



Tacket Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AU



COMMENT
SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2026

THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear All,

I hope you're keeping well, and that despite the scorching weather lately, you've managed to enjoy these summer weeks with family and friends. September is now upon us, and as individuals, and as a Church family, many of us will return to our usual routines, roles, and responsibilities in the weeks ahead.

In Psalm 27, we find words of encouragement as we prepare to embrace the coming weeks and months. This Psalm is among my favourites, the whole Psalm is worth reading through, but here I'll just mention the closing words of the Psalm:

*¹³ I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
¹⁴ Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!*

The Psalmist is definitely a realist, familiar with the challenges and difficulties that God's people face. However, as one writer notes, the Psalm 'rings with the overpowering conviction of the presence of the Lord, of the assurance that he may be sought and found', and the Psalmist is certain of the Lord's care for him at all times and in all situations. As the reader of the Psalm lives devoted to the Lord, walking in his ways, depending on his faithfulness, relying on his grace and trusting in his provision, a hope, a confidence in God flourishes and the Psalmist then challenges his reader to 'wait for the Lord, be strong and brave, and put your hope in the Lord'.

I pray that whatever specific situations we find ourselves walking through right now and in the coming weeks, whether individually or as a fellowship, we will be able to keep growing in our devotion and dependence upon the Lord, that we will sense his presence, and with a settled confidence, be those who 'wait for the Lord, be strong and brave, and put your hope in the Lord'. We can be sure that we are surrounded by and held in divine love and we can always lean into the ever loving, ever faithful, ever dependable God. So let us walk forward together with hope, looking out for the goodness of the Lord.

With much love,
Neil

*Alone with none but thee, my God,
I journey on my way.
What need I fear, when thou art near,
O King of night and day?
More safe I am within thy hand
than if a host did round me stand.*

Attributed to St Columba (521-597)

IRENE GALE 1932 – 2026

Irene was born in 1932 in Ilford Essex, to William and Ella Finch. She was the youngest of their four children with three older brothers, Len, Reg and Ray. She was just seven when the Second World War began and over time saw each of her brothers, in turn, go off to fight, two in the RAF and one in the Royal Navy. Irene remained in the family home throughout the war, although their house was badly damaged by incendiary bombs on two occasions. Their Anderson shelter in the back garden survived unscathed.

Irene's schooling was further disrupted by illness and frequent spells in hospital. After leaving school she started work at the Co-op. In 1962 she married Bill and they went on to have three children, Colin, Carole and John, and, in time, six grandchildren. Originally setting up home in Hutton, before moving to Ipswich in 1971, they had 59 happy years together.

Irene was artistic, creative, full of curiosity and eager to learn new skills. On top of her commitments working and looking after her family, over the years she taught herself graphology and to paint, did brass rubbing and took lessons in Japanese, as well as being an avid reader, a keen gardener and a fan of the theatre. Irene was a committed Christian but also open to other ideas and teachings that promoted love and wellbeing. She undertook the spiritual study of crystals and investigated alternative medicines. After they retired, Bill and Irene travelled widely while their health was good, enjoying the people and natural wonders of the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Bill and Irene had a long connection with Christ Church, moving from Turret Green Baptist Church when it joined with Tacket Street URC. Irene was heavily involved in Church life during those years. She was a kind and loving person and will be missed greatly by her family and friends.

EAST ANGLIAN AIR AMBULANCE (EAAA)

We are raising money for EAAA from July to Christmas this year. We chose it at Church Meeting, mainly because there is a special reason for their needing extra money at the moment. Cambridge Airport, their local base, is closing, so they have to raise £8.2 million. They have planning permission to create a purpose-built air ambulance base at New Shardeloes Farm on Balsham Road in Fulbourn.

Our contribution will be necessarily small but any fundraising and donations we can give will be worth it. So far, we have had three Open Gardens, and money raised from the Orwell Challenge.

On 8th October a member of the Supporter Engagement Team will be at Thursday Forum to tell us about progress (1.10pm - 1.50pm) and we hope to have a child-friendly talk from EAAA at our Christmas Gift Service on 13th December, which will be a final chance to contribute as Christ Church.

