

# CONTACT

The monthly magazine of

Groby

United Reformed Church



Dec 23 - Jan 24

# Happy Birthday

*Carys Hung has a birthday in January!*

*Happy Birthday Carys*

*May the Good Lord Bless You*

Sue Lawrence-Brooks

## Pause for Thought...

If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room  
I would not fear a million enemies.  
Yet distance makes no difference.  
He is praying for me.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne 1813-1843

(Minister in the Church of Scotland, preacher, pastor, writer and poet. A man of deep piety and prayer. 7,000 people attended his funeral when he died of typhus at the age of 29. His Bible reading plan is still used by many today.)



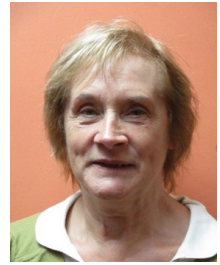
From Mary

**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 KATHY CHURCH ELDER



Welcome to this double issue of Contact.

As we head into December, our focus on preparations for Christmas become more urgent - its taken me quite a while to bear in mind that Christmas is in fact, only 3 weeks after the beginning of December, rather than a vague 'towards the end of December'.

Christmas can be difficult and challenging. We can be more aware than usual of a bereavement, of loneliness, or a lack of something. It seems particularly hard on those who normally struggle with life for all sorts of reasons - Christmas can just be an added burden.

The Christian faith teaches that Christ came into this world for all of us, to reveal God to us, to dwell among us. God meets us in our need wherever and whoever we are. The Christian faith is the only religion that cancels our need to 'strive' to be worthy enough to reach a certain level of discipleship. "Nothing in earth or heaven can be more awesome, more unexpected than this: that Jesus, the 'Lord of Lords and King of Kings' (Rev. 17:14) descended the ladder to reveal God to us and to show us just how much God loves us". (Selwyn Hughes). Jesus came to enable us to have a relationship with God "**.... we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation**" (Romans 5:11). The word 'reconciliation' is 'made us God's friends' in some bible versions. How incredible is that! Why would God do that for us - you and I? Because of His unfathomable love for us. He shares our difficulties and challenges, our sorrows and our joys.

Rick Warren of 'Purpose Driven Life' fame - also wrote 'The Purpose of Christmas'. He explains that Christmas is a time for

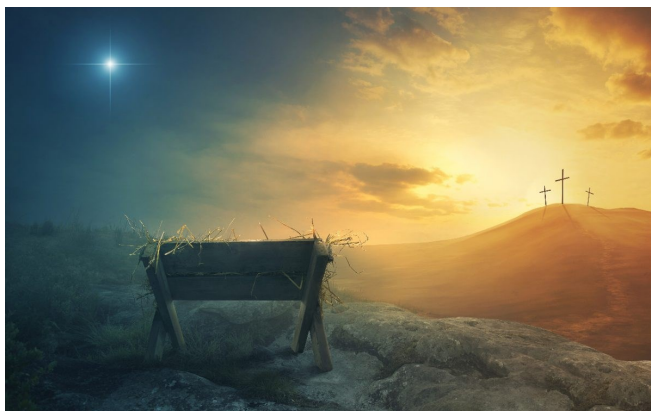
Celebration - 'I **bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people**' (Luke 2:10), Salvation i.e. to be saved from a life separated from God- '**He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace**' (2 Tim. 1:9) and Reconciliation. Jesus came to make a relationship with God possible. '**All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation**' (2 Corinthians 18)

Whatever sort of Christmas you have planned, I pray that you will feel God's presence throughout Advent and the Christmas season, and be blessed with the certain hope and assurance of God's love for you.

As we approach 2024, we have our Church AGM and annual elder's elections. Please take a look at Paul's piece on eldership (page 20) and consider what you can bring to the life of our church. It only took one boy to give what he had to Jesus and five thousand were fed with plenty left over. Jesus did the rest! (Mark 6:1-15)

I pray that the New Year will bring renewed vision and strength in Him to us all.

