



**Histon
Methodist
Church**

NEWSLETTER

July 2024



Minister's Message

What a whirlwind June was! We had so many exciting and wonderful events and opportunities for worship—thank you for all your support and for the way you engaged; it was great to see the church so alive in so many ways.

This month will see the harvest of our £10 talent challenge, and we celebrate all the wonderful things people have done to help raise money for the toilet project at Histon. If you have any photos, please send them to me and if you've done something with your £10, do let me know so I can include you. If you've already told me: tell me again—I'm paranoid I'm going to miss someone off my list! They will be a feature of our section service in Histon on Sunday July 21st, where we will be joined by our friends from Castle Street.

And while you're in Histon on Sunday 21st, why not stay and have lunch before coming over to the Manse for our Open Gardens at 2pm. I'm not promising the level of gardening that Su and Nick offered at their NGS gardens last month, but this is an opportunity for a social gathering for both churches to come and enjoy each other's company and see how the Manse garden has progressed!

If you're looking for a holiday and always wanted to visit Jersey, Matthew and I will be doing a concert at Georgetown Methodist Church on Thursday 29th August. You're very welcome to come over!

Thanks to everyone who has asked about my Mum after her recent pneumonia; she passes on her thanks to everyone for their thoughts and prayers, and continues to get better very slowly.

Thanks also to everyone who has asked about Paul and his training. It's going well! July 21st will be his first flight on the A321 on a practice circuit in Hungary and once he's done enough of these, he will start flying actual people (under supervision) to finish his training.

If you have a prayer to spare, do remember me as I take a group of Rangers (older Guides) to Switzerland for 10 days at the end of July for a trip of a lifetime to visit one of the World Centres of Girlguiding. I look forward to coming back and boring you all with stories!

Every blessing

Rev Jenny

Histon Annual General Church Meeting

Our Annual General Church Meeting will be held in the church at 7:30pm on Wednesday 10th July. The meeting is open to all, so please come along as we review our church life and make plans for the future.

This is also the meeting where we make our appointments to the Church Council, so if God is calling you to serve in this meeting, please let a steward or Rev Jenny know.

Afterwards there will be an opportunity to chat over a cup of coffee/tea/cold drink and biscuits.

Minister: Revd Jenny Pathmarajah

Email: jenny@cambridgemethodist.org.uk

Phone: 01223 343990

Editor: Chris Whitworth

Email: newsletter@histonmethodist.org

Histon Regular Activities

Sunday	Morning Worship	11am
Monday	Craft Club (now weekly)	2–4pm
Wednesday	Community Coffee Shop	9:30am–12pm
Wednesday	Besom Prayer Meeting (1st Wednesday of the month)	2:30pm

Histon Diary for July

Wed 3 July	Besom Prayer Meeting	2:30pm
Fri 5 July	Country Dancing (see notice)	8–10pm
Sat 6 July	Feast Day Coffee Morning	10am–12noon
Sun 7 July	Preacher: Mrs J Wynn	11am
Wed 10 July	Games Afternoon (see notice)	2–4:30pm
Wed 10 July	Church AGM (see notice)	7:30pm
Thu 11 July	Bible in a Year meeting	7:30pm
Sun 14 July	Preacher: Rev J Pathmarajah (Holy Communion)	11am
Sun 21 July	All-Age Section Service: Talents Harvest	11am
Sun 21 July	Open Gardens at the Manse	2pm
Sun 21 July	Holiday Club Commissioning Service at Histon Baptist	5pm
Tue 23 July– Thu 25 July	Holiday Club at Histon Baptist Church	
Sun 28 July	Preacher: Abigail Perrow	11am

Histon Coffee Shop

Despite some wet weather we have continued to have busy Wednesday mornings. We are very grateful to those who continue to support us, despite the weather. May's takings amounted to the magnificent sum of £964.

Anne

Country Dance Club

Jane and Kathryn look forward to seeing you at 8pm on Friday 26th July at Histon Methodist Church for another fun evening of country dancing. We are accompanied by our excellent musicians and have a Caller. All abilities catered for, so do come and join us, either to dance or listen to the music.

