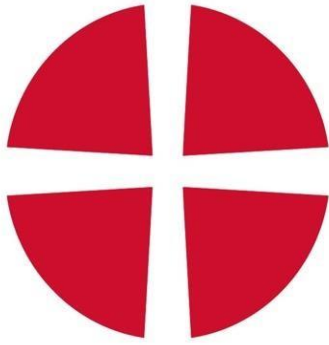




## Colchester Methodist Circuit

### Newsletter

Edition 11 – September 2025 (redacted)



### Letter from our Superintendent, Rev Chris Preece

Dear Friends,

Some months move seamlessly from one to the next and can leave the calendar unturned for a few days at the start. Other months, there seems to be more of a marked change. I always find that the move from August to September is more 'obvious' than others. There always seems to be a bit of a pull towards the final part of the year but a sense of new beginnings as well.

Autumn is a season of change in so many ways. There are those who go on holiday in September to avoid the school holidays. By the time we get to the end of November, which is the end of this newsletter period, the clocks will have changed, the nights will be close to the longest they are for the year, and things will feel very different. We will have given thanks to God for the harvest being gathered in but the crops for next year will also have been planted. There is a sense of this being a time to look back and to look forward.

As we look back over the last quarter in the Circuit, we have celebrated with Hannah her ordination and what a joyous occasion that was. As we look forward, we are welcoming Mr Jastine Diaz, who will be our Anna Chaplain, to the Circuit. There will be more about this later in the newsletter.

There are many examples of journeying with God throughout the Bible. We see Abraham being asked to follow God's leading and to rely on God's promises to help him. The disciples leave everything they have known to follow Jesus and go on a great adventure. This isn't always easy but totally rewarding. We see the transformation of people's lives and society through the sending of the Holy Spirit. The people living through the early days of the New Testament journeyed through a time of great change as they grew in their faith and as Christianity grew in the world. I think we'd also identify we are living in a time of great change today. We need to remember that wherever there is change, God is helping us to navigate this time.

In all things we are assured of God's presence. We are asked to focus on Jesus and to let the Holy Spirit guide us. In every season of life things change. As a Circuit we have much to give thanks to God for as we look back over the past year. We also know we have an exciting new chapter on the horizon as we begin the Anna Chaplaincy work.

As we travel through this Autumn quarter, may we give thanks for all that has occurred in the past year. May we recognise where things are different this year from previous years and commit this to God, focusing on Jesus and praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we journey on together as disciples here in Colchester.

God bless,

Chris

## Rev Hannah Chun writes;

Dear Colchester Circuit,

I just wanted to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for all the ways you have supported me throughout my probation period and recently my ordination. On the day of my ordination, I was greatly moved by the reminder of all those who made my journey possible. You have all been an integral piece of that journey, so thank you. A huge thanks especially to Chris who has worked so closely with me and for enabling me to grow as the minister I feel called to be.

Finally, thank you all for the incredibly beautiful stole that was gifted to me. I will most certainly be wearing it for those special liturgical occasions.

Many thanks and God bless,

Hannah



## **EXCITING NEWS ABOUT THE ANNA CHAPLAINCY!**

OVER the past year, the Circuit has been discerning where we believe God is leading us in our missional work. As part of this journey we have been working towards the establishment of Anna Chaplaincy as an expression of this mission.

Anna Chaplaincy is a national network led by the Bible Reading Fellowship who provide support, induction, training and development for Anna Chaplains. Anna Chaplains are named after the widow Anna who appears in Luke 2. Anna appears with Simeon, and both are seen as good role models for older people. An Anna Chaplain would be there to offer spiritual care and support to people who have a strong, little or no faith. Anna Chaplains are appointed, authorised and sent out, in this case by the Circuit, to support older people. We are delighted that we have appointed our Anna Chaplain.

Jastine will be joining us from September in the role of Anna Chaplain. This is a new and exciting development for the Circuit and for Jastine, who has experience of working with older people. I'll let him introduce himself in a moment. Jastine's role as an Anna Chaplain is a missional role which is centred in the community. His work is not to replace work that is happening in the local churches but to complement it. He will provide a spiritual 'listening ear' to people he is working with. It is envisaged that once all the relevant training and induction is completed, Jastine will begin by building relationships with some local care homes. As there are over 100 care homes in Colchester, it will not be all care homes by any stretch of the imagination! The intention is to start small and to build things up.

