

# *grapevine*

Autumn 2023  
Issue Number 43

The **Methodist** Church   
EAST ANGLIA DISTRICT



for lay and wider ministry

## **Hope**

Hope is the pebble-dash confetti  
strewn to the breeze,  
not knowing where it will settle  
softly, upon the soul deep earth.

Hope is the sad, side-glancing,  
of the Big Issue seller  
on a winter's afternoon,  
clutching copies to her heart.

Hope is the sunlit silence  
of a patiently poised angler,  
waiting for ripple of water,  
and tugging of line.

Hope is the shroud of silence  
that cloaks the house at night,  
when all have returned  
with the weight of their love.

Hope is the kindness of a stranger,  
conjuring goodness in ordinary time,  
the sweet lifting of the heart  
to the possibility of love.

Hope is the cherished verse,  
in the last labours of death,  
held on the lips of the dying –  
poetry to enter eternity....

**© Julian M. Pursehouse  
December 2022**

## Welcome to the Autumn 2023 edition of *grapevine* 'Lay and Wider Ministry'

In this issue we welcome three new members to the District Team, Neil van Holland, District Safeguarding Officer, Kate Dalton, District Lay Employment Secretary and Roy Hollands, District Property Secretary.

We share reflections from Roger Pauley, as he retires from his position as District Property Secretary.

Alison Cracknell gives us an insight into the wonderful work happening in the St Neots and Huntingdon Circuit through her role as Children's and Families Worker.

Revd Betty Trinder and Martin Callam share the value in the Lay Employee and Lay Volunteer get togethers.

Elizabeth Mitchell and Ruth Law have kindly provided wonderful articles relating to their experiences of serving as Lay Volunteers.

Susan Eldridge promotes the importance of Sight Loss Sunday and Revd Julian Pursehouse shares a beautiful poem with us called Hope.

*Please remember this is your magazine. If there is something you would like included, we would love to hear from you.*

*The next issue is due in April 2024. You will find contact details on the back page.*

### ***grapevine***

is available in large print and on  
CD (audio)

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### **The Editorial Team:**

Revd Julian Pursehouse, Susan Eldridge,  
Danielle Gravestock and Aileen Fox

### **Images:**

Front cover— Banner from Methodist Church in Louth,  
Lincolnshire —Susan Eldridge  
Pages 2, 23 and 24—Jacob Gravestock  
Pages 8, 10 and 23— Danielle Gravestock  
Page 7 —Julian Pursehouse  
Pages 5, 12, 13 and 18— Susan Eldridge  
Page 11 and 14—Paul Eldridge  
Pages 16 and 17—Jane Hurst

# Introduction

Revd Julian M Pursehouse



*Dear Friends,*

I am delighted to commend this Autumn edition of Grapevine to you at the beginning of a new Connexional Year. You will see that the theme of this edition is Lay and Wider Ministry and throughout the following pages you will read about a wide variety of ways in which lay people across the District are serving God. Whether it is chaplaincy to lay employees or work amongst children and families or serving the District in paid staff roles (Neil, Roy, and Kate) – all of this bears testimony to the work of the whole people of God in East Anglia.

In the New Testament scriptures, one of the most memorable and vivid images for the Church is the Body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians chapter twelve, the Apostle Paul rejoices in the rich diversity of the Church. It is a body made up of many diverse parts, each with a function and a role that contributes to the wellbeing of the whole! The image works comparatively – the Church in similar fashion is made up of many diverse people who possess a whole variety of gifts, some of them latent and waiting to be discovered but some evident and being expressed in ministry! Only through the functioning

of every part can the Church be truly healthy, vibrant, and centered upon God's mission.

Paul says:

***'Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.'* (1 Cor: 12:4-7)**

Friends, I do hope you will feel inspired by this edition of Grapevine and that you will take your own time to reflect upon your own response to the Gospel of God's love and grace in Christ.

Consider these questions:

*How is God becoming evident in your life and experience?*

*What is God's invitation to you now?*

*What is God calling you to be and do with the gifts and graces you possess?*

*With peace and blessing,*

Revd. Julian M Pursehouse  
Chair of the District

# Prison Chaplaincy in Suffolk

Martin Callam

The East Anglia District organises get togethers four times a year for Lay Employees and volunteers employed by the District and Circuits.

These usually take place at Diss Methodist Church but in June each year there is a visit to an outside venue.

