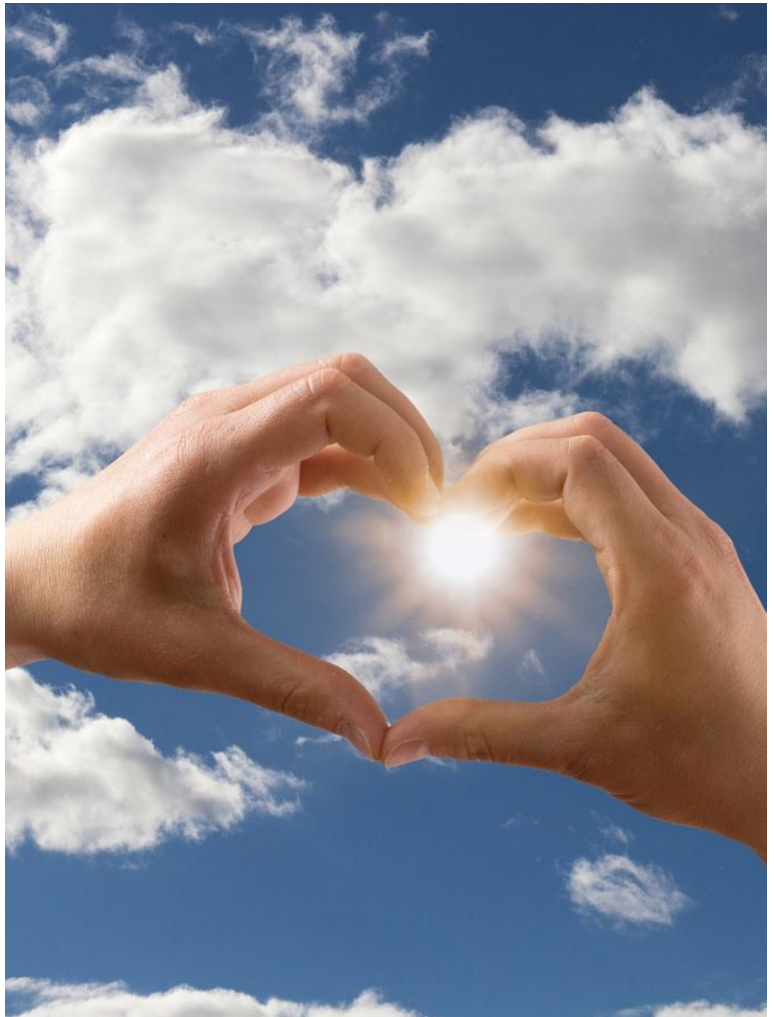


CONTACT

CHRIST CHURCH HALTON
COLTON METHODIST CHURCH

February 2025



Edward's Letter

Greetings everyone,

I trust and pray the New Year 2025 is going well so far with you and your loved ones. I'm writing this letter seven days to "Candlemas,"

traditionally the 40th day of (and conclusion of) the Christmas – Epiphany Season, celebrated every year on the 2nd of February. This year it'll receive more attention from churches as it falls on a Sunday.

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2 February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself. In the New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'Public Appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child – to 'present him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the 'Light of the World,' and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day – hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2: 22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis. Making candles, telling stories, having dinner by candlelight has been a simple formula for celebrating Candlemas over the years at home.

As we celebrate Candlemas, symbolizing Jesus as the "Light of the World" be reminded that we are also the light of the world, therefore, let our light so shine among fellow human beings that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Every blessing and peace.

Edward Sakwe



Revd Becki's Sabbatical

A reminder that Becki is on sabbatical leave until 26th March 2025. Revd Mark Stennett will cover anything at Colton that requires a minister during this time. For any support, please contact the senior stewards at Colton (Kathryn Glasby or Elaine Preston) in the first instance or let them know if there's something that you feel needs to be dealt with during Becki's absence or noted for her return.

Try a Carbon Fast?

Caring for creation is one of our instructions from God. As we move towards the period of Lent, many of us will be thinking about how we will be focussing more firmly on God through a fast. We often think of this period as fasting from good things to eat or drink, but how about another suggestion? How about considering a Carbon Fast to help us to live more simply and finding new ways to cut our own carbon footprint as a way of caring for God's creation?