EMMAUS GROUPS

Monday

The group meets in the lounge at 10.30am each week and we welcome people from other churches who come with friends. During the past year we have studied Christianity Explored, used by some churches as an alternative to Alpha and later this year we will follow a further study in the series. At present we are revisiting The Holy Habits. Sadly, we lost Cathy Moss from the Minster but have welcomed 2 new members in the past 18 months. If you would like to share in exploring the bible and can spare an hour on Monday morning, we restart on Monday 14th September and you would be very welcome to join us.

Thursday

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 10.30am to midday, enjoying a time of Bible study, fellowship and prayer together. If this sounds a little intense, please know that none of us are experts on the Bible but we try to learn more at each session and how we can apply it to our everyday lives. The group is free to ask questions and express their own opinions if they wish, in a relaxed and happy atmosphere, which has a beneficial effect for all of us. Not to forget, of course, coffee, biscuits and occasionally cake are always on hand.

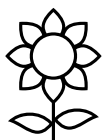
At the beginning of the year, we finished a course on Isaiah which was stimulating and thought provoking. Following on from that, we have just completed The Bible Society's Bible Course by Andrew Ollerton, that takes you through a tour of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation in 8 sessions! This course came with a video each week which gave us a good overview of the Bible and how the Old Testament and New Testament fit together.

We usually meet in term times and those of us who attend have the added option and bonus to stay on to enjoy a lunch and talk at Thursday Forum afterwards. The 1st meeting in the autumn term will be 24th September, when we are beginning a course on Angels in the Bible called, "Standing Guard." We would warmly welcome any newcomers to join with us.

DIETARY NEEDS

It is some time since we checked to see if anyone requires gluten free wafers at communion. If you have a need, please let me know, so that we can provide wafers.

OPEN GARDENS



We have enjoyed three Open Gardens this summer. Our grateful thanks go to all the hosts for making us so welcome and once again serving a wonderful variety of cakes. A total of £500.70 was raised in aid of EAAA.

Church Life Committee



HARVEST FESTIVAL

This year's Harvest Festival will take place on 11th October. Everyone is invited to Harvest Lunch, which will follow the Harvest and Parade service. The lunch will be quiche, baby potatoes and salad followed by fruit crumbles. There is no need to book and there is no charge for the meal. Please let us know of any special dietary requirements or restrictions. Because preparations will be taking place in the kitchen, coffee will be served at the back of the church on this occasion, a chance to admire the church decorations, some of which will have been prepared by church organisations.

Church Life Committee



PRAYERS FOR SEPTEMBER

6th September

After a time of relaxation, holidays and summer days, we celebrate being together again as a church family and give thanks for all we have enjoyed. For many, September brings change and new experiences and challenges. We pray especially for young people who will be changing classes at school and those who will move to a new school or on to university or apprenticeships. We also think of anyone who will be experiencing change in any way. Be with them, Lord, as they experience these new beginnings.

13th September

Continuing the theme of education, Sunday 13th September is Education Sunday. We give thanks for teachers and all those who support learning in any way and the opportunities we all have in this country to learn. We have access to books and informative magazines and so much more via the radio or television. May we never take for granted our opportunities to learn. We pray for those around the world who are restricted in how they can access learning due to poverty, repressive regimes or simply a lack of opportunity to travel to where they can learn.

20th September

Monday 21st September is International Day of Peace and the theme is '*Invest in Peace – For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day*'. We long for wars to cease and a halt to the devastation and resulting homelessness in war torn countries. We join together in praying for world peace and an end to the often unjustifiable reasons which have led to unnecessary wars. We pray as a church family for greater harmony and understanding between different religions both near and far.

27th September

After a summer of drought which affected our gardens and, importantly, farmers who now face poorer harvests, we pray for all those involved in providing our fresh food. Wildfires have devastated parts of the world and also in our country, including Suffolk's much loved Dunwich Heath. We pray for all those affected by these fires. Changes to our seasons is a concern to us all but especially those who will have responsibility to lead and manage the resulting problems due to the lack of rainwater this summer and the potential for flooding when rain does come.

