

Upton United Reformed Church

N
E
W
S
L
E
T
T
E
R

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



July/August 2026

44 Heath Road, Upton By Chester, CH2 1HX
Telephone 01244 373854



Visit our Website at:
www.uptonurc.org.uk
Email:
info@uptonurc.org.uk

Family News

It is with sadness that we report the news that Brian Rose died on 23rd April.

He had been an active and valuable member of the church for very many years. Brian contributed a great deal to church life, not only as an elder, but also as a confidant and supporter. He was always ready to welcome people into church and encourage them to take an active role wherever possible.

In earlier days he was involved with FURY for the young people and in later years was still prepared to look at life in fresh ways.

Our love to Caryl and family.

We also report the death of Yvonne Dingwall on 17th April. She had lived a long and eventful life.

Our thoughts are with Brenda Leece as well as Debbie and Phil Mason who spent so much time looking after Yvonne in later life.

John and Margaret Hainsworth now have a new email address, as you will notice on the back sheet of the newsletter:

Johnhainsworth42@hotmail.com

Some interesting history from the Archives

Talk given by Eric Morgan at a dinner commemorating the 130th anniversary of Upton United Reformed Church on 3 December 1988

As you are all aware this year is the 130th anniversary of the foundation of our church in Upton. And as the most visible aspect of the presence of a church is its buildings. I, as a fairly long serving member of this church, was asked to give you some recollections of the last 30 years of the 130 of which I have some personal knowledge. But I cannot ignore the first 100 years so if you will bear with me, I will fill in an outline of the period.

In 1858 the church as a body commenced to worship next door in the Wheatsheaf – some of you may say that you still worship there! But be that as it may, in 1858 it was not a public house but a wheelwright's shop. In the next 2 years there was such a rapid increase in worshippers that at a cost of £250 a chapel was built to hold 120 people – a building which is now the newsagents shop up the road. The tablet above the door is still there but the 'Congregational Church' is now thickly covered in paint. (NB the building has since been converted into a private house).

The years followed with many ups and downs but at the turn of the century a revival took place and the result is the present original part of our church on this site – built in 1900 at a cost of £1,500. It was a beautiful little

church built in the gothic style, full of character and affectionately known as 'the little church in the hollow amid the trees'. It was graced with stained glass windows at the front of which our present windows are only the centre pieces.

The next item of change occurred in 1920 when the area of land between ourselves and the Wheatsheaf was purchased for £113. A year later it was nearly resold as the church had fallen on hard times but lucky for us today that never came about.

In 1928 the first extension of the church took place when toilet facilities were added, and the building was connected to mains drainage.

In 1933-34, the 2nd Upton Scouts purchase a hut from Barrowmore Industries for £34 which found a home on our car park. The Scouts were disbanded about 1937 for financial reasons, and the hut was presented to the church and moved to the rear of the building where it served as a Sunday School classroom for many years.

Until 1947 we were affiliated to Queen Street Church. It was then decided that we were strong enough go it alone. Our first Minister was appointed and a Manse purchased in Heath Road. He was the Rev. E F Gurney from South India who left in 1949. In 1950 the Rev. D D Robinson came from college to take up the pastorate. He made a more productive use of his ministry by marrying

Joy, the daughter of Mrs Gould, who many of you will remember. Mr Robinson moved on in 1955.

In 1959 a new minister, the Rev H T Donaldson was appointed, and a new Manse was obtained in Mill Lane. Mr Donaldson's arrival spelt a turning point in the building life of our church. Up till then the Sunday School was held in the old back hall with the overflow in the old scout hut previously mentioned. Under his guidance it was decided that a new hall was necessary. Mr and Mrs Jones, who some of you may remember as a prominent Chester Congregationalist, offered us an old army prefabricated hut. This was intended to be sited in the present car park and here we enter the last thirty years of the church's life. There we were with a wooden hut on the site and immediately hit the dreaded ogre – planning permission – we had to have proper foundations which would cost about £1,000 – if I remember correctly the hut was worth about £50. It was decided that this was a waste of scarce money and we would endeavour to raise enough to erect a permanent building.

We decided that an ambitious money raising effort was essential and 'Once in a Hundred Years' was born. It is of note that the Parish Church contributed £100.

A local architect produced some drawings which on costing out were too expensive. By coincidence I had at work just completed a building the style of which we agreed would suit our purpose. So, in association with a

contractor I used at work (George Eastwood and Sons), I drew up plans and costed the work out. The total was still more than we could raise so with the co-operation of Eastwoods who agreed to do the main civil work at a very favourable price, we decided to do the electrical, decorative, kitchen fittings and drains ourselves.

