

IPSWICH



DRYDEN ROAD, IPSWICH, IP1 6QF

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025



Ministers:

Revd. Adam Earle

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SERVICES DURING MARCH

All Sunday Morning Services will be live-streamed.
Access is via the Church website [www.castlehillurc.org.uk]

Sunday 2nd

10.30am. Morning Worship with Communion
William Glasse

Sunday 9th - Lent 1

10.10 –10.25am Pause for Prayer

**10.30am. Morning Worship
Including Baptism.**

Revd. Adam Earle

Church Fellowship Meeting Follows this Service
(See back page for details)

4.00pm Lent Afternoon Pastorate Worship

Revd. Adam Earle

SUNDAY 16th - Lent 2

10.30am. Morning Worship

Rachel Harris {FNKD} & Mike Hollingsworth

SUNDAY 23rd - Lent 3

10.30am. Morning Worship

Keith Scarffe

CARE AND SHARE at 11.30am, following Worship.
Stay and enjoy sharing, coffee, snacks, and fellowship.

SUNDAY 30th - Lent 4

Mothering Sunday

10.30am. All-Age Morning Worship

Revd. Adam Earle



THE JOURNEY OF LENT: MORE THAN JUST GIVING UP CHOCOLATE

Lent is here again, starting on Ash Wednesday, this year on the 5th March. It's that time of year when we're all supposed to give something up—chocolate, crisps, wine, social media, or maybe even caffeine (if you're braver than me!). But is that really the heart of Lent? Or is there something deeper?

It seems to me that at its core, Lent is about reflection, renewal, and drawing closer to God. It's a journey, not a punishment. It's about making space—clearing away the clutter so we can focus on what really matters. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness preparing for his ministry, and in some small way, we're invited to do the same. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

A friend of mine once decided to give up negativity for Lent. Instead of cutting out a favourite food or soap opera, she challenged herself to stop complaining. Every time she caught herself moaning about the weather or grumbling about the traffic, or getting annoyed at her husband or children, she made a conscious effort to find something good instead. It wasn't easy, in fact at times it was almost impossible, but by Easter, she said she felt lighter—freer, even. It had shifted her mindset in a way she hadn't expected.

So maybe this Lent, instead of (or alongside) giving something up, we could take something on. A daily act of kindness. More time in prayer. Writing letters or emails to people who need encouragement. Volunteering. Actually attend a Lent course this year! Checking in on a neighbour. Something that draws us closer to God and to one another.

Ultimately, Lent isn't about self-denial for the sake of it—it's about transformation. It's about stepping away from the noise and making room for grace. And if that means still having the odd square of chocolate while choosing to be more patient, more compassionate, or more prayerful, then I reckon God will be just fine with that.

Whatever you decide this Lent, may it be a time of growth, peace, unexpected joy, and may it "... renew a right spirit within me."

David

HADLEIGH URC WELCOMED INTO PASTORATE



Several members from Castle Hill joined others from our Pastorate churches to welcome Hadleigh URC into the Ipswich and East Pastorate.

In addition to members of the Pastorate, the Service, was attended by many residents of the town, including the Mayor of Hadleigh Town Council, Councillor Sue Monks and Suffolk County Councillor Mick Fraser. The service was led by Revd Lythan Nevard, moderator of the Eastern Synod of the URC.

Revd David Rees said: “Central to the URC’s spiritual DNA is a desire to bring Christians together to work in witness to the love of Jesus Christ for all. The communities we serve, in Felixstowe, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Leiston and Saxmundham, are facing unprecedented challenges – everything from the housing, jobs, mental and physical health crises to worries about the environment and world peace.

“By working more closely together across the towns, we believe we have a bigger impact in both helping people and showing them that a real alternative way of life is possible.”

Source: URC Eastern Synod

PAUSE FOR PRAYER

This is an opportunity for us to gather, for a short time, once a month, before Morning Worship. It is a simple and informal prayer time led by one of our Ministers. There is no expectation for anyone to pray aloud. All are welcome.



