

The Messenger



**Christ Church, Longridge "Living for Christ
at the heart of the community"**
www.christchurchlongridge.org.uk

Musings from the Manse

From 'Priest-town' to 'God's port'

Dear Friends,

It is with some sadness that I write what will be my final pastoral letter to you all – in just a few short weeks; Colin and I will face the upheaval of moving house once more, as I leave to take up the position of Minister to two churches in Gosport, Hampshire.

In my life, I have moved no less than eleven times – so you'd think I'd be getting used to it by now! It certainly helps to keep down the clutter, and prevents you from 'storing' things in the loft – but it never becomes something that is easy to do. Each time, a little bit of me gets left behind – but each time I also take memories of that place with me.

When we leave Preston, I hope that the bit which gets left behind will be the memories you will have of our time here – the good times and the not so good – the happy times and the sad ones – the times when we have journeyed together in harmony, as well as those when we've been little out of step with each other.

The memories I will take with me are too numerous to mention – but I will never forget the acceptance I found here in my first pastorate, and I will continue to reflect on the challenges you gave me – some of which were more challenging than others!

It seems fitting, somehow, that my final weeks here are part of the season of Lent – a time to reflect on the journey that Jesus takes to the cross and how our own discipleship is challenged by it. As I look

to the journey that is before me, both spiritually and physically, I will as always, seek God's guidance in all that I do. The opportunity to minister in a new but familiar place will not be without its difficulties – but the experience I have gained here, with you, will hold me in good stead, and help me to face the unknown.

Whatever the future holds, both for Colin and myself, and for you as a community of faith – my prayer is for God's will to be at the centre of all we do, and His leadership guide us in the course set before us.

And so, in the words of this Gaelic blessing...

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Yours in Christ,

Helen

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PS My induction will be on the 20th April, 2.30pm, at Bury Road United Reformed Church – and whilst I realise that it will be difficult for most, if not all of you to be there, I hope that you will hold both Colin and I in your prayers on that day. And if ever you are 'dahn sarf', there will always be a welcome for you at 9 Carlton Road, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 1JU. Thank you.

Walk For December – Savick Brook

Longridge, unlike many other parts of the country, doesn't suffer from serious flooding simply because it isn't associated with a river. However, we do have a brook that starts in Longridge and flows through the North of Preston and down to the River Ribble. This walk, devised by Jim some time ago, follows this watercourse from Longridge to Haslam Park in Preston.

The walk started from Grange Towers at the bottom of Hacking Drive and should have followed the brook, through the fields to Grimsargh. However, some of the fields are in a poor state due to the wet weather, so we started by walking along the railway to Suddels Farm and then continuing by road. Once through Grimsargh, we turned into the long straight lane of Cow Hill and down to Londonderry Bridge. Here we joined a narrow path that took us to the driveway of Haighton House and on to Fernyhalgh and its famous wishing well. We next headed across a field to a footbridge over the M6 and entered a new housing development and stopped for lunch in the children's playground.

On our way again, we passed through an ornate gate that opened up to a pleasant path down to Midgery Lane and then on to a wet pathway to Eastway. Crossing Eastway presented its usual challenge, but we survived and entered the beautiful fairways of Preston Golf Club. No one seemed to be playing golf, but it was a cold day and we ourselves had experienced a few hairy moments with black ice. Beyond the golf club, our path closely followed the brook to Garstang Road and then to Lytham Road which took us from Fulwood to Ashton and on to Woodplumpton Road and to the canal towpath, which we followed to the journey's end at Haslam Park and the frozen duck pond.

Now it was 'bus passes out for the journey home. The walk proved to be quite interesting with a steady progression from rural to urban landscapes, terminating in a beautiful park and goes to prove that good walks can be devised just about anywhere.

Linda & Eddie Grange

Farewell to Helen and Colin

On January 13th after the morning service, Mel Watson as church secretary announced that Helen would be leaving us at Easter to take up a new pastorate in Gosport in Hampshire. I think it is fair to say that there was a stunned silence, as very few people had any idea that such a move was being considered.

This has been Helen's first pastorate as a Minister in the United Reformed Church and I'm sure she has found it full of ups and downs; joys and frustrations. We will all have different memories of her nearly six years with us. Sometimes things don't seem to change much week by week in church but when we look back over a period of years we can see that quite a lot has happened. Helen's legacy will be different for different people but here I would just like to mention some of her lasting contributions to life at Christ Church which I have particularly appreciated. Perhaps Prayer is not what will strike other people first but for me this has been specially important. Both the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church have had designated 'years of prayer' in the last few years and with Helen's quiet encouragement we have introduced the monthly prayer breakfasts and the Prayers for the Congregation book.