Kathryn

Games Afternoon

Come and join us for yet more fun and games at 2:30pm on Wednesday 10th July. I have a wide selection of board games for you to choose from, both old and new.

Looking forward to seeing you.

Kathryn

Eco Tips

As the days grow longer, take advantage of natural light to reduce your reliance on artificial lighting. Consider replacing incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs. LEDs not only last longer, (sometimes up to 20 times longer vs halogen/incandescent bulbs) but also consume less energy, contributing to lower utility bills and a reduced carbon footprint.

Castle Street Regular Activities

Sunday	Morning Worship	10am
Sunday	United Church at Castle (Second Sunday of the Month)	6:30pm
Wednesday	Community Coffee Morning	10:30am–12pm
Wednesday	Strength and Balance Exercise Class	12–1pm
Wednesday	Table Talk (Student Ministry, University term-time)	7–9pm
Thursday	First Friends (not during school holidays)	10am–12pm

Castle Street Diary for July

Sun 7 July	Preacher: Rev J Pathmarajah (Holy Communion)	10am
Sun 14 July	Preacher: Local Arrangement	10am
Sun 14 July	Church @ Castle: Mr John Boocock	6:30pm
Sun 21 July	All-Age Section Service at Histon	11am
Sun 28 July	Preacher: Mrs Tess Maddin	10am

Table Talk

Table Talk finished at the end of June and we enjoyed our bible studies with Bryony, who has kindly offered to join the Table Talk team for two more terms. We look forward to working and ministering with her. We say goodbye to two of our students, Reuben (who's testimony is in this month's newsletter) and Izzy. Reuben takes a year out as he applies to do a Master's degree and start the Local Preaching course—and might be back with us in Cambridge next academic year. Izzy moves to Edinburgh to do a Masters degree in the ethics of AI and hopes to move back to Cambridge at the end of this. Please pray for them as they make this transition, pray for our returning students over the summer for rest and refreshment and pray for the students who are awaiting results and will be moving to Cambridge over the summer.

Histon Property Report

Over the last few weeks a lot of work has been carried out at Church.

The flat roof above the choir has been repaired and insulation added. The insulation was part of our Eco Church work.

A new larger screen in church has been installed, partly funded by the Cottenham Ebenezer trust and the projector has been re-sited.

The Village Society and Edd of Avanit have been working with us to install wireless internet access, as well as tidying up the data cables that were installed during all the building phases. They were just lying on the floor in the plant room, but now are correctly terminated and identified in a new hub.

A patch to go on the notice board for the change of time from 10.45 to 11.00 is being arranged.

John Wyborn

The deadline for the August newsletter is Sunday 21st July

Please email contributions to newsletter@histonmethodist.org

or hand them to Chris Whitworth

Chris Houghton

The Thanksgiving Service for the life of Chris Houghton was held in our church on 18th June and was a fitting tribute to a man who was very much loved and respected. Almost every seat was taken by his family, friends and colleagues representing the many aspects of life well lived.

Rev Jenny led the service which included well chosen hymns and readings, and moving memories from family members.

Chris's son-in-law Dan Hurd wrote the piece below, which really sums up the type of person Chris was. In a quiet, unassuming way he obviously helped and influenced family members and many others he met throughout his life. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered.

Chris Houghton

From the diverse suburbs of Croydon, a man moved gently forward, with eyes that saw the world in layers of wonder.

Through the Pearl of Africa to the bustling suburbs of Cardiff onto the quiet lanes of Cambridgeshire, he cycled the pathways of life. Caring for the planet and humanity with every pedal stroke.

With a heart and mind tethered to the rhythms and history of the earth he trod softly, an advocate leading the way for the environment's plea.

An academic with a thirst for knowledge, a researcher with an enquiring mathematician's mind at play. A teacher who brought numbers to life, touching lives, leaving echoes of his gentle wisdom.

In tiny handwriting on scraps of paper and the back of an envelope he inscribed life's journey. He lived with modest grace, leaving almost no footprint, reusing, recycling, growing life in his allotment.

Sunny afternoon croquet games, Houghton rules apply, Boxing Day football, walking holidays

exploring new horizons, spirited Scrabble and outings to collect the Guardian all becoming enduring, endearing customs.

But, most of all, bar the last few fading years, he journeyed through life with curiosity, intellect and a quiet but undeniable presence.

A life creating a tapestry of love and learning, in partnership with Judy, woven through years, three daughters, Cath, Sue, and Liz, inspired by his humanity and twinkling light, each carrying a piece of his indelible spirit within them.

Thank you from Judy

Thank you to everyone who came to Chris's Thanksgiving Service and to all who sent messages. We were so grateful to have Jenny leading the service and Matthew playing, which helped to make this special.

The charity, Practical Action, to which we are sending the donations have sent a very personal thanks for our support. This is the message they sent to Catherine:

Thank you for taking the time to get in touch, especially when you must have so much to sort out today. From our small team at Practical Action we are honoured that you consider our vital work a fitting tribute in memory of your father.

You can find out more about their work on their website: <https://practicalaction.org>. Any gifts donated online can be made in memory of him.

Judy Houghton

Thank you

Roger and I would like to thank you all for coming to our Diamond Wedding celebrations on 18th May; apologies this wasn't in the June newsletter—we missed the deadline!

Pam and Roger

Histon Family News

We were delighted to hear that Nicholas Warrington has been offered a permanent job at Robinson College with the role of assistant gardener, following completion of a two-year apprenticeship. He is the tenth apprentice they have had and the first to have been offered a permanent job. Those of us who attended the garden tour and afternoon tea which Nicholas organised recently had a most enjoyable afternoon. We wish him well in what we hope will be a rewarding future.

Testimony: Reuben Baldwin

When John Wesley preached at the funeral of the great revivalist George Whitfield, he was prompted to reflect on the disagreements they had shared in his lifetime. Wesley concluded that, for all their differences over trivial things, he and Whitfield could, I quote, ‘agree to disagree’—as long as they held fast to the essentials of their faith. Now, you may be thinking, ‘This is Reuben’s baptism, why is he digging up Wesley?’ Well, this is my baptism and I get to decide when to talk about myself and when to talk about Wesley!

(Incidentally, John Wesley’s claim to have coined the phrase ‘agree to disagree’ is disputed, which might be for the best, since in conversation the phrase ‘agree to disagree’ is more likely to incite rage than it is to prompt meditation on essential matters of religion)

But every rite of passage—funerals, weddings, and indeed baptisms—offers us a chance to contemplate these essentials. In his marvellous hymns, Charles Wesley had a morbid habit of reminding people of death. The lyrics for ***O Thou Who Camest From Above*** begin with the kindling of sacred love and end with death sealing the endless mercies of God. Whether in direct references to death or indirect references to Heaven, Wesley never ceases to remind us that

our time is limited. And just as Charles Wesley collapses the life story of the Christian—conversion, walking in Christ, death, and everlasting life—into one hymn, so too does the rite of baptism and the testimony disclose a universal and sacred story of salvation. The testimony is my life in a nutshell: how I came to this place, and where I will go. For this reason, I paused on ***Psalm 139***, where God hems the psalmist in, before and behind them. And as I do now, the psalmist struggles to comprehend this awesome truth, that such an ordinary life as mine may bear in any way the fingerprints of God.

Allow me to talk about someone who might help me understand the work of God’s hand in my life. When I was a child, I visited an island off the coast of Northumberland called Lindisfarne where, in the seventh century, lived a monk called Cuthbert. When he wasn’t healing or preaching in the hills and valleys of the mainland, Cuthbert liked to live as a hermit on a secluded, rocky island. Here, Cuthbert set himself a challenge. In the night, he would strip down, naked as he came into this world, and he would wade out into the freezing North Sea until the waters were up to his neck, where he would pray in the cold water until sunrise, his eyes turned upwards to Heaven.

Cuthbert was looking for God in the small hours of the night, when all he could see was black emptiness. He wanted to see if he had the faith to look hopefully and prayerfully for love in such a dark and remote place as Lindisfarne. And Cuthbert was rewarded for his trust in God, because Lindisfarne was soon full of life, in the otters who we are told dried his feet, the seabirds who fed him, and the monks who gathered around him. In this way, the life of Cuthbert tells us a simple truth: that love gathers all.