Kathy



# Middle East Crisis Appeal



£627.35 has now been sent to Christian Aid in response to their emergency appeal. Thank you to everyone who contributed. Money raised will help Christian Aid's established partners deliver vital emergency supplies to vulnerable families affected by this terrible crisis.

Mary

## Pulpit Supply Secretary

I have enjoyed being our Pulpit Supply Secretary for the last two years. We are blessed with a good number of excellent preachers on our list who are willing to give their time and minister to us on the Sundays when Paul is at one of his other churches. It is therefore not a difficult job!

I was wondering, however, if it is time to pass this role on to someone new who may feel called to take this on. This would also free up some of my time which I would use to help with other Church admin tasks.

Please prayerfully consider if this might be a role that you would be willing to take on. (You would need to be able to use emails to contact preachers as all communications are done by email). The role doesn't necessarily need to be carried out by an elder.

I currently have all the Sundays covered until the end of March 2024, and would be happy to offer support as required as someone new settled into the role. Please have a chat with me or Kathy if you want to know more about what is involved.

Mary

# TEACHING AND READINGS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2023

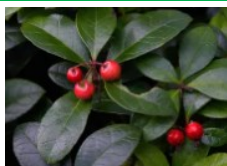
<b>Dec 3rd</b>	<b>Genesis 3. 1-15</b> <b>Advent Sunday Service:</b> <b>'It all started with the fall'</b>	Ruth Mwenga
<b>Dec 10th</b>	<b>'Know You are Loved'</b> <b>Isaiah ch. 9</b>	Dave Lomas
<b>Dec 17th</b>	<b>Matt ch 1:18-25</b> <b>'The birth of Jesus'</b> <b>A Carol Service</b>	Paul
<b>Dec 24th</b>	<b>Matt ch 2: 1-15</b> <b>'Wise men from the East'</b>  <b>The service includes</b> <b>sharing Holy Communion.</b>	Wendy
<b>Dec 24th</b> <b>at 5 pm</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Family</b> <b>Service</b>	Richard Knott  Children and Youth Development Officer for East Mid. Synod
<b>Dec 25th</b> <b>at 9.30 am</b>	<b>Luke ch 2: 8-20</b> <b>'Shepherds abiding in the</b> <b>fields'</b>	Paul
<b>Dec 31st</b>	<b>Matt ch 2:19-23</b> <b>'The return to Nazareth'</b>	Paul

All services begin at 10 am unless stated otherwise.

We will share Holy Communion during the morning service on  
Christmas Eve.

## December's Helping Hands

	<b>Elder</b>	<b>Music</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	<b>Coffee</b>
<b>Dec.</b>	(Kathy)	(Tim)	(Tim)	(Joy)	(Joy)
3rd	Mary	Helen	Barry	Ruth & Roger	Kathy & Margaret
10th	Kathy	David	Tim	Sue & Mike	Joy & Cherryl
17th	Sue	Debbie	Mark	Joy & Peter	Hilary & Dave
24th 10am	Mark	Sue	Chris	Barbs & Anita	Mary & Trevor
24th 5 pm	Rachel	David	Dave	TBC	TBC
25th	Wendy	Debbie	Tim	John & Elaine	N/ A
31st	Phil	Sue	Tim	Alan & Judith	Pat & Linda



**Sunday  
Flowers**  
(Barbara  
Conlon)

Christmas Flowers and  
Decorations.