HOLIDAY AT HOME

Our Holiday At Home took place on 16th and 17th of July, which seems ages ago. Thankfully it was not during one of the heatwaves. A total of 29 people registered over the two days and we all enjoyed a wide variety of activities, hopefully a mixture which included something for everyone. The destination was France and we enjoyed a delicious French-inspired two course lunch each day. Holiday at Home was rounded off on Sunday afternoon with tea for our members and guests followed by Songs of Praise.

There are so many people to thank for helping to make the event successful, those who helped on the day as befrienders, cooking and serving meals and refreshments, organising and helping with activities and our guest entertainers. Thank you for all the delicious cakes that were enjoyed on Friday and Sunday.

This year we decided to finance the event ourselves rather than applying for funding, which had become increasingly difficult and time consuming. Your generosity was amazing! We covered all expenses and have a little in the kitty to start off next year.

Thank you so much. *Church Life Committee*

QUIZ IN AID OF EAST ANGLIAN AIR AMBULANCE

Join us for a fun general knowledge quiz in the Church Hall on Wednesday 21st October, starting at 7pm. Bring friends, come as a team, or come on your own and join other friends to make a team. Tea, coffee and snacks will be provided (or you can bring your own drink if you'd like a slightly stronger tippie). Donations welcomed for the EAAA. No need to book.



CHAPPEL URC 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Our Minister the Revd Neil Coulson and Secretary Rob King were among around 60 guests and friends who attended the 125th Anniversary Celebration of Chappel United Reformed Church in Chappel near Colchester on Saturday 22nd August. The Chappel URC is close to many hearts at Christ Church, as Tony Percival, our friend and long-term organist and Choirmaster from the early 1990's until 2018 is the Church Secretary and organist there.

Guests enjoyed an afternoon buffet tea, with many bringing greetings and congratulations from their own churches. After tea, a celebratory service was held in the church, with a talk entitled "Christian Dissent Past & Present" given by the Revd Dr Robert Pope, lecturer in Church History at Westminster College, Cambridge. Six popular hymns, chosen and introduced by Tony for their importance in the Free Church traditions, were sang enthusiastically by the congregation to complete an enjoyable occasion.



125th Anniversary Celebration
1901 - 2026



After a long break from the end of May we start our regular meetings again on 1st October. We had to cancel the summer outing to Landguard Fort in Felixstowe because of the first heatwave, which was a shame for the 18 people who had signed up. We will be meeting up again on 3rd September for our annual meal at The Key, St Margaret's Green.

We sadly lost two regulars over the summer: Sue Diaper, from Felixstowe who came regularly with her carer husband John, who suffered from dementia; and Cathy Moss, our rep from the Minster on the committee.

October's talks take us all over the world, and into the workings of our own county as well, so it will be well worth coming along to hear all of them: 1.10pm to 1.50pm, although if you come earlier, you get a first class meal, or snack of your choice, any time from 12pm.

We hear about one woman's lifelong work with children in a town in Uganda and later we hear another woman's passion (Evelyn Bailey) for a type of Japanese drama which she came to love while living in Japan. At the end of the month, I'll tell you about my experiences in Georgia, although don't expect a scholarly knowledge of the country. In between, we hear about the EAAA. They have a special appeal at the moment because they need to find a different site to accommodate their helicopters after the sale of Cambridge Airport. The middle Thursday looks to be a fascinating insight into some of the checks and balances built into our British system. What is a High Sheriff, and what does she do? Gulshan Kayembe, who was the High Sheriff this last academic year, will attempt to explain.

We're really excited to start again. I hope many of you will be able to visit us now and again. If anyone has time this year to volunteer, we would love to hear from you. We need another committee member ideally not from Christ Church; we always appreciate help in the kitchen either cooking or helping before and after; and we have a system of 'meet and greet'. Just talk to Neil or myself. See you there.

ECO-CHURCH CREATION CARE

"Phew, what a scorcher!"

