

CONTACT

The monthly magazine of

Groby

United Reformed Church



September 2023

Happy Birthday

William Ward has a birthday in September!

Happy Birthday William

May the Good Lord Bless You

Sue Lawrence-Brooks

Pause for Thought from Mary Pringle

2000 years ago Jesus repeatedly liberated and affirmed women - treating men and women as equals.

Women were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb- the first to be entrusted with the news of the resurrection of Jesus.

Nicky Gumble, Facebook 7.3.2021



Our Church website can be found at <https://grobyurc.com/>

Our Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/grobyurc>

A link to recordings of our services can be found on both our church Website (click on the 'worship' Tab at the top) and on our Facebook page.

WELCOME FROM WENDY CHURCH ELDER.



Dear All,

Welcome to this month's edition of Contact magazine.

As I write to you, we have just had our Strawberry Sunday event where we gathered to share food, eat strawberries, tax our brains with a strawberry quiz, (did you know there are 130 varieties of strawberry, and it shares its genes with roses?) and have a jolly good sing along to old classics. Thank you, Trevor, Mary, and others who made this event possible. The most notable part of the event was sharing in fellowship with many of our friends from Tasters as one big family. We are all made in the image of God and as such we share the need for a sense of belonging and acceptance. How wonderful that we are all able to have these needs met by each other as we continue to walk alongside each other and offer each other support and friendship.

"It's better than being home alone" one lady said. "I've had a wonderful time,"

Next week we will be having fun with the families who come to enjoy our Tasters café on Saturday morning too. This time we will be turning church into the seaside, with a beach, paddling pool, crafts, ice cream and photo opportunities. At the end of August, we will have our second men's breakfast and into September our lady's afternoon tea, and also the start of the Alpha course.

For me this is church at its best. Jesus said that he came not to be served but to serve, and to show us such love that we understood through his actions, the love of the Father. His acceptance of us is un-conditional, there is nothing we can do to make him love us

more, and nothing we can do to make him love us less. He came not to condemn, but to woo every person on the earth to himself. It is only as we journey in this sense of belonging and acceptance together as children each made in his image that we begin to fully understand ourselves, our needs, our damaged selves, and our damaged world, through the lens of his love. Brené Brown describes true belonging as “the spiritual practice of believing in and belonging to yourself so deeply that you can share your most authentic self with the world and find sacredness in both being a part of something and standing alone in the world. True belonging doesn’t require you to change who you are, it requires you to be who you are.”

I interpret this as accepting, the un -conditional love of Christ, by finding strength in him and our community to face the challenges of life together. Being transformed by the Spirit of God at work in all of us as we accept both the light and dark within us, and allow Gods love and teaching to change us to our true authentic selves.

Sam Wells in his book ‘Incarnating Ministry; Being with the Church’ articulates a theology of “being with” arguing that the heart of Christian faith is God’s commitment to “be with,” revealed most deeply through Jesus. For Wells, “being with,” starts with people’s assets, not their deficits, and models enjoying each other for their own sake, not to “do for them”, or “to use them.”

This is challenging and uncomfortable, but it is a theology being outworked in places like Tasters, Catch, and the numerous activities I have mentioned. A willingness to treat people as valuable in God ‘s sight, as a people beloved as children of God, as individuals in whom the Spirit of God is already at work, and where it is safe for us all to be our authentic selves. This includes those on the edges, the mentally ill, the cognitively different, and

those who strike us as odd.

Maybe this understanding of God is new to you. Perhaps you yourself want to learn more, or perhaps you have people around you, who are curious, and questioning what's happening in the world right now. Why not invite your friends to join you for Alpha? Enjoy the wonderful hospitality we are developing as part of our theology with each other with a two-course meal, and open discussion, and continue the journey into an acceptance and belonging you have perhaps never thought possible but is available in Christ.

Let's learn together.

Warmest love and blessing

Wendy Hall (Elder)



Our Alpha course begins at 7 pm, Monday 18th September. It is a Churches Together event which will be held in our church.