This year we were given the opportunity to visit Hollesley Bay and Warren Hill Prisons near Woodbridge on the Suffolk coast. Our host for the day was Stephen Caley, a member of the Chaplaincy Team and a Methodist Lay Employee.

After travelling from Norwich along a series of roads of apparently ever decreasing width, we all arrived to be greeted (after going through the security checks) in the chapel at Hollesley Bay with coffee and cake.

Stephen told us that, although the two prisons operate separately, the Chaplaincy Service covers both sites. Services and meetings are planned or

can be arranged for nearly a dozen different faith and belief groups.

HMP Hollesley Bay is a category D (Open) Prison. We spent the morning touring the grounds and chatting with one of the inmates in their room with barely a lock in sight. Apart from a few



Woodbridge Harbour

signs stating, 'Out of Bounds for Prisoners' you would hardly realise that you were in a prison.

We were able to buy lunch at the Marsh Barn Café which, along with the Farm Shop next door, is in the prison grounds and staffed by inmates; it is a popular spot for visitors to the marshes.

After lunch we made the short journey to HMP Warren Hill, which as the name suggests is built on a hill so there were lots of steps to be negotiated. After the usual security check we waited to be let in. The way in for visitors is through the vehicle, 'tunnel'; the gate slides open and you go through, then the gate slides across behind you leading to a sense of claustrophobia and a feeling of entrapment and powerlessness before the inner door opens and then, having passed through two more gates that need to be unlocked and locked again, you can enter the prison grounds.

Warren Hill is situated in pleasant grounds and the buildings that we visited felt light and airy. We were able

to see round the visitors area which has some nice facilities for visiting children. The Chapel had a good amount of room but, in common with the rest of the prison, several flights of stairs and numerous gates to be unlocked and locked again before reaching it.

Overall, the day was enjoyable and informative. We were able to see what can be accomplished in the prison service in terms of accommodation and rehabilitation of prisoners but with the thought always in mind that many places do not come up to this standard.

Martin Callam  
Norwich Circuit

## Reflections from your retiring District Property Secretary

Roger Pauley

It was just over fourteen year ago that Dulcie, my wife, and I decided to go and hear Revd Graham Thompson (previous Chair of District) preach one Sunday morning at Pymoor Methodist Church on the Ely and Newmarket Circuit. After the service, talking to Graham over a cup of coffee, he said that the District were looking



for a new Property Secretary and wondered if I would be interested in the vacancy. He was aware that I was the Circuit Property Secretary and a Building Surveyor by profession. In Graham's inimitable way, he virtually convinced me that I would be ideally suited to the role and left me to further reflect on our conversation.

Following discussions with Andrew King (chairman Administrative Group) and Dulcie, and much prayerful thought, I concluded that this was a further

opportunity to serve the Methodist Church of which I had been a committed member for over sixty years. I duly offered my services for this role, which was accepted ... and fourteen years later, with the much used phrase, the rest is history.

I can truly say this has been a quite fulfilling job, which has radically changed

since I started, and has become a much more intense and wide ranging job, interrupted only by a stroke ten years ago. Following my recovery I have only been able to continue in the role by the commitment of my wife who has driven me hundreds of miles round East Anglia, done all my typing and been my PA. Dulcie - thank you for everything.

During these fourteen years I have been involved in 573 projects, some large

(e.g. refurbishment of a Church) and 68 closures, which always saddens me. In particular the village Church at Manea in The Fens which closed in February

2017, where I attended Sunday School, where we were married 57 years ago, where I first became aware of the saving grace of Jesus and was made a member of the Methodist Church on 9th August 1959.

This is not completely the end of my service in the District as I am continuing my role as District Disability Advisor and taking over from Dulcie as District Manse Secretary.



Roger at the opening of the Beacon Church, North Lynn - a collaboration between the Norwich Diocese and the West Norfolk Circuit

May I leave you with this verse:

*Tis Jesus the first and the last  
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home  
We'll praise him for all that is past  
And trust him for all that's to come  
May the Lord bless you all*

*Roger*

Roger Pauley  
Ely & Newmarket Circuit

# The Joy of Serving

Elizabeth Mitchell

I volunteer at the Haverhill Methodist Church as a Sunday Club Leader and as a Church Steward. As a Sunday Club Leader I have learned so much from our children and young people. They are full of energy and joy. I mostly work with the ages 11-14.

