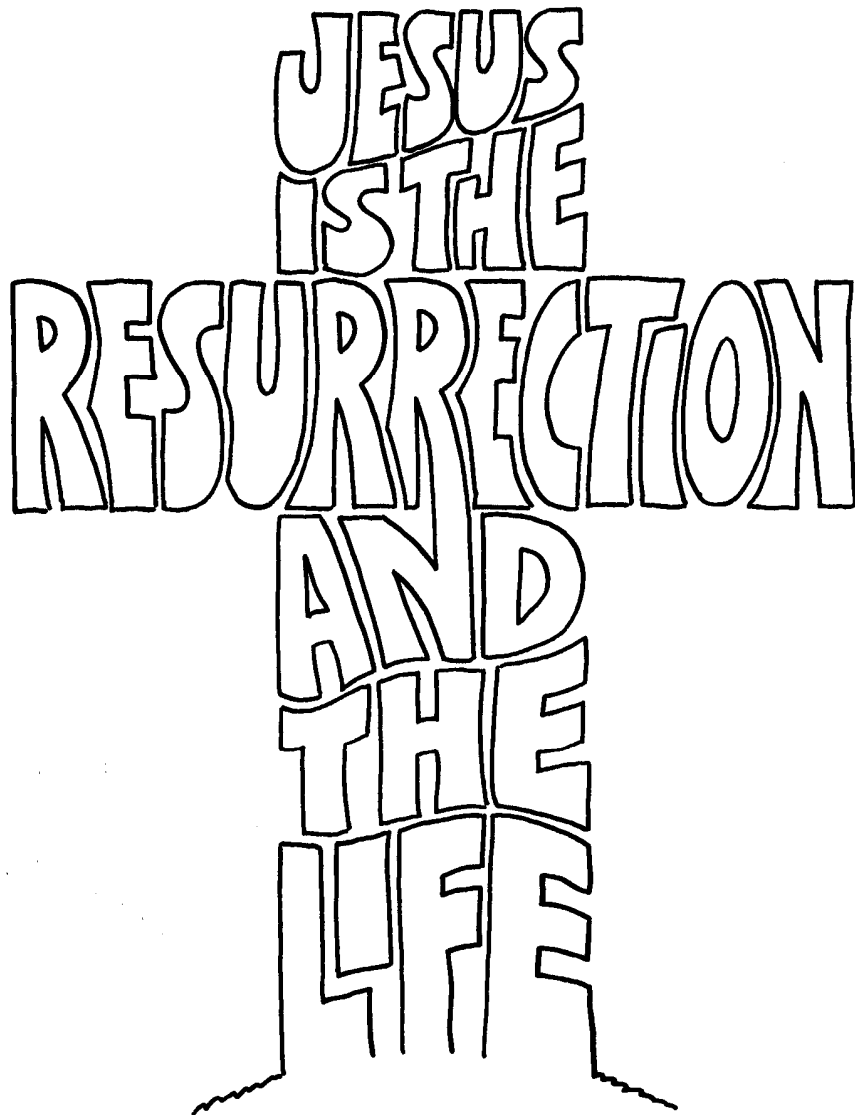


# THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

January to March 2026



Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" – *John 11:25-26 (NKJV)*

The Magazine of the  
United Reformed Church, Hadleigh, Essex

## PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR JANUARY 2026

Sun 4 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Ian Miller
Sun 11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr John Amos
Sun 18 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Sun 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Heather Brown

## PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2026

Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr John Amos
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Feb	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Clive Lewis
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr John Simmons

## PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR MARCH 2026

Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Mar	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Ian Miller
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Mar	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Mar	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar	10.30pm	Morning Service	Mr John Amos
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Mar	10.30am	Morning Service	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh

<b>CHURCH MEETING</b>	<b>ELDERS' MEETING</b>
Thu 12 <sup>th</sup> Mar 13.00pm	Thu 16 <sup>th</sup> Apr 1.15pm

## CHURCH FLOWERS

Sun 4 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Jean Reeve - birthday
Sun 18 <sup>th</sup> Jan	June Gargrave - great-grandson Percy's birthday
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	June Gargrave - in memory of her brother Derek
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Mar	Jean Reeve - in memory of her mother's birthday
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Mar	John & Valerie Ambrose - birthdays
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar	Doreen Church - wedding anniversary
Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Apr	June Gargrave - in memory of great-grandson Noah



Note: If you'd like to make a donation towards the cost of the church flowers on a particular Sunday, perhaps to celebrate a special event or remember a loved one, then please speak to Heather Brown. Heather phone number is 01702 557678.

