

New Horizons

MAY 2025



ASCENSION

THE CORNERSTONE



Bournemouth Park Road,
Southend-on-Sea, SS2 5JL
(For car park on Central Ave, sat navs
use SS2 5HR no 59)

www.thecornerstonesouthend.org.uk
Email:
CornerstoneReception@outlook.com

WORSHIP AND ACTION

Sunday 10.30 am **Morning Worship** and Junior Church.
Holy Communion is celebrated during Worship on the 4th Sunday

Coffee and tea will be served after Morning Worship
Please stay to talk with each other in an informal atmosphere.

Tuesdays at 11.30 am Is a special Time of Prayer together for: the Fellowship, those with special needs, our neighbours, and our worldwide Christian Family. All are welcome to join with us.

Church Meetings are held on alternate months. It is the decision of the Church Meeting that they shall be held after Sunday Morning Worship during the winter but revert to Thursdays at 7.30pm in the summer. This may change so the actual dates and times will be published in this magazine and announced in Church.

What's on in the week

Tues	10.00 am	THE HUB Starting with Tea and Coffee in the Foyer
	11.30 am	Followed by Prayer Meeting with fellowship and activities on 1 st and 3 rd Tuesdays or as announced.
Wed	9.15am - 11.15am	The Cornerstone Toddlers during Term Time.
Thurs	6.00 pm	Beaver Scouts and Cub Scouts
	7.45 - 9.15pm	Scouts
Thurs	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting (1 st Thursday)

We do offer Christian Marriage, Baptisms and Funerals so please talk to the Secretary or any Elder if you feel that we can help.

Little Turtles Pre-School meets on Monday to Friday from 9.00 am during term time. Please contact the Church Secretary for details.

Reflections by an Elder

This month we welcome some thoughts from Ann Thorp.



'2 Timothy 3:10

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, and my endurance.'

As many of you know I retired from work last August so have now had over 6 months to settle into a very different pattern of living. At first, I was keen to fit in as much as possible for each day and even started a journal to record what I had done each day. I felt I needed a 'purpose' in life having no set pattern to the week.

As weeks went on, I wanted to justify using each day in a useful way. Quite soon however, I lagged behind in recording what I had done. It was at this point that I had a rethink on my week.

I decided that my purpose in life could be many different things and came up with the following thoughts.

Each day I generally use 'Word for Today', read a short Bible verse, look at the commentary on it and then refer to the Prayer Diary to pray for people or situations both within our church and in the wider community, country and world. Thanks to Ruth, these diaries are available at church or online.

It could be to get outside and do some exercise - cycling, walking, hula hooping or perhaps a yoga lesson, each contributing to keeping me as fit as possible.

A second option could be to visit or phone someone, either to keep me connected to friends or to help those I visited to feel cared about and bring some of God's love given to me and passed on to them.

It could be as simple as shopping for food to ensure we have healthy options for our meals and keep as well as possible by eating nutritious

choices. Other household chores are also fitted in to ensure the house is kept running smoothly.

Occasionally, we spend the day visiting a local attraction or going out for lunch in one of the many garden centres, cafes and tea rooms available. Once a month we join with ex-Police personnel and their friends having a coffee, tea, chat and sometimes a stroll around the garrison area in Shoeburyness.

One of the easiest decisions for me was to attend church regularly every Sunday and to talk to other Christians to enhance my spiritual wellbeing and support them in their journey with Christ. Also, I was already part of the Bible Study group which has been a pleasure to attend, to listen to other Christian views and hear about their journeys with Christ. These meetings are held both online with a link through the internet or in person at the church for those who prefer face to face contact. Our topic at present is Fruits of the Spirit, having covered the first on Love. I have found it enlightening to hear different interpretations of the Bible and how it has affected those who attend. Sometimes there is a historic or more scholarly input but often we talk about personal experience and everyday life with some participants happy just to listen. All are welcome, so please have a chat with me if you wish to join us.

A third part of my Christian life has been the Tuesday Coffee group, sometimes followed by the craft group. There have been so many discussions on various aspects of church life, and it is an invaluable time to share concerns, wishes and ideas.