Whenever I ask them what they want most in their lessons the answer is usually games, games, and more games. It surprises

me and fills me with relief. The young people aren't "too cool," to still play. Also, the church is their safe place to be themselves and learn. I am struck by how children and young people just want to have fun! As an adult in my walk with Christ, it is easy to forget the joy of the Lord. God invented fun, laughter, and times of celebration. Working with young people reminds me that, "The joy of the Lord is my strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

The other aspect about children and

young people that moves me is just how much they want to belong. My prayer is that they know how inclusive our God is; all are welcome. We are adopted into the family of God through our faith in Jesus Christ. I aim to share God's love for the young people by

making them feel welcomed and valued. After all, they will be the leaders of our church in the years to come. The young people often impress me with their knowledge of



the Bible as well. They tend to have unjaded open hearts to the gospel message. Generally, I try to help them see that God's word is practical and can be applied to their everyday lives. It is a privilege to serve the young people and a responsibility I do not take lightly. I offer myself as an imperfect vessel to the Lord and am often surprised when a lesson works out! It is the work of the Holy Spirit and the glory is the Lord's alone.

As a Church Steward, I take on a different role. It is one of seemingly menial tasks such as turning on the lights, unlocking doors, and pouring the preacher a glass of water. Then at the end of the service, doing all these things in reverse. It is greeting people as they come in and sharing event announcements. Stewarding involves supporting the preacher and praying over that person before they bring the message to the congregation. It is watching over the people during the service also to make sure everyone is

okay. No job done for the Lord is small. My meager offerings are mighty in Jesus' hands. It is a blessing to help to make the service run smoothly and the facilities comfortable for God's people. It is the least I can do for my church family. As it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "So continue encouraging each other and building each other up, just like you are doing already."

Elizabeth Mitchell  
Haverhill Circuit

## **Acle Churches Together**

Colleen Palmer

It all began in 1953. The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II completely embraced our small village of Earith in the Huntingdon District of Cambridgeshire. So as 2023 came into being, there was another Coronation on the horizon.

Inspired by The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, I thought it possible for Acle Churches Together to give a gift to each pre-school and school person to the age of 16. We would not be able to equal the mugs my peers and I had been given in 1953 but we scoured the internet to see what was available.

Two coffee mornings were held, plus donations, to raise funds. It was

decided to give young people to Year 5 a King Charles III 50 pence piece each and Year 6 and above were each given a King Charles III medallion with a Coronation emblem on them.

A team of willing helpers assembled the gifts and they were distributed to the educational establishments by Rev Greenland from the Anglican Church and Rev Andrew King from the Methodists.

I thank God for my wonderful memories of June 1953 and the inspiring prayers from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Services in January 2023.

Colleen Palmer  
Norfolk Broads Circuit

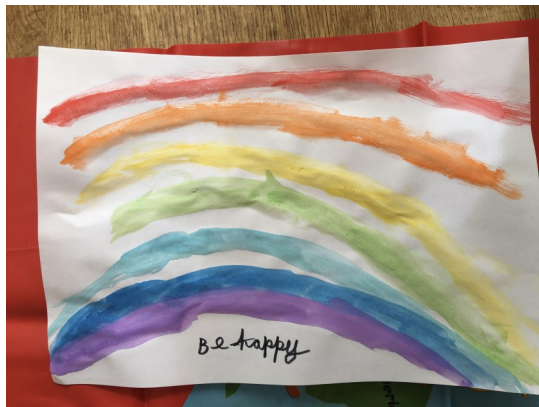
# Children's & Families Worker in St Neots

Alison Cracknell

I was appointed as part-time Children and Families

Outreach Worker at Berkley St church in St Neots last September and we have developed new and exciting projects in our community in the last 12 months, including...

**BERKLEY BUSY BEES...** our pre-school group runs weekly in term time, with free play indoors and outside in our garden, playdough and craft, a fruit snack for the children and tea and coffee for the grown-ups. We started with 4 families from a pre-existing Berkley Babies group and ended the year having had contact with 47 families. Our families comment on the care they receive, and we have observed the increased confidence in both children and adults, many of whom lacked support during the pandemic. We have a Bible story once a month and Prayer Bear has started to visit regularly. The families enjoyed taking part in our Annual Nativity service as sheep and their shepherds.



**MESSY CHURCH...** our Messy Church has been running for over 10 years, but we have grown our contact list from 52 to 95 families in the year. We run 6 times a year, and families enjoy craft, challenges, a bit of

science and lots of singing and prayer, before sharing in lunch together.