The prayer breakfasts are not particularly well supported but the Prayers for the Congregation slot has become a really important part of our morning worship. (Perhaps the title is slightly misleading for those who are not able to worship regularly. Each week we pray for a number of people who are on the church's community roll and their families by name. In this way everyone connected with Christ Church in the immediate neighbourhood is prayed for about twice a year.)

Helen has also been exceptionally faithful in leading the CTL prayers early on Friday mornings. This is particularly burdensome for us as there is just a three week rota (Anglican, R.C. and free church) but both the Anglicans and Roman Catholics have two ministers to call on and there are only two weeks in the year when these prayers do not take place. Add to this commitment the fact that Helen is not on the spot in the way the other clergy are and you can appreciate how important Helen's contribution has been. So Helen we thank you for your commitment to the prayer life of the church and Longridge as a whole and promise to pray for you as you go and hope that you will still find a small place in your prayers for us.

Perhaps the most obvious legacy that Helen leaves behind is the relationship she has built up with Barnacre Road School. There is a long history of connections between our church and the school but Helen has thrown herself into building up this connection in a substantial way. She is a school governor and goes into school to lead assemblies etc. and of course, this has led to the highly successful Wednesday Connexion Zones. Helen spoke very forcefully about the importance of this relationship at our last council meeting. Like all churches we have suffered from the decline in church attendance amongst the young and young families. Churches with church schools are in a better position to reach out to the younger members of our community but Helen has laid the

groundwork for us to have a similar sort of relationship with the youngest age groups and we would be failing in our duty if we did not maintain this opportunity. It is not primarily about building our numbers but about making sure that the gospel story is communicated to each new generation. We are now at the very beginning of a new step with the monthly Connexion Zones on Sunday afternoons. We are not a big church and some of us are less active than we used to be but as Helen has given us such a good base to work from, we need to make sure that this is one of our major priorities.

Thank you Helen for all your work and a word of thanks and farewell to Colin too. We perhaps don't see as much of Colin as we might as he tries to split himself between two churches and his Street Pastoring Ministry and of course, he lives some distance from Longridge, but we are aware of how much his support is essential to Helen's ministry and how difficult it must be for him to up sticks and find a new job etc. Thanks Colin for your cheerful willingness to have a go at anything and for supporting Helen so well.

As you believe you are going to a new ministry in response to God's call, we pray that you both may find a warm welcome and a satisfying place of service and that you may enjoy being closer to your granddaughter and other members of your family.

Helen's last service at Christ Church will be on Easter Sunday and all are invited to come and share a meal with Helen and Colin after the service. If for any reason you cannot be there, try to join us for one of the other services she will be leading before then.

Carol Spencer

A Word About The Future

From the beginning of April the pastoral oversight of Christ Church will pass to the Methodist Superintendent Minister, the Rev. Paul Davis. We do not yet know what the full implications of this will be for us but it is inevitable that more work will fall on the shoulders of church members, at least to begin with. If you see things that need doing around the church and think you can help, please speak to a member of the council. There is a saying which goes something like 'one volunteer is worth ten pressed men' ----- or something like that!!!!

Walk For January - The Gormley Men

There is now a tradition for the first walk of the year to be a promenade stroll and this year we decided to walk along the Merseyside coast from Hightown to Crosby and have a look at the now famous Gormley statues.



Antony Gormley produced one hundred of these metal reproductions of himself and have been exhibited in Germany, Norway and Belgium, before being sited in the sands at Crosby over an area of 3 Kilometers along the beach and 1 Kilometer out to sea.

We parked our cars at the end of a housing estate and started walking along a good path that later joined the Sefton Coastal Pathway a paved route between the sand dunes and the sea. Later, at Blundellsands, this pathway gave way to a proper promenade and a leisurely stroll down to Crosby, enjoying the splendid weather which was dry, clear with a strong, low winter sun which we found dazzling. The tide was well in as we neared Crosby and the metal chaps couldn't be seen, so we continued down to the lake and our lunch stop, in a sand dune, protected from the cold easterly wind.

Our elevated dining room gave us a good view over the Mersey estuary and as it was high tide. We watched the ships entering and leaving port. Local IOM and Irish ferries went out and three large container ships arrived, heading for the Seaforth Container terminal. Beauty of line doesn't seem to be part of the design of modern cargo ships and compared to the vessels of old, they are positively ugly.

