

Halesworth



and Bramfield URC



June 2025

What we believe

We believe that in obedience to Christ's command, we must proclaim the Gospel to the world in the power and at the direction of the Holy Spirit.

We are called out of darkness to live as children of light, reflecting God's glory all around.

We recognise that as a Church, the bride of Christ, we are commanded to love and encourage one another and ensure that no root of bitterness divides us.

We acknowledge our absolute dependence on Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father made us, Jesus has redeemed us and the Spirit sustains and provides all we need on our pilgrimage.

We acknowledge our commitment to the Bible, as the authoritative word of God able to teach us, guide us and inspire us as we discover God's perfect will for our lives

**If you have something for the
July magazine,
please email
smedleybigal@aol.com (preferably)
or hand it to me by 22nd June**

Blessings, Alan

Our Vision:

**"To know Jesus Christ;
to make Him known."**

Dear Friends

At our recent Annual Church Meeting we elected elders to serve for the next 3 years. Since several of the existing elders were at the end of current periods of service, most of whom were not nominated to serve again, and there were no new nominations, the result is a further reduction in the number of serving elders.

As well as reflecting on how God has led us over the past year, we looked ahead to what is to come. You will see that the written reports we received are printed in this magazine. And I want to add some further thoughts looking forward:

It is now just over 6 months until I am due to retire – with the vacancy that will follow as well as the formation of a new Mission Partnership. The likelihood is that we & North Lowestoft will be joined with 3, possibly 4 other churches under the new scheme and there is no way of knowing how soon a minister might be called on that basis.

The good news is that the 1st new Mission Partnership (churches in & around Norwich) have successfully called a new minister. She is in her final year of Ordination training and will be with them thereafter.

So, the times ahead will be challenging as well as exciting! As you pray, listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as to what part you might play. Pray also that the Lord might bring to us others he is equipping and raising up for future leadership.

It is very exciting that Jo Moreira (who was our Children & Families worker until she left to train for ordination) is coming to Uganda with me in August. She is doing the trip as an oversees placement and thus part of her training. We will also be joined by her friend, Lisa Lawson (a member of Lowestoft Community Church) as well as Stu Precious and Josie Lynn from North Lowestoft. Please keep the 5 of us in prayer.

A major part of our preparation for the times ahead will be our engagement with the Awake Suffolk Coastal Mission. The Charity Through

Faith Missions is running a mission in the Suffolk Coastal area, 6-14 September. We are partnering with them and there will be a huge range of exciting events to invite others to. We will be hosting a team of volunteers from TFM.

We are also planning to follow it up with the Alpha course. In the meantime, Alpha is running now, building confidence ahead of the mission. Although it has started, it is OK to join part way through. The next session, "Why did Jesus' die?" is Mon 2 June, 7.30pm.

This is a great opportunity. In particular, if you have friends, neighbours or family members who are not yet Christians – and you find it difficult to raise the issue with them, this could help a lot. And as many of us get involved, this could strengthen & prepare the church for the times ahead.

Please also be praying for the Mission, and for Alpha. And pray for those God may be raising up to contribute to future leadership.

Blessings Jon



Kathryn Bones has been in James Padget hospital for over a week at the time of writing. When I last visited, she was asleep so I quietly prayed over her. Paul is very concerned. Please keep Kathryn, Paul, Gavin and the whole family in prayer.

Tricia Willis has suffered a broken wrist and will be in plaster for about 6 weeks. Please pray for her and Tony.

We continue to pray for Margaret Long whose recent time in hospital resulted in a diagnosis of Pancreatic Cancer. She is home with outpatient visits and ongoing consultation on treatment options. Praise God for the

peace she is experiencing. Please also pray for George, Lottie and the wider family. *(see below)*

Lorraine Smedley's health issue flared up significantly recently. Please pray for her and Alan, and for the Open the Book team as Lorraine's availability is often uncertain. Please also pray for others to join the team and, after the coming term, someone to lead the work as Lorraine will step back. Listen in case the Lord is prompting you to be involved.

We continue to pray for Paul Potts – and indeed all the family as we stand with them in the loss of Pat. Thank you, Paul for your sensitive leading of worship. It must be hard doing what you and Pat used to do together.

Please continue to pray for Moira Cooke, Christine Dominic, Michael Gilbert and others you know of in need.

Blessings

Jon

An enormous thank you to so many of you for your beautiful cards, understanding words in letters and emails and on-going concern and prayer support.

Here is a short follow up from yesterday's hospital visit. Unfortunately, the cancer has spread to a nearby lymph node. The big op is therefore not possible (quite a relief!) and, after the next scan (hopefully very soon), a programme of chemo can be worked out.