## Easter reflection

Dear Friends,

We have been watching the daffodils that I planted in the front of the Church garden last autumn unfurl. They are now bowing their golden heads gently in the breeze. These Lenten lilies bring light and colour to the garden and remind us of our Lenten journey with Christ, as he made his way to the Cross. On Good Friday here in Hadleigh, we will join with all our Christian community to worship at the Methodist Church as we remember the sacrifice Jesus made to carry our sin on that fateful day.

In the past, Good Friday preparations were made at our church to welcome all those who walked from the Methodist Church, along the London Road in a Walk of Witness, arriving at our church for refreshments and a buttered hot-cross bun. For some years now, we have not been able to provide this service due to falling numbers in our congregation. Unfortunately, the number who attend the Good Friday service has slowly diminished but Churches Together in Hadleigh continue to meet at the Methodist Church for the service on Good Friday. Members from each church often take part in the service.

We also continue to do the Walk of Witness from the Methodist Church, crossing the busy London Road at the pedestrian crossing and walking on the pavement to Rectory Road before turning into the public car park, coming back up through the lane (or snicket as Malcolm would call it) between the carpet shop and the optician's, and returning to the Methodist Church. We then have our cups of tea or coffee and hot cross buns in the large hall at the Methodist Church joining those who are unable to take part in the Walk. We are very grateful that the Methodist Church has stepped up to help keep this tradition alive in Hadleigh.

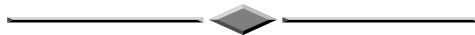
I find that these Churches Together events are very uplifting as we meet our friends from other churches and enjoy our company together. I wonder how long it will take for us to further our companionship together on our Christian journey. With numbers falling in our churches, will there be a day when we will join together as one worshipping fellowship? Is this to be part of God's plan for us?

Malcolm will probably try to wake up early for the Sunday morning Sunrise Service at Hadleigh Castle. Unfortunately, after having two hip replacements I no longer find it easy to walk on the rough ground out at Hadleigh Castle, but it is a really wonderful experience to walk the path to the Castle early on the Sunday morning thinking how Mary Magdalene and her friends walked towards the grave where Jesus' body had been laid. They felt that their Lord had been hurriedly lain to rest and wanted to give him a respectful burial, only to find that his body was no longer there. Mary was to be the first person to see the risen Lord, although she didn't recognise him at first.

As the sun rises in the sky at Hadleigh Castle, those who attend this service find blessings in the memories of this story and greet Easter Sunday in thoughtfulness, songs and prayer as they watch the sun rising in the sky. The story of Jesus' resurrection slowly unfolds and we rejoice in thankfulness that he promises us new life in Him.

Wishing you all every blessing this Easter!

*Heather Brown (Secretary)*



### ***From the Bible – Luke 24:1-10 (NIV)***

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words. When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

**From the Editor** Welcome to the first edition of the Hadleigh Messenger for 2026.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to return to the pattern of publishing a magazine every month, though I still hope to do so, and therefore this edition nominally covers January to March. For historical continuity I have included details of services that have already taken place but I have also included details of our April 2026 services below and the traditional united Good Friday and Easter Day Sunrise services.

The good news is that I am now suffering very little pain from the sciatica and muscular problem in my right leg but I still have numbness in my right heel, which is probably unrelated to sciatica. I was signed off by the physiotherapist at Southend Hospital in early January.

The delay in publishing another magazine is due to time pressures caused by a variety of factors

including involvement in the organisation of the World Day of Prayer service and work on the manse site. The manse property is in the process of being re-let.

February saw the formation of the South East Essex Mission Partnership, which has replaced the South Essex Area Partnership. I have included a report on the celebration service, led by the Synod Moderator, which included the signing of the Mission Partnership Agreement.

On Friday 6th March, our church hosted the local service for the World Day of Prayer and a report on that event is included.

Our Church Secretary, Heather, continues to work hard to keep the church functioning. Finding preachers has been difficult and, consequently, she has been preaching more often than she would like. We are grateful to her and all our preachers.

*Malcolm Brown*

---



---

## Easter services

### **Fri 3rd Apr (Good Friday) 10.30am**

**United Service** at Hadleigh Methodist Church led by Rev. Pete Moorhouse, Circuit Superintendent of the Southend & Leigh Methodist Circuit.

The service will be followed by the usual Walk of Witness around Hadleigh. Refreshments will be served afterwards back at the Methodist Church.