Attendance is now routinely at 100 people (adults, children and team) and we have had to introduce a waiting list sometimes! We have also introduced Mini Messy sessions in between, held after-school for 4 weeks in Advent, Lent and the summer, exploring God's Green Garden. Mini Messy is smaller but enables us to meet families more often and have deeper conversations.

**SCHOOL UNIFORM PROJECT...** we began collecting and rehoming unwanted school uniform in 2021. All uniform is freely available to anyone, and interest is growing. Families send messages via the church Facebook page or attend our big summer giveaway sessions. In July 2023, 44 families came to the giveaways and took bags of clothes to equip them for the



coming academic year and a total of 68 families have been helped in 2023. The project prevents clothes going to landfill and saves pennies in people's pockets too.

**WINHILLS TOTS...** we contacted our local schools and Winhills Primary Academy, just up the road from the church, asked us if we would partner with them to run a weekly toddler group at the school. The school is in an area of high need and the Children's centre, based at the school, has not fully re-opened since the pandemic. Since Easter, we have been running weekly sessions, starting with a few invited families and increasing contact gradually. The Winhills Tots group does not have an intentional faith-sharing element but is about working



with partners in our community to make a difference.

Our project is bearing fruit thanks to the prayer, fundraising, commitment and hard work of the local church team at Berkley Street, as well as financial contribution from our Circuit and District. Local businesses, like Kingfisher Funerals, the Co-op and Tesco have given support for various activities and St Neots Town Council are funding the costs of staffing Winhills Tots.

If you would like to know more about our work, please contact Alison Cracknell, Children and Families Outreach Worker on [alisonchnandfam@icloud.com](mailto:alisonchnandfam@icloud.com)

Alison Cracknell  
Children and Families Outreach Worker,  
St Neots & Huntingdon Circuit

## The East Anglian Heritage Centre

Susan Eldridge

On a sunny June morning Paul and I were privileged to be at the opening of the new East Anglian Heritage Centre at Wighton. This showcases the influence of the Methodist Church in East Anglia and represents a lot of hard work from some dedicated volunteers. The Heritage Centre, which is



accessible, is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 11 am to 3 pm until the end of October and is free to visit. Groups visits can be arranged on request. The visit can easily be combined with one to nearby Walsingham Methodist Church. Leaflets will be available at Synod or from Revd Jacqui Horton. It is also on the Visit East of England website.

Revd Julian Pursehouse cutting the ribbon at the opening of the East Anglian Heritage Centre

# District Lay Employees and Volunteers Chaplain

Rev Betty Trinder

I have had the honour and privilege to be the District Lay Employees and Volunteers Chaplain for over ten years. I had been a Lay Pastor in the Luton Circuit and served for five years there having pastoral care of one church, working in the staff team for two other churches and also part of the University of Luton's chaplaincy team. A wide variety of duties that were to serve me well before I became an ordained minister in the East Anglia District.

In the not too distant past the Connexion used to have training for new Lay Employees, yearly retreats for training and networking. Sadly these were cut over five years ago so our quarterly meetings together in the District are for training/sharing experiences, fellowship and support plus a biannual retreat. We meet in March, June, September and December.

The March and September meetings are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in the month and we meet at Diss Methodist Church from 10 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. We share experiences, lunch and a short time of worship with Holy Communion. In June we meet up anywhere in the District for a day out together. Over the years

we have been to see what the District Agricultural Chaplain's, Prison Chaplain's, and Hospital Chaplain's duties have been. We have had days in Norwich at the Julian Church and Ancient churches across the city. We have also had a day out on the Broads leaving from Wroxham.



St Julian's Church, Norwich



Entrance to Julian's Cell at St Julian's Church, Norwich

Our December meeting is on the first Tuesday as everyone gets so busy with Advent and Christmas duties. Our meetings have had speakers coming to us to teach us about Safeguarding awareness, Mental Health issues, Dementia and Christians against Poverty. Our speakers have included our District Chair, Revd. Julian Pursehouse and this September we look forward to the past President of Conference, Revd. Graham Thompson, speaking to us. We also hear from our own Lay Employees and volunteers about their duties, ranging from Admin, to Family Support, Youth Work and Lay Pastors. We are a varied and eclectic bunch of folk who know what it is like to work in isolation sometimes and who value this

colleagueship.

From November 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> we will have our third bi annual retreat, this year held at the Pleasaunce in North Norfolk, which is completely free due to the appreciation of Circuits and the District for their lay employees. There are still a few places available.

