

Upton United Reformed Church

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God's Love is for All
Our Mission is to Show it,
Share it, Live it



December 2025
January 2026

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Telephone 01244 373854



Visit our Website at:
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A Christmas Message of Hope

As Christmas draws near, we come together to celebrate and rejoice in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In recent weeks, shops have been bustling with activity, shelves filled with festive goods, and reminders all around to prepare for the season. Children delight in the glow of Christmas lights and the anticipation of unwrapping gifts. For many, it is a busy time —writing cards, planning visits, and preparing to be with loved ones. Yet, amid the hustle and bustle, Christmas offers a precious opportunity to reconnect with old friends, cherish family, and reflect on the blessings in our lives.

Still, we are mindful of those who are not as fortunate. Across the world, many continue to endure the pain of war, the grief of lost loved ones, and the daily struggle for basic necessities. Hunger, homelessness, and fear weigh heavily on countless lives. And yet, even in the darkest places, there remains a longing and a hope for peace.

Christmas reminds us of that hope. Jesus Christ entered a world torn by conflict and oppression. He brought peace, love, and light. His presence continues to shine in our lives today.

God speaks to us of hope and peace. He sustains us when we feel lost or weary. As we celebrate this season, let us hold in prayer those in our homes, our communities, and around the world who are in need of comfort and care.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”— Jeremiah 29:11

Jane Morris

Letter

From the Leprosy Mission

To Upton By Chester URC

October 27,2025

Dear Friends,

Thank you. You are so faithful. By helping to renovate the leprosy ward at Danja Hospital in Niger, you are showing people like Adam how much you care when it's needed most.



Adam was once one of the loneliest people on the planet. When he could no longer hide the signs of leprosy, he was shunned by everyone. Death threats hung over him like a dark cloud. Terrified, he fled to another country grieving for the life he once knew. But supporters with a kind heart like yours across our region made sure he found love and expert care at Danja. His physical and emotional wounds were healed.

What joy Adam experienced when he found Jesus! Now he looks to the future with new faith and hope.

Today, you're continuing that life-changing work for many more like Adam. You're ensuring that there will be a safe, hygienic, and comfortable leprosy ward. A place where the nurses can give the quality of care each patient deserves.

Your wonderful gift of £576 will help to give others that some hope for years to come. Thank you for being part of God's rescue plan for their lives - for giving people affected by leprosy a special place to recuperate, feel loved and whole again.



Thank you, from my heart to yours,

Sam Stockill

Community Partnerships Manager, North West England
07392 198413

P.S. Do keep in touch! I would be happy to speak at a Sunday service (in person or online), pray together by phone and answer any questions I can.

Important Vacancy News and Notice of an Extraordinary Church Meeting at 2pm on 19th January 2026

I am pleased to announce that that we have a ministry candidate who has met the vacancy committee made up of Elders from Upton, Vicars Cross and Blacon churches.

They have been invited to preach with a view and meet the congregations over the weekend 17/18 January 2026.

It is planned that the candidate will lead worship here at Upton at 2pm on Saturday 17 January. This will be followed by an open forum for questions and discussion and a time to meet the candidate over a buffet tea.

The candidate will then preach at Vicars Cross URC at 10.30am on Sunday 18 January.

Each church will be holding a church meeting on Monday 19 January to discuss and vote whether we should issue a call. The meeting at Upton will take place at 2pm in the Sanctuary.

**Please make every effort to attend one or both
of the services so that you are able to take part
in the discussion and vote at the church
meeting.**

Church Anniversary

Our Church Anniversary service is taking place on 7 December and is being led by Rev. Kate Gartside.

The service will be followed at 12 noon by a buffet lunch. If you would like to stay for lunch please sign the list on the whiteboard in the foyer or contact Jane Morris by 1 December.

Advent Bible Study at Hoole URC

Thursday 10.30am – 11.30am

27 November

4 December

11 December

19 December

Informal Advent Devotions at Blacon URC

Monday 12 – 1pm

1 December

8 December

15 December

22 December

From Churches Together in Cheshire

You are warmly invited to gather for the Churches Together in Cheshire Ecumenical Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Date: Sunday, 18th January 2026

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: Chester Cathedral

Preacher: Rt Revd Kenneth Nowakowski, Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Holy Family of London.

This special service brings together believers from many traditions to worship, pray, and seek God's light for our shared witness. With Scripture, music led by the Salvation Army band, a sermon from Rt Revd Kenneth Nowakowski, the Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family of London.

We shall also be joined by the Chester Taizé Choir and prayers will be offered by representatives from across our Christian family.

The evening will celebrate the unity we share in Christ and strengthen the bonds of fellowship across our churches.

Please join us as we come together as children of light to pray for peace, justice, and deeper unity in our communities and our world.

Refreshments will be served at the end.

Reform Magazine

Reform is a fresh and challenging magazine exploring theology, ethics, personal spirituality and Christian perspectives on social and current affairs.