**“The Clean Team!”**

Week Beginning

Dec 4th: Trevor & Mary

Dec 11th : Our Chores

Dec 18th: Barry & Kathy

Dec 25th : Our Chores



## SUNDAY MORNING TEACHING AND READINGS FOR JANUARY 2024

<b>Jan 7th</b>	<b>Preacher's Choice</b>	Jim Coaton
	<b>The service includes sharing Holy Communion.</b>	
<b>Jan 14th</b>	<b>Matt ch8</b>	Kate Coffey
	<b>'Healings'</b>	
<b>Jan 21st</b>	<b>CTG service for Week of</b>	Paul
<b>9.30 am</b>	<b>Christian Unity</b>	
	<b>At St Philip &amp; St James church.</b>	
<b>Jan 28th</b>	<b>Ch9 vv1-8 and 18-26,</b>	Gary Wood
	<b>'Your sins forgiven,</b>	
	<b>A girl restored to life and a woman healed'.</b>	

As we go into 2024 we pick up the Gospel story from Matthew, although Jim will be choosing his own theme to begin the New Year as seems appropriate.

Sue will lead us in sharing Holy Communion on the 7th .

We join with our friends at St Philip and St James for our service to mark the Week of Christian Unity. It will be held at St Philip & St James and will begin at the earlier time of 9.30 am.

All other services in January begin at 10 am.



## January's Helping Hands

	<b>Elder</b>	<b>Music</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	<b>Coffee</b>
<b>Jan. 7th</b>	(Kathy)	(Tim)	(Tim)	(Joy)	(Joy)
7th	Sue	TBC	Barry	Pete & Elsie	Ruth & Roger
14th	Kathy	TBC	Dave	Rachel & Margaret	Kathy & Barry
21st	Rachel	TBC	Mark	Linda & Hilary	Peter & Margaret
28th	Mary	TBC	Chris	Ruth & Roger	Joy & Cheryl



### Sunday Flowers

(Barbara Conlon)

Jan 7th: Barbara Conlon

Jan 14th: Ann Tombs

Jan 21st: Phil & Kathy Holmes

Jan 28th: Ruth & Roger Ivens.

### “The Clean Team!”

(Kathy Du Boulay)



Week Beginning

Jan 1st: Dave & Hilary

Jan 8th: Our Chores

Jan 15th: Tim & Linda

Jan 21st: Our Chores

Jan 29th: Sue LB & Sue A

# GROWING HOPE - OUR TEARFUND CHRISTMAS HARVEST APPEAL



Our 2023 Christmas Appeal will focus on helping some of the millions of people around the world who have dropped out of the news and their plight is going unmet.

The best way of helping them is through **Tearfund's** Church and Community Transformation Training (CCT). And the good news is, we too can be part of the story.

One of the easiest ways of explaining how CCT transforms a community is by presenting a video of how it works in Burkina Faso. We will therefore, be showing an inspiring video clip in church a couple of times before Christmas, demonstrating a local church in action.

We love this picture of a young mum and her contented baby. Do you think they benefitted from their local community training and resources? She certainly looks happy and baby well fed!

If you would like to help unlock even more self-help this Christmas please read on.....



**tearfund**

## **How can we donate and is it complicated?**

There are envelopes on the bookcase at the back of the church and on the table in the passageway, please help yourself.

## **Where can we find details of the Tearfund Christmas Harvest Appeal?**

In the December Contact magazine, along with prayers for the appeal, or by talking to the Voice 4 Justice Team - Ruth, Joy, Kathy. There will also be updates in the December notices at morning worship.

## **What do we do next?**

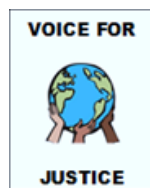
Pop your donations in the envelopes and place them under the church Christmas tree where a candle will be lit each week as a thank you for your donation. Envelopes will be emptied after morning service so no monies will be left in the building.

## **How long will the Appeal last?**

After Twelfth night (Epiphany Eve) the Christmas tree will be taken down and donations sent to Tearfund along with details of our Appeal.



Thank you for putting your  
compassion and concern  
into action.



## Recommended reads - Prayer

Gary Wood spoke to us on 5th November on the topic of prayer and fasting. He started his talk by recommending three books about prayer.

Power through prayer by E.M. Bounds.

A slim volume, but a classic that Gary recommends as the best teaching book that he has read on prayer.