The *Alpha* course has been incredibly successful for decades now in explaining in a cringe-free way what Christians believe. It does so through a series of evenings with a simple format: a meal together, followed by a lively DVD, followed by a group discussion of the DVD, where all comments and opinions are heard, and questions considered.

If you invite someone, you can come along with them each Monday. For the sake of the catering, those attending are asked to register, mentioning any food allergy, at office@bradgatechurches.org.uk by the previous Monday (11th September).

H IS FOR HABITAT



© CanStockPhoto.com

Habitat is the place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows.

Humanity is the human race, which includes everyone on Earth.

What is humanity doing to our habitat?

There has been a decline of 89% of species in South America.

An 83% decline in freshwater species since 1970.

Germany's insect population has declined by 76%.

Agriculture and palm oil plantations have destroyed an unconceivable amount of habitat. Have you read Catherine Ward's book *'The Emerald Forest'*? (on the Children's book shelves)

There is urgent need to protect our habitat and we can all play our own small part:

- By creating Bee-friendly gardens
- By attempting to avoid palm oil products
- By trying to live a more simple lifestyle can only benefit our habitat

Catch-up on Creation & Driving, Energy & Food, Globalisation & Habitat, all coming shortly to the Tearfund notice board in the church hall, or speak with Joy/Kathy/Ruth for more information.

Voice 4 Justice.

Sunday Service Take Aways

As part of our series on Jonah, Cate Coffey kindly preached for us on Jonah Chapter 3 - Sin City.

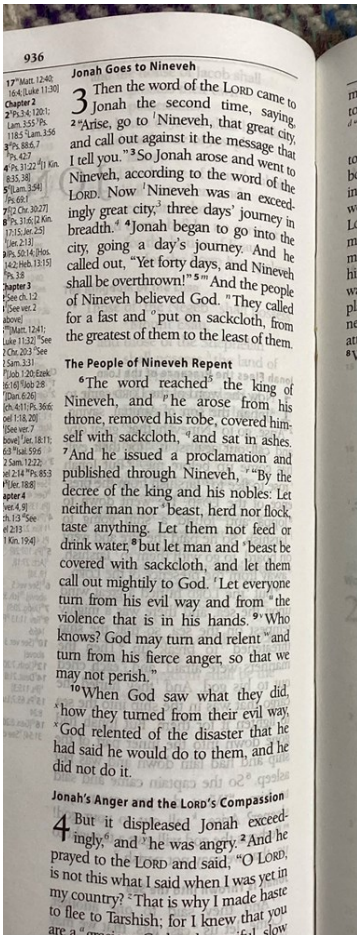
Here are some of the points that she made.

1. Forgiveness is compulsory for Christians. We forgive because we have been forgiven.

‘For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.’ Matthew 6:14-15.

2. The unlikeliest people respond to God. Responding to God requires change, repentance and turning away from wrong ways of thinking and acting.

3. God’s view of the world (and its people) is not our view. We need to see the world through God’s eyes. For God is loving and compassionate.



‘For his anger lasts only a moment but his favour lasts a lifetime’ .
Psalm 30:5

Mary

IT'S BETTER TO SAY "I'M FINE" WITH A GRIN THAN LET PEOPLE KNOW THE SHAPE WE ARE IN

On Thursday 13th July the **Thursday Home Group** held an Afternoon Tea, planned as a garden party, but because of the unpredictable weather moved inside.

Invitations were mainly sent to church people who live alone.

Why did they hold this event?

The decision was taken months earlier at a home-group meeting to endeavour to put faith into action rather than solely 'consuming' Bible passages.

Was a good time had by all?

Judge for yourself from some of the comments made afterwards:

"Such a pleasant way to get to know each other better".

"The old photos of the village were very interesting".

"The poem lady was very funny".

"Such good food & the tables were set with such loving care".

"Everyone was very thankful".