### **Sun 5th Apr (Easter Day) 6.00am**

**Sunrise Service** at Hadleigh Castle led by Major Mark Cozens, with members of the SA Temple Band.

### **Sun 5th Apr (Easter Day) 10.30am**

**Easter Day Service** at our church led by Mrs Heather Brown.

## PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR APRIL 2026

Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Apr	10.30am	Easter Day Service	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 12 <sup>th</sup> Apr	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr John Amos
Sun 19 <sup>th</sup> Apr	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup> Apr	10.30am	Morning Service	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh

Articles for the magazine can be e-mailed to the Editor, Malcolm Brown, at [mgbrownmail@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mgbrownmail@yahoo.co.uk).  
Opinions expressed in any published articles do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editor or the policy of the United Reformed Church, either locally or nationally.

# Churches Together in Hadleigh Lent Course

## 'Lamentations'

This year's Churches Together Lent course is being hosted by Hadleigh Baptist Church. Pastor Tom Pender was planning to run a Lent course on Lamentations for his own fellowship and kindly invited people from other churches to attend. Each of the five sessions is being held both on Tuesday afternoons and on Thursday evenings to suit those who work or who have commitments that might prevent them attending a particular a particular session. The sessions on Tuesday afternoons commence on 3<sup>rd</sup> March and the start time is 1.30pm. The sessions on Thursday evenings commence on 26<sup>th</sup> February and the start time is 7.30pm. Light refreshments will be available before each session. All are welcome to attend.

*Malcolm Brown*

---

## H&TCA Echo Archive negatives scanning project

Some readers will be aware that the Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive group, of which I am a member, has been scanning negatives of images that appeared in the Southend Standard and Echo newspapers from the mid-1960s to the year 2000. A few of the images scanned to date appear below..



Hadleigh Corner – Mar 1967



Cherry's (now Fatty's Bar) – Feb 1975



Jack Barber of Daws Heath - Jan 1998



Scrambling on Hadleigh Downs – May 1975



Thomas Brothers closing down sale – Apr 1984



Girls' Brigade at our church – Jan 1970

*Malcolm Brown*

---

## Family News

---

### Marion Melliush

Marion, wife of Colin Melliush and grandmother of Emily Simpson, passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> December in Catherine Miller House care home, Leigh-on-Sea. Marion had dementia and we had been praying for her for several years. Her funeral was held on 7<sup>th</sup> January at Southend Crematorium.

*We continue to hold Colin and Emily in our prayers after their loss.*

### Birthdays in Jan, Feb, Mar & early April



---

### **EASTER.**

**Alleluia! Sing with gladness,  
On this happy Easter-tide,  
Jesus Christ, the Lord, has risen,  
Spread the message far and wide.**

**Raise the joyous Easter anthem,  
God's beloved incarnate Son,  
Over death and evil powers.  
Has the glorious victory won.**

**Jesus is the Resurrection,  
Then, O! death, where is thy sting,  
Shall our hearts not beat with rapture,  
Shall we not arise and sing.**

**He, sin's iron chain has broken,  
And the prisoners are set free,  
He, the great triumphant Leader,  
Leads to Light and Liberty.**

**Onward! then, ye faithful soldiers,  
'Listed in the holy war,  
On from strength to strength He'll lead you,  
Ever upwards shall ye soar.**

**Saviour, then this Easter morning,  
We our joyful songs would raise,  
Listen, then, O! loving Jesus.  
To our happy notes of praise.**

**Prittlewell.**

**H. J. EVANS.**

*Published in the Southend Standard newspaper on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1882*



Please remember those associated with our fellowship in need of prayer...

# Formation of the South East Essex Mission Partnership

Hadleigh United Reformed Church is now officially a member of the South East Essex Mission Partnership. The new mission partnership came into being when representatives of the five member churches signed a Partnership Agreement at a special celebration service held on the afternoon of Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February at Kings Road URC. Our Church Secretary, Heather Brown, signed the agreement on Hadleigh URC's behalf. Sadly, Southchurch Park URC, which would have been a member, had recently decided to close, with their final service planned for 28<sup>th</sup> March.

The service was led by the Moderator of Eastern Synod, Rev. Lythan Nevard, and members from each church took part. After the service there was a time of fellowship with the traditional tea/coffee and cakes but this was then followed by a meeting of the 'Vacancy Group'.