The following are some of the sorts of things we could do:

1. Fast from unawareness by watching a TV programme or listening to a podcast to find out more about climate change
2. Fast from food waste through making a plan for our leftovers, and composting fruit and veg scraps.
3. Fast from excessive energy use through turning down the thermostat, walking, cycling or taking public transport more or fasting from social media use (having a games night instead?)
4. Fast from meat and dairy through trying to go meat free for a day or two a week. If you're already vegetarian or vegan, how about cutting down on desserts or sweets?
5. Fast from Silence through praying for creation and talking about the climate crisis.

If you'd like to find out more about Carbon Fast, you may find the following websites useful:

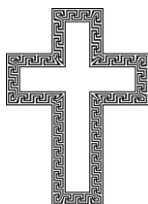
[www. Climatestewards.org](http://www.Climatestewards.org)
www. Ecofaithrecovery.org
www. Ecochurch.arocha.org.uk
Colton Eco Church Team.

A Retreat for (Busy) Volunteers 8th March



Following on from a successful retreat morning last year, the Yorkshire West District is offering another retreat for busy volunteers on Saturday 8th March from 12.30pm – 4.30pm at Christ Church Hipperholme, Wakefield Road, Hipperholme, Halifax, HX3 8AA. The church will be open from 12.30pm for you to bring your own lunch and share fellowship with others. The retreat will be from 1.30pm to 4.30pm, led by Revd Michaela Youngson, Assistant Secretary of the Methodist Conference. See Kathryn Glasby at Colton if you are interested in going, or see:

<https://ywmethodist.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Poster-March-25.pdf>



Eric Songhurst 1940-2025

We are sad to announce that Mr Eric Songhurst passed away recently. Some of you may remember Eric from Thursdays About and as a speaker at the Ladies Group, both held at Colton Church, or as a teacher at Temple Newsam Halton Primary School some years ago.

The funeral will take place Colton Methodist Church on **Friday 14th February at 2.15pm**. A collection will be taken for Yorkshire Air Ambulance and St Gemma's Hospice.

The family have asked if those attending the funeral can wear something yellow, purple or pink (the colours of the Charities supported by the family). You are warmly invited to a gathering at Colton Sports and Social Club after the service. It is suggested that you park at the club and walk down to church if possible.

Marie and Mark are collecting memories of Eric on the "Much Loved" website. Please share your memories there.

<https://ericsonghurst.muchloved.com>

Our thoughts and prayers are with Eric's family and friends at this time.

Stationing update

There's been a lot of work going on in the Circuit to prepare for Summer 2025 when 4 of the current presbyters (Revd Becki Stennett, Revd Mark Stennett, Revd Edward Sakwe and Revd George Bailey) leave the Leeds North and East Circuit. This note is to update you on what we know so far about those joining and those leaving the Circuit!

Subject to confirmation at Conference 2025:

- Revd Emily Young will be serving at Roscoe, Trinity and Chapel Allerton churches
- Revd Janet Titterton will be serving at Garforth, Scholes, Colton, Cross Gates and Christ Church Halton (joint with the URC minister Revd Dr Nicola Robinson).
- Revd Becki Stennett has been stationed to the Coventry and Nuneaton Circuit in the Birmingham District, with pastoral charge over Central Hall Coventry.
- Revd Mark Stennett has been stationed to the Lichfield and Tamworth Circuit in the Birmingham District, with pastoral charge over Lichfield Methodist Church, and the family will be based in Lichfield.
- Revd Dr George Bailey is being appointed to the role of Methodist Oversight Tutor at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham. The stationing process is underway to seek a replacement presbyter to serve in our Circuit, with pastoral charge of Oakwood (joint with a Church of England priest), Newbourne and Barwick churches.
- Revd Tanya Short will continue in her role as Circuit Superintendent (no longer a shared appointment from September 2025) with pastoral charge of Alwoodley Park, Lidgett Park and Shadwell churches.
- Rev Edward Sakwe has been appointed to the Hinckley Circuit in Leicestershire, with pastoral oversight of three churches - Hinckley at the heart of its community accommodating uniformed organisations, charity groups and a pre-school group; Burbage, an outward and forward looking church with a new building, hosts or runs a range of weekly activities; and Sapcote, a warm welcoming church with a strong church family feel.

Please continue to pray for everyone involved in these processes and changes, and for the work of God in the circuit.

Christ Church Guild Update

The new year got off to a shaky start with the snow and ice causing the New Year Party to be postponed. However, since then, we have learned a lot about the way of life in Alaska and the history of the police through the Mobile Police Museum. Two very interesting evenings. At the time of writing we have yet to hear about Lutherans.