You may have wondered why the floor levels of the church and hall are different – that was the measure of our shortage of money. We went ahead in faith and the only time the good Lord left us to our own devices was with the drains! There were no records and by the time we traced out the runs and started to excavate for the new manholes it became obvious to all the volunteers that you cannot mess about with drains on a part time basis! We found the extra money from somewhere. But thinking back it was a time of laughter and tears and some incidents stick out – like the time the ladies had produced a whole row of mugs of tea neatly on a plank of wood and my young son trod on the end of it getting out of a manhole.

In January 1965 our new hall was completed and weren't we proud of our achievement. I am reminded too by Trevor Salvage of the quote by one of our volunteers who was up a ladder at the time having just hit his thumb for a second time – a member of the Whist Drive asked "Is that building going to be dedicated?" "I don't know about dedicated" was the reply "but it's been blessed a few times already".

In 1967, Northgate Church closed and a fair number of their members came to us. It soon became obvious that the church and new hall required further extension. Another great fund raising effort commenced. The project was too big to be handled ourselves – remember the drains – and so architects were appointed.

Originally we had thought of turning the church around, that is the front at the back, so as not to disturb our stained glass windows and we were a bit concerned about being too near the road – the new front would be part of the old back hall – the new hall had to be widened. The architect persuaded us to extend forwards, but he had to be instructed to include the figures from the stained glass windows in the new windows. We did not accept his plans for the hall extension but widened and extended the new hall into what you see today.

The contract was awarded on a competitive basis to our old friends Eastwoods and they served us faithfully again. Financially we were helped by a substantial contribution from the sale of Northgate Church. During part of the construction period services were held in the Village Hall.

Our new church was completed in January 1970, but not without difficulty as a special piled foundation had to be driven in because of the presence of a well we did not know existed at the front. If we had known at the time that we were to join with The Church of Christ we could

have incorporated the well into the church or become Baptists! On the opening day I wonder how many people realised the battle we had had to get the front pews installed in time and the floor varnishing completed. We had visions of the visiting dignitaries being well and truly stuck down!

Peace reigned for a few years until the Rev. Stephen Thornton arrived. Junior Church was expanding and once again space was in short supply. We were now in the days of the Manpower Services Commission, when for finding employment for craftsmen, plus two young people per craftsman, the government would pay the wages if you found the materials. We had dreams to build the back rooms, provide a store room and improve the kitchen and toilets, but the £20,000 or so required was way out of our reach. We investigated the Manpower Services possibilities but even the £10,000 required for materials appeared to be too much of an obstacle. In an idle moment Stephen said to me "If I find the money, will you build the extension". Put like that I had no alternative but to agree thinking that it was a safe bet. To my consternation, he and others did just that and I was landed with the task, which on reflection still makes me shudder and have occasional nightmares. But with God's help we succeeded, and our dreams came to fruition, and the extensions were completed in February 1977. Not only did we succeed but our example persuaded St Columba's to build their church hall the same way, and many of our craftsmen and youngsters

helped them with their scheme. The old hut at the back of church served as a site hut for the construction before being sold for £72.

This church in the last 30 years has achieved everything it set out to do. It continues to do so with the purchase of a new manse, installation of new heating and purchase of a new organ. Part of the roof over our heads is that erected 24 years ago with our first hall. It is on borrowed time so we cannot rest on our laurels.

I have not tonight done justice to the many men and women whose dedication and hard work has resulted in the facilities we enjoy today. Many are no longer with us – names like Stan Longsdon in connection with the first hall, Tom Strange who helped me bear the brunt of the church extension and Charles Wilshaw who so ably managed the financial side of the erection of the back rooms. They have left a heritage of which we can feel justifiably proud and should be an example to us all to continue with enthusiasm the saga of Upton United Reformed Church.

Eric Morgan 3 December 1988

From: Emma Hodgkins <eehodgkins@hotmail.com>

Life Begins at 50?

Sitting on the edge of my bed on the eve of my 49th birthday, I remember wondering: what happened to the last few decades?

I knew they had happened, and I was pretty sure they had left a lasting mark on me, but the last thing I remembered with any real clarity was leaving university in a flurry of mediocrity. Since then, life had been a whirlwind of children, sports days, friendship dramas, holidays, full-time jobs, grazed knees, football tournaments, parents' evenings, sleepovers, and all the emotional turmoil that comes with raising a family.

Through all of that, two things remained constant: the support of my parents and the neglect of myself.

As I swung my feet into bed that night (with considerably less grace and considerably more noise than it should have required), I decided that my 50th year on this planet needed to be different.

Fast forward to my 50th birthday, and life looks a little different.

I'm still surprised by the apparent disappearance of several decades, but I'm determined to make the most of whatever time I'm fortunate enough to have left. This year has surprised me. I've travelled to the other side of the world on my own—daunting, a little scary, but also freeing and fulfilling. I've become fitter and stronger, all while life has continued rushing along beside me.

All the while, my children have been growing and learning, and my dad has continued supporting me, just as he has done for my entire life.

Dad—or Robin, as many of you know him—dislikes emotional displays, which must be quite a challenge when you’ve raised such an enormously emotional daughter!

He is a logical man, grounded in reality, who comes from a place of kindness, forgiveness, and remarkable, unwavering love. Alongside my wonderful mum, Anna, he adopted me and my sister Becky. Together they have held us up through life’s challenges, protected us when we needed it most, understood us when we struggled to understand ourselves, and forgiven us endlessly.

He is truly my guiding light, my rock, and a man of such integrity that I am immensely proud to call him my dad.

For the last few years, Dad has been living with Parkinson’s disease. He faced the diagnosis with characteristic determination and, with the support of friends both within and outside his church community, has remained as physically and mentally active as possible.

He embraces activities that keep him young and engaged, and he still cooks a three-course Sunday lunch for the entire family—complete with the best apple strudel you will ever taste.

Which brings me to the purpose of this article.

Parkinson’s is a cruel disease. It doesn’t care whether someone has spent a lifetime looking after their physical and mental health—it simply happens. While advances in science have improved treatments and there is far more guidance available on staying active and maintaining quality of life, there is still a very long way to go.

So I’ve decided to set myself a series of challenges to complete before I turn 51, and I’m asking anyone who is able to spare a few pounds to donate to Parkinson’s UK in support of both my challenges and my dad.

Over the next few months, I will be stepping well outside my comfort zone. My challenges include:

- Completing a marathon (and an ultramarathon)
- Planting 50 trees
- Learning to free dive
- Completing the National Three Peaks Challenge (over 48 hours, not 24...)
- Reading the classics I avoided as a teenager
- Playing in a band again (thank you, Phil Mason, for helping with this one!)
- Skinny-dipping (don't tell Dad!!)
- Riding the UK's longest zip wire

If—and it's a very big if—I survive the next few months, I'd also like to raise £1,000 for Parkinson's UK to help people like my wonderful dad live longer and live better with their diagnosis.

If you'd like to donate, by cash or cheque, Dad is happy to collect donations and we'll add them to the total.

Thank you for reading, thank you for your support, and hopefully I'll see you all after my 51st birthday!

Emma Hodgkins

Parkinson's UK - Chester & District Branch

Supporting our community with friendship, activities and help.

Are you or someone you know affected by Parkinson's? You'll find a warm welcome here. Join us for singing, socialising, exercise and support.

Chester Website: chesterparkinsons.weebly.com

Friday Film @ Hoole URC

July 3rd

Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale

(2025; PG)

The Crawleys grapple with a public scandal and financial trouble.

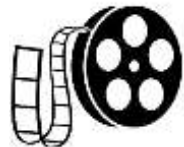


Showing at 2 pm

(Doors open at 1:30 pm)

Further info: 07751 519 019

Everyone Welcome





Fifth Sunday Service

**“Marsh & Plessington -
The Chester Martyrs”**

Sunday 30th August 2026

**4.30 p.m. at St. Columba's Church
(Iona Chapel – Use Back Door)
Plas Newton Lane Chester CH2 1SA**



ALL WELCOME

Church Diary

July 2026

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Service/Meeting</u>
Tues	1		
Wed			
Thurs	2	10.00 am 1.00 pm	Thursday Ladies Group – Diary planning Food ‘n’ Fun
Fri	3		
Sat	4		
Sun	5	10.30 am	Internet Service
Mon	6	10.30 am	Monday Men’s Meeting
Tues	7	2.00 pm	Friendship Group –
Wed	8		
Thurs	9	10.00 am	Community Coffee Morning
Fri	10		
Sat	11		
Sun	12	10.30 am	Chris Kellet
Mon	13	10.30 am	Monday Men’s Meeting
Tues	14	10.00 am	New Tuesday Group

Wed	15		
Thurs	16		
Fri	17		
Sat	18	10.30 am	Church Meeting - AGM
Sun	19	10.00 am	Barbara Capstick
Mon	20	10.30 am	Monday Men's Meeting
Tues	21	2.00 pm	Friendship Group – Table Games
Wed	22		
Thurs	23	10.00 am	Community Coffee Morning
Fri	24		
Sat	25		
Sun	26	10.30 am	Shiela Dunbar
Mon	27	10.30 am	Monday Men's Meeting
Tues	28		
Wed	29		
Thurs	30		
Fri	31		

August 2026

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Service/Meeting</u>
Sat	1		
Sun	2	10.30 am	Margaret Hainsworth
Mon	3	10.30 am	Monday Men's Meeting
Tues	4	2.00 pm	Friendship Group – Tea & Chat
Wed	5		
Thurs	6		
Fri	7		
Sat	8		
Sun	9	10.30 am	Shiela Dunbar
Mon	10	10.30 am	Monday Men's Meeting
Tues	11		
Wed	12		
Thurs	13		
Fri	14		
Sat	15		
Sun	16	10.30 am	Rev. David Hamblin
Mon	17	10.30 am	Monday Men's Meeting
Tues	18	2.00 pm	Friendship Group – Afternoon Tea