The Vacancy Group will organise the calling of two new ministers. The mission partnership has a scoping of two ministers, one of whom, Rev. Naomi Young-Rodas, is currently in post. Naomi, who is the daughter of Rev. Arthur Young, Minister at our church from 1965 to 1978, was originally appointed as minister of Christ Church Rayleigh URC but her scoping now includes Bridgwater Drive URC and Kings Road URC. However, Naomi recently announced that she will be leaving in May so two ministers will be need to be called.

At the Vacancy Group meeting, which both Heather and I attended, Lythan advised that Rev. David Coaker, currently part-time Minister of Grays URC and also Eastern Synod Clerk, had offered to be our Interim Moderator during the period of vacancy. This offer was accepted by those present. The Moderator advised that it will probably be at least a year before new ministers are in post. Another meeting of the group will be held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April at Rayleigh.



Rev. Lythan Nevard addressing the five churches



Signing of the Mission Partnership Agreement



Rev. Naomi Young-Rodas giving the blessing

*Malcolm Brown*

## Order of the Celebration Service on forming the SE Essex Mission Partnership

**Call to worship and welcome:** Nick Raggett, Kings Road

**Hymn:** Great God, your love has called us here

**Prayers:** Ian Miller, Christ Church Rayleigh

**Hymn:** The church is wherever God's people are praising

**Readings:** 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31 read by Bob Howes, Bridgwater Drive  
Matthew 28:16-20 read by Malcolm Brown, Hadleigh

**Reflection:** Rev. Lythan Nevard, Synod Moderator

**Hymn:** The Love of God comes close

**Prayers:** Ruth Dixon, The Cornerstone

**The Signing of the Mission Partnership Agreement**

**Hymn:** Let us build a house

**Blessing:** Rev. Naomi Young-Rodas

# News from around the URC

## Ecumenical Covenant signed as part of 'joy-filled' Installation service

On 25<sup>th</sup> March, at the Installation of Sarah Mullally as the 106<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, the first woman to be elected to that ministry, Rev. Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, one of the Presidents of Churches Together in England and Moderator of the Free Churches' Group, took part in the historic and joy-filled service by asking the new Archbishop to sign an Ecumenical Covenant.

During the service, Tessa, a URC Minister with churches in Gants Hill, Grange Park, Wanstead and Walthamstow, who served as Moderator of the General Assembly from 2023-2024, asked Dame Sarah to "add your signature to the Covenant we share as Presidents of Churches Together in England, and join your voice to ours in prayer and in the service of the Gospel in our nation."

The Archbishop responded by saying: "Willingly I share with you the service of the churches of this country, and pledge myself to strive for the full, visible unity of Christ's Church in truth and love," before signing the Covenant.

In an interview with the BBC, Dame Sarah said that she recognised the significance of being the first female archbishop, but that she was "also aware of the women that have supported me in my ministry, and the men as well. ...The installation service will have women's voices right the way through it, so there's something about celebrating women, but also being able to say to other people, in a sense, it's entirely possible for you to follow your dreams."



The United Reformed Church was represented by Andy Jackson, left, Catriona Wheeler, second right, and John Ellis, right, pictured with Tessa Henry-Robinson, second left, who took part in the service as one of the Presidents of Churches Together in England and Moderator of the Free Churches' Group.

## New Head of Ministries Learning and Development appointed

The Ministries Office is pleased to announce that Rev. Dr Phil Wall has been appointed as Head of Ministries Learning and Development for the United Reformed Church.



Before entering ordained ministry, Phil worked in a number of settings that reflect both pastoral sensitivity and educational depth, including as a Childline counsellor, apprentice psychotherapist and secondary school teacher. His preparation for ordained ministry included doctoral study, with a PhD exploring theology and teaching within fresh expressions of church, a focus that continues to inform his understanding of how the Church learns, adapts and bears faithful witness in contemporary society.

Following ordination, Phil served for eight years in pastoral ministry in the valleys of South Wales, where he exercised a grounded and relational ministry shaped by local church life, community presence and pastoral care. More recently, he has served as a chaplain in Milton Keynes with young people aged 12–18 in a young offenders setting, ministering among those whose lives are often marked by vulnerability, exclusion and complexity.

Alongside his ministerial work, Phil is a foster carer, an avid film watcher and an occasional runner. Across these varied contexts, he has demonstrated a sustained concern for those at the margins, for thoughtful discipleship, and for the way learning can equip the Church for faithful ministry in demanding times.

In his new role, Phil will lead the United Reformed Church's work in learning and development for accredited, commissioned and ordained ministries, helping to ensure that formation pathways remain accessible, coherent and responsive to the changing needs of the Church.