With apologies to those who have had enough of hearing about the weather, it seems impossible, in an item on environmental matters, not to talk about the extraordinary summer we have been experiencing. We have seen temperature records being broken and then broken again, not just in the UK but across Europe, wildfires causing devastation to landscapes, forests and homes and drought at disturbing levels. This year, maybe for the first time, we have all felt the effects of climate change for ourselves, not something that is a potential issue for the future but a present reality.

For most of us the issue has just been the discomfort of temperatures we are not really used to, but the effects of these kinds of extreme weather are potentially much more serious than that. Climate scientists who have warned of the danger of food shortages due to climate change have often been accused of scaremongering, but we know already that harvests this year, not just in the UK and Europe but also the US and Canada, are at record lows. In a normal year we assume that, if necessary, we can import what we need but this does not work when the problem is global. Chris Jaccarini, food economist at the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit, said "Unless greenhouse gas emissions are cut to net zero, extreme weather will continue to intensify, putting ever increasing pressure on farm businesses, food production and ultimately food prices."

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, has written, "The most common refrain I hear from climate deniers is that green policies are some kind of luxury divorced from the worries of working people who are just trying to get by. But the idea that you can separate the climate crisis from the cost of living is patently absurd. What happens when droughts cause food prices to rise and when oil-price shocks squeeze household budgets? When hospitals are overwhelmed by vulnerable people struggling in the heat? When railways and roads buckle, workplaces close and schools are shuttered? The notion that climate action represents "woke nonsense" relies on the ridiculous

premise that the climate crisis isn't real – or that if it is, we won't feel its impact on our lives. This year has proven just how wrong that is.”

It is becoming impossible to argue that we cannot afford green policies, when the economic cost of extreme weather is becoming so evident. Direct economic costs arise because workers across many industries become less productive in heatwaves, infrastructure and equipment overheats and has to be shut down. When we add in the costs of repairing the damage caused by fires and drought, the economic cost to the UK this year will run into billions of pounds. Not to mention the hurt caused to natural environments and individual lives.

The good news here is perhaps that the climate crisis is now apparent to all and increasingly difficult to deny. It is noticeable how both the issue of working towards net zero and that of adopting measures to adapt to a changing climate are being widely discussed on mainstream news channels. For some time, it seems, public opinion on combatting climate change has been ahead of that of the politicians; perhaps greater action to protect our precious planet and its people is now a little more likely.

PRAYERS FOR OCTOBER

4th October

Tomorrow is World Teachers' Day and we pray for everyone involved in educating and nurturing learners of all ages. We think of newly qualified teachers just starting out, those in leadership positions with decisions to make, and those putting themselves at risk to teach in dangerous places and situations. We thank you Lord for the dedication of teachers who have inspired us and helped us along the way, and the lasting impact they've had on our lives.

11th October

Today we celebrate Harvest and all the good things God has given us. We give thanks for everyone who works to bring food to our tables and we pray for farmers whose livelihoods are at risk from extremes of weather and poor crops. We ask God's blessing on our Harvest gifts, that they will help to improve lives at home and abroad.

18th October

October is Black History Month and we thank you, God, for the rich diversity of your people. Teach us to appreciate the stories, faith and achievements that have shaped our communities. Help us to value and learn from one another and work for fairness and justice.

25th October

As the clocks go back and we prepare for darker mornings and evenings ahead, we thank you Lord that your light never fades. Bring us comfort when life gets us down and help us to share your love generously with those around us.

Thursday Forum

at Christ Church
Tacket Street (next to Cox Lane car park)