The old lady appeared suddenly during tea and disappeared without trace soon afterwards. She was heard muttering "My pulse is weak, my blood is thin, But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in".

Do you know who she is?



Home Groupies:

Dave, Elaine, Elsie, John, Joy, Mary, Pete, Ruth, Trevor

Recommended Reads

Missionary: not just a position by Anji Barker

This book is the interesting and moving autobiography of the unusual life of Anji Barker.

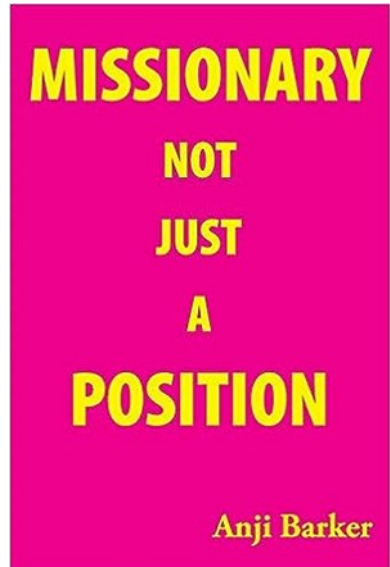
Anji is qualified social worker and a United Reformed Church Minister, who has spent the last 30 years living and working with poor urban communities in Melbourne, Bangkok and Birmingham.

She is open and honest about faith and doubt and the challenge of raising children in difficult places. Her stories are amazing, challenging and inspiring.

Anji and her husband Ash now run Newbiggin Community Trust in Winson Green where they have founded two new Church congregations as well as working to develop Church and community leaders.

Anji is speaking at the Ladies' Tea on 17th September. To find out more about her, why not borrow a copy of her book from Mary or Wendy.

Mary



THE POWER OF THE CHURCH

tearfund

In the past **Voice for Justice** have written in the Contact about Tearfund projects worldwide, but sometimes it's good to remind ourselves of their belief that local churches are a catalyst for social transformation in their neighbourhoods; with Tearfund working out a plan to implement this:

By equipping the local church, guiding and supporting them to identify specific needs within their community.

By using Biblical principles in whatever action they plan to do.

By assisting and putting into place solutions to address those needs.

Needs may vary to suit the people and places, but could involve Bible studies and training sessions; funding and community projects such as schools, churches and infrastructure; or providing care to vulnerable community members.

WHAT A VISION!

Is this a model our church could replicate and apply here in Groby? Future Church Meetings could take on a whole new significance!

Voice for Justice

VOICE FOR



JUSTICE

We've recently been looking at the book of Jonah during our Sunday morning Worship

Jonah was a prophet who was very close to God.

God gave to him a message which Jonah found quite odd.

He had to go to Nineveh, a place of evil men.

Jonah didn't want to go there; he'd rather go to Spain.

God followed him on board the ship and sent it through a tempest.

The sailors threw Jonah overboard and all of them repented.

God took good care of Jonah in a fish's mammoth belly.

It was dark and cold and very wet and really rather smelly.

The fish threw Jonah onto land; God gave his job back to him.

He went to Nineveh at last and told them that God loved them.

The Ninevites were overwhelmed and all of them repented.

They left their violent lives of hate and turned to God instead

But Jonah wasn't happy - he'd expected this would happen.

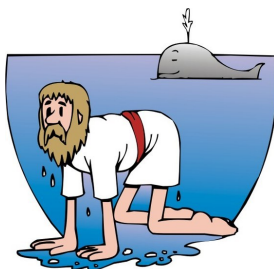
'Cos God's love is everlasting and so is his compassion.

God had to teach him yet again to follow in God's ways

That people coming close to God is reason for great praise.

From Paul

Author Unknown



SUNDAY MORNING TEACHING AND READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

Our preaching in recent months has been based on two short books, Jonah and then Philippians. Let's now get our teeth into a whole Gospel, for what is more central to our Biblical faith than the Gospels? Of the four Gospels, the only one not to have been covered in our sermons in the last nine years, and the one least often preached from in the last fourteen years, is Matthew's. I know not why!