Each Thursday I have the privilege and joy to look after my granddaughters in Dedham, giving my daughter and son-in-law help while they go to work but giving me the happiness and blessing of seeing the little ones grow week by week and sharing their lives.

Now, each day I am not so regimented in finding a purpose but have discovered that one can easily be found in the activities of everyday life.

Ann

Prayers for our Fellowship and those we know

Prayers can be for joy and sorrow, health and sickness, good news and bad in addition to those for our own needs and guidance.

Please pray for all our fellowship as we live in these worrying times of financial worries, natural disasters and war.



We keep in our thoughts any of our fellowship who are unwell, in hospital, undergoing surgery/treatment or having tests. We pray for their return to good health.

Please remember in your prayers those in our fellowship who mourn the loss of a loved one, especially David Stone on the passing of his beloved wife, Maureen. We think of him and also sons Martin and Andy and their families. Give them peace of spirit and the knowledge that God hears all their prayers.

Father, hear our prayers
Amen

Maureen Stone - RIP



Many of you will have heard that Maureen passed away recently, and we shall miss her at Worship, Tuesday Coffee and The Hub. Maureen was a delightful lady with a twinkle in her eye and a friendly smile for everyone.

Her funeral will be on Wednesday 7th May at 1.00pm in the crematorium at Sutton Road, Southend on Sea when Rev. Matt Stone (her grandson) will lead the service.

**Grief is the last act of love
we have to give those we loved.
Where there is deep grief,
there was great love.**

We also remember in our prayers Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church and sovereign of the Vatican City State from 2013 until his death on Easter Monday (21st April 2025). He was the first Pope from the Jesuits, the first Latin American, the first from the Americas, the first from the Southern Hemisphere, and the first born or raised outside of Europe since the 8th century Syrian Pope Gregory III.

He had been seriously ill during April, but somehow God gave him the strength to deliver, on Easter Sunday, his Easter Blessing to the world and to travel in his “PopeMobile” around St Peter’s Square, where thousands of worshippers were gathered for his blessing.

Dozens of heads of state and Royals attended his funeral but thousands were in St Peter’s Square, on the route to his final resting place and watching on television. He was known as “The People’s Pope”, a simple and much-loved shepherd.

Our prayers for the whole world.

Our Heavenly Father, we earnestly pray for peace throughout the world. So often we concentrate on the terrible wars between nations and continents but now we pray for peace in all places.

In our homes.

In our neighbourhood.

In our towns and cities.

In workplaces and where we relax.

On our streets and parks.

Help us to treat everyone with love and respect. help them to reflect our own behaviour in their lives as they deal with others.

To see the other’s point of view, to be able to disagree but seek to find common ground.

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

Never regret a day in your life,
good days give happiness,
bad days give
experience, worst days
give lessons, and best
days give memories

SECRETARY'S NOTEBOOK

Since our last magazine, we have held our Annual General Meeting with all its formalities that we must do each year. The Minutes are on the notice board in the worship space if anyone needs to read them.

We also decided that the past six months' communion offerings would be donated to Shoebury Ark and I am pleased to confirm that the sum sent is £297.21. We heard that the Ark is meeting a great need in that particular area of our City and I would encourage you to bring donations of books, toys and children's clothes if you are able.

In addition, thank you for your support of Water Aid's Jars of Change Lent Appeal which raised £116.43. Some people have commented that, in this day and age of card transactions, and online shopping, change is not easily come by, so it may be we will consider some other collection means or cause for next Lent. Elders will welcome your ideas.

The church has recently been blessed by the arrival of young families, and we say welcome to Melanie and Sam, Felicity and her girls and extended family, Anna and Philip and their children. We are delighted to be able to resume children's and young people's activities on Sundays - thanks in no small part to Shameer being available to run the AV desk, releasing Derek for the children's work. For the time being at least this is being run under the Pilots' banner as we are not yet able to resume weekday Pilots or Youth activities. However, this does mean I am no longer able to provide a weekly commentary on the adult worship for the purpose of this magazine and would be grateful for a volunteer to take that over.