The appointment comes at a significant time as the denomination continues to reflect on the future of ministry, theological education and lifelong formation, seeking ways to sustain both depth and adaptability in its ministerial life.

## St Andrew's Roundhay in Leeds is celebrating

St Andrew's Roundhay in Leeds is celebrating after reaching its fundraising target to repair its Clocktower. When the clock stopped working a few months ago the congregation was told that it would take more than £15,000 to both repair the clock and fit a suppressor to the clock bell to silence the chimes at night. Dismayed at the huge sum of money required, the church turned to its "amazing" community for help.

In February, the congregation launched an appeal



to help save the clock with a special fundraiser at the church's weekly Clocktower Community Café, open on Wednesday

mornings between 10am and 12pm. Members of the church also delivered leaflets telling people more about the history and significance of the 118-year-old clocktower and set up a JustGiving page asking for donations. The appeal met with resounding success with a total of £15,800 raised.

## Wise words from 2026 Youth Assembly

The young people of the United Reformed Church vowed to put their actions where their mouths are at this year's Youth Assembly, held in Northampton. Taking the theme "Wise Words – Wise Actions" as their starting point, around one hundred 14-25-year-olds enjoyed a weekend of business, worship, and a wide range of activities – from prayer walks and karaoke to marshmallow toasting and ceilidh dancing.

Following lively discussion and a vote, Youth Executive was tasked with focusing their attention in 2026-27 on three priorities: social injustices for young people; international partnerships and collaboration with Christian youth; and environmental issues.

From tackling a housing crisis that prevents young people from moving out from home to recognising that those below the poverty line are impacted more by the effects of climate change, members of Assembly made clear the issues they are passionate about – and feel their churches and communities should care deeply about too.

Taylor Hawkins, a delegate from Wessex Synod, was successful in persuading Youth Assembly to encourage synods and local churches to become more young carer aware. Their resolution will

come to the recently formed Faith in Action committee for further discussion and action.

There was also a notable emphasis on the need to collaborate ecumenically. Delegates were present from different Christian denominations, from across the UK and Germany, as well as interns from the Joint Public Issues Team. Incoming Youth Moderator Kacie Hodgson has made "expanding our horizons through our ecumenical relations" one of the platforms of her year in office, and Moderator-Elect Alex Clements added that "where URC churches exist at a geographical distance, we need to support young people to feel more confident in getting to know young people of other Church denominations".

The depth of commitment to Youth Assembly was evident throughout the event. Outgoing Youth Moderator Maya Withall, who joined the URC aged 11 from a non-Christian background, marvelled at the journey she has come on and said her colleagues on Youth Executive have inspired her to be better in her own work. The new Clerk of Youth Assembly, Jessica Gough, echoed that sentiment and told the gathering she was baptised recently and became a member of her local church. She said, "I honestly don't think I would have made that decision had I not got involved with URC Youth."

## URC donates nearly £45,000 to help Jamaica rebuild after Hurricane Melissa

The United Reformed Church (URC) has donated £44,610 to help churches in Jamaica rebuild after the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa.

The funds, raised through a denomination-wide appeal, were presented to the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) during a visit by URC representatives to the Caribbean. Karen Campbell, the URC's Head of Global and Intercultural Church, and Rev. Dr Kevin Snyman, Head of World Justice, travelled to Jamaica on 15<sup>th</sup> February with ecumenical colleagues to witness the impact of the storm and strengthen church partnerships.

More than 50 churches were badly damaged when Hurricane Melissa struck, with roofs torn away and eight buildings completely destroyed. The UCJCI is coordinating repairs while also supporting the wider needs of affected communities. Church leaders say rebuilding homes and restoring stability for families remains the immediate priority before damaged church buildings can be repaired.

# Why hedgehogs used to be hated

Hedgehogs have been part of human culture for thousands of years. Across different societies, they've been symbols of fertility, protection and healing, as well as fear, superstition and suspicion. Today, 17 species of hedgehog are found across Europe, Africa and Asia, many of which live in close proximity to people, a closeness that has helped shape the stories told about them.



**Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)**

Long before written history, hedgehog-like imagery could be found in symbolic art linked to fertility and renewal, suggesting these animals mattered to people for far longer than written records can reveal. In ancient Egypt, they were seen as guides and protectors, admired for their ability to survive winter through hibernation, a powerful symbol of rebirth. However, the Egyptians also hunted them for sport and used their spines in folk remedies, including those thought to cure baldness.