But don't worry, the Old Testament will not be ignored! For Matthew quotes the OT more than any other New Testament author. "Fulfilled" is one of Matthew's characteristic verbs, as he makes the connections some of us find so hard between Christ and the OT Scriptures.

Matthew provides a comprehensive context by which we see all of God's creation and salvation completed in Jesus, and all parts of our lives - work, family, friends and future - completed in Him.

And by the way, we shall start at chapter 3, leaving the first two chapters of Matthew until Advent: I think you know why! Paul.

Sept. 3rd	Psalm 121	Malcolm Clarke
Sept. 10th	Matthew Chapter 3:1-12 'John the Baptist'	Paul
Sept. 17th	Matthew Chapter 3:13-17 'Jesus' Baptism' Service to include Communion A CTG Service	Paul
Sept. 24th	Matthew Chapter 4:1-17 Temptation and Repentance	Jane Henderson

September's Helping Hands

	Elder	Music	Media	Welcome	Coffee
Sept		(Tim)	(Tim)	(Joy)	(Joy)
3rd	Mary	Debbie	Dave	Alan B & Judith	Joy & Cherryl
10th	Wendy	David	Mark	Elsie & Pete	Dave & Hilary
17th	Sue	David	Chris	Rachel H & Margaret	Mary & Trevor (Extra Help)
24th	Mark	Sue	Barry	Linda & Hilary	Pat C & Linda



Sunday Flowers
(Barbara Conlon)

3rd: Margaret Chaplin

10th: Kay Blick

17th: Pete & Elsie Randall

24th: Anne Brandon

“The Clean Team!”
(Kathy Du Boulay)

Week Beginning

4th: Our Chores

11th: Barry & Kathy

18th: Our Chores

25th: Dave & Hilary





Strawberry

Beginning with a very 'interesting'! presentation of fruit to tell the Bible story by Rev Paul during our morning worship (e.g. Mango = Man goes his own way! Lychee = lying and cheating! Passion fruit = Christ's passion!), we and our guests gathered for our Bring & Share lunch which finished with some very delicious strawberries, cream and / or ice cream! Photos were taken in the strawberry picture frame, lunch was eaten, quiz answers were given, and we finished with a good old sing song led by Trevor of course. Here are the pic of the crop from the photos! (in editors opinion of course!)



Sunday



Sadly, your editor lost track of which table won the quiz, but I can tell you Kezi won the best dressed strawberry themed outfit, and our thanks to Linda, Mary and Trevor for their hard work organising, and the many others who helped! More photos can be found at [Groby United Reformed Church - YouTube](#)



Open the Book Autumn Term 2023

September will see the beginning of our 10th year of presenting Open the Book to the primary school children in Groby (and more recently Ratby) and in some ways will be a new beginning.

The Bible Society have introduced a different form of membership with a new package that includes a new Storytelling Bible, handbook, ID lanyard etc and Extend have very generously paid for the whole team to become full members. We are very grateful for this.

We are also delighted to welcome a new member to the team; Rev Paul Ellis, URC Minister, who will begin his “storytelling” experience with us in September. Great to have you on board Paul, (you’ll make a brilliant Goliath!).

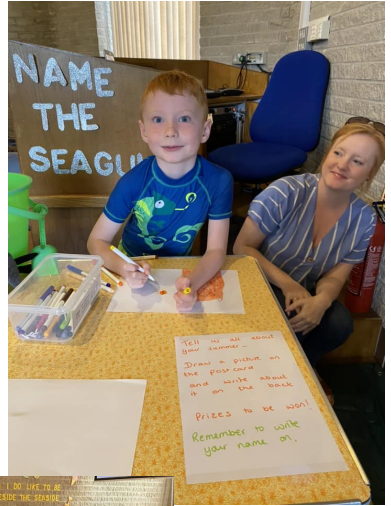
We will be using the new Storytelling Bible starting in September, although we certainly won’t be abandoning the old one. Our first story will be Temptation, which follows on beautifully from our end of year presentation of the Baptism of Jesus, and at which Jesus very clearly opens the book to rebuke the devil. The children are reminded too which book we are opening, so a good start to the year really.