Thursday Lunchtimes

Refreshments at low cost 12 noon - 1.00 pm

A short talk 1.10 - 1.50 pm

You are welcome to either or both



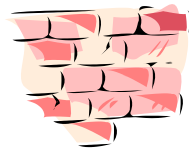
Season 2026/2027

- Oct 1st** **My passion for Uganda**
Alison Brain who supports children and young people there
- Oct 8th** **East Anglian Air Ambulance: a special appeal**
Supporter Engagement Team
- Oct 15th** **What does a High Sheriff do, and how do you become one?**
Gulshan Kayembe, High Sheriff of Suffolk
- Oct 22nd** **Kabuki Theatre; vibrant Japanese dance-drama**
Evelyn Bailey
- Oct 29th** **Georgia: Challenges and Rewards**
Ann Fox

www.christchurch-ipswich.org.uk

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

It seems a very long time since I last wrote to you and I hope you have had a restful summer without complications caused by extreme weather. My biggest interaction with it was actually in Scotland, in a few hours spent in Edinburgh. Knowing I couldn't spend all the time walking around, I had a coffee and a snack, then bought a newspaper and walked back to a big grassy area with empty seats, to read it. I couldn't find a gate that would open then discovered it was owned by people living or working in the surrounding buildings, and they had keys. Like many more, I sat on the pavement outside! I was thankful to return to the coach, but it took over an hour to progress under a mile: fires had caused traffic to be gridlocked. As I reflect, I realise how fortunate I have been: fires destroyed wildlife habitats on Dunwich Heath and lots of homes in Stourbridge, which I often drove past when I lived in the West Midlands. We must thank God we have been kept safe here, but be very careful not to cause fire or waste water.

My most exciting happenings have been connected with my retirement years travelling to Uganda. The first was the weekend I spent in Coventry at the silver jubilee of ordination of Fr Sunday, who did once come to Thursday Forum. I was chosen to be the major speaker because I'd known him for a long time in Uganda as Head of the school where I was based. My job was to make people laugh!

We always had a cow for the boys to slaughter for special events, but in the middle of one celebration the cow escaped and Fr Sunday chased it! Sadly, it raced over the Rwandan border before he could catch it! World Vision built a waterline from up in the hills to the local village, but one man was always cutting it then demanding huge sums to reinstate it. Sadly the route did not pass our school, but late one night, Fr Sunday got the better of him, by cutting the pipe and reconnecting it so we got water to the laboratory! I could go on, but what was really memorable was my meeting with Robert: long ago I taught him chemistry, then A Level divinity, for five years in Uganda, yet now he is here as a missionary in my country.

I've helped Andrew from when he started secondary school with £20 a lady from Woodbridge Road gave to me. He's now a clinical officer doing cataract operations. Since March he's had a job in a government clinic but they'd run out of money and he got no pay. He told me last Thursday that it had all come. I'd talked to him about opening a savings account, but he's blown it all: he's used it as a deposit for a little two room house for his mum, with almost all his pay until November needed to pay the balance. Would we do that? He's a lesson for us all, to help others, remembering that our Lord said, 'Inasmuch as you do it for these the least of my brothers and sisters, you do it for me'.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Your Catholic friend,

Jean

DIARY DATES FOR 2026

All dates are subject to change

Youth Parades (10.45am)

11th Oct (Harvest Parade), 13th Dec (Gift Service)

Forum

3rd Sep (Thursday Forum meal at The Key)

1st Oct (My passion for Uganda)

8th Oct (East Anglian Air Ambulance)

15th Oct (What does a High Sheriff do?)

22nd Oct (Kabuki Theatre)

29th Oct (Georgia: Challenges and Rewards)

OTHER DATES

September

Saturday 12th Ride & Stride/Heritage Day

Tuesday 22nd Prayer Lunch (noon)

October

Sunday 4th Neil leads service at Chappel URC
(6.30pm)

Tuesday 27th Prayer Lunch (noon)

SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER

All Services will be led by our Minister, Revd Neil Coulson unless otherwise stated.

Sunday 6th September

10.45am All-Age Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday 13th September

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 20th September

10.45am Family Worship led by Revd Birgit Ewald

Sunday 27th September

There will be no Service on the 27th due to road closures for the Ipswich Half Marathon

SERVICES FOR OCTOBER

Sunday 4th October

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion,
followed by the Church Meeting

Please bring a packed lunch to eat
before the Meeting

Sunday 11th October

10.45am Harvest Thanksgiving and Parade
Service

Sunday 18th October

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 25th October

10.45am Family Worship led by Mr Keith Scarf

SERVICES FOR EARLY NOVEMBER

Sunday 1st November

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion
