



**Histon
Methodist
Church**

NEWSLETTER

February 2026



Minister's Message

Dear Friends

February often feels like a turning point. The days are slowly lengthening, there's a hint of spring in the air, and in the life of the church we begin to look towards Lent. Lent is not about being gloomy or grim, but about making space—space to notice God more, space to be honest about ourselves, and space to grow.

Traditionally, Lent is a time when people give something up. That can still be a helpful discipline: letting go of something that distracts us, or takes more than it gives. But Lent can also be about starting something new: a new habit, a new rhythm. A deeper way of praying, reading, or listening. The question isn't so much "What should I give up?" as "What might help me draw closer to God?"

If you're looking for something to begin this Lent, I'd like to recommend two very accessible books that many people have found helpful. If prayer feels difficult, awkward, or mysterious, you might enjoy *How to Pray* by John Pritchard. It's practical, down-to-earth, and full of real-life wisdom. No jargon, no pressure—just honest encouragement and simple ideas for praying in everyday life. And it's available for under £10.

If you'd like to understand the Bible better but feel a bit intimidated by it, *The Badly Behaved Bible* by Nick Page is a brilliant place to start. It's funny, thoughtful, and reassuringly human, helping us engage with some of the trickier bits of scripture

without fear. Both books are written for people in the pews, not academics—curious, thoughtful Christians who want to grow.

As Lent begins, my encouragement is this: don't aim for perfection. Aim for intention. Choose one small thing—something realistic—and offer it to God. Whether that's five minutes of prayer a day, reading a chapter of a book, or letting go of something that weighs you down, trust that God meets us in small, faithful steps.

If you are choosing to give something up this Lent, it's worth pausing to ask why. Lent isn't about self-punishment or proving how disciplined we can be. It's about creating space. Whatever you lay down, try to make time to let God fill that space instead—with prayer, reflection, kindness, or simply stillness. Let what you give up become an invitation rather than a burden, and trust that God will meet you there.

May this Lent be a gentle and fruitful season for us all.

With every blessing,

Rev Jenny

Castle Street Lent Bible Study

Castle Street will be holding a Lent Bible study, on Tuesdays at 7:30pm, starting 24th February, meeting in the Church hall. More details to follow, or speak to me if you have any questions.

Denise

Minister: Revd Jenny Pathmarajah

Email: jenny@cambridgemethodist.org.uk

Editor: Chris Whitworth

Email: newsletter@histonmethodist.org

Histon Regular Activities

Sunday	Morning Worship	11am
Monday	Craft Club	2–4pm
Wednesday	Community Coffee Shop	9:30am–12pm
Wednesday	Besom Prayer Meeting (2nd Wednesday of the month)	10am

Histon Diary for February 2026

Sun 1 Feb	Preacher: Mrs Judith Wakelin	11am
Sat 7 Feb	Beetle Drive & Cream Tea	2:30pm
Sun 8 Feb	Preacher: Revd Barbara Garwood	11am
Wed 11 Feb	Besom Prayer Meeting	10am
Wed 11 Feb	Games Afternoon (see notice)	2:30pm
Fri 13 Feb	Country Dancing (see notice)	8pm
Sat 14 Feb	Coffee Shop	10am–12noon
Sun 15 Feb	Preacher: Kirk	11am
Sun 22 Feb	Preacher: Revd Jenny Pathmarajah (Holy Communion)	11am
Tue 24 Feb	Pastoral Visitors' meeting	1pm
Wed 25 Feb	Stewards meeting	3:30pm

Upcoming Dates for your Diary

Fri 6 Mar	World Day of Prayer at St. Andrew's Church, Impington	Time TBC
------------------	---	----------

Histon Donations and Collections

Wednesday Coffee Shop takings for November and December totalled £1295. Thanks for everyone's support.

Sunday coffee collection donated to Concrete Rose for September–December was £342.35, and collections from Christmas services sent to Action for Children amounted to £215.50

Cash donations from Judy Houghton's Thanksgiving Service amounted to £460, which I have sent off to Concrete Rose, her family's chosen charity. If anyone else wishes to donate in memory of Judy please have a word with me.

John Wyborn

Concrete Rose: Thank you!

A huge thank you to everyone at Histon and Castle Street Methodist Churches who provided gifts for our young people this Christmas through the Giving Tree.