Lunch over, we returned to the coast and by now the tide was out and most of the men were visible. They present an odd site, one hundred men all gazing out to sea, looking somewhat like zombies in a Hammer horror film. We walked out to have a close look and have our photo's taken with them, a strategically placed cap providing a degree of modesty!

Now it was time to return and as the sun had slipped behind a cloud, it was now quite chilly. The twitchers observed a number of birds, including Redshank, Common Tern, Waders and Oystercatchers.

This was a pleasant day out, something a little different and ideal for this time of year. We now hope that the countryside can dry out to enable us to return to our traditional type of walking.

Linda & Eddie Grange



CHRIST CHURCH LONGRIDGE

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON Ed.5

Sunday May 12th
2.30pm

Featuring Guest Performers

'VOLANTE'

Wind Quintet based at Manchester University



*Tessa Watson – Flute
Amy Roberts - Oboe
Jason McMahon - Clarinet
Sam Gee - Bassoon
Ed Spencer - Horn*

Tickets £5 incl. refreshments (or pay on the door)
Contact: Carol Rose 01772 783680

**For more information about Christian Aid
please visit caweek.org**

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For All “Computer Using” Grandmas

I recently bought a new computer, and as I was having some difficulty with one or two aspects of the new machine, I had to turn to the younger generation for help. When they had sorted out the problem for their “dinosaur grandma”, Ian and Matthew gave me the following poem, which I thought might be amusing to others who like myself really only tinker with modern technology!

Mel

The Computer Swallowed Grandma

by Gill Muir

The computer swallowed Grandma, Yes, honestly it's true,
She pressed 'control' and 'enter' and disappeared from view.
It devoured her completely, the thought just makes me squirm.
She must have caught a virus or been eaten by a worm.
I've searched through the recycle bin, and files of every kind,
I've even used the internet, but nothing did I find.
In desperation, I asked Jeeves, my searches to refine.
The reply from him was negative, not a thing was found 'online'.
So, if inside your 'inbox', my grandma you should see,
Please, copy, scan and paste her, and send her back to me! !!

Walk For February - Around Heysham

Unfortunately, the countryside is still very waterlogged, so this month we selected a somewhat urban walk around the village of Heysham.

Our meeting point was the Half Moon Bay Café, a welcoming shack overlooking the sea and featuring a log burning stove. After coffee, it was time to start the walk, but it must be said that there was some reluctance to leave the comfort of the café and face the freezing wind. However, we made a start up the hill and onto a grassy area that led to a large housing estate which took us some time to negotiate. Eventually, we arrived at the Old Hall Inn, crossed the Morecambe road and again passed more houses, along a quiet road that became a track over the railway and at long last into the countryside. This area is known as the Moss and looking east we could see the outline of Lancaster and the hills beyond.

The next part of our walk was along a straight lane, Clay Lane, pointing north, with fields either side. We followed this until we arrived at the very busy Oxcliffe Road that now took us west to the promenade. Here we stopped for lunch on the seats provided on the children's play area.

On our way again, our party of eight followed the promenade to the quaint old village centre of Heysham and a stop to have a look at St. Peters Church, one of the oldest churches in Western Europe. Unfortunately, the church was closed, so we were unable to see the Viking relics. From the church, we climbed up to the ruins of St. Patrick's Chapel and along the grassy path with superb sea views. After a short while, the two giant Monoliths of Heysham Nuclear power Station came into view. Someone considered how many windmills it would take to replace this one facility?

Now we were nearing the end of the walk and the café was coming into view. We all piled in and ordered coffee again, the Dear Leader being offered a comfortable armchair in front of the stove.

This proved to be a worthwhile winter walk with little challenge. The highlight was the old village and the dramatic contrast between the old and the new in the form of the nuclear power station and the 10th century church.

Linda & Eddie Grange

Ladies' Guild

After a break of two months, hoping to avoid the wintry weather, we met on Monday 11th on a very cold but fine evening. Mrs Irene Reid gave a very interesting and amusing talk about her visit to Buckingham Palace to be presented with her MBE for her services as a “crossing lady” in Berry Lane for over 40 years, now helping children whose grandmas were helped when they were young.

On February 25th we look forward to Beryl Thayne’s visit, not known to us, but recommended by a friend, subject “Grumpy Old Lady”. As Easter is early this year the last Guild meeting before we break for the summer is on April 22nd.

See your programme or the Church notice board for the rest of our meetings.

On behalf of the members of the Guild I would like to thank our minister Helen for her very interesting talks to the Guild and send our very best wishes as she and Colin move to her new pastorate in Gosport.