Holy Week saw our usual round of services and events, beginning with the service led by John Amos on Palm Sunday. John had helpfully provided bible readings for the week in the form of a bookmark which was distributed with the Palm Crosses. On the Wednesday we had a Family Fun Afternoon with around 50 people participating in Easter crafts and worship. Nigel and Val led a Taizé style service on Maundy Thursday when we also had a simple Communion. On Good Friday Roger Brett led our worship with a series of readings and reflections and, as has become our custom, the Singing Group sang "The Power of the Cross". Roger also led an

all-age Easter Sunday Morning service with Holy Communion. As I write we are expecting Neil Keeble for the final Sunday of the month - Neil has taken several parade/children's services over the years with his special brand of 'magic' but I believe this is his first time leading an 'ordinary' worship service for us.

By the time you read this, the Elders will have met Rev Anne Sardeson (Synod Pastoral Committee) to consider next steps after Sohail's move to Orpington. As I understand it, our future allocation of a Minister's time depends on what happens with the Mission Partnership and there is a meeting for the Elders of the 6 churches on 22nd May to begin talks on the way forward. (and yes, I have demanded birthday cake!). I hope to bring further news to our church meeting the following week.

Ruth Dixon



I am sure you would agree with me that we celebrated Easter in good "Cornerstone" fashion. This does not just happen, but so much prayerful preparation is undertaken before these services are shared with us. Many thanks are due to John Amos, Nigel & Val Mead, Roger Brett and Ruth Dixon, for the deeply meaningful

messages brought to us on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day. We travelled the road to Jerusalem with Jesus. To the Upper Room; in the Garden of Gethsemane; his death on the Cross and then to the great joy of His Resurrection.

Thanks also to those who arranged and helped out at the Family Fun Afternoon - a rewarding time of Easter crafts and worship. At The Cornerstone, we are greatly blessed in the music - thanks to Nigel & Clive on the organ, the orchestra and the singing group. We were rejoicing on Palm Sunday, contemplative on Maundy Thursday and shared with Jesus the pain and suffering on the Cross. Then, on Easter Sunday we sang our Alleluias of praise at the Resurrection of our Lord. Our thanks also to Val Mead for the beautiful Easter flowers and to the 'Tea' ladies for the hot cross buns we enjoyed after the Sunday Service.

Anne Clarke (Ed)

Minister, Minister, Wherefore art thou Minister?

I was recently asked to write a piece for Southchurch Park about something that is exercising all our minds at the moment. Our Minister, Sohail, has left, long live the Minister. Or more relevantly how long will it be before we can hail a new Minister. It seemed sensible to share my thoughts with The Cornerstone and others.

To make sure that we are all up to speed, forgive me if I start with things that you already know but we all need to be at the same level of understanding.

The URC has a total number of 'X' Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Of these a percentage are in roles where they are not in Pastoral Charge i.e. they have no responsibility for a congregation. Roles such as the Moderator of Eastern Synod or specialist roles such as the Minister called as the Synod's Transitional Minister.

This leaves 'Y' number of Ministers who can be in Pastoral Charge. Set against this we have all of the congregations who we will call 'Z'. 'Y' is always significantly smaller than 'Z'. which means there are never enough ministers for each congregation to have its own.

Centrally the URC determines the number of Ministers in Pastoral Charge for each Synod who, in turn determines the size of a Pastorate.

There will be some stand-alone churches as their membership numbers allow them to have a full-time minister. A rule of thumb is that you need 150 members for this to happen. Some Pastorates for a minister may be formed of two or more churches such as the one for Southchurch Park and The Cornerstone and they will share a minister. Alternatively, for example Grays, who are not in a joint pastorate nor have enough members to qualify for a full-time minister, so were given 25% ministry for Grays and 25% for two other URC churches.

Then we have joint CofE/URC churches where all ministry is provided by the CofE and we also have churches such as Wickford and Hutton and Shenfield where ministry is provided alternately. Currently Wickford URC has a Methodist Minister whilst Hutton and Shenfield

have a Baptist Minister. When either of them leaves the URC will supply ministry.

The figures I was given back in 2021 showed that the Synod had 98 URC churches, 31.5 Ministers and 3790 Members. But we had been allocated a maximum of 33.5 ministers by central URC. Having an allocation does not mean having a minister, there are always vacancies. Remember the difference between the number of ministers and the number of congregations. Vacancies last for a number of years, sometimes into double figures.