Hedgehogs also historically took on more unsettling roles. In parts of China, early stories described hedgehog spirits that could shapeshift into human form and bring misfortune. Later traditions, however, recast them as sacred household protectors and healers.

## Hedgehogs' horrible history

In Britain, hedgehogs were viewed largely as negative until relatively recently. During the middle ages, they were closely associated with witchcraft. One widespread belief was that witches could transform into hedgehogs to cause harm and mischief. They were also thought to sneak into fields at night to steal milk directly from cows' udders.

Another long standing belief was that hedgehogs carried stolen fruit on their spines. Medieval illustrations often showed them sneaking through orchards with apples skewered on their backs, an image that still appears in children's books and birthday party treats today.

Some long-standing myths also persist, with well meaning people offering them milk, despite hedgehogs being lactose intolerant.



**Part of an illustration from around 1250 showing a hedgehog stealing fruit. Getty Open Content**

Although some of these stories survive today as charming curiosities, others had more serious consequences. Hedgehogs were officially classed as "vermin" under the Preservation of Grain Act 1532, alongside a long list of other animals. Parishes were required to kill them, with bounties of three pence paid for each hedgehog, a significant sum at the time. Communities that failed to meet their quotas could even be fined.

Hedgehogs remained on these vermin lists for centuries. It's estimated that over the 140 years from 1660 to 1800, around half a million hedgehogs were destroyed in this way – a figure comparable to a substantial proportion of the UK's current population. And they weren't alone, wildcats, otters and pine marten (to name but a few) were all once persecuted in the same way, and are now among the UK's most legally protected species, after suffering significant population declines.

## Persecution and protection

Although this act was eventually repealed, the killing of hedgehogs continued well into the 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly on shooting estates. Records suggest that tens of thousands were destroyed each year during this period, with the numbers killed declining between the 1960s and early 1980s. This may reflect changing attitudes and the introduction of wildlife protection legislation, but it is also possible that hedgehogs were becoming scarcer.

Today, hedgehogs are seen very differently in the UK at least. In 2016 they were voted Britain's favourite mammal, beating red foxes, which came in second place, by a considerable margin. Public affection for hedgehogs has fuelled garden

conservation campaigns, dedicated charities and a growing network of rehabilitation centres, caring for sick and injured animals – often supported by members of the public who actively manage gardens with hedgehogs in mind.

While attitudes towards hedgehogs have improved dramatically in recent decades, this has not been enough to halt their decline, with the species recently reclassified as “near threatened” on the International Union for Conservation of Nature red list.

Understanding our cultural journey and changing attitudes towards hedgehogs helps explain both our desire to protect them and some of the mistakes we still make. It also offers a warning, other species once dismissed as pests only gained serious protection once their declines became impossible to ignore. Species such as badgers and foxes continue to provoke strong and divided

public opinion, much as hedgehogs once did – a reminder of how strongly stories shape which animals we choose to protect.

The hedgehogs journey from feared pest to beloved garden icon shows how powerful human stories can be, both in harming wildlife and in motivating protection. But affection alone isn't enough. Myths that once justified persecution still linger in softer forms, shaping well-meaning but sometimes harmful behaviour. Right now hedgehogs need protection. Simple actions, such as offering a shallow dish of water, creating hedgehog-friendly gardens, providing escape routes from garden ponds and reducing pesticide use, will all help to save this now much-loved mammal.

*Kate Davies*

PhD candidate, Nottingham Trent University



## Easter time

We're on our Easter outing  
With picnic lunch in tow.  
It isn't raining, isn't blowing,  
Just a lovely springtime show.  
We are settled in the park,  
The bees are buzzing by,  
While in the bluest blue,  
A blackbird beats the sky.  
With the birds in hallowed song,  
And the horses, cows and sheep,  
Happy, where they belong,  
The search is on for hidden eggs,  
Chocolate rabbits too,  
Easter cards sent with best wishes  
From me to you.

*Doreen Churchill*

# World Day of Prayer Service – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March

The World Day of Prayer, formerly known as the Women's World Day of Prayer, is always held on the first Friday in March and the service is prepared by women from a particular country. For 2026, the service on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March was prepared by women from Nigeria with the theme of 'I will give you rest, come' drawing inspiration from Matthew 11:28.

The service in Hadleigh and Thundersley is hosted in turn by one of the local churches and is usually organised by a committee of ladies from the local churches but that did not happen this time. This year's service was originally planned to be held at Hadleigh Baptist Church but they were unable to host it as they were celebrating their centenary on the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March.