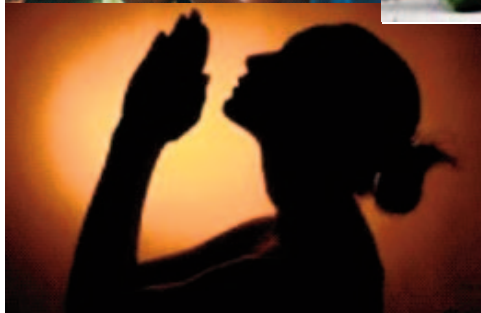
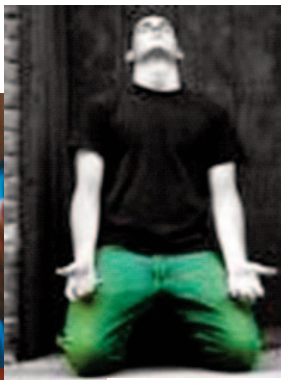
With our love to you all.

With much love

Margaret XXX

Healing?

Is it part of our real spiritual experience?



Explore this with us Sunday 1 June 2025: 3pm
@ North Lowestoft URC (London Rd North NR32 1HB)

In a gentle, prayerful environment, in the context of worship centered on Jesus Christ, we pray for peoples' needs with the option to receive individual prayer

No brash promises. Just an understanding that the healing ministry of Jesus continues through the Church

More info from Rev'd Jon Sermon (01986) 873761
email: pastorjonsermon@gmail.com

SPECIAL DATES at HURC

Halesworth United Reformed Church

Come and join us for:



Suggested donation £1 Per Person

Tuesdays 3:30pm - 5pm
June 3rd & 17th

Book with Elizabeth - familyhurc@gmail.com



Tuesday 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th



HURC Too
Every Sunday



Messy Breakfast
14th

Dear Elizabeth has given me some pictures from the last Spring Harvest. Due to extra pages this month I have not used them (sorry) but look out next month — Alan

Halesworth & Bramfield United Reformed Church

Minister's Report AGM 2025

This has been an exciting year:

A year ago, I reported on our support for Jo in her call to train for Ministry of Word & Sacraments. We continue to support her on the journey. It is great to see her flourishing.

Meanwhile, we also see Elizabeth, having replaced Jo as our Children & Families worker, growing into the role, taking the Families work forward. This included another trip to Spring Harvest, bringing in new Families especially at Messy Church and, with Jo's help, continuing to develop young Families Bible Study.

We have also been delighted to support Alex Instone-Brewer in his training for ordination. He is largely involved in the young family's work, but also in the main congregation and he will be helping with some of the Alpha sessions and the Holiday Bible Club.

Our worship continues to be enriched by musicians and singers and, of course, we remain grateful to have Jason on the organ, usually once a month. Having some new singers has been great, including the recent Sunday when our Nigerians brought an 'African feel' to worship.

Highlights include:

- The joy of having welcomed new members.
- The growth in home groups
- Our ongoing links with Romans 1.11 Trust, Esther and her ministry, MAF, Christian Aid and other charities & mission organisations
- Many new people engaging with us, both in the 'main' Sunday congregation and the Families work

- Ongoing co-operative links with Edgar Sewter School, including Open the Book and the school coming into the church.
- Delight, at the growing Families ministry including Messy Church and in again having a young Families group trip to Spring Harvest

As we look to the next phase, we must continue pray for those who may be taking on eldership, returning to it or developing in other leadership and support roles. Pray also for respite for those stepping down.

We are aware that in just over 6 month there will be a vacancy as I retire. Preparation for that is underway.

And the wonderful opportunity of the 'Awake' Suffolk Coastal Mission in September which has the potential to really strengthen the church, bring us together with a common purpose and help put us in a better position to face whatever adventure is ahead. Hopefully, it will also result in new believers joining the church, those wanting to continue exploring faith joining with us and others having their faith and desire to contribute to the life of the church revitalised.

As you know, we will be using the Alpha course as part of the follow up with contacts made during the Mission. We are also running Alpha now. The hope is that many of us will become more familiar with Alpha and build our confidence to invite others in September.

Although we started on Monday – and the best way is to attend as many sessions as possible, it is NOT too late to join. The next session is next Monday 2nd June 7.30 in church. The subject is "Why did Jesus' die?" The one you may have missed is largely an introduction and this represents the start of the full content.

Blessings

Jon



Explore the meaning of Life

The Alpha Course is a basic introduction to Christianity. A great way to explore faith or refresh our understanding. Also, an open environment to bring questions.