Jastine will be looking to build up networks and also to recruit Anna Friends, people who can support the work in any number of practical ways. This may be from within the local churches or ecumenically. Please pray for the work of the Anna Chaplain, and if you would like to explore what it might mean to become an Anna Friend then please get in touch with either your minister or Jastine once he has started in September.

Jastine's role is part time for 20 hours per week. He will be working for the Circuit all day on Tuesdays, and Monday and Friday afternoons (possibly starting late morning on those days). We are very much looking forward to working with Jastine and it's great he's been able to write us a brief introduction so we can start to feel we know him already!

Jastine writes: 'I feel both honoured and delighted to have been appointed as the Anna Chaplain for Colchester Methodist Circuit. This is such a meaningful ministry, and I am excited about the opportunity to walk alongside older people in our community, offering friendship, a listening ear, and spiritual support. It is a privilege to be part of this work, and I look forward to building relationships and sharing in this journey with you all.'

Welcome Jastine! We're looking forward to you joining us.

### **from Lexden:**

MANY of you will remember our organist, Chris. Soon after the death of her beloved husband Hu, she moved to Norfolk to be nearer to her family. We had been told she was poorly and was receiving palliative care. She died peacefully on 31st July. By the time you read this her funeral will have taken place at St Faiths Crematorium near Norwich.

Chris and Hu were a very large part of our church and were the forces behind the extension and updates to the building just over 25 years ago. They were both very musical and often treated us to duets. When we had a new organ installed, they arranged for the Master of Music at Norwich Cathedral to baptise the instrument with a version of last night at the proms.

Chris was much loved and sadly missed but we are blessed in the knowledge she has been reunited with Hu.

#### **from Castle:**

WE are sure that at Castle we are no different from any other of our Circuit Churches in saying what a joy it is to welcome back Rev Chris, following her sabbatical, and we all look forward to hearing what she learnt from the experience. We are very grateful to the Rev Paul and Rev Dr David Chapman for their support and pastoral care while Chris was away.

MEMBERS of our church family recently enjoyed sharing time together at our picnic in the park. Sixteen members of Castle were joined by three members of St Botolph's, as we sheltered from the sun under the canopy of a majestic beech tree; we were also blessed by having a gentle breeze to keep us cool on such a hot day. We were 'serenaded' for the first half of the picnic by the American rock band The Smashing Pumpkins and their support groups, preparing for their evening concert in lower Castle park. Everyone present had a good time!

ON Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September, we will be holding our Harvest celebrations, led by Rev Chris. The service will include Holy Communion and will be followed by us sharing in lunch. Once again, we will be supporting the work of The Colchester Foodbank with our gifts. The needs of our community are great at this time.

ON Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October, we will be celebrating our Church Anniversary. This service will be led by Rev Robin and members of our Junior Church. We are greatly looking forward to sharing in worship with our young people and I am sure we will have cake to enjoy with our coffee after the service.

ON Advent Sunday we will be joined by our friends from St Botolph's Church as we renew our Covenant of co-operation. The service will be led by Rev Chris and the Preacher will be a member of the St Botolph's team. We will celebrate Holy Communion at this service.

THE former Conservative Club next to Castle is now in the ownership of Dean Nevill Developments. They have planning permission to convert the building into flats. The members of our Church leadership team recently met with Dean and his son to discuss the project and the effect it may have on our church property. We informed Dean that any works taking place on our property would have to be authorised by TMCP. We hope we can have a productive relationship with Dean and look forward to the neighbouring property being transformed.

#### **from The Ark:**

THIS summer has been a period of property maintenance at The Ark. The perimeter fence which was installed when the building was first erected had come to the end of its life, with many of the upright posts rotting in the ground and making the fence unstable. The whole fence to the front and side has been renewed, with the work being done during the height of one of this summer's heatwaves, giving the contractor a headache in every sense of that word!

