

CONTACT

The monthly magazine of

Groby

United Reformed Church



Dec 24 - Jan 25



Carys Hung has a birthday in January!

Happy Birthday Carys

May the Good Lord Bless You

Sue Lawrence-Brooks

Christmas Blessings by Kay Blick

The Blessings of Christmas is when Jesus came to earth,
A baby born in a stable underestimated His worth.
Then came the Shepherds by the Angels were told
The three wise men came later, guided by the star
It was a longer journey as they travelled from afar.
Bringing precious gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense
And although they didn't know it, it was for His crucifixion,
But what a resurrection!
We now have the Holy Spirit to rest in our God's love
To spend our lives forever in God's Heaven above. Amen.

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.

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Welcome from Wendy Hall, Church Elder & Accredited Lay Pioneer

Welcome to this double addition of
Contact Magazine, and a big thank you to Kathy
for putting it together.



As I sit here I am listening to the Remembrance Day Parade, reflecting on those who gave their lives and wondering as many do about the world in which we now find ourselves. As elections in the nations seem to be increasingly dominated by mis- information, and we battle the effects of climate change and wars, it would be easy to be discouraged and fearful. Yet we have to remember as Christians we belong to a different kingdom than that of the world. Soon it will be Advent and we wait with excited expectancy to celebrate the child called “ Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” who will eventually govern the world in peace, justice and righteousness. (Isaiah 9:6-7) In Ephesians 1:21 Paul says about Christ that “ He is far above all rule and authority power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”

Paul wrote this when he was a prisoner in Rome under the power of the Roman Empire. Yet he does not see himself as subject to these powers but under the dominion of King Jesus, who holds all things subject to himself. As Christians we live in the tension of the now and not yet and as we await the return of Jesus, we can embrace the truth that we are citizens of a new kingdom (Phil 3:20). Our heritage is not the infinitesimal amount of time we spend here on the earth, but the infinite time we will spend eternally with Christ. “He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor

crying or pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” (Rev:21:1-4)

I find great hope and comfort in the age to come, when we finally find our home in heaven described by C.S. Lewis in his book “The Last Battle” as a place of indescribable beauty and sensuous delight. A place where agony is turned into Glory. This is the age we Christians are waiting for, and this is the truth we need to embrace when the world around us feels dark. “He is our God and we are the sheep of His pasture.” (Psalm 95:) It is good to remain in the very presence of God, and make Lord God our home (Psalm 73:28 MSG)

As we enter a new year, let us remember the hope that is before us and draw near to God.

Finally as we draw near to Him, in the days ahead we have our own elections coming up for Eldership. If you are eligible please consider carefully, whether you should consider becoming an Elder.

As an Eldership we try to use our individual gifting and calling to strengthen one another and the church. You may well have something to bring. So please be open to hear what God has to say to you, and don't assume it's not you. Do talk to Paul or an Elder for more information.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NIVUK)

May God bless you and keep you. Make his face to shine upon you and give you peace.

Wendy

TEACHING AND READINGS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2024

Dec 1st	Isaiah Chapter 7. The sign of Immanuel	Paul
Dec 8th	Preacher's Choice	Tom Limb
Dec 15th	Isaiah Chapter 9. vv 2-7. A new King is coming. A Carol Service	Paul
Dec 22nd	Micah Ch. 5. vv 2-5. The ruler from Bethlehem This service will include sharing Holy Communion.	Paul
Dec 24th at 5 pm	Christmas Eve Family Service	Paul & Louise
Dec 25th at 9.30 am	Luke ch 2: 8-20 'Shepherds abiding in the fields'	Elders
Dec 29th	Preacher's Choice.	Wendy

During November, we finally reached the end of our long series through Matthew's Gospel (the longest of the four Gospels!) I hope it was helpful and inspiring to you to consider so much that Jesus did and taught.

As a change, we move to the Old Testament for Advent, with teaching from prophets whose writings we believe saw fulfilment in the arrival of Christ, the Messiah, as a human Child. Two will be from the book of Isaiah and one from Micah.

I look forward to being with you on most of the Sundays in Advent.

Paul.