We meet in the common room from **10:10am to 10:25am**.

Please feel free to join us to pray on:

9th March 2025

13th April 2025

LENT STUDIES

**BEGINNING 12th.
MARCH**

**7.00pm at
Castle Hill**

**2.00pm at
St. John's URC**

Exploring our relationships with God, the environment, community and ourselves.

Look out for further information on display at Church.



Relationships

The Heart of the Matter

A Lent Study Course



FNKD UPDATES

It's the start of the school year in Uganda and we currently have 87 children living in the villages in North Kigezi Diocese on our sponsorship programmes. They all did so well at the end of last year, passing their exams and promoting to new classes and from Primary to secondary school. Three children took their O levels and have all passed – we are so proud and would like to thank everyone for making it possible for them to progress as it's only through sponsorship that these children can stay in school. The picture shows some of the children at Centre Day in Bucence receiving their books, pens, pencils and pads ready to begin the new term. They were so happy.

I had the great task of ensuring that the children were all placed in a setting to suit their needs, and they had what they needed. I look forward to meeting up with the children at their next Centre Day at Easter.

Our sewing training programme is coming to an end after running for a year. It's been a great programme – two of our sponsored children can now sew as well as 8 local ladies. They can now make school uniforms, dresses, shirts and trousers. One lady from Bucence Village, Emily, was given the opportunity to learn to sew through FNKD. Emily and her husband Laban were doing well with their three young children – they had built a small house but then Laban became ill and has Motor Neurone Disease, so life has

become very hard for them. Learning to sew has given Emily some hope. If anyone would like to help them a bit, please let me know.

The children in Bucence Children Centre are growing fast – Eunice reports that baby Robert is now constantly chatting and is very playful. The rest of the children are all at school. Three more of our children have promoted to Secondary School which now makes 5 of them and our eldest boy has just finished his first semester in Nursing training at Kissizi hospital. It was a massive task for Eunice to prepare her large Children Centre family of 26 plus her own four children to return to school – she really is an amazing lady.

Cards for Bucence Children Centre - to help raise a few small funds to help Bucence Children's Centre there are some handmade greetings cards for sale on the table in the church – there are some lovely cards and very reasonably priced.

On the evening of Saturday 22nd March, Mark and Fiona are holding a quiz evening to also help us to raise some funds for the Children's Centre. The last quiz night was a really good night – so if you would like to join in please sign up on the list in the vestibule. Teams of 6 to a table please.

I will be returning to Uganda on 3rd April for three weeks and value so much your prayers and support. For my journey, my health and strength – and I pray the Rat doesn't visit this time.

Please be in touch if you would like to help in any way

Rachel Harris 07772311133 rachh123@hotmail.co.uk

‘SPEND A PENNY’ TO RETURN

There is an urgent need for clean, safe, and hygienic toilets in Bucence and surrounding areas—not only indoors at the Children's Centre but also in villages and other communities.

To support this, we will be relaunching our *Spend a Penny* campaign after Easter for two months. Soon, you'll notice *Toilet Twinning* signs at every church toilet, reflecting our commitment to funding hygienic toilets in Uganda, ensuring they meet the same high standards as our own. More details and pictures in the April Newsletter.

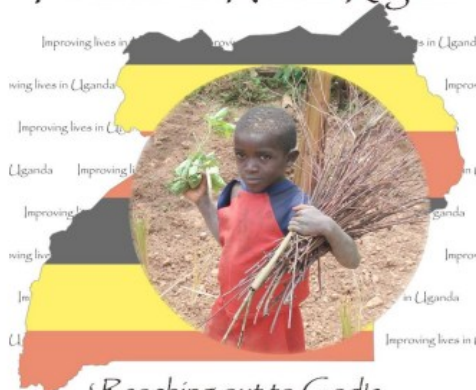
QUIZ NIGHT

Questions by Mark & Fiona Ward

CASTLE HILL CHURCH DRYDEN ROAD
SATURDAY 22nd MARCH AT 7PM

ALL PROCEEDS TO THE BUCENCE CHILDREN'S
CENTRE IN NORTH KIGEZI

Friends of North Kigezi



*'Reaching out to God's
children in South Western Uganda'*

Please Bring your own drinks and snacks (no alcohol)