Even so, I think that Cuthbert must have feared that the darkness of the sea would cover him and

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blot out the light of God. But, like the psalmist, Cuthbert knew that no-one is out of God's sight; nowhere left unlit by Their love. And while the psalmist provides a perhaps frightening image of being unable to flee from God's searching presence, we learn the truth that no-one is forgotten, wherever they go in life. And that, however they have strayed, they are free to come home. As Christ says in the Gospel of Luke, 'Rejoice with me; for I have found my lost sheep.'

Cuthbert used his island hermitage to make himself vulnerable, to let God's love transform him. When I was young, I didn't have Cuthbert's courage to open myself up to the darkness. Instead, I built myself a house of self-pity and despair. I had been diagnosed with epilepsy, an isolating and mysterious condition, and I took comfort in building a topless wall of stone around my heart. This was a formidable wall, but when I dislocated and fractured my shoulder in a seizure and underwent surgery to relocate it, I realised that all the spirit behind that wall had decayed a long time ago. When I arrived here two years ago to start my studies, I felt exhausted, wounded, and angry.

But, even in the darkest valley, when I walked dismally and aimlessly, I felt a little light rising up within—a candle that withstood the wind, that urged me to insist on living with the assurance that I was free to want nothing, know nothing, and have nothing but my broken self before God. Such a light was incredible and unstoppable. It had always been there. And it was creative, hopeful, and interested in what I was going to do next.

In those days, I hurt constantly, but I hurt hopefully with the expectation that I would learn to live again. Yes, I had to be carried from day to day by a strange light, not knowing what moved me, but I was carried. In the depths and up, out from the depths, my appeals were heard and my hand was held.

So, in Spring 2022, I started going to a Quaker Meeting House. The Quaker Meeting for Worship was the perfect nursery for my faint feelings of love, peace, and awe. Just as Cuthbert looked deep into the darkness, there in the Meeting House I listened deep into the silence, deep in the ground of my soul, discerning the ways of the Spirit. Paul tells us that 'Love is patient', and I thought that I was being patient by sitting in silence and waiting for a nudge from the Spirit, but there was a being in that silence who had been waiting for me for a long time, and as soon as I recognised it, I realised that it knew me well and fully loved me. In the silence of the Meeting for Worship, I realised that I had what the Quakers call an Inner Light, something of God in me, and I started to learn how to return to this source of my being.

I could now walk, but I wanted to know the way. I looked to Scripture, and many of the stories that I thought I knew well inflamed my newly blazing heart. A God who hears the cry of the oppressed; who brings Good News to the poor; and who inspires the living Church to walk in Christ and prepare a table for all. Consider the sum of what is happening in the world: in many ways, the world as we know it is passing away; and monstrous things are happening. In this appointed time, we must be witness to the unfolding calamity. While the impoverishment, displacement, and dispossession of broken people feed a reign of death and despair in the world, the Church is called to wake up, cast off the rule of death, and look to the sun that dawns in Christ. These are desolate times, but these are also saint-making times, when people are given the choice to deny illusions of 'self-reliance' and conquest and instead choose to affirm life, seek justice, and walk together towards the Kingdom of God.

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Many things will come our way, and many things will come to pass. But, of all things, Paul says, 'love never ends'. All these short-lived attachments that we think we value are passing by, but they are all steeped in an unending river of love. And such love, Paul says, 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.' This is the Good News which affirms that death and despair do not have the last word in history.

To return to 'agree to disagree': I'd like to consider the essentials of my faith. Our infinite God lived like us and felt all our pains, He felt the complexities of our messy lives, and on the Cross, He cried out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?', feeling the darkness overpowering Him and weeping with those who couldn't feel God's light.

All so that we might have the chance to do the reverse, to shed all these brief pleasures and pains, these temporary and tangible things, the insecurities, the enmity, the death, and when the Lord comes down again, to be taken up, and at the point where Heaven and Earth combine, to behold ineffable and infinite things, and to meet ourselves, each other and God, once more reconciled face to face.

I freely allow this Church into my life and I wait prayerfully to discern what I am called to do, and what is expected of the people called Methodists in this urgent, appointed time. But for now, consider me your friend, neighbour, and brother, for we pilgrims walk in Christ together.

God bless you all,

Amen.

Reuben