Unfortunately, we do know that there are many lay employees and volunteers who cannot join us due to the timing and dates of our meetings but I would encourage everyone who can to come and join us and enjoy the time we have together.

Revd. Betty Trinder  
District Lay Employees and Volunteers Chaplain



Vintage Broadman, Wroxham

# District Agricultural Chaplain's Report

George Frost



## Comments from the Countryside

Waiting for the summer is the theme for today. Farming has always relied on the weather to dictate what you do next. Timing, which is very important to any growing crop, is reliant on 'normal' seasonal weather. This year has not been a normal year once again, and with an early start in July to harvest, we thought we were on our way. But not so, most of July was wet, wet, wet. Now on the 10th August the sun is shining and the combines are rolling the trailers passing the house until after dark.

This is nothing new with changeable seasons in this country and the threat of global warming continually being thrown at us by the media. The whole world seems to be in turmoil, with

wars, forest fires, extreme temperatures, but not very warm in East Anglia. I thank God that he is in control and not the politicians.

At this time of year I usually report on commodity and meat prices. The market is so volatile it is very difficult to

predict anything for the future. Feed wheat was priced at over £300 per tonne in March, but is now around the £190. Bread wheat, which we all rely on, is

now at £255 per tonne. Oilseed rape has returned to near normal, after rising to £840 per tonne in March, to £380 in September. Pig farmers are relieved that at last they can see some profit. The price of lamb has fallen sharply. Finished cattle are about the same as last year. The difficulty in farming, in general, is the price of fuel, mainly due to Russia, but also the Middle East are restricting the amount released on the market.



By the time this article is published let's hope for more stability in the world, whether it is commodity prices, or warring nations and the weather has returned to normal. It is worth noting that we are relying on imports for a lot of our food. Keep buying British if it's available, consider the farmers who are looking for staff to harvest, especially the market garden, soft fruits and vegetables. The government has made some concessions with migrant workers, who would normally come here to harvest.

Yes God is good, as I've written so many times in my reporting, but sometimes we question what is going on! Hold on to your faith and He will make it right as He always has done.

*Trust in the Lord and He will direct your path. All we have to do is listen to His calling and respond, because He knows the way we should go.*

*Blessings to all  
George Frost*



George Frost  
District Agricultural Chaplain

## **'Only Brave on Paper!'**

Ruth Law

In real life, I have to admit that as well as being an absolute coward, I am a bit mentally and physically 'broken'.

Those who know me well enough will understand that I struggle with social situations, so I operate with a 'comfortable at the end of the back row' policy, when it comes to church services and other events.

Bad experiences in my past have had a profound effect on my life, and until quite recently I could not convincingly dispute the 'weird' or 'standoffish' labels that were often applied. However, after receiving a warm welcome into Upwell Methodist Church and The Fens Circuit, and help to face my 'demons', I must admit that I am relieved to finally be identified as a 'Survivor'.

Fellow 'Survivors' and those who have completed Safeguarding Training, will no doubt understand the term, 'Survivor', and feel that they are in a better position to understand my difficulties.

Others, whilst knowing the meaning of the word, may not necessarily recognise the context in which it has been applied in my case.



This is all very new to me, but I have to say that over the past few months, my eyes have been opened and not exclusively to my own situation.

It was the scrutiny of unacceptable past events, due to inadequate Safeguarding, that brought about major changes, and the Methodist Church is not alone in making every effort to comply with Safeguarding Guidelines, in order to ensure that the welfare and protection of members and visitors is paramount at all times.

In view of my own difficult experiences, I truly believe that this is a positive step, which will help to enhance the credentials of the Church and those who work within it, and promote it as a safe place to be, to worship, to volunteer, and to thrive.

So, at this point, you may decide to stop reading, because you suspect that here I am, a new member of the Methodist Church, about to 'spout off' about the value of Safeguarding Training.

Well, I will try hard not to do that, but unfortunately, from a personal perspective, and without going into too much detail, I am going to say that I wish it had been a

requirement within Christian organisations many years ago.

If that had been the case, it may well have helped to protect me and my family, and thereby saved us from the damaging memories that have tainted our lives ever since.

It was a very long time before guidelines were introduced, that God called me and my husband, with three young children at the time, to work with addicts, alcoholics, offenders and those considered vulnerable, on a full time residential basis. I am sure that several people within the Methodist Church will similarly have spent years in positions of trust, working in various ways with children and adults, and may agree that it can be both rewarding and challenging.