The Not-so-new Year Party will now be on 25th February. Unfortunately Lesley Newnham is not able to come that night so it was easy to re-arrange the quiz and fish and chip supper. If you wish to join us please book with Sheila (0113 2602553) and please note it will be a 7pm start.

Looking forward to February, the programme is as follows:

4th February – The Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella

Frank Lee's personal journey along the Portuguese Camino in the summer of 2024, covering 227km in two weeks.

11th February – The Illustrated Story of Roundhay Park

We welcome back Alun Pugh to talk about one of Leeds biggest parks.

18th February – Musical Mystery Tour

An evening of musical entertainment compiled by Brian Poulter and featuring a range of genres all with geographical titles.

25th February – Postponed New Year Supper!

A fish and chip supper followed by a quiz by Paul Kaufman.

As has been said many times before, the Guild is open to all. You are invited to join us for any evening which appeals to you.

- *Sheila Staveley*

Colton New Year Party

Thank you to all who came to our New Year Party and contributed to the wonderful selection of food. We had games (with some cheating!), a quiz, guess the name of the Snowman, a Pass the Parcel (mayhem!), some singing and a raffle. The latter raised £74.90 for the Repair and Renew Fund.

A Service of Thanksgiving Saturday 29th March 3pm

As mentioned in last month's edition of Contact, Revd Marlene Wilkinson, previously Minister of Christ Church Halton, and Colton, will, along with others, be leading a Thanksgiving service, to celebrate her 80th birthday. Friends from both the churches are very welcome to attend. Marlene would be delighted to see many friends come along and share in this special event. It will be held **at Christ Church Halton, on Saturday 29th March 2025, beginning at 3.00pm**, and will be followed by refreshments, and time to chat.

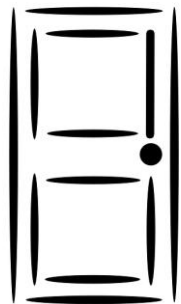
For catering purposes please can you let Helen Lappage at Christ Church or Kathryn Glasby at Colton know if you hope to attend, by the end of February if possible.

Also, if you were involved in the performances our churches put on (many years ago!) of "Saints Alive" by Roger Jones and would like to join singing the Saints Alive version of "All people that on earth do dwell" at Marlene's service again please speak to Helen or Kathryn.

Rear Entrance Door @ Colton

Currently this door is out of use due to safety concerns and users of the premises are being asked to use the main door. It is hoped that the door will be replaced soon. Prior to her Sabbatical, Becki applied on behalf of Colton to the District Grants Committee. We now have confirmation that Colton has been awarded a grant for replacement of the door and window. It has been a long process involving Planning Permission, drawings, surveyors etc. Thank you to all who have helped and encouraged in this project. My special thanks go to my daughter Ali who persevered alongside me during the councils Planning Application Process.

- *Elaine*



Christ Church Halton Local Ecumenical Partnership Review

We met on Saturday afternoon, 25th January, for our review workshop. We had an excellent attendance, a lovely soup and sweet lunch and fellowship followed by a focused workshop.

Rev'd Jamie Kissack (Moderator of the United Reformed Church Yorkshire Synod) and Rev'd David Goodall (District Mission Enabler in the Yorkshire West Methodist District) directed our thoughts to our effectiveness as a worshipping community in Halton as we focused on our Mission Statement written as our denominations began to work together as a Local Ecumenical Project.

Are we a missional church? What do we do well and what might we do better? What of our future? Are we sustainable in terms of people helping to run things in five, let alone ten years and also in financial terms with annual deficits increasing?

Despite our concerns about the future, there was encouragement in the stories that were shared about things we do well and the consensus that we still have a good foundation on which to build. We look forward to receiving a report of the discussion and we will see the key ideas/themes that arise.

We express our thanks to those who planned, set up, catered and cleared away and to Jamie, David and our own ministers Nicola and Edward for their leadership and guidance.

So there is already some work to do. We will review our Mission Statement as well as continuing to review our Finances. The stewards of the five churches in our Circuit section have already started working together and will continue to build on this. We will begin discussing our priorities when the Stewards meet with Jamie and our ministers in March. We will pray that God will guide us and that our ears and eyes will be open to that guidance as we move forward together as a church.

Helen Lappage - on behalf of the Stewards

Colton Church Annual General Meeting 16th March

Worship on Sunday 16th March will be led by Revd Mark Stennett and will include Holy Communion. This will be immediately followed by our church AGM, chaired by Revd Mark, so you are invited to stay for a cuppa following worship and take part in the meeting. Please start to give some prayerful consideration of how you might be able to contribute to the life of the church at Colton, as we will be spending some time considering how we might spread the workload to ease the burden on individuals. We will circulate a report booklet covering various aspects of Colton Church prior to the meeting and there will then be opportunity for feedback on any of the reports.

