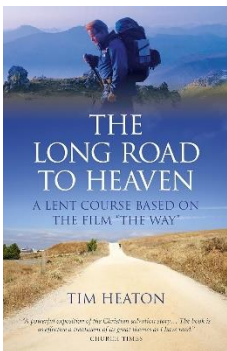
PASTORATE NEWS



In January Saxmundham URC, Leiston United Church and Castle Hill URC were pleased to welcome our **EASTERN SYNOD MISSION AND TRAINING OFFICER**, Revd Jo Clare-Young, to lead worship

and share ideas about whole life discipleship and mission. She shared some lively and thought-provoking ideas.

Jo was also due to visit St Johns and Felixstowe but unfortunately was unwell. She is now back at work and we offer her our supportive prayers and blessing. Jo has a new date booked to come to St John's in October and will find an opportunity to visit Felixstowe in due course.



Our Pastorate **LENT COURSE** is now underway with folk from all of the churches taking part. Leiston and Saxmundham joining in via a Zoom link and sharing their own group discussions. We also

welcome folk from Christ Church URC and their minister Revd Neil Coulson, is joining Revd David and Revd Adam in leading and participating in the sessions.

The course entitled "The Long Road To Heaven" calls us to reflect on Salvation and

Faith's journey. It makes use of clips from the excellent film "The Way". The story of the film is very thought provoking and provides plenty of inspiration for reflection and discussion. It is particularly refreshing to learn how different people understand the issues raised and to develop confidence in talking about faith and our faith journeys.



Last year we held a series of afternoon services tracking the journey through Lent, visiting each of the churches in turn. This year we are doing so again with a series entitled "**KEEPING LENT**". We are, at the time of writing, part way through the series having visited Leiston (shared with Saxmundham) on 18th and Castle Hill on 25th February.

The remaining dates and host venues will be as follows:

SUNDAY 3rd MARCH

15:00 @ St John's URC

Cowper Street, Ipswich IP4 5JD

Prepared and led by Revd Adam

SUNDAY 10th MARCH

15:00 @ Felixstowe URC

Orwell Rd, Felixstowe IP11 7NZ

Prepared and led by Revd Adam

SUNDAY 17th MARCH

15:00 @ St John's URC

Cowper Street, Ipswich IP4 5JD

Prepared and led by Revd David

The reflective services, which last between 30 and 40 minutes are followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments. You are welcome to attend any of these.

If you are not able to be there in person we are also making the times of worship

available via Zoom. To join via Zoom you can login to the Castle Hill Zoom Room ID: **889 953 6542**.

DID YOU KNOW that during the fasting season of Lent, the Sundays remain feast days and are in addition to the forty days and nights.



MOTHERING SUNDAY aka Mother's Day or Refreshment Sunday (flowers are "permitted" in church on that Sunday) falls on **Sunday 10th March**. All the churches in the pastorate will be remembering this special day. In our worship we will give thanks for mothers, those who have been like a mother to us and celebrate God's love and care. We will also hold in prayer, all who may find the day difficult.

CASTLE HILL URC

10:30am Mothering Sunday Worship
Led by Mrs Andrea Rumsby

ST JOHN'S URC

10:45am Mothering Sunday Worship
Led by Mr Peter Dawson

FELIXSTOWE URC

10:30am Mothering Sunday Worship
Led by Revd Adam Earle

LEISTON UNITED CHURCH

10:30am Mothering Sunday Worship
Led by Mr William Glasse
(Service includes Communion)

SAXMUNDHAM URC

10:45 Mothering Sunday Worship
Led by Revd David Rees
(Service includes Communion)



CARING FOR CREATION is an important part of our calling and service to God and others. We are stewards of creation and recognize that the choices we make and the actions we take have a significant impact on the world.

With the threat of climate change and global warming, already bringing significant harm and concern to so many, we must continue to take this seriously. The pastorate Caring for Creation have asked that we have two services each year, across the pastorate, holding this in our hearts and prayers.

The first of these services for 2024 will take place on **Sunday 21st April**. Each church will be making use of similar material. Leiston and Saxmundham will have a joint service led by Revd David. St John's service will be led by Revd Adam. The C4C team will lead a hybrid service at Castle Hill, with a pre-recorded message from the ministers. Allison and Ann will lead a similar hybrid service at Felixstowe.