December's Helping Hands

	Elder	Music	Media	Welcome	Coffee
Dec.	(Mary)	(Trevor)	(Barry)	(Joy)	(Joy)
1st	Sue	David	Barry	Linda & Hilary	Barry & Kathy
8th	Mary	Sue	Mark	Ruth & Roger	Margaret & Maurice
15th	Mark	Debbie	Dave	Sue & Mike	Joy & Cheryl
22nd	Margaret	David	Chris	Joy & Peter	Hilary & Dave
24th at 5 pm	Wendy	Helen	Barry	TBC	TBC
25th at 9.30 am	Elders	TBC	Barry	Kathy & Helper	N/A
29th	Phil	Sue	Mark	Barbs & Anita	Mary & Trevor



**Sunday
Flowers**
(Barbara Conlon)

Christmas Flowers and Decorations.

“The Clean Team!”

Week Beginning-Dec 2nd: Ruth & Ann

Dec 9th : Our Chores

Dec 16th: Joy & Pat

Dec 23rd : Our Chores.

Dec 30th: Trevor & Mary



SUNDAY MORNING TEACHING AND READINGS FOR JANUARY 2025

Jan 5th	Matthew 2: 1-12 The wise men.	Anne Willmott
Jan 12th	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 Baptism of Jesus.	Cate Coffey
Jan 19th	CTG service for Week of Christian Unity at Groby URC This service will include sharing Holy Communion.	Paul
Jan 26th	Acts 16: 25-34 Prelude to Holy Habits.	Ben Wright

Normal YChurch groups are organised for the Churches Together service on the 19th.

The following week, we begin the series on 'Holy Habits' with a prelude taken from Acts ch. 16. The series is based on the activities of the early Church listed in Acts chapter 2 verses 42 to 47 and using material from Andrew Roberts' book *Holy Habits* (published by Malcolm Down, 2016). This identifies from the Biblical text ten Habits that should be part of our life as a Church, from 'Biblical Teaching' to 'Making More Disciples'.

January's Helping Hands

	Elder	Music	Media	Welcome	Coffee
Jan.	(Mary)	(Trevor)	(Barry)	(Joy)	(Joy)
5th	Sue	Debbie	Dave	Elaine & John	Pat C & Linda
12th	Mark	Sue	Chris	Alan & Judith	Ruth & Roger
19th	Phil	David	Barry	Elsie & Pete	Peter & Helper
26th	Mary	Debbie / Trevor	Mark	Rachel H & Margaret	Kathy & Barry



Sunday Flowers

(Barbara Conlon)

- Jan 5th: Barbara Conlon
- Jan 12th: Ann Tombs
- Jan 19th: Phil & Kathy Holmes
- Jan 26th: Ruth & Roger Ivens.

"The Clean Team!"

(Kathy Du Boulay)



- Week Beginning
- Jan 6th: Our Chores
- Jan 13th: Kathy & Barry
- Jan 20th: Our Chores
- Jan 27th: Dave & Hilary

The Just shop in Leicester City Centre



Tuesday to Friday 11am to 4pm

Saturday 10am to 5pm

Sunday and Monday 11am to 3pm

Selling... The Real Advent Calendars, Christmas Cards..



Papital Gallery jewellery....



Woollen
Hats &
Gloves

Socks!



And lots more lovely gifts....



for all ages!



TOGETHER WE CAN HELP END HOMELESSNESS

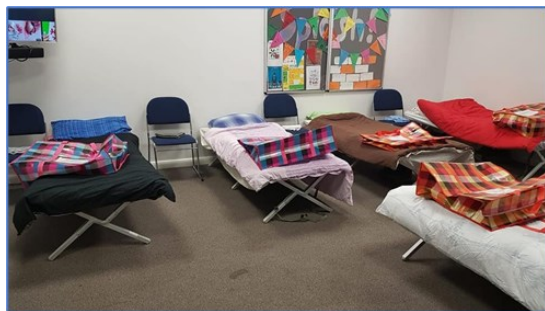


Our 2024 Christmas Appeal will be launched on Sunday 1st December when during morning worship we shall hopefully gain more of an insight into homelessness in Leicester.



The local charity One Roof Leicester accommodates and supports people who are homeless to recover, reset and rebuild their lives by providing sustainable housing.

ORL are passionate about developing and delivering projects which enable people at risk of, experiencing or previously homeless to access temporary accommodation and offer support.

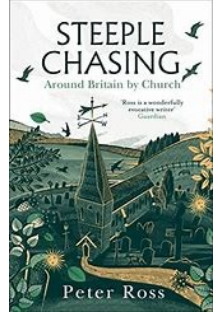


HOW CAN WE HELP? Our monetary gifts can help achieve ORL's aims and can help give people a home to feel part of the community they live in.