The magazine is for thinking people who enjoy reading about Christian ideas from a range of viewpoints. It features writing from journalists, academics, politicians, campaigners, scientists and religious leaders.

As well as high-profile interviews, in-depth features and book, music and film reviews, Reform carries letters and a regular light-hearted column.

The magazine is published 10 times a year by the United Reformed Church and costs £29.50 for the year's subscription. There are copies of previous editions on the table in the entrance hall.

If you would like to subscribe to receive Reform please see Carole Mellor by the end of December.

Waiting for the light: advent online retreat

2 December 2025 07:30 to 6 December 2025 21:00

Venue: Online

Ticket: Free



There will be three sessions each day:

7.30-8.00am: a portion of a psalm, leading into silence

12.00-13.00pm: a shared slow reading of one of the readings of the day (lectio divina) followed by a little sharing

7.30-9.00pm: sessions led by a variety of people, to include Neil Thorogood, Andrew Brown and Jacob Bali

For previous online retreats some people have attended all the sessions, weaving the rhythm of the retreat into their week, and others have dipped in as they are able. Sessions will be sufficiently self-contained for this to work as a “retreat in daily life” for whatever sessions people can make.

All the sessions will be on the same Zoom link.

Please book at:

https://urc-spirituality.org.uk/urcsp_event/advent-online-retreat-2

after which you will be sent the zoom link for all the sessions.

Upton Amblers

Unfortunately our November outing had to be cancelled because of poor weather conditions, and also of the low numbers of people available on that day.

Philip and I had already been thinking a lot about the future of the walking group and have now come to the decision that it is time for us to step down as Amblers organisers, as we have run out of ideas and the numbers of attenders has dropped considerably over recent months. We have had family health problems for most of this year and a lot of our regular members have been struggling with health and age related issues.

We are very grateful to all who have supported us over the last 24 or so years that we have been organisers, and special thanks go to George and Jean Coward who were Wednesday walk leaders for 8 years, and also Richard and Anne Sykes and Peter and Sandie Milburn who provided us with wonderful weekends away.

We all have many happy memories to cherish, of all the friends who have joined us over the years.

Our last walk as leaders will be on Wednesday 3rd December.

Celia Jones



Special Services

7th December at 10.30 am Anniversary Service.

This service will be led by Rev. Kate Gartside.

The service will be followed at 12 noon by a buffet lunch. If you would like to stay for lunch please sign the list on the whiteboard in the foyer or contact Jane Morris by 1 December.

14th December at 10.30 am Gift service

Please bring along gifts of toys, toiletries, children's pyjamas, festive food etc which will be donated to **"Save The Family"** and **"The Foodbank"**.

Christmas Services At Upton URC

7 December	10.30 am	Church Anniversary
14 December	10.30 am	Gift Service
16 December	1.00 pm	Carol Service open to all
21 December	10.30 am	Morning Service
25 December	NO SERVICE	
29 December	10.30 am	Morning Service (communion)

Christmas Day

There will be **no** service here on Christmas Day.

Here are details of the Christmas Day services at the other URC churches in the area –

Vicars Cross URC 10.00 am

Hoole URC 10.00 am

Christmas Services and Events at Hoole, Vicars Cross and Caldý Valley Churches

6 December	1.30 – 3.30 pm	Christmas Fair at Vicars Cross URC
12 December	7.00 pm	Light up a Light Service with the hospice at Caldý Valley Church
21 December	6.00 pm	Carols by Candlelight at Vicars Cross URC
24 December	4.00 pm	Carols around the Christmas Tree at Caldý Valley Church
25 December	10.00 am	Christmas Morning Service at Vicars Cross URC
	10.00 am	Christmas Morning Service at Hoole URC

Christmas Post

We shall be operating our Christmas post system again this December.

Christmas cards to members of the congregation can be left in the post boxes in the lounge from the first Sunday in December.



Please leave a donation in lieu of postage in the collecting box provided.



Money collected will be given to Christian Aid.

Copy date for the February newsletter is
18th January

Contributions to Margaret Hainsworth, please.

Church Diary

December 2025

Day	Date	Time	Service/Meeting
Mon	1	10.00 am	Monday Men's Meeting
Tues	2	1.00 pm	Friendship Group – Christmas Party
Wed	3		
Thurs	4	10.00 am	Thursday Ladies Group
Fri	5		
Sat	6		
Sun	7	10.30 am	Rev K.Gartside Church Anniversary Followed by lunch
Mon	8	10.00 am	Monday Men's Meeting
Tues	9		
Wed	10		
Thurs	11	10.00 am	Community Coffee Morning
Fri	12		
Sat	13		
Sun	14	10.30 am	Dr. R.Pettigrew
Mon	15	10.00 am	Monday Men's Meeting