**HOLY WEEK
& EASTER**
Across the Pastorate

It is always good to know what each of the churches will be doing to mark and celebrate the events of Holy Week and Easter.

PALM SUNDAY - 24th March 2024



Join us in celebrating the "Triumphal Entry" of Jesus into Jerusalem when the crowds laid down their coats and waved palm branches. They shouted "Hosanna!" (Save us) as they welcomed Jesus.

Castle Hill URC
10:30 Worship led by Revd David

St John's URC
10:45 Worship led Revd Canon David Atkins

Felixstowe URC
10:30 Worship led by Mr Keith Scarff

Saxmundham URC
10:45 Worship led by Revd Adam

Leiston United Church
14:00 Afternoon Worship
led by Revd Adam

MAUNDY THURSDAY - 28th March 2024



We gather to remember the Last Supper and the events which followed in Gethsemane.

Felixstowe URC
12:00 Lunch & Communion
Led by Revd Adam

*Please bring your own packed lunch.
Other refreshments will be provided*

Castle Hill URC
18:30 Holy Communion & Reflection
Led by Revd David

GOOD FRIDAY - 29th MARCH



On this day we recall the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross and recognise the wonder of God's love and salvation revealed in humility.

St John's URC
10:00 United Service

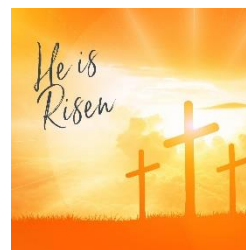
with Mission Ipswich East Churches
Led by Revd David

Castle Hill URC
10:30 Reflective Worship for Good Friday
Led by Revd Adam

Saxmundham URC
10:45 Reflection at the Cross
Led by Mrs Sue Liddell

Felixstowe URC
14:00 Reflection at the Cross
United with Felixstowe Methodist Church
Led by Revd Adam

EASTER SUNDAY - 31st MARCH



We celebrate the resurrection of Christ Jesus with shouts of "Alleluia, Christ is Risen!", salvation and new life on this day of day.

Castle Hill URC
10:30 Easter Worship with Communion
Led by Mr Peter Dawson

Felixstowe URC
10:30 Easter Worship with Communion
Led by Revd David

St John's URC
10:45 Easter Worship with Communion
Led by Revd Adam

Saxmundham URC
10:45 Easter Worship with Communion
Led by Mrs Sue Liddell

Leiston United Church
14:00 Afternoon Easter Worship
with Communion

Led by Revd Adam



NATIONAL & SYNOD NEWS



The last few years have seen considerable change. There is a significant contrast between church as it was twenty or even ten years ago and today. God is calling us to new ways of thinking and challenging us to let go and let God lead us. Nationally the URC is engaged in the **CHURCH LIFE REVIEW** and looking at how resources, including finance can be more fairly shared and used. Slimming down on some of the many committee and officer roles and thinking more about the local impact of resources and support to enable churches to flourish is a priority.

With fewer ordained ministers available across the UK, each Synod is reflecting on how best to encourage churches to work together and benefit from the ministers who are available without simply adding to the number of churches that each minister supports. Each Synod has already implemented or plans to implement ways for calling and “deploying” ministers that best suit local need and situations. Eastern

Synod are introducing **MISSION PARTNERSHIPS**. This will mean some changes to the arrangements and working groups of churches, with a move away from Area Partnerships as they are at present.

Each church is invited to be part of a Mission Partnership, largely determined geographically, with practical considerations for future development. Different churches will engage in different ways.

At present the Ipswich and East Pastorate will continue as at present, five churches working together with our two ministers. Revd David and Revd Adam will share more about how other churches will engage with us at forthcoming Church meetings. There is hope and expectation built into the approach and we continue to look to God with faith and seek God’s will.



Eastern Synod are in the process of reviewing arrangements for **AUTHORISED PRESIDENCY FOR HOLY COMMUNION**. This will mean that there is greater flexibility in enabling more of our local preachers and elders, with appropriate training, to preside at communion, including offering home communion.

As part of the developments the Synod Training Officer is arranging training for presiding at Communion. Any of those currently authorised who have not undertaken training in the last three years is asked to attend the training as a refresher alongside any nominated to take on the

role. Castle Hill URC will be hosting one of the training sessions, led by Revd Jo Clare-Young, on **Saturday 1st June 2024** from **13:30**.

The next edition of Connect will be published in June 2024. If you have any items please send them to Revd Adam on revaje@outlook.com