LOOK OUT for our 'Blue Peter lookalike' One Roof donation shoebox displayed at the front of the church. Let's countdown to Christmas by donating through the roof.

Recommended read from Jim Coaton
STEEPLE CHASING - AROUND BRITISH
CHURCHES BY PETER ROSS

The author, Peter Ross, was baptised in a Scottish church but later left the church, but admits that the church never left him. He set out on a tour of churches, aiming to cover a cross section from Westminster Abbey through to the humblest village churches, and abandoned churches where a single person kept the door open. To quote John Betjeman, "church crawling is the richest of pleasures; it leads you to the remotest and quietest country. It introduces you to the history of England, in stone, wood and glass". This is certainly revealed in this book



Peter's narrative began immediately after the long period of lockdown, caused by Covid 19, and at the time when people were returning to church. He described his feeling of anger, fear, resenting the lies, and losing faith in the future.

He started his crawl with a stay at Pluscarden Benedictine Abbey in north east Scotland, where he found peace and calm. He continued his search for the next 18 months gathering inspiration, from stones, bones, dust, and catastrophes, and stories from Archbishops, stone mason, steeplejacks, cleaners etc

In one church he saw a plaque in remembrance of a padre who served in the 1914-18 war. He was twice awarded the Military Medal for bravery... He ended up in a field hospital where soldiers had unspeakable injuries suffering and dying. He turned to a young doctor and asked, "How is it possible that such things can be?"

I often find my self asking the same thing.
Not an easy read, but in parts soul searching.

Groby URC Prayer Sheet – Dec 2023/ Jan 2024

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” 2 Corinthians 9:15

Welcome to our December prayer sheet.

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 the upcoming Elder’s elections, the new children’s group which is starting and Under the Willow Tree.

Prayers for our Christmas Appeal 2024

Pray for this local charity who house homeless people. If you look at the notice board in the hall (next to the swing doors), it may help you to understand why this Christmas we are giving them our support.



- Thank God for ORL and people like them who dedicate their lives supporting and changing lives.
- Thank God for the roof over our heads and that of our families; let us never take it for granted.
- Prayerfully read...

*Lord of the poor, friend of the weak, Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain*

Come change our hearts from a spark to a flame.

- Ask God to show this country how to tackle the underlying problems of homelessness and empower us to do our bit to support the appeal.
- Please pray that this year’s charity will help change our perception of people who are homeless.

Prayers for Christmas Events

The Christmas Season is one where we get an opportunity to share the message of God's love with those around us in a way not often found throughout the rest of year.

This year let's pray in particular for our Carol's Around the Tree and Journey to Bethlehem events taking place in December.

- Pray for all those who are planning these events, thank God for their time and commitment to sharing His love with all those in Groby.
- And pray for those who may come along, that they will hear the true message of Christmas.

As well as these specific events let's take the time to pray about how we share the message of God's love with those around us this Christmas let's pray for:

- All the Christmas events going on at churches in Groby & those going on out in the community, that God's love will show through to all those who come along
- 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 and Christmas.



Prayers for the Elder's Elections

With the start of the new year comes the church AGM and Elders elections.

Throughout January, the process of electing new elders to the eldership team will take place. This is an important part of our church life as we choose those who will lead and guide our fellowship over the coming year.

Please pray:

- That the eldership team will be strengthened and have the right skills and expertise on which to draw.
- If a member, pray about your own nominations, spend time listening to God to hear who He is calling to this role.
- Take time to thank God for the work put in by all of our Elders and for the time and dedication they give to the service of the church



Prayers for Lighthouse

Lighthouse is the new children's after school club Louise is setting up from January (see following page)

The group will be for children in primary school years 1 – 4 and will run on Friday nights from 5.00pm to 6.30pm. This an opportunity to reach this age group who may not be involved in any other activities in church and start to get to know them before they can join Rock Solid. It is also an opportunity for the older children who are already in Rock Solid to come along and help.

Louise has asked if we can pray for:

- Volunteers – as with all these things it needs people to be willing to give up their time to make it happen. Pray that there will be plenty of willing volunteers to make Lighthouse a success.
- Pray for the young people the group is aimed at, that they will want to come along and have a good time!
- Pray that God will be there and meet with everyone who is there so that they will see something of Him through Lighthouse.