Too busy not to pray by Bill Hybels

A practical book on prayer, encouraging us to slow down and make time to be with God.

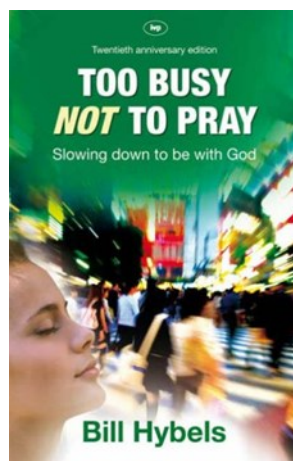
Rees Howells - Intercessor : the story of a life lived for God by Norman Grubb.

A biography of a Welsh miner and his devotion to prayer and his ministry of intercession during World War Two.

Many thanks to Gary for these recommendations.

If you own one of these titles and would be happy to let others borrow - please let me know.

Mary



# Groby URC Prayer Sheet – Dec 2023/ Jan 2024

*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:4*

As this is a double issue we are including prayers for Christmas and the new year. Move towards Christmas we are focusing our prayers on activities going on within Groby, as well as our church Christmas appeal. Then for the new year we have prayers for all those who volunteer within the church and especially think about the upcoming Elder’s elections.

## Prayers for Christmas Events

Advent is a time where we remember how much God loved each & every one of us: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only son”

As we think about how we share this message of God’s love with those around us this Advent and Christmas let’s pray for:

- All the Christmas events going on at churches in Groby & those out in the community, that God’s love will show through to all those who come along
- Praise God that we are once again able to hold Carol’s Around the Tree where we can share the



- true meaning of Christmas with those in our community. Pray for all those involved in organising this event & those that will be attending it.
- Spend some time looking at the church Christmas cards, pray for all those involved in creating & distributing these & also all those who will receive one, that God may speak to them this Christmas.
- Pray that the true message of Christmas will be shared by everyone this year. Ask God to show you how you can show his love to others this Advent.

## **Prayers for our Christmas Appeal.**

Our Voices For Justice Team are coordinating this year's Christmas appeal which is centred on Tearfund's Church and Community Transformation Training (CCT).

Here are some prayers they have put together for the appeal:

**GIVE THANKS** to God for the work of Tearfund throughout the world. (pause)

**GIVE THANKS** to God for the churches who adopted the CHURCH COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION TRAINING scheme.

**GIVE THANKS** for the vision, and the leadership to build up these Training Centres ( pause)

**PRAISE GOD** for all those who adopted new farming techniques and as a result, their families had enough to eat. (pause)

**PLEASE PRAY** for many more Training Centres to be set up. Pray for the trained farmers to share their skill in the community.( pause)

**PLEASE PRAY** for funds for the extension of such practical and vital work. ( pause)

**PRAY** for yourself. May we humbly admit our high levels of carbon emissions which affect poor countries badly. ( pause)

**PRAY** for the outcome of the Christmas /Harvest Appeal to rectify this injustice to a degree by supporting Tearfund's appeal, and at the same time examine our lifestyle.



# Prayers for the New Year

As we start 2024 we will be preparing for our church AGM.

As well as a meeting to discuss the business of the church, this is a great opportunity to stop and thank God for all He has done & is doing in our church.



In preparation for this spend some time thanking God for all He has given us over the last 12 months.

Think about all those who volunteer in the church, without their time and commitment none of the activities we run would happen. Spend some time thanking God for all those who give their time and other gifts to the church.



Finally, the AGM also means that it is time for the church to elect Elders. There will be some Elders who will be standing down or due for re-election in January.

We thank God for all the work put in by all of our Elders. Spend some time asking that He will guide any decisions made about who should be Elders within our church.



