

Halesworth



and Bramfield URC



December 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

Dear Friends

As you all know, December is to be my final month as minister here. I retire on 31 December. My final time leading worship here will be Christmas Day. It doesn't make sense to linger then, when you will all be rushing home to your ovens, presents, decorations etc. So, the 1st Sunday that I will be retired, 4th January, I will be with you – in the congregation – and there will be a bring & share lunch after as a 'farewell'.

Thinking about the future, it is a big change for me and one I almost don't want to make. I have loved being with you for 9 and a half years. I will be very sad to go. But the time is right and I know I will still be in the Lord's hands – as also will you!

Reflecting back there are many joys and there are also sadnesses. Perhaps most prominent is the sadness of all those we have lost, primarily through deaths. Remembering not only those of you who are still here, but also those we have walked alongside, is poignant.

And all of you will remain in my memory and prayers for a long time. Ruth and I will, hopefully, return to visit the area from time to time and it will be lovely to see you. And if you should be heading into Northamptonshire, perhaps you could visit us?

I want to say that it has been a great pleasure to serve here as your minister. I have encountered so many inspiring people and also had the privilege of being able to help some through life's ups & downs and in spiritual growth. We have seen people come to know the Lord, new seeds of faith and many connections.

It will be a wrench to leave you. Yet I know that I leave you in good hands, not only in relation to the elders and others who will lead the church forward, but the overriding truth that you all, individually and corporately, remain in God's hands.

The future is uncertain: We do know that Halesworth & Lowestoft will be

**If you have something for the
January 2026 magazine,
please email**

**smedleybigal@aol.com (preferably)
or hand it to me by 22nd December**

Blessings, Alan

Our Vision:

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

joined also by Southwold, Wrentham & Beccles to form a Mission Partnership. After the work of establishing that and seeking a vision as to how the 5 churches can co-operate, there will be the prospect of calling a new minister who will serve all 5 churches. She or he will be the minister of the Partnership and new ways of determining how to work over such a widespread group, geographically and in other ways, will have to be devised.

Exactly how you will all need to go about it and how long it may take cannot yet be known. We do know that it must include establishing contacts across the 5 congregations and getting to know one another. The key thing to hold onto is that, however much there is uncertainty, the certainty is that you will still be on a journey with God. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance. Pray for one another and for your leadership. Continue to pray for new engagement, new people coming to faith, new Gospel opportunities.

And I pray blessings upon you.

In the meantime, let's enjoy our remaining time together as we journey through Advent, celebrate the coming of our Lord again this Christmas and look forward with hope to all God has for us in the New Year and beyond.

Blessings Jon

Christmas Food Court Flash Mob Hallelujah **Chorus**

Most of you will have seen this short video on "You Tube"
It happened 14 years ago!...but I still watch it at least once
at Christmas, it delights the soul! If you have never seen it
just go on to "you tube" and type in the title (in red at the
top of this paragraph).. I promise you it will make you
happy for the rest of the day ! Love, Lorraine x



The latest news from Margeret Long is encouraging. Although the Chemo treatment can't stop the cancer, and it is challenging to live with, Margaret is coping remarkably well. And the latest tests show that it is significantly holding back the growth of the cancer. Please keep her, George, Lotte and the wider family in prayer.

Kathryn Bones is still experiencing a difficult time. Pray for her and for Paul.

Ruth and I are trying to get ahead with preparation for the move. Her capacity is very limited, as you know, and the pressure of downsizing our book collections and all the other stuff we may not need is quite a burden to carry. She has managed to be in church a bit often recently. In depth prayer ministry is helping.

Pray for Allan Moreira as he is in the process of applying for British Citizenship. And of course, for Jo in her ongoing ministry training.

The Alpha Course is reaching its conclusion. Please pray for everyone involved and for their ongoing journeys of spiritual searching and development.

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

Blessings

Jon



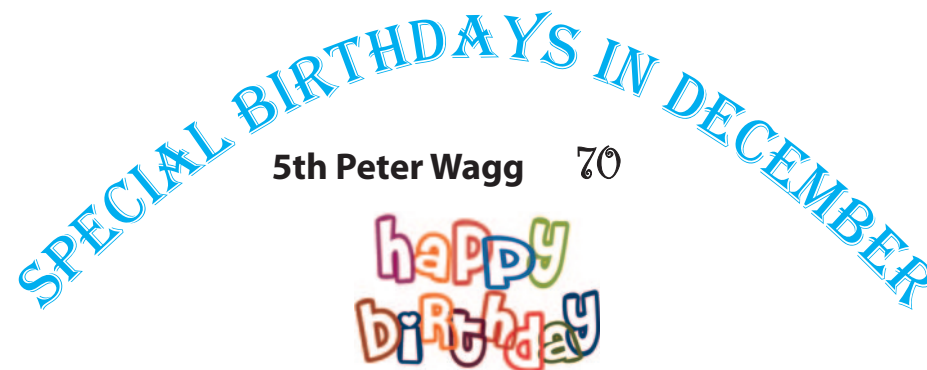
The Christmas Special offered by Dunamis Fellowship in Britain and Ireland this year is called "Celebrate, Come as You Are"