Alpha is running at Halesworth URC at present, open to all. And it will run again from September this year.

Although the best way to engage is to attend every session, it IS still OK to join part way through. The remaining sessions are:

Mon 2 June - Session 3 "Why did Jesus' die?"

Mon 9 June - session 4 "How can I have Faith?"

Mon 16 June - Session 5 "How & Why do I Pray?"

Mon 23 June - Session 6 "How & Why do I read the Bible"

Mon 30 June - Session 7 "How does God guide us?"

Sat 5 July Alpha Away Day (covers sessions 8/9/10 "Who is the Holy Spirit?", "What does the Holy Spirit do?" & "How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?")

Mon 7 July - Session 11 "How can I resist evil?"

Mon 14 July - Session 12 "How & Why do I tell others?"

Mon 21 July - Session 13 "Does God Heal Today?"

Mon 28 July - Session 14 "What About the Church?"

Mon 11 Aug - Session 15 "How can I make the most of the rest of my life?"

Mondays are 7.30pm @ Halesworth URC (finish by 9pm). No need to book

Venue and timing of the Away Day to be confirmed.

More info from Rev Jon Semon 873761 pastorjonsermon@gmail.com

Pentecost Celebration

Join with Christians
from across the area
in a bold open-air act
of worship:



Sunday 8 June 2025 3.00pm
@ Kensington Gardens



- Exuberant worship
- Party feel
- Salvation Army Band
- Bible & preaching
- Prayer & praise
- Craft activities
- Light refreshments
- No charge
- Everyone welcome

This is a Christians Together in Lowestoft & District event

For more details contact:

Mary Hunt johnandmaryhunt@gmail.com

Rev Jon Sermon pastorjonsermon@gmail.com





Sunday 1st	11 a.m.	Gathered Worship Minister Jon sermon Communion
	3 p.m.	Healing Service at Lowestoft
Monday 2nd	7.30. p.m	Alpha Session 3 "Why did Jesus die?"
Tuesday 3rd	10 a.m. to 12 noon	Coffee morning at Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship
Thursday 5th	7.00. p.m	Dunamis Pentecost Event - see page 16 Book @ www.dunamis.org.uk
Friday 6th	9.45. a.m.	Prayer Meeting in the Church and Zoom followed by Coffee Morning

Sunday 8th 11 a.m. Pentecost at St Mary's Church
Churches Together

3 p.m. Bramfield Chapel

3 p.m *Pentecost open air celebration at Kensington
Gardens, Lowestoft Jon leading with the
Salvation Army Band*

Monday 9th	7.30. p.m	Alpha Session 4 "How can I have faith?"
Tuesday 10th	10 a.m. to 12 noon	Coffee morning at Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship



Friday 13th	9.45 a.m.	Prayer Meeting in the Church and Zoom followed by Coffee Morning
Sunday 15th	11.00 a.m.	Gathered Worship TBA
Monday 16th	7.30 p.m.	Alpha Session 5 "How & why I should pray?"
Tuesday 17th	10 a.m. to 12 noon	Coffee morning at Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship
Friday 20th	9.45 am	Prayer Meeting in the Church and Zoom followed by Coffee Morning
Sunday 22nd	11 a.m.	Gathered Worship Paul & Lorraine
Monday 23rd	7.30 p.m.	Alpha Session 6 "How & why should I read the Bible?"
Tuesday 24th	10 a.m. to 12 noon	Coffee morning at Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship
Friday 27th	9.45 a.m.	Prayer Meeting in the Church and Zoom followed by Coffee Morning
Sunday 29th	11 a.m.	Gathered Worship TBA
Monday 30th	7.30 p.m.	Alpha Session 7 "How does God guide us?"



Exciting Update:

We now know that the team from through Faith Missions coming will probably be 6 people, 4 men & 2 women. I am grateful for the accommodation offers made so far, but please could I have more?

The steering group is continuing to work on the content of the programme. It will include links with Conquest Art, Brownies and Edgar Sewter School. We are on the point of booking at least one, possibly 2 'Christian Celebrity' speakers. We also have a URC minister from the Synod, Alex Jacob, who is involved with TFM coming to us. We are planning a BBQ, family event in the park, possible a 'Grill the Minister' Q&A session and a Healing Service.

We still have a lot to do in prayer and preparation, to discern these details and to prepare the ground: Think of Jesus telling the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4, also in Matthew & Luke). We want the seed to fall on 'good soil' and our prayerful preparation is a major part of that.

We also hope that several of us will host meals in our homes, with a team member going to each household. You could invite a few friends and neighbours, telling them that a Mission team member will be present to talk about faith/answer questions. Those who sense a call to host such a small gathering, please let me know.