# Just Fair Trade Shop has longer opening hours over the Christmas period

Sundays 12.00 to 4.00, Mondays 11.00 to 4.00  
Tuesday to Friday 10.30 to 4.30, (Wednesdays 10.30 - 6 pm)  
Saturday 10.00 to 5.00



In store you will find a range of gifts and festive goodies - toys, woolly hats and gloves, cards and chocolate. Things for the home, including; soft furnishings, candles, incense, glassware and crockery, clothes, bags, socks, jewellery, refills, toiletries and food

more time to browse all  
3 floors

**Shop online**  
**Anytime!**

[Shop - Just \(justfairtrade.com\)](http://justfairtrade.com)





If you would like to help prepare our beautiful Christmas Tree ready for its annual outing / big event, this will happen sometime week beginning November 25th. Please see Joy or Sue for more detail.

The more the merrier as they say!!



We have been asked to provide a communal Christmas card so greetings can be written for members of the fellowship. You will find the card on the noticeboard in the passageway from the beginning of Advent. Sticky labels will be available for you to write your message.

# **CHRISTMAS CAPERS!**



**Saturday 16th December**



**4pm to 6pm**

**At Groby URC**

**A get together with our friends from  
the Resource Area Churches  
with Christmas Songs and Party Pieces  
and to include hot drinks and mince  
pies**

**DO COME ALONG AND ENJOY SOME  
CHRISTMASSY FUN**

## WHAT THIS CHURCH NEEDS IS MORE OF 'THE ELDERLY' ...

In the URC where I was a serving elder for 15 years, there was a Dutch lady, Minnie, who always referred to the elders collectively as 'The Elderly', to the amusement of myself and the other younger elders!

Each winter, Groby URC collectively considers who might be being called by God to serve as an elder here and that call is tested at the Annual Church Meeting in January.

So, please read on and seriously consider whether you are being called to serve as an elder, or if there is a Church member who you consider would fit the bill.

What are the functions of the elders? Overall, URC elders share together and with the minister both a spiritual leadership role and a pastoral role. Together, the main specific functions of the eldership are:

- To promote in the Church concern for witness and service to the community, evangelism at home and abroad, Christian education and ecumenical action;
- To ensure that public worship is offered regularly and to promote the welfare of the congregation (although we have a Preaching Secretary who books and contacts all visiting preachers on our behalf);
- To ensure pastoral care of the congregation (although not to do it all themselves!)
- To nominate one elder as Church Secretary;
- To keep the roll of members and lists of adherents and children, and to advise Church Meeting on the admission of new members and on the removal of members from the roll;
- To oversee our work with children and young people and all

our Church organisations;  
To call for the election of elders;  
To recommend to Church Meeting arrangements for proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the local Church.

Ideally, I think, the eldership should roughly reflect the age profile of the local Church it serves. It is less healthy if all the elders are over retirement age. An elder must already be a member of Groby URC.

Please feel free to talk with me about eldership, with regard to yourself or another member.

Having said all that, eldership is nonetheless a calling from God. It is not a reward for long service in the Church. We read in Acts chapter 2 how the young Church appoints Matthias. They do this in the light of Scripture and in the context of prayer. Please will you prayerfully consider whom you believe God may be calling to serve Him as an elder of this Church at this time? The need for women and men of God to share in the leadership of this Church is clear; whom is He prompting?

Paul Ellis.

*When Steve Burrage preached for us in October, his wife Heather read out a poem he had written during the time he spent resting and recovering from the ill health. Here it is.*

### **It's up to you**

A potter you say Lord..... but why?  
because.... I don't want to be clay.  
I mean, couldn't you just make me perfect,  
and let it be done straight away.

I can't face all that prodding and moulding,  
to be shaped in to something for you.  
Let's just stick to your love and forgiveness,  
that's the stuff that will carry me through.

Your mercy is all that I need now,  
it's pleasant and safe for my life.  
And why should I change and be different,  
when I can worship and praise without strife.

I know that you died just for me Lord,  
that you paid such a terrible cost.  
But surely there must be another way,  
I just need to know, I'm not lost!