- When: Thursday 18 December 7pm start prompt – 8.45
- Where: On Zoom, so wherever you have an internet connection
- Why: A really special opportunity to join in heart-felt worship with other Christians who are excited about celebrating Jesus Christ
- How: Book at <https://www.dunamis.org.uk/online/christmas-2025/>



Christmas greetings

David and Rosemary would like to wish all their church family a
very Happy
Christmas and blessing for 2026
We pray the joy of Christmas will be with you all



I am deeply appreciative for all your messages and prayers over the past few months, which have been joined to prayers from around the world.

After a scan and blood tests, it would appear that the chemo is doing its job and preventing further spread of the cancer. I spoke to the Oncologist recently and he was very positive and encouraging. I shall continue with the chemo until the middle of January, with a little break over Christmas.

George and I wish you all a blessed, joyful Christmas.
Margaret Long

Thank you, Rosemary, for my recent Birthday Card from the Church, and we do thank you for taking on this role and for continuing to include those of us who have moved away from the Halesworth area.

Dear friends, please know that we continue to hold you all in our prayers, and thank our Heavenly Father for the friendship and care you showed us over the years we were in Suffolk. This will always remain with us, as will our concern for you all.

We wish you all a peaceful and joyful Christmas

With our love, Audrey and Bob

December

Tuesday 2nd 10 a.m. to 12 noon Coffee morning at Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship

Friday 5th 9.45 a.m. Prayer Meeting in the Church and Zoom followed by Coffee Morning

Sunday 7th 11.00 a.m. Gathered Worship Minister Jon Sermon
Holy Communion

Friday 12th 9.45 a.m. Prayer Meeting in the Church and Zoom followed by Coffee Morning

7 p.m. Carols by Candlelight

Sunday 14th 11 a.m. Christingle Service Elizabeth leading

3.00 pm Carols at Bramfield Chapel

Tuesday 16th 10 a.m. to 12 noon Coffee morning at Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship

Thursday 18th Dunamis Christmas Special (page 6)

Friday 19th 9.45 a.m. Prayer Meeting in the Church and Zoom followed by Coffee Morning

Sunday 21st 11 a.m. Gathered Worship Minister Jon Sermon

Tuesday 23rd 10 a.m. to 12 noon Coffee morning at Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship

December

Thursday 25th 10.30 am CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

Minister Jon Sermon

Friday 26th 9.30 a.m. Prayer Meeting in the Church and Zoom followed by Coffee Morning

Sunday 28th 11.00 a.m. Morning Service (Carols /Hymns / Readings)

Tuesday 30th 10 a.m. to 12 noon Coffee morning at Lowestoft followed by Morning Worship

Sunday 4th January 2026 11.a.m.

Gathered Worship Peter Wagg

"Farewell to Minister Jon" (Shared Lunch)

SPECIAL DATES at HURC

Halesworth United Reformed Church

Come and
join us for:



Tuesdays 3:30pm - 5pm
December 2nd & 16th Christmas Party

Book with Elizabeth - familyhurc@gmail.com



**Tuesday 2nd, 9th and
16th Christmas Party**



**HURC Too
Every Sunday**

14th Christingle main hall



**Messy Breakfast 13th
with Christmas crafts**



I know that most of you have already read and/or heard this story, but I felt the need to lay it before you again. It is the very first story I was prompted to write, for the unusual Nativity Service I was compiling in (I think) 1979?, for St. Luke's Church in Beccles. God knew that music has been central to my life since my birth and, as HE touched my heart with the wonder of Angel Song, my spirit was lifted in a way I find hard to describe. I pray that the LORD would enable you also to feel the numinous wonder of that heavenly concert!

The Shepherd

Quite late it was, and darned cold too I remember. We were sitting around the fire, talking as we always do, while the sheep huddled together on the hillside. For us, another night of watching for wild animals... (or even bandits!) with nothing odd about the night at all: just the star-studded sky and the usual banter amongst ourselves.

As usual, old Jacob was on top form: Gloomily, dramatically, he loudly complained about how "the cold strikes through to the very bone" when you are getting older! Then his jaw suddenly dropped wide open, and he got a look on his face like a fish, gasping in the bottom of a fishing boat. Jacob is a bit of a "wag" and we are used to him larking about, so the rest of us started to jeer and make comments about him being as "daft as a brush". Then, he lifted his finger: and slowly, with a real tremble, (I was impressed by that!) he pointed to a place behind us. Keen to enter into the fun, we all turned to see the joke.