CAROLS AND COFFEE

Led by Concordia we had a wonderful morning just before Christmas when £465.00 was raised for MacMillan Cancer Care. Grateful thanks to all.

Christmas Shoe Boxes

We collected 36 filled Christmas boxes from members and friends of Christ Church. On top of this, Julie Digings collected more than 90 from friends on the "We Are Halton" Facebook group. Along with Colton's boxes, we took around 200 in total to Meeting Point Cafe in Harehills to be given to local needy families. We actually saw Deacon Adella distribute them as a group from Concordia sang carols which was very touching. Grateful thanks to Julie and all who contributed.

World Day of Prayer Service 7th March 2pm

We are pleased to be hosting this year's World Day of Prayer Service at Colton Methodist Church at 2pm on Friday 7th March. The theme is "I made you wonderful" and the service material has been prepared by Christian women in the Cook Islands. Refreshments will be served afterwards and all are warmly invited.

Leprosy Mission

On Sundays 9th & 16th February there will be a special collection at Colton Church in aid of the Leprosy Mission, a charity we have supported for many years, encouraged by the work of the late Freda Pagan who brought this important organisation to our attention. Envelopes will be available for your donations. Thank you in anticipation of your support.



Thank you from Colton Church Stewards

To all those who contributed to the amazing donations for Meeting Point and Foodbank as part of the Reverse Advent Calendar. Special thanks to Keith and Sylvia for delivering the items and Ali for all the promotion. And further thanks to all who donated toys at our Toy Service and to the Salvation Army who helped distribute to those families in need.

To everyone who contributed in any way with worship over Advent, Junior Church for overseeing the Advent Liturgy, guitarists Frank and Amanda, all preachers and our amazing minister Becki who manages to fit so much in over the season!

To everyone who helped decorate the church for Christmas and helped with the tidying on the 5th January.

Thank you for all the monetary donations over Christmas – we're pleased to announce the amount raised for Action for Children was £146.29 and for Save the Children £222.81.

To the Methodist Church Connexion for the "Hush the Noise" resources used in worship, publicity and giveaways. Thank you to all who followed Wendy's idea and design made felt bells which were distributed throughout our groups and community.

As always it was a great team effort to make such a special season, so thank you everyone for your support!



Lent Giving at Colton

Each year at Colton we ask you during Lent to think of something small that you use or buy often (e.g. a tempting snack or a takeaway coffee) and collect the money you've saved by giving it up. This year we'd like to take this opportunity to raise money for the **Toilet Twinning project** – so you might like to save a penny when you spend a penny!

If we raise £60, we can twin our church toilet and fund a project in a community that helps families to build their own basic toilet, access clean water and learn about hygiene – a vital combination that saves lives. You can find out more information about the work of the organisation at <https://toilettwinning.org/> . Look out for further details in the weekly notices and the March edition of Contact.

Fundraising For Christ Church

After the meeting on 25th January at Christ Church it appears obvious that we need to raise funds for our Church.

If anyone has any items that they no longer want and would like to help raise funds for Christ Church, I am quite willing to advertise the items on Ebay in order to try and sell them to raise money. I have already sold quite a lot of items but just thought it may be time to reiterate that this is a good way to make money.

If you do have anything you can either bring it to Church on a Sunday or let me know and I will arrange to collect it if necessary. Thank you.

- Jean Hopkinson

“At Sea With God”

Around 20 people from different denominations met at Saint Gregory’s for a time of fellowship, quiet reflection, conversation, prayer and worship on Saturday 8th of January. Anne Hemsworth led us using the book “At sea with God” by Margaret Silf.

We thought of our “voyage” on the journey of life, using it as a metaphor as to how we live our lives as Christians.