Tickets £ 5 per person – Teams of 6

Raffle and Ugandan Craft Stall

Any Raffles Prizes greatly appreciated

**For tickets and further information please contact
Rachel Harris 07772 311133**

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 -HAVE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR ORGANISATION'S REPORT?

To enable the report to be compiled and distributed in time for next month's AGM, your report is urgently required. The deadline has been extended to March 14th to enable outstanding reports to be included. Please send your reports to Len Green

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Lent is a time when Christians examine themselves and their lives before God. As part of this you are invited again this Lent to 'Count your Blessings' and give thanks to God for what you have received. Leaflets with a pointer for thankfulness and suggested giving each day are available from the table at the back of the Church.

The money you give will be shared between our Church Charities for this year which are 'Families Together (Suffolk)' and 'Friends of North Kigezi Diocese.

Most of us do not carry much cash these days, so if it is easier not to put your daily contributions in one of the small donation boxes, you can note the daily amount and pay the total by cash, bank transfer or the church card machine. Money should be brought to the Church on Easter Sunday.

Elaine Thomas

YOUNG PEOPLE SHOW THAT THEY CARE BY SHARING AND SERVING

After attending the first part of Morning Worship, a dedicated team of young people from CHAPS and the Girls' Brigade stepped into action on February 2nd, launching the new *Care & Share* initiative. Gathering in the Sports Hall, they worked together to help prepare a delicious buffet for the congregation to enjoy after the Service.

The event was repeated on February 16th. One congregation member shared, *"It is truly uplifting to see these young people giving up their Sunday morning to serve others. For those who live alone, having a light snack prepared for them makes a world of difference."*

Beyond providing tasty refreshments, *Care & Share* has already become a cherished time of connection, bringing people of all ages together by creating in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.



More pictures on following pages.



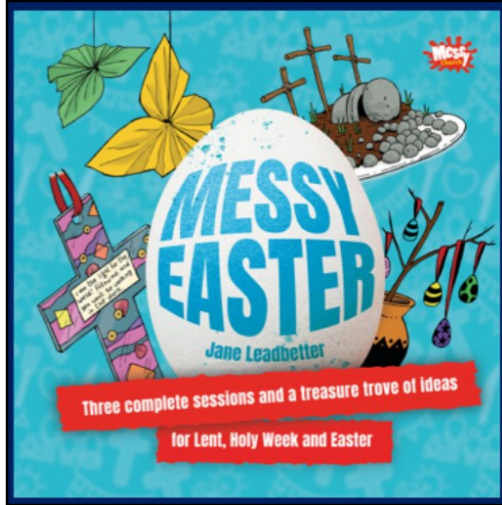
HARE AND SERVE



EASTER MESSY CHURCH

SATURDAY 12th APRIL

Volunteers are needed to help prepare for this family event or to help on the day. If you can then please speak to Adam.



BIBLE STUDY

Our monthly Pastorate Bible Study via Zoom will be on Monday morning March 10th at 10.30. We shall be looking at one of the lectionary Bible passages for the following Sunday which is Luke 9:28-43a. This is the story of the Transfiguration and the healing of a boy.

This time of reading together gives us the opportunity to share our understanding and the insights that we have from our experience and to see how it relates to our Christian living today. All are welcome to join, to listen and to contribute.

Elaine Thomas



GIVE YOUR BROKEN ITEMS A SECOND CHANCE AT THE SUFFOLK REPAIR SHED

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



Before you throw away that faulty hairdryer or give up on a silent alarm clock, consider taking it to the **Suffolk Repair Shed**. Whether it's a broken radio, a torn teddy bear, or a worn-out kitchen appliance, the skilled volunteers there might be able to bring it back to life—saving you money and reducing waste in the process.