My heart still does a somersault when I remember it.

There before us, was the hillside and the sheep. We could see Bethlehem, asleep under the night frosted stars, but we were standing as rigid as those Roman statues in Caesarea, each of us with the same silly expression on our faces that old Jacob was wearing. The familiar scene was all there, as usual, but none of it looked **real** (if you take my meaning): nothing seemed ... **solid**. It was as though all of us (and the whole wide world we lived in) was simply a drawing...yes, just like a sketch, made of cobwebs, that one puff of wind could blow away forever: BUT, where Jacob was pointing, there was **something** that was so real and solid, even just looking at it hurt your eyes.

It was like a man, but he was HUGE. He looked immensely strong and he was burning bright, full of colour. He didn't seem to be standing on anything (which made me feel dizzy) and I couldn't figure out in my own mind which way was 'up'.

I noticed that (although the night was very still and quiet) his garments fluttered and flew around him as if he was in a mighty wind, or travelling at great speed.

Then he spoke. with a sound that should have bent the trees and woken the dead. He told us of a baby, just born in Bethlehem town. Seemingly, this baby was the Lord's Anointed, the one we in Israel have been waiting for through many long centuries! What didn't make sense was that this mighty messenger was telling US about it, common shepherds! What is more, he said that we were to go and look for this baby, in a STABLE!

I thought that I hadn't heard right, but I didn't dare to open my mouth to argue, he looked far too terrifying. What happened next; I can hardly explain. It was like a door opened in the sky... and in the land... just behind the angel. It was huge, as though a giant hand had just torn a hole in the dark, night time world and through this opening we could see a place that was filled with brilliant light. Suddenly, through this hole, there came thousands more of these huge, REAL people, running and flying and pushing into our little world, all excited and smiling, seemingly curious to see the place where we lived. I was afraid that the earth would collapse under the weight of them all and the excited bubble of their calling to one another.

Then..... **Oh! Then THEY ALL STARTED TO SING!**

I want to cry at the memory of it. I don't even know if I heard the music or tasted it. It drenched me! It took hold of me and I seemed to be shattered into pieces and then put back together again. I tingled all over and wanted to shout and fly like these strange folk. I felt so elated, I knew that I could run for a hundred miles and not be tired. **"GLORY TO GOD"** echoed through my head, **"PEACE TO ALL MEN"** reverberated from the flimsy hills. It was so rowdy I felt sure that our whole world was about to shake to bits, but I didn't want it ever to stop, (oh, HOW could I ever tell you about that wonderful music?) Ah! ... but then (all too soon) it did stop.

I don't know how long all this took, but suddenly, all the 'real folk' were gone and the hillside seemed darker than ever before, despite the moon and starlight. The world was a cold and a lonely place and I felt like a small bairn, whose mother has left him all alone, cold and frightened. I wanted to weep and, as I looked at the others, I knew that they felt the same way. Just then, we all seemed to catch a tiny echo of that music, from where I don't know. We looked at one another.

Let's go and find this baby then", I suggested and the others agreed.

As we stumbled through the town, looking for the correct stable, without a thought for the sheep left on the hillside, I wondered how this baby was feeling. If he came from that bright place, where everything was so real and bright and full of that wonderful music, how cold and lonely must he be feeling right now?

When we found him, his Mum let me hold him, even though I do smell of sheep. We don't have much to do with babies usually, but all of us were stilled and awed by this meeting. It looked so ordinary, his Mum was tired, but shining with happiness, her husband protective (and even he seemed a little overwhelmed.) Lots of babies would be born this night but how many of them had their birth announced in such a way?... and to the kind of people that most folks looked down on and didn't want to know! It was more than I could understand.

So, before I gave him back to his Mum, I kissed his little forehead, telling him about those 'real' people and their incredible song....
...just to make him feel welcome.



Lorraine

And there were shepherds abiding in the fields....

SURPLUS PAINT

Having just had the house redecorated, we have a few part tins of mostly pastel coloured paint left over.

There is also some dark green and a couple of part tins of mould resistant paint for a bathroom or kitchen.

If any of this is of interest to you, please have a word with one of us.

Thank you. Vivienne and Doug Mizon



Taken from Val's balcony at The Limes, Halesworth



Dear readers as you will know we move into uncharted times next year after Jon's (and Ruth's) retirement. I make a request that if you want to put any family news or prayer requests in the magazine PLEASE send it to me by 22nd of the month - email, phone or on a bit of paper. My details on back page.

*I wish you all a blessed Christmas
and New Year
Alan*



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