Can you help?

Lighthouse is our lively new after-school club for primary-aged children, launching in January, and we need your guiding light to make this venture shine!

**Could you dedicate just 2 hours every few weeks?
Are you able to prepare some juice and serve delicious biscuits?**

For more delightful details, please reach out and talk to Louise.



During this year's FT Fortnight, 615 campaigner led events took place nationwide. 95 MPs have already signed the Be the Change pledge to back fairer trade, launched during Fairtrade Fortnight.

Look out for more opportunities to support Fair Trade in 2025!

Showing the 30th anniversary cake and Luca & Roberto's prize hamper for winning the FT quiz

Church Elders Election

At this time of year, our church fellowship begins to consider who might be being called by God to serve as an Elder. The calling will then be tested at our Annual Church Meeting on January 30th.

Please would you prayerfully consider whom you believe God may be calling to serve Him as an Elder of this church at this time?

Please feel free to speak with Paul about eldership, either with regard to yourself or another member.

Sue Lawrence-Brooks

“CHRISTMAS CAPERS!”



Saturday 14th 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!**

NEWS FROM THE WEST LEICESTERSHIRE CHURCHES

Some forty of us gathered at St Stephen's in October to celebrate in song the hymns of Isaac Watts. The St Stephen's Elders thank all who came and in turn we are grateful to St Stephen's for their hospitality.

Grobby's ecumenical *Alpha* course has nearly finished, after a good Awayday together. We are also well through the *Child and Youth Friendly Church* process, with specific resolutions that have now emerged to improve what we offer the younger generation, both on Sundays and mid-week.

St Stephen's will soon have their premises valued and will need to decide whether to recommend to Synod that they be put up for sale. It is certainly not all 'doom and gloom' though, and, besides hosting the 'Songs of Praise', we have celebrated a baptism and some of us will soon gather for a film afternoon.

Braunstone has been given a set of copies of 'Mission Praise' in memory of Sheena and Serita's parents, so that we have enough when the congregation is larger, and it was a joy to dedicate them at October's Café Church. We look forward to hosting a joint service with St Stephen's at 7.00 pm on Christmas Eve.

Christ Church enjoyed hosting the Synod Team on Tour and recently the church was almost full on Remembrance Sunday. November's Messy Church, on the theme 'wonderfully made' (Psalm 139) was a great success, with many new families attending. The Messy Church team even led a morning service.

Enderby was packed again on Remembrance Sunday, with 200 people squeezing in: mostly children in uniform and their families. (I thank the other Churches for understanding why I make that

opportunity a priority for my attendance on Remembrance Sunday each year.) Their Autumn Fayre will be at Enderby Civic Centre on the last morning of November (aka St Andrews' Day, if you attend St Stephen's!) I look forward to leading an Advent series for their Bible study group on Monday afternoons.

On Saturday December 14th, from 4.00 'til 6.00, the Churches will join together again for a repeat of last year's *Christmas Capers* at Groby. So we shall be singing again, but not mainly serious carols. We also look forward to two items contributed by each Church: do you know yet what your Church will be offering? Hot drinks and mince pies will be on offer.

Quite rightly, each Church will be celebrating Christmas with something extra. Additional services you may like to attend, even if it is not at your own church, include:

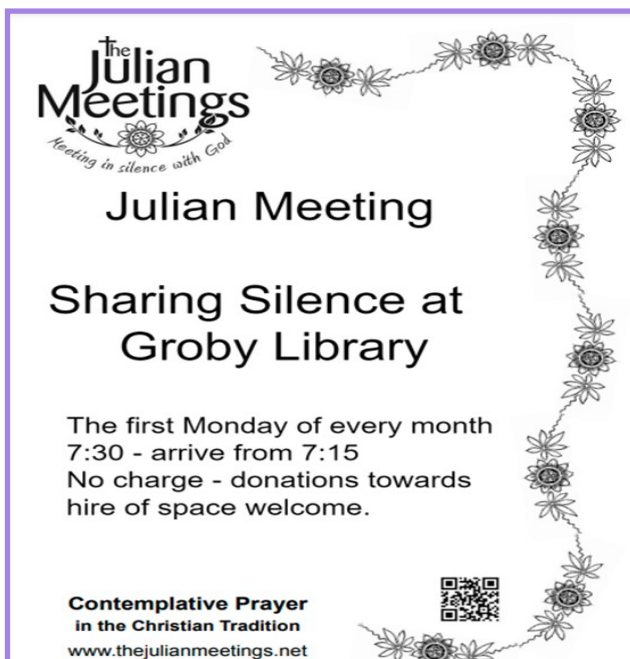
Sunday 22nd 4.30 pm Candlelit carols at Christ Church
Christmas Eve 5.00 pm Intergenerational service at Groby
7.00 pm Holy Communion at Braunstone, joint with
St Stephen's
11.30 pm Midnight Communion at Christ Church
Christmas Day 9.30 am at Enderby AND at Groby

See you then!