How It Works:

Repair sheds are popping up all over, and one of the closest is in **Martlesham**. If your item can be fixed, you simply make a donation of your choice. If it can't be repaired, there's no charge.

One member of the *Ipswich and East Caring for Creation Group* has used the service a few times and speaks highly of the experience. While not every item was repairable, most were given a new lease on life.

Not Quite Like TV's "The Repair Shop"

Unlike the professional restorers on TV, the Suffolk Repair Shed is run by **talented volunteers** rather than specialists

Visit the Suffolk Repair Shed

Location: Unit 15 Martlesham Creek, Sandy Lane, Woodbridge, IP12 4SD

Opening Hours:

Tuesdays: 7:00–9:00 pm

Wednesdays: 10:30 am–1:00 pm

Thursdays: 7:00–9:00 pm

Fridays: 10:30 AM–1:00 pm

Give your items a second chance—drop by and see what can be saved



Photo taken in March 2021 just 4 miles from our Church

SPRING ON THE HORIZON IN THE SEASON OF LENT

*The air is hushed with solemn grace,
A time of waiting, slow embrace.
Yet just beyond the barren trees,
Spring whispers softly in the breeze.*

*The earth, though clothed in ashen grey,
Prepares for life in bright array.
The buds, though tight, begin to swell,
A promise that the world knows well.*

*As fasting hearts in prayer reside,
The rivers break from winter's tide.
The dawn grows warm, the nights grow brief,
And hope stirs deep beneath our grief.*

*For Lent, though wrapped in sacrifice,
Prepares the soul for paradise.
And as the Easter light draws near,
Spring's song of life grows loud and clear.*

*So let us walk this path with grace,
Through desert winds, through sacred space.
For just beyond the cross we see,
The bloom of love eternally.*

DISCUSSION POINT

The poem above took three seconds to produce.

It was written using Artificial Intelligence {AI}. So could it be inspired by God? Again, I put the question to AI and in two seconds the answer came.

'AI itself isn't inspired by God, as it lacks a soul or spiritual connection. However, if a Christian prays for wisdom while using AI, God can work through their intentions. Like a painter's brush, AI is just a tool—it's the person using it who brings meaning. If an AI-generated poem reflects God's truth, it may still be part of His work.'

What do you think? Do you believe God can work through technology in this way?

Len Green

TURN OFF THE LIGHTS

SAVE EARTH ENERGY



**EARTH HOUR
22nd MARCH
2025
8.30 – 9.30PM**

**CASTLE HILL
SHOW YOU
CARE FOR
GOD'S
CREATION!**

Observing Earth Hour shows that we care about God's creation by demonstrating respect for the world He entrusted to us.

The Bible teaches stewardship of the Earth (Genesis 1:26, Psalm 24:1), calling us to protect nature and use resources wisely. By reducing energy consumption and raising awareness of environmental issues, we honour God's gift and show love for future generations.

Participating in Earth Hour is a simple yet powerful act of gratitude and responsibility, reflecting a commitment to preserving the beauty and balance of creation as an act of faith and worship.



CARING FOR CREATION PUSHING TOWARDS SILVER AWARD

If you notice a washing-up bowl partially buried in the soil at the back of the car park, don't be alarmed—it's not rubbish! It's actually a water source for the wildlife that visits our church grounds. This is just one small step in our journey towards achieving the Eco-Church Silver Award.

Another step was our church's participation in the **Big Garden Birdwatch**. On a chilly January afternoon, Arthur and Elaine Thomas spent an hour in their car at the back of the church, carefully counting the birds that landed in our grounds. Their sightings, which included 10 sparrows a white-collared dove and a blackbird, were submitted to the RSPB, contributing to this nationwide conservation effort.