Tues	16	11.00 am 1.00 pm	New Tuesday Group Christmas Feast Carol Service for everybody – followed by coffee and mince pies
Wed	17		
Thurs	18	12.00 noon	Thursday Ladies Group – lunch at the Wheatsheaf
Fri	19		
Sat	20		
Sun	21	10.30 am	Lessons and Carols with Carole Mellor and Debbie Ormerod
Mon	22		
Tues	23		
Wed	24		
Thurs	25	10.00 am 10.00 am	No service at Upton Service at Vicars Cross Service at Hoole
Fri	26		
Sat	27		
Sun	28	10.30 am 4.30 pm	Rev R.Reid - Communion Churches Together Service at Holy Ascension
Mon	29		
Tues	30		
Wed	31		

January 2026

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Service/Meeting</u>
Thurs	1		
Fri	2		
Sat	3		
Sun	4	10.30 am	Rita Griffiths -Joint Service at Upton URC
Mon	5		
Tues	6	2.00 pm	Friendship Group – New Year Catch Up
Wed	7	9.45 am	Upton Amblers walk
Thurs	8	10.00 am	Thursday Ladies Group Christmas memories and New Year thoughts
Fri	9		
Sat	10		
Sun	11	10.30 am	Mr D.Welsh
Mon	12		
Tues	13	2.00 pm	Friendship Group Post Christmas Tea and Chat
Wed	14		
Thurs	15	10.00 am	Community Coffee Morning
Fri	16		
Sat	17	10.00 am	Saturday morning coffee

Sun	18	10.30 am 5.00 pm	Rev.Alan Wickens - Communion Ecumenical Service at Chester Cathedral - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Mon	19		
Tues	20	2.00 pm	Friendship Group - Clumps
Wed	21		
Thurs	22	10.00 am	Thursday Ladies Group Lunch at the Wheatsheaf
Fri	23		
Sat	24		
Sun	25	10.30 am	Mr.K.Redmile
Mon	26		
Tues	27		
Wed	28		
Thurs	29	10.00 am	Community Coffee Morning
Fri	30		
Sat	31	10.30 am	Church Meeting

Church Meeting Dates 2026

31 January

25 April

18 July (AGM)

10 October

Extracts from “Unity through Prayer”

A Prayer Diary for the Churches in Upton

7 December	Pray for the residents of Glastonbury Avenue, Tewkesbury Close and Marlowe Avenue. For those who are bereaved and those who provide support.
14 December	Pray for the residents of Woburn Drive, Halton Road, Dorset Place and Cotswold Close. For the Youth Clubs and Youth workers in our churches. For all young people in our community.
21 December	Pray for the residents of Woodlea Avenue, Cornwall Road, Aldford Road. For All Age Family Worship, Messy Church, Junior Church and Children's Liturgy. For all children who attend our churches each Sunday and their leaders.
28 December	Pray for the residents of Dorset Road, Shipbrook Road, Mannings Lane South and Peckforton Way. For the work of Churches Together in Upton and Churches Together in Chester. For the Churches in Upton: Holy Ascension, United Reformed, St Columba's and the Baptist Church.

4 January	Pray for the residents of Newhall Road, Winston Court, Arradon Court, Breton Close, Wealstone Lane, Well Lane, Bank Close and Newton Hall Drive. Orchard Manor, Wealstone and Crabwall Hall. For all those who live and work in these Homes.
11 January	Pray for the residents of Newton Lane, Appleton Road and Handforth Road. For the Archive Group, Social Committees and fundraising groups. For the fellowship and sharing at social gatherings.
18 January	Pray for the residents of Shocklach Road, Horrocks Road and Bolesworth Road. For the choirs and music groups. For uniting all who play and sing from the three churches.
25 January	Pray for the residents of Dunham Way, Chirk Close and Tintern Avenue. For the prayer groups and ecumenical prayer groups. For those who have nobody to pray for them.
28 January	Pray for the residents of Whitton Drive, Sutton Drive, Bidston Close and Greenfield Lane. For Sunshine Tots, Praise & Play and for all the leaders. For young families.

Car Ferry

December 7	Keith Reading
December 14	Phil Mason
December 21	John Hainsworth
January 28	Niall Ormerod
January 4	John Hainsworth
January 11	Keith Reading
January 18	Phil Mason
January 25	Niall Ormerod
February 1	John Hainsworth
February 8	Keith Reading
February 15	Phil Mason
February 22	Niall Ormerod



PLEASE NOTE: Anyone requiring transport should contact Debbie and Phil Mason as soon as possible to enable appropriate arrangements to be made.

Flower Rota

December 7 Ivison Family

December 14 Flower Box

December 21 Flower Box

December 28 Flower Box



January 4 Debbie Ormerod

January 11 Brenda Bentley

January 18 Violet Brickland

January 25 Gaynor Kitchener

February 1 Eleanor Hornsby

February 8 Caryl Rose

February 15 Wendy Lenihan

February 22 John and Margaret Hainsworth

We are in a vacancy at the moment.

Please contact Church Secretary, Carole Mellor, for any enquiries

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