In the same document there were proposals that the number of minister positions allocated to the Synod should drop within a few years to 28 and we can see that this is already happening. At the start of 2024 there were 3 ministers in the six Southend/Rayleigh churches and now there is one.

It is these numbers that have led us to look at new ways of using the finite resource of our ministers so that every congregation gets some Ministerial oversight.

Until now the process for a vacancy was roughly this:

Visit by the Moderator and/or Synod Pastoral Convenor to help the congregation come to terms with the loss of the minister and the changes this would mean.

Appointment of an Interim Moderator who would help the congregation deciding where they were, where they were going and what they would be looking for in a minister.

At the same time Synod would be deciding on the size of the Pastorate; One, two or more churches each of whom would go through the same process.

Once things were settled, which might take many months or years, a Pastorate Profile would be prepared, Synod would declare a vacancy and all ministers across the URC would receive the information.

A Minister might feel Called to the Pastorate or a Moderator might feel a Minister of theirs would be suitable. One Moderator would talk to another Moderator and the minister would be introduced.

There would be some meetings led by the Interim Moderator, “preaching with a view”, Church meetings across the Pastorate, a vote and if ‘Yes’, a call would be issued followed by Induction etc.

BUT, the current situation is that we are attempting to move to Mission Partnerships with for us, six churches working together. Not just sharing a minister but actually working together. So, roles shared across churches where, for example, one person does DBS for all, another Safeguarding for all, a small group works on Pulpit Supply or Children’s work or Property for all. Reducing the load on individual churches.

Each Mission Partnership would have a set number of ministerial positions. But like before these may not always be filled. However, there should always be one minister in post per Mission Partnership. We are shown as being allocated two Ministers for the six churches. How they are used is up to the Mission Partnership and this forms part of the set-up discussions.

Churches could opt out of the Mission Partnership if they wanted but they would be unlikely to have any ministerial oversight. And what that would mean for the number of ministers in the Mission Partnership is anybody’s guess.

Our Mission Partnership talks begin with Elders on the 22nd May and we move on from there.

Synod is still confirming the exact method of calling a Minister with discussions about Church Profile, Mission Partnership Profile, allocation of time, expenses etc. and the actual process of meeting, listening and voting.

For Southchurch Park the situation also requires discussion about finances, the building, membership numbers, Elders numbers etc. Synod has started to take some oversight here to ensure that monies are spent in places where there is a likelihood of continued presence

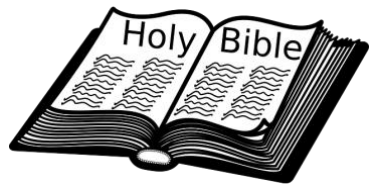
as an active Worshipping Congregation of the United Reformed Church.

What next then. Well, we need to work together, worship together, pray together, help each other, look forward together, work out what God wants from us together, deliver God's plan together. Not just one church by itself but working with others towards the same end. Accepting and loving each other along the way.

Your friend
Roger

BIBLE STUDY

In April we managed to meet twice, online and in person using Microsoft Teams, with grateful thanks to Ann Thorp as she mastered the technology.



Also, another thank-you to Ann as she started to lead us through the fruits of The Spirit by **Love** on one Monday and **Joy** on the last Monday of April.

We shall meet again on Monday of 12th May when we will look at the fruit of **Joy** and then **Peace** on the 26th.

Yet to follow are: forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. What a challenge.

We are finding that we all learn something when we meet in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Why not just try it?

Just email me at mjb23wardle@btinternet.com for a chat, or to ask me to send you the direct link to the meeting

Michael

Harvest Supper and Entertainment 2025

All your voting slips have been collected, collated, checked and verified. The vote numbers have been confirmed, checked and re-checked and this announcement approved by the highest authority on this matter.

I am now authorized to announce the result of the vote for the date of the Harvest Supper and Entertainment for 2025. It is.....

The Evening of Friday 26th September 2025

We hope to have our usual starter of Fish and Chips followed by big screen entertainment, singing to live music and a musical interlude.

Everyone is invited. We will look at the proposed payment required for the meal but, after the meal, the entertainment itself is free of charge.