Looking ahead, we've purchased wildflower seeds that will be sown once a section of ground has been prepared. This will help support pollinators and enhance biodiversity. These initiatives, along with our existing **bug hotels, bird nest boxes, and hedgehog shelter**, are simple yet meaningful steps. However, some targets are more challenging due to the nature of our church grounds.

Beyond caring for land and wildlife, the **Eco-Church Award** also requires us to meet goals in Worship & Teaching, Buildings & Energy, Community & Global Engagement, and Lifestyle. We are making good progress in all areas, but there is still more to do.

However, our eco journey isn't just about meeting targets—it's a heartfelt commitment to caring for God's creation. As a Christian community, we are called to take practical steps to protect the environment, and this responsibility belongs to all of us.

So, let's start with something simple that **everyone** can do! Why not take part in **Earth Hour** (advertised on the facing page) and show our shared commitment to protecting our planet?

Len Green

GOOD FRIDAY WALK—18th APRIL

Organised by Mark Ward. Further details to follow in April Newsletter

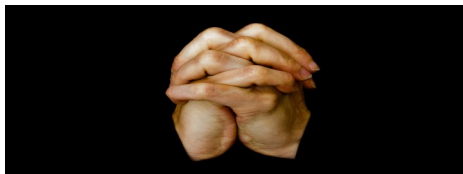


Last years walk

A SPACE ON THIS PAGE So let's squeeze in a prayer.

Lord Jesus, open our hearts and minds to Your constant presence. Help us to recognise You in every moment, to feel Your love surrounding us, and to trust that You walk beside us. Remove our distractions and doubts so that we may rest in the peace of knowing You are always near. Amen.

OUR STREET PRAYER FOCUS FOR MARCH IS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF WILLOWCROFT ROAD



TUESDAY WELCOME



**EVERY TUESDAY
10am-12noon**

TEA, COFFEE,CHAT

CASTLE HILL CHURCH

INDOOR CARBOOT SALE!

Join us in 2025:

**SATURDAY 29TH MARCH
SATURDAY 26TH APRIL
SATURDAY 31ST MAY
SATURDAY 28TH JUNE**

**Contact Katie 07787325536
£5 per table
Free entry for buyers
2-4pm**

WOOL COURT

**March 18th
10.30am -12.30pm
And every third
Tuesday of month.**

Come and join us for coffee, knitting and chat. Also to buy wool for your knitting needs at very reasonable prices.



FISH AND CHIPS FRIDAY

**FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA
AND THEIR CARERS**

**Organised by Headway
A time filled with activities and entertainment**

**28th March
And every fourth Friday of the month**

No need to pre-book

For more information contact:
maureenhowes@headwaysuffolk.org.uk
Phone 01473 7122255

**Cost £10 (includes fish & chips,
tea, coffee biscuits and cake)**

Castle Hill URC is a Dementia-friendly Church

DIARY DATES FOR MARCH 2025

- 2nd. German Church 4.00pm
- 6th Elders' meeting 7.00pm
- 9th Fellowship Meeting 11.30am. after Morning Worship.
(see Note below)
- 10th Bible Study by Zoom 10.30am.
- 12th Lent Studies begin 7.00pm. at Castle Hill
2.00pm. at St. John's
- 16th Organ Concert 2.30pm.
- 18th Wool Court 10.30am-12.30pm.
- 19th Lent Studies continue 7.00pm (2pm at St. John's)
- 22nd. Quiz Night—in aid of Bucence Children's Centre.
- 26th Lent Studies continue 7.00pm (2pm at St. John's)
- 28th Fish and Chips Friday 11.45am.
- 29th Table-Top Sale 2.00 – 4.00pm.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP MEETING
SUNDAY 9th March 11.30am following Morning Service

**CONSIDERATION OF
REGISTRATION FOR
SAME SEX MARRIAGE**

**A presentation and questions
Followed by a Paper Ballot**

Deadline for the April Newsletter

Submissions to Len Green by the early date of **Friday 21st March please**

E-mail: editor@castlehillurc.org.uk