When the service was discussed at last October's Churches Together meeting, I offered our church as a venue but pointed out that neither I nor Heather would have time to get involved in the organisation of the service although Heather would play the piano. As it happened, Ade Bakare, Pastor of Grace Church, happened to be attending his first Churches Together meeting

and suggested that his wife Bunmi, who grew up in Nigeria, might like to get involved with the organisation. (Grace Church worships at Hadleigh Junior School.)

To cut a long story short, I ended up helping Bunmi sort out volunteers for the different roles in the service and ordered paper copies of the order of service. I managed to hurriedly arrange a practice on the Friday of the week before the actual service and, fortunately, the orders of service arrived in time. The majority of those taking part were able to make the practice and we were able to iron out any issues. Having Bunmi take part was helpful as she was able to provide various 'symbols' to be placed on a table at the front and provided guidance on clothing and pronunciation of various Nigerian words.

On the day itself, about thirty people attended the service, including those taking part. Fortunately, all went well and several appreciative comments were received after the service. Refreshments were served in the Small Hall and, judging by the volume of chatter, people enjoyed the time of fellowship.



Leaders (L to R: Zoe Smeeton, Thelma Watts, Sue Croucher) and Narrator (Claire Littlejohn)



Congregation including ladies who read testimonies from four Nigerian women (front row, L to R: Josette Streetley, Jane Brown, Bunmi Bakare, Doreen Churchill)

Thank you to all those who helped with the service in any way.

*Malcolm Brown*

---

## A prayer from the World Day of Prayer service

God of the marginalised, we know that you see us. You see the discrimination faced by so many: those who are overworked; those exploited in factories, fields and homes; and those who cannot find work to feed their families. Thank you, Gracious God, for the resilience and resourcefulness of all who remain faithful amidst difficult circumstances. Inspire us by their example and move us to build a better world. *Amen.*

## Computer Corner

**Interesting video**

**South East Essex Mission Partnership Celebration Service**

This is a recording of the service on 15<sup>th</sup> February at Kings Road URC during which the mission partnership was formed by the signing of a Mission Partnership Agreement.

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26j4WjHn-Cw>

**Useful free software**

**QuickLook**

QuickLook is a program that allows you to preview a selected file by simply pressing the spacebar, without having to wait for an app to be launched to open the file. It mimics a feature built into the Apple Mac operating system. QuickLook not only allows you to preview files but also modify them. For instance, you can add or remove text when previewing a Word file or perform basic edits when previewing images. When previewing PDFs, you can select text and copy it.

URL: <https://apps.microsoft.com/detail/9nv4bs311h4s>

**Interesting download**

**Letter to council leaders about Local Government Reorganisation in Essex**

It has been announced that the network of 15 councils in Essex will be abolished and replaced with five local authorities. In our neck of the woods, Castle Point will merge with Rochford and Southend to form a new unitary authority. You can read the letter from Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, sent to local council leaders explaining his decision.

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-reorganisation-decision-letter-to-essex-southend-on-sea-and-thurrock-council-leaders>

### Word Search – Chocolate related

O	F	H	A	D	Z	D	R	J	C	P	A	P	M	U	O	S	M	V	B
M	Y	U	L	I	B	W	P	K	C	X	X	M	X	S	O	S	C	K	G
A	N	R	E	W	F	O	A	I	Q	G	K	E	K	O	R	E	A	P	B
Y	L	X	K	Y	R	U	B	D	A	C	L	F	C	I	A	V	C	I	F
T	C	S	N	I	C	K	E	R	S	L	K	S	N	O	T	T	U	B	M
N	W	Y	P	B	K	J	P	E	I	T	W	I	X	K	J	Q	U	J	B
U	K	T	S	F	S	F	S	V	K	E	H	D	N	H	Y	O	U	C	I
O	I	J	N	K	L	P	N	M	D	S	J	C	H	T	R	I	R	F	A
B	Y	M	P	A	E	R	V	G	A	X	T	W	T	K	B	U	E	Q	O
Q	C	T	K	Y	U	U	A	X	R	R	S	G	L	I	N	D	T	T	L
A	X	E	M	O	T	L	R	X	Q	N	T	D	P	C	E	F	L	Z	C
S	E	V	B	A	A	O	X	O	P	G	W	I	H	P	I	C	N	I	C
A	L	M	K	X	L	S	S	Q	T	S	K	I	E	Z	C	V	M	W	W
Z	T	M	Y	I	D	T	D	B	O	X	E	R	N	S	B	O	S	I	W
Q	S	X	A	V	V	V	E	X	W	T	A	K	T	I	K	D	C	P	G
M	E	X	D	R	A	A	P	S	I	W	E	N	O	R	E	L	B	O	T
E	N	S	D	M	S	B	M	S	E	T	U	L	J	G	X	L	L	L	Q
M	B	P	J	K	O	J	O	I	S	R	G	X	D	J	L	Q	D	E	N
C	M	T	C	R	L	R	G	U	H	Z	S	U	K	F	U	Q	F	W	L
B	W	N	W	N	E	E	T	X	E	X	F	L	U	N	G	P	A	K	D