Full timings will come out later but put this evening date in your diary. And I look forward to seeing You, Any of You, All of you, from across Southend and beyond.

Thank you for helping. Now the real fun begins. I have already reviewed around 250 musical films and events and I am in the mid 'H's in my alphabetical list. My office is alive with the Sound of Music.

Roger

The Cornerstone Toddlers

We are having some difficulty, due to sickness, in providing the appropriate care so discussions are ongoing as towards its future.

In the meantime, would you please contact Ann Thorp (07753 348856) for information.

Warm Space 2025



From the beginning of the year until early March every Monday from 11am - 3pm our Church foyer was open for Warm Space Visitors.

Every week we had guests who wished to save on heating their homes for a few hours and enjoy some fellowship. Although board games, cards etc were available, people were more than happy to sit and chat and “put the world to rights”!!!!

We found that some visitors were just looking for somewhere to ‘pop-in’ for a coffee - especially if they were having some respite from their Carers duties at home. We told them of our Tuesday Coffee morning, and hope some might give us a visit.

Tea and coffee were served during the whole time and a soup and roll lunch with cakes, were provided each session.

Many thanks to those regular supporters from our Church who helped us each week.

Val and Nigel

Easter Eggs and Donations to Shoebury Ark

Many thanks to those who made donations of Easter Eggs or money in aid of the Shoebury Ark. Nigel and I delivered them on the Tuesday after Easter where they were very gratefully received.



The work of this Organisation continues to provide much needed supplies by way of a food bank, cooked meals, children’s clothing bank, books to aid children’s reading skills, nappies the list goes on, to the people living in a very socially deprived area.

At a recent visit prior to this, we were informed that their stocks had got very low. They were wondering where their help would come from and, as if in answer to prayer, we, and a couple of other donors had arrived with the much needed supplies. And so, the work continues.....!

I make a plea, to please remember that the donations, in whatever form, are made to benefit those in need of that support and not the Organisation facilitating it. The work cannot continue unless they receive the donations etc that they need.

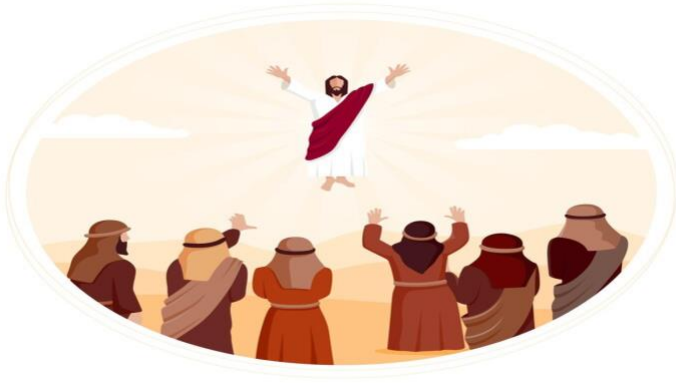
Many thanks one and all,
Val and Nigel

Did you know?

Nearly everyone has read, seen plays or heard of Shakespeare but did you know that some of the things we say today we owe to that great man. Here are a few to surprise you:

- Good riddance
- Wear your heart on your sleeve
- Set your teeth on edge
- Full circle
- Dead as a doornail
- The world is my oyster
- A sorry sight
- Love is blind
- Brave New World
- Fight fire with fire
- Send him packing
- Too much of a good thing
- Wild goose chase
- Seen better days
- Break the ice
- Send him packing
- Makes your hair stand on end
- Seen better days
- Baited breath
- What's done is done
- A sorry sight

THE ASCENSION - Luke 24:44-53



He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Holy Bible - New International Version

**God's plans are greater
than your doubts.
Trust the process,
even when you don't
understand the path**

DIARY OF WORSHIP AND OTHER ACTIVITIES AT THE CORNERSTONE

May

Thu	1 st	7.30pm	Elders' meeting	
Sun	4 th	10.30am	Morning Worship	Sarah Wilson
Sun	11 th	10.30am	Worship and Parade Service	Ruth Dixon
Mon	12 th	7.00pm	Bible Study	
Sun	18 th	10.30am	Morning Worship (HC)	Roger Brett
Sun	25 th	10.30am	Morning Worship	Ruth Dixon
Mon	26 th	7.00pm	Bible Study	
Thu	29 th	7.30pm	Church Meeting	