Olive

CTL invite you to 'Follow the Trail'!

Do join us on Easter Monday, 1st April when there will be an opportunity to walk the 'Footsteps of Faith' trail. Starting in St Lawrence at 1.30pm the walk will take us to each of the church buildings, including Alston Lane. We plan to spend 15 – 20 minutes in each Church, with not only time to view the points highlighted in the leaflet but also see some of the other interesting features we were unable to include. On our return to St. Lawrence we will be rewarded with tea and cakes and possibly an Easter egg hunt for the children.

As we will be walking on footpaths along the main road all children must be accompanied by an adult. To help with catering, if you intend to come along, please put your name on the list on the noticeboard.

Friday Coffee Rota

Mar	1st Rev E Hodgkiss	May	3rd Mrs E Marven
	8th Mrs E Marven		10th Mrs A Barnes
	15th Mrs A Barnes		17th Miss O Hurlstone &
	22nd Miss O Hurlstone &		Mrs B Warren
	Mrs B Warren		24th Mrs L Grange
	29th Mrs L Grange		31st Dr R Mazumder
Apr		Jun	
	5th Dr R Mazumder		7th Mrs S Lawson
	12th Mrs S Lawson		14th Mrs M Cook
	19th Mrs M Cook		
	26th Rev E Hodgkiss		

...He sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain.....

As we sang this Harvest hymn as a 'Grace' before a farewell meal at the home of the President of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone, we found it difficult to keep a straight face! Only two weeks earlier we found ourselves stuck on the M6 motorway in 12 inches of snow on our way to Gatwick Airport, convinced we had missed the plane. But God had other ideas. With two minutes to spare before the check-in desk closed we made it!

The ten of us from churches around Lancashire had responded to the call to visit Sierra Leone again to spend time alongside the folk there. The aim of the visit was twofold, five would spend time at Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital in Segbwema installing theatre equipment and training some of the staff and five would travel to Kailahun to start the refurbishing of an old manse for use by the Red Rose Skills Training Centre. Both places, of course, were badly damaged during the civil war.



There isn't room here to adequately report on the visit but here are some of the more memorable times.

Sunday Worship that lasts four hours and is a joy to be part of. Attending morning prayers at 7.30am, with 200 student nurses. Attending morning prayers at the Skills Centre with both Christian and Muslim students and experiencing prayers from both faiths. 'Showering' with a cup and a bucket of cold water. Eating rice and stew for every meal, don't ask what's in the stew! A day trip to Guinea without our passports. Meeting Josh from the USA, teaching

in the Methodist Secondary School for two years. Playing football in 30 degrees of heat, England versus the Nurses – it was a one all



draw, I lasted 20 minutes! The unexploded land mine – the Army hadn't bothered to tell us it was 20 metres from the Skills Centre and they were about to detonate it! Meeting the Paramount Chief of the Kailahun District.

Working with the members of the local Methodist Churches as together we continued to make improvements for the local people. But above all just being there, living with our sisters and brothers in Christ was the most rewarding. Thank you for your prayers and support, they really made a difference, especially in the snow and heat!



Dates for Your Diary

We are almost half-way through Lent already!!! Where do the weeks and months go?

Please don't forget to look at the weekly notices and the noticeboards in the foyer for up-to-date information and for more details on some of the items listed here and for information on events happening in other churches and around the community. There is always information about events in the Preston Methodist Circuit on the back of the preaching plan which can also be picked up in the foyer and, of course, our regular events carry on as normal.

Friday March 1st

12noon Lent lunch at Christ Church followed by the service for Women's World Day of Prayer at 1.00pm

Saturday March 2nd

Inspire Conference at Runshaw College (details in foyer)

Sunday March 3rd (Lent 3)

9.00am Prayer Breakfast

10.45am Holy Communion Rev H Higgin-Botham

6.30pm Mr Douglas Whittle

Tuesday March 5th

7.30pm CTL Business and Study Meeting at Alston Lane

This year CTL meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of alternating months (January, March, May, July, September and November). The first part will be a business meeting as usual but it is hoped to keep this to a minimum so that the main part of the evening can be devoted to a relevant topic which will be introduced by a speaker – usually one of the local clergy—and followed by

discussion if time permits. This means that all are welcome to attend and not just the elected representatives.