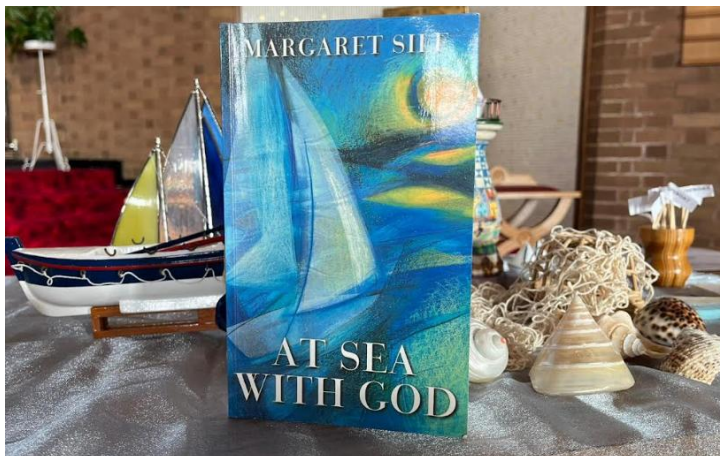
What type of boat are we? What is our fuel supply? What charts do we follow? How are the tides? What cargo or baggage do we carry? What storms and calm seas have we experienced? When do we “drop anchor”? Who is our captain?

The Bible readings used were:

- Psalm 46 “God is our shelter and strength, ever ready to help us in time of trouble”.
- Matthew 8:23-27 (Jesus stills the storm)
- 1 Timothy 1:12-18 (Gratitude for mercy)

It was a blessing to spend time with each other and with God.
“Lord, though we are many, make us one”.

- *Amanda Stocks*



Six brief ponderings full of meaning

Once a village suffered a long drought, the villagers gathered together and decided to hold a collective day of prayer. On the day of prayer all the people gathered, but only one young boy brought with him an umbrella. That is faith.

When you throw babies up in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them. That is trust.

Every night we go to bed without any assurance we will be alive the next morning, but we still set our alarms to wake us up. That is hope.

We plan things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future. That is confidence.

We see a world beset with war, with hunger, drought and suffering, but we still get married and have children. That is love.

On an old man's t-shirt he had printed "I am not 80 years old. I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience." That's attitude.

Have a happy day and live your life like these stories. Remember, good friends are the rare jewels of life, difficult to find and impossible to replace.

ST. GEMMA'S FUNDRAISER

I am having my hair shaved off completely on Saturday 1st March to raise money for St Gemma's Hospice. I would appreciate any donations towards this and will have a sponsor form at Christ Church for the next few weeks.

Thank you

Sarah Wannacott



Forthcoming Services at Christ Church

2 February	Mrs Janice Green
9 February	Rev Edward Sakwe Holy Communion
16 February	Rev Nicola Robison
23 February	Mr Fidelis Chinyama
2 March	Rev Angela Hughes

Christ Church

MESSY CHURCH

It's almost that time again - join us on **Saturday 8th February**, between **2 and 4pm** for this month's Messy Church which is all about love!

Fun, crafts, stories, singing, worship,
refreshments and friendship.

All children must be accompanied by an adult throughout. Pay as you feel able, with a suggested donation of £1 per child.

The next edition of Contact will be published on 2 March. Please let Andy have any articles or contributions for next month's issue by 7pm on Tuesday 25 February. Many thanks.
andybirkett76@gmail.com or 07952 861316.

Forthcoming Services at Colton

2 February	Mrs Anne Johnson All-Age Worship
9 February	Mr Michael Prince
16 February	Rev Joyce Nicholson
23 February	10.30am – Rev Norma Davey 4.00pm – Family JAM (Jesus and Me)
1 December	Local Arrangement All-Age Parade Service

Colton Dates For Your Diary

- Monday 3rd March 7.30pm Colton Church Council Meeting at church.
- Ash Wednesday Service 5th March 7pm at Crossgates Methodist Church.
- Sunday 16th March Church Annual General meeting following worship (see separate item in this month's Contact)
- Saturday 5th April WOW Concert - more details to follow.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Phoebe Stead who having passed yet another course is now a Petty Officer within the Royal Navy. Her new title is Petty Officer Underwater Warfare Specialist Stead. Phoebe is expecting to be deployed soon on HMS Portland. We all wish Phoebe safe travels.

A New Year

by Pauline Hardman

A new year begins
fresh and clear.
The lights of Christmas time dimmed.
Keep in your heart,
that first Christmas night.
The light and the joy that it brings.
Keep hope and love within you,
As you step forward in the year.
Whether your path be rough or smooth
Know God's love is ever near.

2025



The Present

Time. Is it elastic? Is it fluid? Is it a construct of the human mind? The physicists and theologians may long debate the elemental nature of time but is not one most alive when the future does not beckon and when the past does not weigh down the present?

(From "Musings Of A Wayward Pilgrim" by Mark Zenick and reproduced with the author's kind permission.)

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Rev Becki Stennett (Colton)

(On Sabbatical until 26th March)