I'm not sure that I'm ready or willing,  
but all you ask, is to give it a try.  
For my life to be given to you, Lord,  
that this old life, be willing to die.

Then help me to realise, I'm your project,  
and help me to see all you've planned.  
and give me the grace now to follow,  
let me live, with the touch of your hand.

By Steve Burrage



## **DID YOU KNOW THAT 1 IN 6 PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING WITH POOR MENTAL HEALTH AT ANY ONE TIME?**

Neither did Rev Paul, Wendy and myself until we attended the Mental Health Training Day back in October.

The day was most interesting and packed with useful and very practical suggestions on how to support someone suffering with their mental health.

Cheryl Hawkins, who led the course, spoke from her personal experiences and was passionate about using those experiences to help others with similar issues.

Wendy and I put together a brief summary of what we heard and discussed and would be happy to share it with anyone who may be interested to read it. Please just mention it to Kathy or myself and we'll send you the attachment.

Sue

You may have missed out on being able to attend the Mental Health Training Day. Cheryl, who runs the course, says 'We will be starting our new Mental Health Church Champion course in the new year - this is a six part course that covers the most common mental health issues - anxiety, depression, OCD, self-harm, psychosis, suicide, addiction, dementia and childhood issues. We look at what they are and how to manage and support them in the church.

These six 2-hour sessions are delivered on Zoom and we will have a choice of daytime or evening groups'.





# **ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE LUNCH CLUB**

starting in January at

**GROBY COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Forest Rise**

**EVERY FRIDAY FROM 11.30 - 1.30PM**

Main course, Dessert, Tea/Coffee £7.50

Transport if required - £7.50 for both journeys

If you are an older person, feel socially isolated and would benefit from good company and a hot meal, please consider joining us and our lovely group of volunteers will look after you.

**Please note that this is not a drop in centre and it is essential to book your place in advance.**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO BOOK YOUR PLACE,  
PLEASE CONTACT:**

**ELIZABETH JARVIS**

**(0116 876110)**



## DIARY DATES FOR DEC. 23 & JAN 24TH

**Prayers for Ukraine:** Thursday 7th & 21st December and 4th and 18th January, 6.30 pm in church

**Rock Solid:** Every alternate Fridays, 7.30 - 9 pm at our church. Term time for Year 5 - 11 children. Dec. 1st

**Christmas Capers: Saturday 16th December at 4 pm.** A get together with our friends from the Resource Area Churches at our Church. See page 12 for more info.

**Christmas Carol Service:** December 17th at 10 am with invitations to all. Paul to lead this service

**'Fair cuppa' Carols:** Thursday December 21st, 11.15 am at the Village Hall

**Carols Around the Tree:** Thursday December 21st, 7 pm at the Stamford Arms with the Ratby Band. Wrap up warmly.

**Family Christmas Eve Service:** Sunday December 24th at our church, 5 pm

### ***And into 2024***

**CTG service for Christian Unity:** Sunday 21st January, 9.30 am at St Philip & St James Church, Groby.

**Church AGM:** Thursday January 25th at 7.30 pm at Church. Look out for notifications regarding elders elections, Church reports and agenda.

**Save the date - Thursday April 25th - Area churches Quiet Day at Launde Abbey to be led by Mike Playdon.**

## February 2024 issue

The next issue of Contact will be for February and will be available towards the end of January 2024. The deadline for this issue is **SAT 20th January 2024 but happy to accept articles sooner if prepared and ready to go!**

Please submit to [magazine@grobyurc.com](mailto: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](mailto:magazine@grobyurc.com)

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

May you fall in love again with the world  
May you arrive once more at the door  
Of the morning with a breath of hope.  
And may your heart soften,  
Your spirit rise above the cynicism,  
Your whole being turned whenever it can  
Towards goodness.  
Gideon Heugh  
(Christian, poet and environmentalist)

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



## CONTACTS

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

**YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORKER:** Vacancy, currently  
being advertised.

**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 Rock Solid 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'.