Tuesday March 5th

7.30pm Circuit Meeting, Longton

Friday March 8th

12noon Lent Lunch at St Paul's

Saturday March 9th

URC Synod (See Sue Lawson or Helen if you would like to go and see how these things work)

Sunday March 10th (Lent 4) Mothering Sunday

10.45am Mrs Elizabeth Fletcher

3.00pm Connexion Zone

6.30pm Park House Rev H Higgin-Botham

Wednesday March 13th

URC Preachers Meeting at Lytham

Friday March 15th

12noon Lent Lunch at St Wilfrid's

Sunday March 17th Passion Sunday

10.45am Rev H Higgin-Botham

Church Meeting/Council after morning service.
All Welcome

6.30pm No service

Wednesday March 20th

Provisional date for Connexion Zone with Barnacre Road School and 2to School. This may be moved back to March 13th depending on the school's programme before Easter.

Friday March 22nd

Lent Lunch at Christ Church

Saturday March 23rd

9.00am Safeguarding Representatives Meeting at Ingol

Sunday March 24th Palm Sunday

10.45am Rev Elizabeth Hodgkiss

6.30pm Holy Communion Rev H Higgin-Botham

Monday March 25th NO CRAFT GROUP

Thursday March 28th Maundy Thursday

7.30pm Joint Communion Service at Fulwood URC - Rev H Higgin-Botham (please see a member of the Council if you would like a lift)

Friday March 29th Good Friday

10.45am Morning worship led by Helen followed by short act of worship for all the churches at Towneley Gardens at 12.00pm

Sunday March 31st Easter Sunday

Easter Sunrise Service on Beacon Fell

10.45am Holy Communion Rev H Higgin-Botham

This will be Helen's last Service with us and will be followed by a meal and a time of sharing and farewell for Helen and Colin. Please try to come. There will not be an evening service at Christ Church but there will be a circuit service at Ashton Methodist Church if you are unable to get to morning worship.

Monday April 1st

Launch of the Footsteps of Faith Leaflet with a Heritage Walk starting from St. Lawrence's and visiting all the current places of worship in Longridge.

Sunday April 7th Easter 2

10.45am Mr Ernest Wrennall

6.30pm Circuit Service at Ashton

Sunday April 14th Easter 3

10.45am Dr Carol Spencer

3.00 pm Connexion Zone

6.30pm Park House Mr Henry Rose

Sunday April 21st Easter 4

10.45am Mr Tony Strong

6.30pm Mr Eric Bainbridge

Saturday April 27th

Methodist Synod (see John Spencer for details)

Sunday April 28th Easter 5

10.45am Rev Paul Davis

6.30pm Holy Communion Rev Malcolm Hickox

Sunday May 5th Easter 6 Sunday before Ascension

10.45am Holy Communion Rev Elizabeth Hodgkiss

3.00pm Connexion Zone

6.30pm Circuit Service at Fulwood

Sunday May 12th Easter 7 Sunday after Ascension

10.45am Sister Janet Edwards

2.30pm Music in the Afternoon for Christian Aid

6.30pm Park House Rev Elizabeth Hodgkiss

Sunday May 19th Pentecost

10.45am Dr Carol Spencer followed by Annual General Meeting

6.30pm No Service at Christ Church (District Service TBA)

Thursday May 23rd

Coffee Day for Christian Aid

(please see Pam Cliff if you can help)

Sunday May 26th Trinity

10.45am Rev Paul Pells

6.30pm Holy Communion Rev Ron Lewis

Saturday June 8th

Longridge Field Day (please see John or Carol Spencer if you can help with pitching and striking the marquee; if you can help with a float; or if you could help staff the tent for all or part of the Saturday)

Sunday June 9th

3.00pm Connexion Zone

Sunday June 16th

Church Anniversary Services with visiting preachers the Rev David and the Rev Kathleen Wood.

Wednesday June 26th Circuit Meeting

Monday July 1st Craft Club Trip

Wednesday July 10th Provisional Date for Connexion Zone

Sunday July 14th

3.00pm Connexion Zone

We will need extra help with both the Sunday and Wednesday Connexion Zones after Helen leaves. Please see John Spencer if you think you could get involved. There will not be a Sunday Connexion Zone in August. We will resume on September 8th.

Weekly Activities

SUNDAY

10.45am Morning Worship &
Junior Church

6.30pm Evening Worship*
*2nd Sunday at Park House

MONDAY

10.00am Craft Club

7.45pm Ladies Guild*
*2nd and 4th Monday each month

FRIDAY

7.45am CTL Morning Prayers

10.00am Coffee Morning

SATURDAY

9.30am Christ Church Ramblers*
*2nd Saturday each month

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