The ladies' toilets were in need of a lick of paint, and have now been decorated, and with the installation of a water butt at the side of the church (inspired by Wimpole Road's lead!) to aid with the watering of our planters along the front, we are looking very smart and inviting.

AN eco-survey of our building has taken place, to establish what further steps we can take to reduce our carbon footprint in support of our beautiful environment. We expect to be looking again at the possibility of installing solar panels and will be studying the surveyor's report in detail in due course.

OUR harvest festival gifts in September will once again be donations for the Colchester Food Bank, the Highwoods branch of which has its home at The Ark. We are delighted that the Gilbert School has, for the second year running, asked to make the Highwoods Food Bank the destination for their own harvest gifts after the start of the autumn term, and have contacted The Ark direct to receive these gifts for the Food Bank.

THE next general meeting of the church will focus on worship styles, engaging the congregation, and retaining visitors, all of which is all part of our current Mission Plan.

### **from Wimpole Road:**

WE are delighted with our new audio-visual (sound and screen) system installed in the middle of July. The next stage was for the control system at the back of the church to be re-sited to a new place under the tech-desk which has been re-modelled from some of the pews which have been removed.

If you wander around the church and look for a screen, you will see at least one screen clearly from wherever you may be situated, which is a great improvement from before. The preacher and the choir have sight of a smaller screen and the organist has his own, attached to the organ surround. Progress indeed!

New bookcases have been crafted from redundant pews, to be placed in the vestibule.

It is anticipated that work on the kitchenette and accessible toilet will start in early September and although we expect some disruption during the alterations, our services will continue as normal.

TIME passes quickly and the end of the school holiday draws ever closer. This means for Wimpole Road, feverish activity for both the Holiday Club and the Community Day has happened. We had 29 children enrolled for the three days of Holiday Club, along with 11 young leaders who return each year having experienced the thrill of it for themselves and who are enthusiastic to share that with the 'little ones'. As always, we are grateful for the work that Andrew, Sue and Julie do to ensure the smooth running of operations and big dollops of fun for the youngsters (and some grown-ups too!). Just one day separated the Holiday Club and the annual Community Fun Day on the Recreation Ground this year, so there were some very tired people by the end of August!

The Community Day is a wonderful opportunity to meet with local people in the area. Juliet and Andrew work tirelessly throughout the year to gather individuals, groups and organisations together to participate in this event as we share in the day, building relationships and friendships with our neighbours in New Town. Thank you to you both for your commitment and hard work.

Please continue to pray for the work of this church in bringing the good news of Jesus to all who enter our building and are associated with us.

### **from The Well:**

ON Aldersgate Sunday we were delighted that the Methodist Coordinator for the Americas, spoke at our service. It was wonderful to hear how the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of people in that part of our world. In Cuba there is ongoing work of evangelism and steady growth of the Methodist Church.

AS in previous years, we held 'Tea at The Well' for everyone connected with our church and particularly for those who find it difficult to come regularly. We had a full house and it was a very happy occasion. It was good to catch up with people we had not seen for a while.

AT a recent Local Arrangement, our Worship Leaders organised Café Style worship in the hall. It was certainly different, but the worship was no less meaningful because of the informal atmosphere and the congregation took an active part in the service.

FOR those of us who are more property minded, we have put up new curtains in our hall, and the hedge at the hall end of our site has been replaced by a fence. As this area is used as a play area for children and the hedge was a safeguarding issue, our local Community Council kindly awarded us a grant towards its removal.

IF anyone would like to join us, then the next three, monthly, Charity Coffee Mornings are:

- Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September - All We Can
- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October - St Helena's Hospice
- Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November - Samaritan's Purse (Shoe Boxes)

### **from Wivenhoe:**

THE summer has been a difficult time for us at Wivenhoe, with more of us experiencing health issues the general running of the church has become more difficult. This has been exacerbated by the need to fill a number of Local Arrangements.

However, the Church continues to be a loving and caring place and Sunday worship is well attended, even if numbers are down due to holidays and illness. The commitment of our Ministers and Preachers each Sunday is much appreciated.

THE Thursday Knit and Natter and Fellowship meetings remain popular and are attended by people from the other Wivenhoe Churches as well as our own. At the end of August they went to Wivenhoe House for a cream tea.