Please do keep the whole team and the children and staff in your prayers and if you want any more information just ask one of the team members at your church. If you feel called to join us, we would love to have you; rehearsals are great fun and the presentations are very rewarding.

Lynda Hawkes
Open the Book Team Member.

Tasters

On Saturday Aug.19th, Church was turned into a seaside!



A special Thank you to Hannah who thought up all the crafts, jokes and made story time happen.
Wendy





At the end of June, it was Oscars all round for ***Groby Sings At The Movies***. It was so good to be back at our 'home' in Groby College and to finally have space for all three choirs to come together after several weeks of rehearsing separately at The Groby Club.

It was no mean feat for Musical Director, Simon Lubkowski, who was experiencing his first major Groby Sings concert weekend, to have only one rehearsal in which to blend over 100 voices so that they produced a quality performance in every song. After the concerts, Simon commented to the choir, 'Well done for learning your songs so well.....(and)..... showing the enjoyment of singing together in this wonderful group – the youth choir were amazing and I found myself quite emotional at the quality of both their singing and the potential they have for the future.'

Groby Sings has always played a part in boosting the confidence of our young singers as has been shown by past youth choir members who have gone on to take part in school concerts, the Leics Sing Show Choir, which has performed at the De Montfort Hall and the NEC, and the Schools Prom at the Royal Albert Hall, amongst other events. One young Groby Singer also appeared in a West End stage production.

At the post-concert Celebration Evening, there was a final singing of songs from *Groby Sings At The Movies*. BBC Radio Leicester visited to record interviews and take photographs to publicise our being finalists in the Community Group category for BBC Radio Leicester's Make A Difference Awards 2023. We will find out if we have won at the awards ceremony on Sunday 3rd September so watch this space.

As a community choir we have always appreciated the support of our community in all its forms. There are, of course, all the friends and relatives who make up the enthusiastic audiences at our concerts but we are also grateful to the local businesses who sponsor our songs and help with publicity, local magazines and church newsletters which carry our Groby Sings news and reviews, the choir members who often travel several miles to sing with us. We owe a huge thank you to The Groby Club who have supported us from the start by generously providing us with a rehearsal space every week.

Groby Sings is a charity and there is not an alternative, comparable and affordable space.



We're a dementia-friendly choir! For more information please get in touch with our dementia coordinator, Louise, at lou_ross@yahoo.com



This is our next venture.

Rehearsals begin 6th September.

Enquiries via our website www.grobysings.org.

Groby Sings is a Registered Charity no. 1180490

Rehearsals at Groby Club from 6th September

Wednesday afternoon choir: 1.30pm - 3pm

Creche area available

Children's choir 3.40pm - 4.40pm

for children aged 7 years old and over

Wednesday evening choir: 7.30pm - 9.00pm

Performances take place in November

www.grobysings.org for more information Registered Charity no. 1180490

Julian Meetings starting in Groby!

Julian Meetings are ecumenical groups of people who meet together regularly to practise silent, contemplative prayer. At a Julian Meeting we sit in a circle and relax in the presence of God. A short devotional reading leads into a time of silent prayer with a candle in the centre to focus on as we open ourselves to God and wait on Him.

This practise is not something new and has different names in the Christian tradition: The prayer of loving attention; contemplative prayer; the prayer of silence; the prayer of the heart. It is a way to open ourselves up to God free from any agenda we may bring. It is an opportunity to sit in each other's presence and the presence of the divine: we share the silence together.

The meeting in Groby is open to everyone – those of 'all faiths and none'. We will meet on the first Monday of each month at 7:15 with 20-30 minutes of silence beginning around 7:30. The silence will begin and end with a few words or a chime. Some may wish to leave the venue silently, whilst others may want to stay and have a quiet chat.