And there will be opportunities to accompany team members in street evangelism, pubs or cafes and door to door visits.

TFM are offering a training session, Saturday 26 July @ Ipswich. I will be going and can take a car full. It is a day event, 9-4.30. Let me know. We also need to be prayerfully considering what each of us might contribute, you may also wish to consider which of these roles you could be involved in:

- Mission Coordinator
- Prayer coordinator
- Follow up coordinator
- Hospitality – either in your home or helping with food if the men on the team choose to sleep in the church
- Publicity
- Joining the steering group
- Being part of a mission specific prayer group
- Joining a follow-up team, both one-to-one follow up and the delivery of the Alpha Course immediately after the mission.

Meanwhile, we have submitted a Synod grant application to assist with the costs.

Please keep praying. The week of 6-14 September will be an intense focal point. The preparation before and follow up after are just as important. Why not ask the Lord for opportunities to develop relationships with others as you look forward to inviting them to mission events.

Blessings

Jon



From Dunamis

Online event via Zoom:

The Dunamis Fellowship in Britain & Ireland are putting on a special event for Pentecost. I will be giving the Bible teaching. There will be worship, prayer and an opportunity to receive from God.

It's on Thursday 5 June 7.00pm. Book (and therefore receive the Zoom link) at www.dunamis.org.uk

Hope to see you there

Blessings

Jon

NO SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

BUT IF YOU
HAVE A
BIRTHDAY



On the Outside Looking In

I'm surrounded by mad men!

At the beginning of this week I decided to venture out and see what was happening after the events of the Passover: so I spent the day skulking on street corners. I mingled with the crowds, listening to every conversation, even in dark corners of inns, trying to find out if any further reprisals were in the wind. I wanted a chance for us all to get away in time.

I didn't return until well after dark, making sure that I wasn't being followed. After giving the secret knock, I was shocked when the door was suddenly flung open by John Mark's mother, who seemed to be in hysterics. I thought that the temple police must have been to the house already and taken the others away, but then I realised that she wasn't crying... she was laughing! In fact, I've never seen her so merry: an elderly widow and giggling like an empty-headed youngster? It was hard to believe, but she seemed to be showing the effects of strong wine! I flew to the upper room to give someone a piece of my mind. We all needed to be very careful and keep our wits about us at a time like this. I realise that it has been a shocking time for the women (it has for all of us) but we can't let anyone compromise our safety by foolish behaviour.

It was then that I entered a mad house!

All of them in the same state, grinning at me like demented fools and all talking at once. I was furious. I launched into a very loud and angry speech about the **danger** we were in...The danger **I had** been in all day, trying to save their necks!

The room was suddenly silent. Startled faces all turned towards me. Then, the silence was suddenly broken by a tremendous guffaw of laughter, exploding and rumbling round the room. Levi grabbed me and said, "It's all right! He's been here; tonight!"

“He’s been here? **WHO**, has been here?” I demanded. Then I knew that they had all of them lost their reason, for, with one voice, they all said, ‘**The Master!**’ and proceeded to gabble out their own stories, all talking at the same time. I stood, simply appalled, watching my friends caught up in some mass madness. That they all believed what they said, I had no doubt. You only had to look at their eager faces, their eyes shining with tears of joy. And I would be the last one to rob them of comfort at this time: but there was no point in them fooling themselves. They would have to face the fact of Jesus’ death sometime and, anyway, how could we hope to slip quietly out of Jerusalem and back to our families, with them in this state? I knew we would need to get out quite soon, the authorities would be bound to want to ‘mop up’ any remaining followers of Jesus before long. I told them (rather brutally) that I did not believe a word of it and neither **would** I believe what they were saying, until I could put my finger in the wounds where the nails had been and my fist in to his spear torn side. **THAT** stopped the mindless gabble! Yes; I did feel terrible to deflate them like that, but you must be able to see that it had to be done?

Since that evening (exactly a week ago now) the hysterics have ceased but there is still an undercurrent of (what I have to call) excitement ... and there have been some strange changes:-

John and James now....Jesus used to call them ‘sons of thunder’, always arguing, trying to be ‘top dog’: like Jacob and Esau, constantly verbally ‘wrestling’ with each other. At the moment they aren’t just agreeable, they are positively peaceful: especially John.

Simon, on the other hand, (although also uncharacteristically calm) seems to be quietly brooding. Like the others, he is also full of this silly idea about Jesus, but there is definitely something, deep down, that troubles him.