KEN and Kerry continue to run our monthly Saturday Coffee Morning which remains very popular. Our members Dr Bagamba and his wife continue to live and work in Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo, where they run their Beacon of Hope charity. The Coffee Morning continues to raise funds for the charity.

Bagamba recently reported that they continue to live in danger: 'We are doing well although the security situation has worsened with the coming of some Islamist groups in town. Two mass shootings have happened in our town alone within one week. Yesterday at 7:30pm a shooting happened a half km from our home; one dead and four wounded. Please pray that the police find these people. Churches have been warned by the police that they should take special security precautions.'

Reporting on the work of his charity he tells us: 'This school year we supplied 300 pupils with school supplies; we offered teaching materials such as compasses, globes and rulers to three schools where most of the orphans we serve study. Most schools here have black boards and benches, not much.'

'As for the secondary education, in addition to supplying their children with personal school supplies, parents are to pay monthly tuition fees of \$15 for each student. This school year we did not raise enough funds, as a result, for most children we provided only half of the required amount. In general, our help went to students nearing completion of secondary education. In addition to assisting the students with education, we also provide medical care when funds are available. Malaria and waterborne diseases are the most frequent illnesses school age children suffer from here.'

We thank God for their commitment. Please pray for them.

#### **from West Mersea:**

WE had a fun quiz night in July to celebrate our Church Anniversary and raise funds. We were delighted to see a large number of our friends from other churches in the circuit join us for a jacket potato supper followed by a quiz. Our thanks go to Terry who stepped in at the last minute to take the role of quiz master and to Ann and John who prepared and cooked the food to keep our guests happy. We raised more than £100 from that evening, so thanks to all who attended to support us. Rev Hannah took our morning service on the Sunday morning.

'WARM Spaces' turns into Community Coffee morning on Wednesdays and lots of people pop in and out, to have a coffee, cake and chat.

The Beach Club was a success as usual this August, with about 90 young people attending during the week, learning about the love of Jesus. How annoying that in spite of this summer's heatwaves it had to rain on the last two days of the Beach Club – but we were well prepared, and everyone dispersed into the three island churches and continued the fun under cover.

WE now look forward to the Autumn and Harvest time.

#### **from The District:**

The Colchester Methodist Circuit is part of the Beds, Essex & Herts Methodist District. An online safeguarding day has been planned and the details are below. Safeguarding is always at the forefront of everything we do at church, from the smallest of regular activities to the largest of community events with which we become involved.

Whether you are a designated safeguarding officer for your church or not, if you have any role in leadership or event planning, this is a training session not to miss.

If some, but not all, speakers will be talking about a subject particularly dear to your heart, then please contact our circuit administrator by email to [colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com](mailto:colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com) and she will do her best to find out the approximate times for the particular speakers, whose biographies appear below.



Book your ticket now!! <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1559642886859?aff=oddttdtcreator>

## FROM THE CIRCUIT DIARY:

|                            |                                                        |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> September  | Circuit Meeting at Wimpole Road from 7:30pm            |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> September  | Safeguarding Foundation training at The Ark from 10am  |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> September  | Next Circuit Grants application deadline               |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> September | Circuit Monthly Prayer Meeting at Castle from 9am      |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> October   | Circuit Monthly Prayer Meeting at The Ark from 9am     |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> November   | Safeguarding Foundation training at The Ark from 10am  |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> November   | Circuit Monthly Prayer Meeting at Wivenhoe from 9am    |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> November  | Anna Chaplain Commissioning Service from 3pm at Castle |

### In addition;

Circuit Evening 'Zoom' services take place on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month from 6:30pm

Circuit Bible Study takes place on many Tuesday evenings throughout the year (via Zoom)

**All are very welcome and further information on any of the above is available;**

From our Circuit Administrator at [colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com](mailto:colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com)

By viewing the Circuit diary at <https://colchestermethodists.org.uk>

## **DEADLINES**

Please submit your plan requests for Dec/Jan/Feb by 2<sup>nd</sup> October via our Circuit Administrator at [colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com](mailto:colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com)

The next newsletter will be distributed at the beginning of December so please let Judith have your church news by 17<sup>th</sup> November.