However, my expectation, that having been in that situation for several years, would mean that the latest Safeguarding Training would constitute a 'coals to Newcastle' type of experience, or possibly 'teaching your grandmother to suck eggs', could not have been more wrong.

I can categorically say that the Methodist Safeguarding courses – and I have completed both Foundation and Advanced Safeguarding this year – were neither of these, and as previously stated, it certainly opened my eyes, and my mind and my heart.

However, if it appears that I am an 'upstart' (and not even a young one), recently trained, who is preaching to other far more experienced people, then I apologise, because I can assure you that that is definitely not what this is about!

Some of you will be aware of my struggle with grief, but ignoring that for a moment, the other side of my story is ugly, still raw, and difficult to share. Thanks be to God, however, that my past experiences have enabled me to see both sides of the



'Safeguarding' situation in an un-blinkered way.

For me this is about protecting the future of our fantastic church and the safe haven that it represents, which sadly but necessarily, does involve being prepared to 'jump through the hoops' that will enable these

goals to be attained – so we can all worship, volunteer and thrive, safely.

It is my understanding that some degree of Safeguarding Training is now mandatory with regard to most positions of responsibility within the church, and I am sure that for some, this is not a comfortable situation.

However, if the requirement to undergo appropriate training is not embraced, the possible impact on the future of our wonderful church is unthinkable.

I may be a 'Survivor', but unfortunately I am still 'only brave on paper', so apologies for the fact that I had to write this heartfelt missive, rather than being courageous enough to say it out loud. If you did read to the end, thank you!



Ruth Law  
New member of Upwell Methodist  
Church, The Fens Circuit and Lay  
Volunteer with Upwell Prayer  
Gardening Team

# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) matters

## —Sight Loss Sunday

Susan Eldridge



Some of you will be aware that I am the District EDI Officer (a role I hope to share with someone else in due course).

Have you ever heard of “Sight loss Sunday”? I had not until I listened to a recording of a Webinar put on by the South-East District. It will be on Sunday 15 October this year and you may like to follow this link to learn more <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/disability/sight-loss-sunday/>. The aim is to wake up the Church to the issues faced by those with sight loss.

The Webinar was in association with the Torch Trust for the Blind and started by reminding us that all are made in God’s image and are part of the body of Christ. Psalm 139 says “I am fearfully and wonderfully made”.

We were given various thought provoking facts about sight conditions:

- Age-related macular degeneration is common over age 75 (wet and dry versions) and can be helped by an injection into the eyeball. The centre of your vision goes.
  - Cataracts result in blurry vision but can generally be treated.
  - Diabetic retinopathy is when black dots obscure your vision.
  - Glaucoma results in losing peripheral sight and in tunnel vision.
  - Myopia is when sight is blurry around the edges.
- Losing sight can be compared to grieving for a loved one. Those blind from birth can grieve for something they never had.
- 256 people a day are told they are losing their sight and it will gradually get worse and worse.
  - If there are 30 people in a Church, there is likely to be at least one person with sight loss.



EDI Banner from Clacton Methodist Church

For Churches there is best practice guidance on the Torch Trust website <https://torchtrust.org/sight-loss-friendly-church/slfc-benefits/> which includes the following:

- Have a good welcome team.
- Ask any new people if there is anything you can assist with.
- Use specific language e.g. I am to your left (not over here!).
- Have large print and braille hymn books available.
- It is only necessary to show where the toilet door is, not accompany them in.
- Perhaps email service details in advance.
- Preach as if to a radio audience.
- Say when to stand and sit.
- Have a sharp contrast for words and background – font at least 18.
- For videos without words, describe what is happening.
- The more boring a screen looks the easier it is for many people to follow.
- When talking individually say the person's name to get their attention and your name.
- Don't walk off without saying you are doing so.
- If providing a drink show where you have placed it.

If you have any questions the Torch Trust will be pleased to help. If they don't know the answer they ask the RNIB.



From **TORCH TRUST**

Torch Trust offer a wide variety of resources including large print or braille Bibles, Bible-reading notes and books (through their library) and various audio resources, including regular podcasts.

There is an audio version of the NIV Bible with David Suchet reading it, which is completely free.

Please remember that visually impaired people (people with sight loss) are much the same as people in general except they have little or no sight, so don't make assumptions about them.

If you have any questions, or advice or experiences to share, please get in touch.

Susan Eldridge  
District EDI Officer

## District News

The District are delighted to have welcomed three new members to the District Staff Team in 2023.