Our first meeting will take place on Monday September 4th at Groby Library. There is no charge but there will be a tin for donations to cover the cost of hiring the library.

If you have any questions please feel free to ask/email Ruth Mwyenya, bananpemba@yahoo.co.uk or Rachel Hiscocks, rachel.hiscocks@gmail.com

All is Well

For a few years I have been trying to lead a more 'contemplative' life: I find the ways that I tune into and relate to God have changed so I have been exploring the practises that help me. My desire is to draw closer to God – to find him in the world around me and within me. During the Covid lockdowns I felt prompted to write down some of what I had been learning, and I did. But I didn't really do anything with it and as life took over again and got busy I laid it to one side.

What then, to do with what I had written? When I started, the word 'book' was what was in my mind. But my brief thoughts seem too concise and I doubt myself. Yet the words are still there and writing is a medium through which I find God speaks to me. It is useful to me and I hope could be useful to others.

So I have, with some trepidation, started a 'blog'. I am not the most technical of people and can not answer all the questions you may have about how this works. What I can tell you is that through the blog I aim to share what I wrote back in those lockdowns; some musings related in the main to a contemplative life; sermons that I have written that are sat on my computer; and the occasional poem.

You can find the blog by typing this into your computer browser:
wordsandmusingsruthm.blogspot.com

Please feel free to have a read and share the link with anyone else who you feel may find it useful.

Feedback appreciated (but please be gentle!)

Ruth Mwenya

*A prayer written and read by Margaret Chaplin for our
service on 30th July*

Father, you are the glory of our world. Your light shines in our darkness

You are the shepherd of our soul, our longing is to be in the very presence of your holiness. You touch our hearts and minds with your spirit and comfort us in times of gladness and sorrow.

Lord our petition is that we will not be downcast or weary. Because you hear our prayers, you understand we come to you and cease the fluttering of our soul.

We lean on you, learn and be delighted by the knowledge that you know us each individually. Lord guide us into your sanctuary where we can 'Trust in you alone'.

Lord you tenderly choreograph our lives, like a great composer each note in harmony with another.

The holy spirit moves us all into place then the church acts as one. With God as composer Jesus the conductor, we the people the orchestra and the holy spirit as lead musician.

There are great serenades in our lives, oratorios that we can all join in as a church. Musical arrangements where you transpose each of us to be the best that we can.

Help us to watch you Jesus so we come in at the right time. For you indeed are the conductor of our souls.

While we pray in the silence of our own hearts those deep things we would ask of you Lord. Things we cannot always utter out loud. We will be completely silent before you.

Amen.



SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN CHURCH

A workshop focussing on how we can welcome, support and disciple those who struggle with their mental health in our church and communities

How can we recognise when someone is struggling?

What does The Bible say about mental health?

What is the best way to help?

How can our church be a place where people feel cared for?

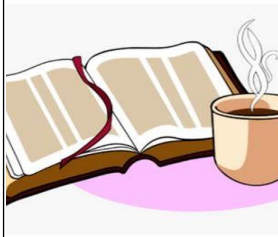
<https://encouragementmentalhealth.org>

Opportunity for all to attend this course, which will run at Christ Church, (Barbara Road, LE3 2EB) on Saturday, 16th September. It will begin at 9.30 am and finish approximately 2.30 pm - 3 pm.

Details of how to register your wish to attend will follow.

Homegroups

The Thursday Homegroup have shared something that they have been doing (see page 8)



We have regular homegroups, that meet fortnightly at different times throughout the week, providing opportunity for bible study, prayer and conversation, as well as the occasional generous and fun events like the one reported on by Thursday's group.

If you would like to know more about joining a group, please contact one of the folk below. Any other 'homegroup reports' would be of great interest to Contact editor!

Please contact one of the people below if not already part of a homegroup but would like to find out more.

Mondays - 6.30 - 8 pm in Groby.