For many of the young people we support, Christmas can be a particularly difficult time of year, when isolation and a lack of family support are felt more acutely than at any other time. Through the generosity of both congregations, we have been able to offer a different perspective. While presents and gifts cannot undo family difficulties or erase past trauma, their thoughtfulness—especially in being so closely linked to the needs and interests of the young people—and their abundance communicate something deeply important: that these young people are loved, cared for, and valued.

In this, your generosity echoes the heart of God, who desires each one of us to know that we are seen, celebrated, and of infinite worth. Our ongoing relationship with you at Histon and Castle Street continues to be an enormous blessing to us as an organisation and to the young people we

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

Castle Street Diary for February 2026

Sun 1 Feb	Preacher: Revd Barbara Garwood	10am
Sun 8 Feb	Preacher: Revd Simon Coleman	10am
Sun 8 Feb	Church @ Castle—Preacher: Margaret Cooper	6:30pm
Sun 15 Feb	Preacher: Revd Jenny Pathmarajah (Holy Communion)	10am
Sun 22 Feb	Preacher: Reuben Baldwin	10am
Tue 24 Feb	Lent Bible Study series begins	7:30pm

serve, and I very much look forward to seeing this partnership continue into 2026.

With sincere thanks, and wishing you all God's favour and blessing in the year ahead.

Mike, Concrete Rose

Welcome back, Castle Street Students and Young Adults!

A very warm welcome back to all our students as Table Talk began at the end of January. Whether you're returning to familiar faces or joining us for the first time, you are so welcome. Table Talk is a space to eat together, ask honest questions, explore faith at your own pace, and be part of a community that takes both God and real life seriously. We're delighted to have you with us and look forward to sharing this term with you.

Bryony, Jenny and Fiona

Getting to know you

You may have noticed our new **Getting to Know You** feature in the newsletter, starting this month with Deacon Ian's reflections. The questions he answered are the ones we're using for future features too.

If you'd like to take part, simply use those questions as a guide. You don't need to answer them all—just the ones you feel comfortable with. And please don't worry about writing it as a polished piece or turning it into prose. Rev Jenny will happily shape your responses into an article for the newsletter.

This is simply an invitation to share a little of your story: your faith, your interests, and what has shaped you. Every story matters, and it's a lovely way for us to get to know one another better as a church family.

If you'd like to be involved, just let Rev Jenny or one of the stewards know.

The deadline for the March 2026 newsletter is Friday 20th February

Please email any contributions to newsletter@histonmethodist.org
or hand them to Chris or Naomi Whitworth.

A Tribute in Loving Memory of Judith Anne Houghton

27th May 1942–20th December 2025

Every seat in our Church and Meeting Room was taken for the Service of Thanksgiving for the life of our dear friend Judy Houghton. An expression as to how much she was loved and appreciated by all who attended.

A wonderful service led by our minister Rev Jenny Pathmarajah, with Matthew McCombie giving his best on the organ as always, and everyone enjoying singing the hymns which had been carefully chosen by Judy herself, who had clearly given a lot of thought to the content of the whole service. As Rev Jenny noted, the combination of both Methodist and Welsh voices singing made for a joyful noise!

Grandsons Joel and Matthew read Juanita de Long's poem *My Hereafter* and Judy's daughters Catherine, Sue and Liz each gave very moving tributes.

Judy was born in Nigeria where her father, a Methodist minister, was working for the Methodist Missionary Society. The family returned to the UK in 1943 and her father continued his active ministry. Judy's secondary education was spent as a boarder at Trinity Hall Methodist School in Southport, after which she went on to Manchester University, where she met Chris. After spending some time teaching in Uganda they returned to the UK in 1967 and married later that year. They settled in Cardiff for 39 years.

Many active years followed, raising a family, teaching in a primary school, running a guide company, and taking roles in Whitchurch Methodist Church.

Almost 20 years ago Judy and Chris moved to Histon, and enjoyed spending more time with their eldest grandchildren, Jamie and Matthew. They

both took advantage of new opportunities, formed new friendships by becoming involved in local groups and societies in our village and beyond, too many to mention here.

Histon Methodist Church soon became a core part of Judy's life: she gave so much service as a steward, coffee shop volunteer, and pastoral visitor, to name but a few.

She will be greatly missed not only by her family but many of us who have had the pleasure of knowing her and working alongside her.

The service concluded with Rev Jenny singing Taps, the traditional Girlguiding Blessing, inviting others who knew it to join in:

Day is done, gone the sun

From the sea, from the hills

*From the sky, all is well, safely rest, God is
nigh.*

God Bless you Judy, you will be greatly missed and fondly remembered.

Rosemary Watson

Revd Cynthia Hardiman

Some of you will remember our minister Revd Cynthia Hardiman and her husband David—they were probably the last ministers to live in the Cottenham manse and the first of our ministers to live in the present manse. They retired to—and have spent many mostly active years, supporting the local churches in—South Shields.

Liz, Kathryn and I have kept in touch over the years, exchanging our news in Christmas letters. We were saddened to hear this year that David died just before Christmas, and that Cynthia's health is failing. We sent our sympathy and concern from the Church family, on your behalf.

Judy Wynn

Histon Family News

Sadly, Judy Houghton's return home mentioned in our previous newsletter was very short: in less than a week she was back in hospital. When it was apparent she would not be getting better, she moved at her own request to Bramley Court. She was well cared for and family and friends could call in to see her more easily. She passed away peacefully on 20th December surrounded by her daughters. We extend our love and sympathy to all her family. Please see a tribute to Judy elsewhere in this newsletter.

We were sorry to hear Mary Marston had a short spell in hospital early in the New Year. She is home now but attending hospital as an outpatient and needs to take care.

We also remember Tina Fell and Jenny Phillipps who both had short stays in hospital recently. Tina was in over Christmas. Jenny now spends most of her time in bed: she is in room 42 at Bramley Court, and always appreciates a visit even if it's a short one.

We have missed seeing Anne Muncey in church, she had a fall at home which meant a visit to A&E and resulted in numerous bruises. She hopes to be back with us again soon.

Michael Simmonds has also been missed at church and coffee mornings; he too has had various health problems.

Our love and best wishes to Kathryn Coles who is also unwell and needing to cut down on some of her regular commitments.

At the time of writing this Robert Craft is feeling very poorly in hospital, we hope he will soon improve and be feeling better.

So many of our church family are in need of care and support, we remember them all in our prayers.

Histon Games Afternoon

Do join us for Board Games on the 11th February, at 2:30pm for our next games afternoon. I have a wide selection of old and new games for you to play.

Cost: £2 towards Church funds.

See you there.

Kathryn

Histon Country Dancing

The next country dancing evening is Friday 13th February at 8pm. Do come along and make new friends, have fun, and dance.

Our Caller this month is Jonathan (Spikey) Griffiths and we will be accompanied by our excellent musicians. If you don't wish to dance you can come and listen to the music.

Cost: £4 towards Church funds.

See you there.

Kathryn

Histon Hall Door

I wish to express my thanks to John Watson and Bryan Bradley for their help in installing a new door closure for the hall. Please be aware that the door has a limited opening span, but sufficient to allow wheelchair access.

John Wyborn

Congratulations: We Read the New Testament!

A huge congratulations to everyone who took part in reading the New Testament in a Year in 2025. This is no small achievement! To journey through the whole of the New Testament together takes commitment, curiosity, and faithfulness. Whether you read every single day or dipped in and out along the way, you were part of something really special.

Along the journey, we were wonderfully supported by Professor Judith Lieu, who joined us for three of our Bible study evenings. Judith brought wisdom,

insight, humour, and patience as she helped us dig deeper into the texts and answered our many, many questions! We are so grateful for the generosity with which she shared her knowledge and love of scripture with us.

And yes: we know you said you didn't want certificates, but they're here anyway! If you'd like one, you're very welcome to tuck it into your Bible as a quiet reminder of the journey you've taken and the time you've given to God's word.

So, what next? Many of us have now read both the whole Bible and the New Testament together, and that's something to celebrate. But if you're feeling stirred to keep going on your Bible-reading or discipleship journey, please let Rev Jenny or one of the stewards know. We'd love to explore what might come next.

Some members of the group are already praying and thinking about whether they might help lead a discipleship course in the future—so do watch this space. God's word is living and active, and it seems this journey is far from over.

Well done, and thank you, to everyone who took part.

If you have been inspired to start reading the Bible or the New Testament in a year, it's never too late to start—you can begin at any point in the year. Speak to Rev Jenny and she will give you a reading plan, and she's always happy to have someone join her on her journey—as she starts reading it for the 18th time!

Getting to know you: Deacon Ian Murray

1. What is your name? Deacon Ian Murray

2. How long have you been coming to [Castle Street / Histon] Methodist Church? My files tell me I first led worship at Castle Street in November 2013. Histon not until December 2015, though earlier for meetings.