- AERO
- BOUNTY
- BOURNVILLE
- BUTTONS
- CADBURY
- CRUNCHIE
- FLAKE
- FUDGE
- GALAXY
- KITKAT
- LINDT
- MALTESERS
- MARS
- NESTLE
- PICNIC
- SMARTIES
- SNICKERS
- TOBLERONE
- TWIX
- WISPA

Words may appear in any direction including diagonally, back to front and upside down.

## WHAT'S ON

### A round-up of future events in the area

---

Mon 30 Mar 2026	- Smart Minds dementia club at Hadleigh URC from 1.00pm to 3.00pm every Mon. Phone Sue on 07889 762172 if interested.
	ditto - Afternoon Tea & Chat at Hadleigh Library from 2.30pm to 4.30pm.
Tue 31 Mar 2026	- Kettle's On Coffee Morning at St Barnabas Church, Hadleigh, from 10.30am to 12.00 noon. Held every Tue.
Wed 1 Apr 2026	- Coffee Morning at St Michael's Church, St Michael's Road, Daws Heath, from 10.00am to 11.45am. Held every Wed.
	ditto - Westwood Art Group from 9.30am to 12 noon at the SA Hadleigh Temple Hall, every Wed. Phone Ian on 07768 871875 for info.
	ditto - Top of the Hill Club meeting (chat, play games) at the White Hart pub, Thundersley from 14.00-16.00. Held 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Weds. All welcome.
Thu 2 Apr 2026	- Drop-in at SA Hadleigh Temple from 9.30am to 12 noon with friendly chat, free tea and toast or coffee and cake, every Thu.
	ditto - Coffee Morning at the church from 10.30am to 12 noon. Free refills.
Fri 3 Apr 2026	- Good Friday United Service at Hadleigh Methodist Church at 10.30am.
Sat 4 Apr 2026	- Hadleigh PIP Councillors Street Stall outside Iceland store, Rectory Road from 10.00am to 12.00 noon. Held 1 <sup>st</sup> Sat, weather permitting.
Sun 5 Apr 2026	- Easter Day Sunrise Service at Hadleigh Castle starting at 6.00am.
Fri 9 Jan 2026	- Castle Point Art Club from 10.00am to 12 noon in wooden hut next to Hadleigh URC every Friday. Phone Ted on 01702 555113 for info.
	ditto - Benfleet Art & Crafts Club from 2.00pm to 3.30pm at Hadleigh Methodist Church. Held every Friday. Phone 01702 554358 for info.
Sat 11 Apr 2026	- Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 10.00am to 12 noon with drinks, cakes and bric-a-brac stall. Held 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat of month.
	ditto - Beat and Beans Café at St James the Less Church from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Refreshments & live music by Hadleigh Voices.
	ditto - Coffee Morning & Book Sale at St Peter's Church, Thundersley from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Held 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat of month.
	ditto - Music in the Park with The Long Run at Southend Bandstand, Priory Park, from 3.00pm to 4.300pm. Free event.
Sun 12 Apr 2026	- Music in the Park with Little Theatre Company at Southend Bandstand, Priory Park, from 3.00pm to 4.300pm. Free event.
Wed 15 Apr 2026	- Lunchtime Concert with Felicity Latham And Tom Jacob (flute And guitar) at Southend Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend. From 12.15pm to 1.00pm. Free admission. Retiring collection for musicians.
Thu 16 Apr 2026	- Poetry Reading Group reading poems of Donna Ashworth at Hadleigh Library from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. All welcome. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thu of the month.
Sat 18 Apr 2026	- Music in the Park with Melvin Beddow Big Band at Southend Bandstand, Priory Park, from 3.00pm to 4.300pm. Free event.
Sat 30 May 2026	- Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive Drop-in at Hadleigh Library from 10.30am to 12 noon.

---

More events listed on the HELIX website at <http://www.hadleighessex.info>