June

Sun	1 st	10.30am	Morning Worship	John Amos
Thu	5 th	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting	
Sun	8 th	10.30am	Worship & Parade Service	Neil Keeble
Mon	9 th	7.00pm	Bible Study	
Sun	15 th	10.30am	Morning Worship (Fathers' Day)	Ruth Dixon
Mon	23 rd	7.00pm	Bible Study	
Sun	22 nd	10.30am	Morning Worship	Roger Brett
Sun	29 th	10.30am	Morning Worship (HC)	Rev Celia Whitman

**The next Issue of New Horizons will be for
June 2025**

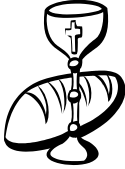


Publication will be on Sunday June 1st and we please ask for your contributions by 9.00am on Thursday 24th May.

We always welcome news, views, ideas and anything else that you feel would help others to live a Christian life of love that they seek to share with all.

**Thank you.
Anne and Michael**

Communion Offerings



These collections are taken at the monthly Sunday Communion Service during the last hymn and are for local charitable organisations outside of The Cornerstone.

Church Flowers

The 2025 Flower List is on the noticeboard in the Foyer and if you would like to supply flowers for any Sunday in the future, please place your name on the list or contact Val.

She will be very happy to buy the flowers on your behalf and arrange them or alternatively, you are very welcome to do your own arrangement.

May

11th

Pat and Eric Garrard
In memory of Mark

18th

Alan Barnes
In memory of Jenny

25th

Carol Smith
In memory of Barry (10 yrs ago)
And Margaret Keeble (9 yrs ago)



**There are good ships
and wood ships,
ships that sail the sea,
but the best ships
are Friendships
and may they
always be!**

Sunday Coffee/Tea Rota

<u>May</u>	4 th	Help please
	11 th	Anne Clarke and Val Mead
	18 th	Sandra Russ
	25 th	Anne Clarke and Val Mead
<u>June</u>	1 st	Anne Clarke and Val Mead
	8 th	Sandra Russ



We are very appreciative of those who serve us after morning worship, but if anyone is available to help even on the occasional day, that would ease the load on our regulars
Please have a word with Michael if you can help. Thank you

Tuesday mornings "Drop in"

<u>May</u>	6 th	Stella Duboux
	13 th	Wendy Brett and Val Mead
	20 th	See below
	27 th	Carol Smith and Pat Pates
<u>June</u>	3 rd	Stella Duboux
	10 th	Wendy Brett and Val Mead
	17 th	See below
	24 th	Carol Smith and Pat Pates



On the Tuesdays that are in red type, someone will set up in the servery and we shall then rely on you to help yourself and perhaps assist others if you feel able. Thank you.

Some people love you in silence, from a distance, in prayers you'll never hear. Just because love isn't loud doesn't mean it isn't real. The purest love often speaks in whispers, not shouts.



WHO TO CONTACT

CHURCH OFFICERS

Minister and Pastor	Vacancy	
Secretary	Ruth Dixon	(01702) 464186
Treasurer	Elizabeth Helm	07973 199759

<u>Envelopes</u>	Ann Thorp	07753 348856
------------------	-----------	--------------

<u>C'Stone Toddlers</u> (Interim contact)	Ann Thorp	07753 348856
--	-----------	--------------

<u>Scout Group</u>	Lorna Skippon	(01702) 477309
--------------------	---------------	----------------

<u>Use of Premises</u>	Roger Brett	(01702) 479874
------------------------	-------------	----------------

<u>Flower arranging</u>	Val Mead	(01702) 296189
-------------------------	----------	----------------

<u>Editorial Team</u>	Anne Clarke	(01702) 293102
-----------------------	-------------	----------------

af.clarke52@gmail.com

Michael Wardle	(01702) 613840
----------------	----------------

mjb23wardle@btinternet.com

**Please remember that your Elders are ordained
to give pastoral care to members, friends and anyone in need.**

**We do offer Christian Marriage, Baptisms and Funerals so please talk
to the Secretary or any Elder if you feel that we can help.**