Contact Mark Hiscocks on 07887 399107
hiscocksm@gmail.com

Mondays- (evenings) in Anstey

Contact Helen Fracchia. 0116 2365349
hmotson@hotmail.com

Wednesdays - 2.30-4.30 pm in Groby

Contact Jim Coaton, 0116 287 6909
j.coaton@sky.com

Wednesdays - 7.30 - 9.30 pm in Groby

Contact Kathy DuBoulay on 0116 224 5095
kathygrace127@gmail.com

Thursdays - 7.30 pm in Groby

Contact Elaine Mee on 0116 287 7608
elaineamee@gmail.com

Pinkies up Ladies for



Afternoon Tea & Talk

"Bring your own special cup"

**Sunday 17th September 3-5pm
Groby United Reformed Church**

Donations appreciated



***Our Guest Speaker is
the mischievous,
courageous, resilient
and a times
outrageous ANJI
BARKER who lives &
works in inner-city***

***Winson Green, Birmingham, dedicating
her life to hope & light in dark places***



DIARY DATES

Church Meeting: Thursday 28th September at 7.30 pm

Please let Paul or one of the elders know if you have something for the agenda. All are welcome to our Church Meetings.

Prayers for Ukraine: Thursday September 14th and 28th, 6.30 pm in church

Men's Breakfast: Monday 28th August at 9 am at the URC

Ladies Afternoon Tea: Sunday September 17th. Guest speaker Anji Barker from the Pioneer Hub. 3 - 5 pm

Alpha Course: An Alpha course will be running on Monday evenings from September 18th at our church. **Remember to invite someone and register by 11th September** (info. on page 5)

Mental Health Training: Saturday October 14th October, 9.30 am, at Christ Church (see page 23 for more info)

October 2023 issue

The deadline for October's issue of Contact is **SAT 16th September 2023** but happy to accept articles sooner if prepared and ready to go!

Please submit to magazine@grobyurc.com or to Kathy (5 Hawthorn Rise, Groby) Preferred via email.

Print or Hard Copy of Contact?

Contact magazine is published in print and on the church website, grobyurc.com. If you would like to be added or removed from the monthly hyperlink email list, please let Kathy know at the magazine email address magazine@grobyurc.com

If you receive a paper copy and no longer wish to, please let us know through the magazine email address.



Warning
Men at
work

“We would tell you a construction joke,
but we’re still working on it”

Colossians 3:23-24: Work willingly at whatever you do,
as though you were working for the Lord rather than for
people.

Well done the maintenance team!

Groby United Reformed Church
member: Evangelical Alliance UK
www.grobyurc.com, LE6 0FE



CONTACTS

MINISTER: Rev. Paul Ellis. 0116 292 6218
Paul Ellis <tallpaulellis@tiscali.co.uk>

SECRETARY CONTACT : Sue Lawrence-Brooks 0116 231
2866 / susanbeverley46@yahoo.co.uk

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORKER: Vacancy.

CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS: Jane Hinds 07530 957022 /
janesnips@hotmail.com

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Our Sunday morning services start at 10 am and are recorded. A link to the recording can be found on our website and Facebook page (see page 2 for details of this.) Our worship includes monthly Holy Communion

The church building has a loop hearing system, wheelchair access, a toilet for the disabled & baby nappy changing facilities.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Mon: Noah's Ark parent & toddler group - 9.30-11.30 (term time)

Thurs: 'Fair Cuppa'* at Groby village Hall-10.30-12 am

Fri: CatCH* parent & toddler group-9.30 - 11 am (term time)

Fri. (alternate Fridays during term time) 7.30 pm Urban Saints.
Games and Grub for children in Years 5 - 11.

Sat: Tasters* Coffee, hot cobs. Kids activities -10-12am

There are also regular Homegroups running throughout the week.
Our Secretarial Contact has more information.

* These activities are run jointly with St Philip & St James as part of 'Churches Together in Groby'.