### **An introduction to Neil van Holland, District Safeguarding Officer...**



Hi all. My name is Neil van Holland, and at the end of April I started in the role of District Safeguarding Officer for the East Anglia District. This was the first real

big job change for me in 2 decades having spent 19 years in the Police in a variety of roles from surveillance to public protection and everything in between, both as an officer and police staff. Prior to this I had a diverse working life, playing and coaching football and even spent a number of years riding and training racehorses from Newmarket to New Zealand. Contented life, a love of food, and an expanding waistline means I would no longer be allowed near a racehorse!!

My wife and I settled in Suffolk in

2007, and now have 3 very active sporty children (11, 9 and 4) that keep us very busy, one reason why the slightly reduced part time hours in comparison to the police were appealing to me on top of the job itself. My wife Aimee is a former Secondary school Drama teacher who has now taken her skills outside of state education and leads an alternative education project called Thrive at The Mix in Stowmarket.

We attend Freedom Church in Great Barton, Suffolk and are both passionate about our Christian faith



and how we can take our life skills and use them in ministry. My background in football and coaching led me to take initially my eldest son to play at Sporting 87 FC in Bury St Edmunds when he was young, and I quickly went from dad of a 5 year old budding player to Assistant Manager of the club's first team. The club itself was formed in 1987 as a single Mens

Christian football team. 36 years later we have 4 adult teams, and in excess of 30 youth teams from 6 years old to 18 years old, and although not all participants come

from Christian backgrounds the club retains its Christian Ethos that underpins everything. We are proud to be one of the highest standard Christian football clubs in the country, and are prouder that our ministry through football has brought other men and women closer to God.

As we move towards a new Connexional year, I look forward to

putting into practice the safeguarding experience I have bought across from not only the Police but other areas of my life, to work together with everyone to make our churches safe places for all to come and worship, and I look forward to meeting more and more people across the District, as I continue to be made to feel welcome.

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### **An introduction to Kate Dalton, District Lay Employment Secretary...**

Hello everyone, my name is Kate Dalton and I took on the position of East Anglia District Lay Employment Secretary in May this year. I bring a diverse work and life experience to my role from jazz singer to publishing, but particularly relevant are my background in psychology and work as an adviser for the employment service.

Having been a member of the Methodist Church all my life it is a privilege to have the opportunity to serve the church community in a working capacity. My fondest memories of growing up in



Hethersett are those of the Methodist Church – the harvest festival suppers, barn dances, quiz

nights and the lasting friendships that have been so important in my life. My mother was an inspiration to me in both my faith and creativity. As an art teacher and lay preacher she taught me to look up at the sky every day, appreciate the wonder of God's creation and then go ahead and paint it!

We have recently moved out into the Norfolk countryside in Fornsett and I am enjoying the newfound peace and walks in the surrounding fields full of butterflies and birdsong – remembering every day to look up at the sky.

## **An introduction to Roy Hollands, District Property Secretary...**

Hello. I'm looking forward to working in East Anglia District part-time as the new Property Secretary. I have been employed part-time with the South East District as their Property Officer for nearly two years, and I have found I enjoy the variety involved in most property work, from bricks and mortar practicalities to conservation and heritage factors and of course always pastoral considerations and missional opportunities.

I have been in church work most of my life, beginning with a few years as a member of the community at Scargill House in the Yorkshire Dales, going on to train for Anglican Lay ministry with the Church Army (much like a Methodist Deacon) and then being posted to Leicester for seven years. I volunteered for a five-year position in Texas on the border with Mexico, pioneering work with Mexican families, looking to establish what we would now call a New Place for New People. On coming back to the UK I was looking for a break from ministry, and I was able to find work as a lorry-driver for a local company, while still offering myself for



preaching appointments on Sundays. Growing up in a village in Yorkshire I had been as much involved with my

local MAYC meetings as I was with the Church of England, and I began to find myself drawn back to the Methodist Church, attending services at my nearest Chapel, and becoming a Local Preacher by transfer in 2017. It was through church that I met

my wife Helen. We have six children between us from our previous marriages, and they are all now young adults making their way in life in London, Winchester, and in Norwich. Helen is a Methodist Presbyterian, stationed in Ashford in Kent since 2018. We are very familiar with the journey from Ashford to Norwich and I will be working from home along with trips to the District to attend meetings and to make other visits as the work requires.