Wed	19		
Thurs	20		
Fri	21		
Sat	22		
Sun	23	10.30 am	Rev Susan Flynn
Mon	24	10.30 am	Monday Men's Meeting
Tues	25		
Wed	26		
Thurs	27		
Fri	28		
Sat	29		
Sun	30	10.30 am 4.30 pm	Shiela Dunbar CTU service at St Colomba's
Mon	31		

Copy date for the September newsletter is

16th August 2026

Contributions to Margaret Hainsworth, please

Extracts from “Unity through Prayer”

A Prayer Diary for the Churches in Upton

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 5 July | <p>Pray for the residents of The Croft, Kirby Close and Ambleside.</p> <p>For all who are baptized in our Churches and their families and for the support given to them.</p> <p>For all who help or attend creches.</p> |
| 12 July | <p>Pray for the residents of Keswick Close, Stanton Drive and Caldry Close.</p> <p>For the Army Chaplain and all at the Dale Camp, the work of the armed forces, the soldiers and their families.</p> |
| 19 July | <p>Pray for the residents of Marina Drive, Cross Green and Chatsworth Drive.</p> <p>For Upton Amblers, Walkers Group, Trekkers and all who meet together for outdoor pursuits.</p> |
| 27 July | <p>Pray for the residents of Acres Lane, Alwyn Gardens and Brooke Avenue.</p> <p>For the clergy of the Churches in Upton and for their congregations.</p> |

- 2 August Pray for the residents of Caughall Road, Acorn Court, The Acorns, Rosedene Close, Endsleigh Gardens and Endsleigh Close.
- For the PCC Members, Elders and all who hold Office in the Church. For strong leadership by those elected and appointed.
- 9 August Pray for the residents of Greenfields, Flag Lane North and Oakfield Avenue.
- For the Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Lay Readers, Parish Assistant and Local Church Leaders.
- For all those not yet connected to the life of the Church or who have lost their faith.
- 17 August Pray for the residents of Oakfield Drive, Flag Lane South, Upton Lane and Weldon Close.
- For the Wardens, Deputy Wardens, Sides persons and Collectors. For our Churches being welcoming to newcomers
- 24 August Pray for the residents of Lumley Road, Demage Lane and Willow Close
- For the senior school: Upton High School, The Catholic High School and Bishops High School. For all the teachers, especially in RE departments. For all young people attending these schools.

Flower Rota

July 5	WD 40's
July 12	Jane Morris
July 19	Celia Jones
July 26	Linda Kershaw



August 2	Marian Cole
August 9	Hilary Salvage
August 16	Eleanor Hornsby
August 23	Doreen Pleasant
August 30	Debbie Mason

September 6	Eleanor Hornsby
September 13	Joan Perkin
September 20	Mary Carter
September 27	Flower Box - Harvest

CAR FERRY - DUTY DRIVERS

After many years of loyal and dedicated service, Margaret and John Hainsworth have decided that, for a variety of reasons, they feel that they can no longer continue providing support as a car ferry driver after September.

We would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all 'clients' to extend our grateful thanks to them both.

We are now down to three regular drivers; if the 'service' is to continue we desperately need new recruits to ensure that there will be no blank weeks - and regular *church-goers* can still attend.

Please give this 'opportunity' your prayerful consideration (it is after all only once a month on average) - and contact Debbie or Phil on 01244 383174 if you feel moved to help.

Car Ferry

July 5	Niall Ormerod
July 12	Niall Ormerod
July 19	Phil Mason
July 26	John Hainsworth



August 2	Sue Pearson
August 9	Phil Mason
August 16	John Hainsworth
August 23	Sue Pearson
August 30	Phil Mason

September 6	John Hainsworth
September 13	Sue Pearson
September 20	Niall Ormerod
September 27	Phil Mason

We are in a vacancy at the moment.

Please contact Church Secretary, Carole Mellor, for any enquiries

Secretary

Mrs Carole Mellor

07946 063847

c.p.mellor0@gmail.com

Treasurer

Richard Sykes

01244 303305

uurc.treasurer@gmail.com

Church Hall Bookings

Deborah Ormerod

07580088720

uurc.halls@gmail.com

Web Support

Dave Nichols

info@uptonurc.org.uk

Newsletter Editors

Mrs Margaret Hainsworth

01244 381396

Johnhainsworth42@hotmail.com

Richard Sykes

01244 303305

rasykes@tiscali.co.uk

Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Shiela Dunbar

07834 160 789