Your friend and minister,



Have you ever tried silent prayer?




The Julian Meetings
Meeting in silence with God

Julian Meeting

Sharing Silence at Groby Library

The first Monday of every month
7:30 - arrive from 7:15
No charge - donations towards hire of space welcome.

Contemplative Prayer
in the Christian Tradition
www.thejulianmeetings.net



Sometimes sitting in God's presence - and the presence of others - in silence, can be a helpful way to connect with the Divine. 'Julian meetings' happen every first Monday of the month at 7:30pm in Groby Library. These meetings are open to all who would like to start the month with some shared silence. The meetings are very simple: they start with a few words and a gong to mark the beginning of the silence; we sit in silence for twenty minutes; then a gong and a few words mark the end of the silence. Whether you are someone who is experienced in contemplative, silent prayer or someone who is new to the practice and would like to give it a go, you are very welcome!

Ruth Mwenya

The Chantry Choir

"Brightest and Best"

Music for Advent and Christmas



Featuring

"The Inn Crowd", a musical by Roger Jones

In aid of

Nationwide Association of Blood Bikes

www.bloodbikes.org.uk

Christ Church, Dumbleton Avenue, LE3 2EB

7th December 2024 @ 7pm. Admission £10



REGISTERED CHARITY 1011147



Christmas Carol Concert
with the
Ratby Co-operative
Mid Band

7.30PM

FRIDAY 20TH DECEMBER

ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES CHURCH, RATBY, LE6 0JF

FREE CONCERT

WITH REFRESHMENTS, RAFFLE & RETIRING COLLECTION



This is the poem Ruth Mwenga read out when preaching at our church recently.

The Kingdom

It's a long way off but inside it
There are quite different things going on:
Festivals at which the poor man
Is king and the consumptive is
Healed; mirrors in which the blind
Look at themselves and love looks at them
Back; and industry is for mending
The bent bones and the minds fractured
By life. It's a long way off, but to get
There takes no time and admission
Is free, if you will purge yourself
Of desire, and present yourself with
Your need only and the simple offering
Of your faith, green as a leaf.

R. S. Thomas.



DIARY DATES FOR DEC 2024 & JAN 2025

Journey to Bethlehem: 2nd to 4th December at our church, when children from all 3 Primary schools are invited.

Christmas Concert at Christchurch: Saturday 7th December at 7 pm. More info on page 23. Tickets available on the door.

Prayers for Peace: This will remain on Wednesday evenings, 6.30 pm in church. Dates are Dec. 11th and Jan. 8th & 22nd.

Christmas Capers: Saturday 14th December at 4 - 6 pm. A get together with our friends from the Resource Area Churches at our Church. See page 19 for more info.

Christmas Carol Service: December 15th at 10 am with invitations to all. Paul to lead this service

'Fair cuppa' Carols: Thursday December 19, 11.15 am at the Village Hall

Carols Around the Tree: Thursday December 19th, 7 pm at the Stamford Arms with the Ratby Band. Wrap up warmly.

Christmas Carol Concert with the Ratby Mid-Band: Friday 20th December, 7.30 pm at Ratby St Philip & St James Church. Free concert with refreshments and retiring collection.

And into 2025

CTG service for Christian Unity: Sunday 19th January, 10 am at our church

Church AGM: Thursday January 30th at 7.30 pm at Church. Look out for notifications regarding elders elections, Church reports and agenda.

February 2025 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 18th January 2025** 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, www.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.

Pause for Thought...

A Christmas gift.....

'Peace with God, Peace with others,
your own heart'
Rick Warren.



Peace

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men (Luke 2:14)

Groby United Reformed Church
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SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Our Sunday morning services start at 10 am and are recorded then broadcast afterwards on our Church Facebook page.

Groby United Reformed Church / Facebook. 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. (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.