3. Tell us a bit about your background — where you grew up, and what paths your life has taken. I was born in Walthamstow, London, and lived through childhood and most of my 20s in different parts of the borough of Waltham Forest, mostly in Chingford. Joanne and I got married when we were 20! We left London in 1997 (aged 28) so that I could begin initial ministerial training.

4. What have been some of the most interesting jobs, experiences, or adventures you've had? I had one job before ministry which I started after finishing my A levels. I had 10 really good years working in central London at University College Hospital. I met and worked with so many different people across a range of disciplines as I helped them to manage their budgets—I was a management accountant. I never passed all my exams though! Too busy doing church things.

5. Do you have any hobbies, hidden talents, or passions you love to spend time on? I'll tell you about two new aspects to my life in the past couple of years. First, our household grew from 4 to 5 when Phoebe came to join us in December 2023 at the age of 3 months: she is a golden retriever. We'd never had a dog before and it's meant that most days now I walk with her—lots of people think that she is cute. Second, we bought our first ever touring caravan just over a year ago (having always had a least a week of camping every summer since I was 12 years old). We named it 'Babs' as the showroom we went to in Royston had caravan TVs for sale which were showing a recording of Carry on Camping. (Some of you will be too young to get the reference to Barbara Windsor).

6. How did you first come to faith, or what has shaped your journey with God the most? I grew up in a Christian family for whom church was central in our lives: Congregational and URC roots and then Methodist after we moved towns. When I was

younger, I would say Boys Brigade was a huge influence. Also my Nan. And then Greenbelt Festival from the age of 15—I still go every year (now 56). My calling to be a Deacon was shaped by youth work and the people that this brought me into contact from a wide range of backgrounds.

7. What do you love most about being part of this church community? I've been so grateful to many friends across the whole circuit in my twelve and a half years serving here. Thank you for giving me space to be myself and for your generosity!

8. Do you have a favourite hymn — and why does it mean something to you? There are so many! But I'll offer you a song from the Iona Community and its Wild Goose Resource Group—another big influence on my journey—*Come Host of Heaven's High Dwelling Place* (StF 680). When I first discovered Wild Goose Worship's songs and liturgy in my teens I appreciated the earthy, honest language. You'll have to look it up!

9. What's your favourite Bible verse or passage, and what draws you to it? I often wish that my memory worked better than it does. I can't recall why, but when I was teenager I wrote something on the inside of my wardrobe door, using a felt tip pen I think—It was quite an old piece of furniture. It was the text of Micah 6:8—*Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God*. It's simple. Easy to remember. Not necessarily easy to practice. I suspect that I encountered it at Greenbelt one summer by an inspirational speaker.

10. What's one thing you think people might be surprised to learn about you? Hmmm.... That I was incredibly sporty up until around the age of 20? Rugby, Football, Cricket, Basketball, Athletics, including captaining lots of school teams.

11. Who or what has inspired you most in your life of faith? I'd have to say Greenbelt Festival, with its huge range of artists, thinkers and

speakers. People whose albums I listen to, or whose books are on my shelf.

12. If you could give one piece of advice or encouragement to someone new to the church, what would it be? Help those of us who have been part of church for a long time to keep learning and changing.

13. Tea or coffee? Don't drink Tea. Has to be coffee. No milk. Preferably not instant.

14. Morning lark or night owl? Used to be more of a night owl but these days neither. I like my bed.

15. If you could invite any biblical character to dinner, who would it be (and what would you serve)? Stephen, maybe? Something from the pub menu as it's unlikely that I would be cooking.

Greenbelt Festival 2026

27th-30th August

Deacon Ian mentions how important Greenbelt Festival has been for him—but did you know that for the last ten years or so, Greenbelt has been happening just an hour up the A14 at Boughton House, near Kettering? This year, sadly, will be their final year in this location—but it's going to be the best yet!

The early lineup announcement includes music from artists like **Arrested Development**, **Grace Petrie**, and **The Proclaimers**, and speakers as diverse as **Nick Lowles** (founder of *HOPE not hate*), **Omar Barghouti** (founder of the BDS movement), **Sonita Alleyne** (master of Jesus College and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University) and **Charlotte Church**, along with a diverse worship (including Wild Goose Worship) and visual arts programme: there's always something for everyone.

Tickets and more information are available at <http://www.greenbelt.org.uk/>