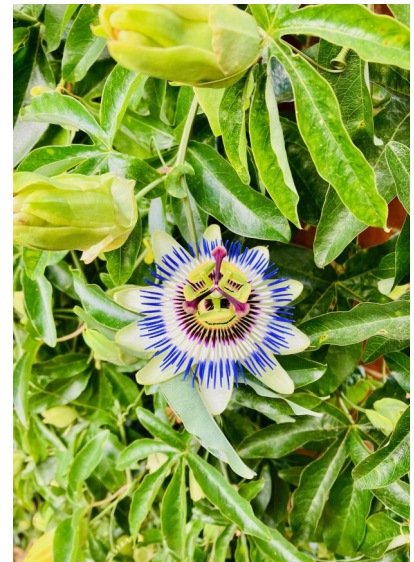
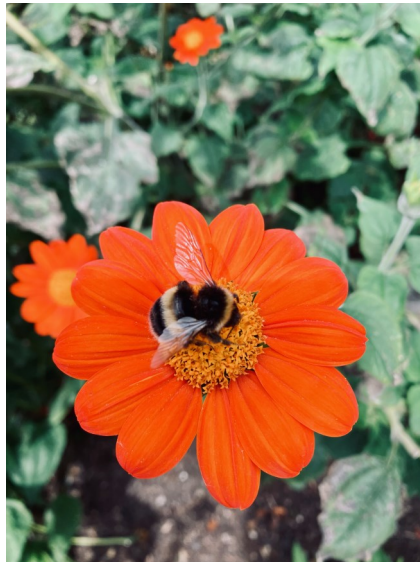
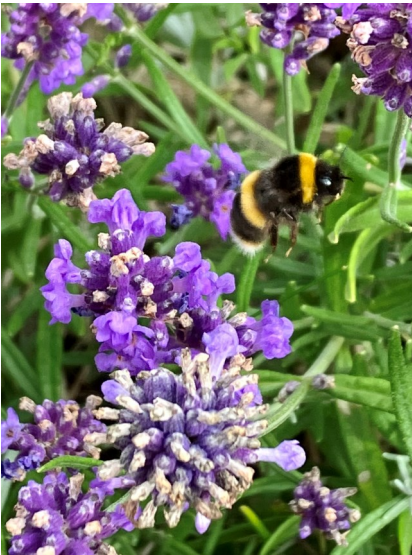
I look forward to meeting you as I take up this work in the District. Please do get in touch with me about any property matters and I will do my best to help and to find out what you need to know. There is a new District email address where you can contact me:

[DPS@eangliamethodist.org.uk](mailto:DPS@eangliamethodist.org.uk)

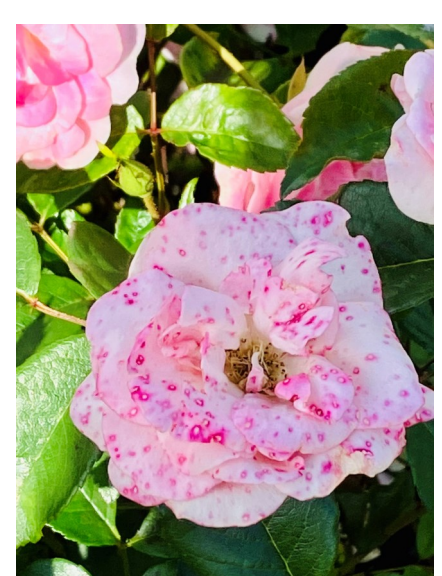
# Flowers for Reflection

In the month of August Central Norfolk Circuit shared 'flowers for reflection' as part of their commitment to Pray 2-3.

Every day in August a photograph of a flower, alongside either a verse from the bible, a line of a poem or line of a hymn were shared through their social media channels. These were used as a focus for prayer, based on the amazing variety, beauty and detail of creation.



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Gen 1:1



StF 92v1 Think of a world without any flowers,... we thank you, Lord, for flowers and trees and sunshine.

# Contributions

**We hope you have been inspired by the articles  
in this edition of *grapevine*.**

**If you would like to make a contribution to  
the next edition, we would love to hear from you.**

**Please send any news items, letters and photographs,  
which you would like to share with others in the  
District to:**

**[eagrapevine@gmail.com](mailto:eagrapevine@gmail.com)**

***or post to 'grapevine'***

**District Office,  
Chapel Field Road Methodist Church  
Norwich, NR2 1SD**

**For further information, please contact  
the District Office on 01603 625765**

***Unfortunately we cannot guarantee  
inclusion of all contributions.***