So, I am now on my way back to John Mark’s house and I will prepare to eat a meal with people I have spent the last 3 years getting to know intimately and can (no longer) hardly recognise. I really do feel that I don’t know them any more. They have all tried to persuade me that Jesus actually did visit them last week, but I will hear none of it.

Somehow, they have been changed: and I haven’t. Although I know it is unreasonable, they seem to be stronger for this mad belief.. I wish I could feel this hope, like them, but I have always been a man of common sense, I saw what happened to the Master - and I have seen Roman crucifixions by the dozen, so I know that no one comes back from that. **No one!**

I, Thomas, am a man of reason and practical thinking. I am no dreamer and I cannot go along with this foolishness. Let me see the nail marks and the spear wound and then:

THEN I WILL BELIEVE.....

Lorraine



Climate Change

Laudato Si.

A call for engagement.

As a person who has had opportunities to travel widely during my working life I have witnessed the abuse of the natural world by humanity. As a result, for the past 20 years, I have had a growing concern about climate change. During this time, I have studied for a certificate in Christian Rural and Environmental Studies on a part time course held at Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford and awarded by The John Ray Initiative. Since retiring I have written a book about climate change and staged three exhibitions at local churches.

I recall hearing about Laudato Si about six years ago but because I was absorbed in my own activities, ignorance and prejudice I chose to ignore it. Recently however, the ever more urgent clamour surrounding the issues of climate change and degeneration of the natural environment prompted me to purchase a book titled

ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

LAUDATO SI'

THE ENCYCLICAL OF POPE FRANCIS ON THE ENVIRONMENT
WITH COMMENTARY BY SEAN McDonagh

I now wish I had reacted more positively when I first heard about the encyclical because it would have saved me 6 years of research and confirms most of what I Learned during many hours on the internet and reading books.

The above book is in two parts, the first is an in-depth commentary by Sean McDonagh and the second part is the complete encyclical by Pope Francis. It is written in a really down-to-Earth style and calls a spade a spade. It also expresses the accelerating urgency for active intervention to rapidly eliminate further carbon emissions and modify our global life-styles to contain them within sustainable boundaries.

The book is encouraging reading for all who recognise the critical importance for immediate action, and should be compulsory reading for climate deniers.

Christian communities around the world are responding positively to this call for action and below are statements issued by the Anglican and United Reformed churches

Recognition of Laudato Si:

Statements regarding Christian response to the Publication of Laudato Si.

Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si' has resonated deeply within the Anglican Communion, inspiring a renewed focus on creation care and environmental justice. Anglicans recognize the urgent need to address climate change and environmental issues, echoing the message of Laudato Si'.

Ecumenical Collaboration:

The Anglican Communion is actively participating in ecumenical dialogues and collaborations with the Catholic Church, including events focused on Laudato Si' and its impact on environmental stewardship.

United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church (URC) has acknowledged and affirmed the message of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si ("Praise Be to You") on care for our common home. Laudato Si, released in 2015, calls for a global effort to address the ecological crisis and promotes an "integral ecology" that connects environmental issues with social justice. The URC, while not a Catholic denomination, recognizes the encyclical's call for Christians to address the dangers posed by human actions to God's creation and to strive for a more sustainable future.

I am still studying the book and encyclical and would strongly encourage our church to include it as recommended study for our congregation.

Martin Dominic



For me, personally, it is a great blessing to be part of a church that also supports the voluntary ministry I have with Romans 1.11

Trust. Thank you for the ongoing support to the Charity, both by the church and many individual members.

Mutual Encouragement with Uganda continues!

Our major focus (and cost pressure) is the training of Pastors in Uganda. Churches are growing, new believers are coming, God is raising up new leaders.

But the extreme poverty most experience and the cost of Theological College courses makes it inaccessible to all but a privileged few. The Romans 1.11 course is offered free of charge to needy pastors, mostly in rural areas, providing training and equipping way beyond what they could otherwise expect. And it meets the need to show proper theological training, without which churches could be threatened with forced closure under government policy.

At present, training is running in 3 centres, Mbarara, Jinja & Kakumiro. We still need more funding to keep offering this and anyone willing to commit to £10/month for 3 years can receive a 'Boost 100' certificate and know you are helping to make this happen

Visits to Uganda are an important part of maintaining the Mutual encouragement. Last year, Stu Precious, and elder at North Lowestoft URC accompanied me. In August this year I will be taking a group of 5, including Jo Moreira who is able to treat it as an overseas placement – part of her Ordination training

Blessings

Jon (Chair of Trustees as well as Minister here)



Volunteers

Coffee Mornings (Fridays)

Other Duties Greeting/Prayers etc

Manse Officer

Open the Book Team and organiser



Please speak to an Elder if you would like to volunteer for any of the above