Linton Free Church

AGM Report June 2025

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MINISTER'S REPORT

Introduction:

This week marks the anniversary of my twelfth year of being minister of Linton Free Church (LFC). As I have reflected over the last twelve months, I think this has been one of the best years I have had serving here in Linton. I say this for a few reasons.

Health:

My health seems to have been consistently good for the first time in about eight years. Although there has been no official medical change from my diagnosis, I have had my longest period without a stay in hospital with Pancreatic problems. This has been such an answer to prayer, and a relief to both my family and myself. It was around two years ago that the moderator sat me down to discuss the possibility of early retirement due to health issues. I wanted us to see what God would do before exploring that possibility seriously and God has been so good. This has enabled me to have increased focus as we have moved forward as a church. I am fully aware that the church is incredibly supportive of me in terms of prayer, and I am so thankful for that continued faithfulness.

Growth:

Another reason why I feel this has been such a strong year is the growth of the church. I don't think we have had a year during my time in Linton where we have seen as many new people attend church. Recently we had John Hardaker (my predecessor) visit us on a Sunday morning. Speaking to me afterwards, he said: "it was great, he hardly recognized anyone".

I truly believe we are in a season where people are increasingly open to the gospel message. This is an exciting time to be alive and to be a servant of Christ. I am challenged that we are a community of believers that are equipped and ready to share our faith. 1 Peter 3:15 says that we should always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give a reason for the hope that we have. This is a challenge for us as we continue to move forward as believers.

Mission Partnership:

We are still in the early days of our partnership with Haverhill. The induction service, and weekend, was a great success and I truly believe we have responded in obedience to God's call on us at Linton. I want to formally thank Haverhill for their welcome and for the hard work that went into the induction service.

I am currently working in Haverhill on Tuesday's, some Thursday evenings, and every 2nd and 3rd Sunday. It has been good to have back-to-back services in Haverhill, giving some continuity to preaching. Attendance at Haverhill has already grown significantly and likewise with what happens at Linton, we seem to get new people most weeks. I am excited to see where God takes us on this journey, and in time, how we support each other both practically and spiritually.

On a personal note, I have found it empowering to develop relationships with other like–minded local church leaders in Haverhill – already having several exciting prayer meetings and churches together meetings. This is something that hasn't been available in Linton, and I find it incredibly refreshing. In many ways it feels like I am being refreshed and revitalized for both Haverhill and Linton. This is an unexpected but huge benefit of the mission partnership.

The downside has been that when I have been away, I have missed people at Linton. However, the excitement moving forward and seeing how God will continue to move in both communities fills me with excitement. I stated in last year's report that I believe we will develop a team ministry, and I absolutely believe that will be the case moving forward. I am unsure at this stage how this will work out, but I do believe that is what we are moving towards.

Sunday Mornings:

I seem to say this every year – I love Sunday's. LFC is an exciting church to be involved in for many reasons.

I am so thankful to the whole church who pull together to make Sundays happen. So many of you are involved, I simply can't thank everyone individually. However, I am so thankful that we have such a great group of people that are willing to step up and share responsibility in making our church community thrive. I have recently appreciated the prayer team that is available to pray with people on Sunday mornings. This takes some pressure off me at the end of the service and is helping me to speak with the new people that attend.

I really enjoy our time together in worship. It is a highlight of my week, and I pray we continue to grow and develop both numerically and spiritually. An area we do need to consider and pray into is the support we have for our young people. We have a great (but limited) team who faithfully lead our young people, which is growing every week. I want to thank Debbie MacBean

for overseeing much of this but realise there are many more involved. Our young people are so important to the life of the church, and we have a responsibility to keep them in faith and help them grow spiritually.

Again, I am in danger of singling out individuals, therefore, missing some, but I want to give a special mention to three people who have served the church and recently stepped down from certain roles:

Katie Binks:

Katie, alongside Dominic, has served the church so well in worship, and continues to do so. However, Katie has stepped down within the last year of overseeing sung worship at LFC. She has served both the church and myself, as minister, very faithfully and well. We have others that can step into an overseeing role, and both Neil Summers and Al Wood are supporting me in that. Katie has been essential in helping us grow and develop our sung worship and although she is still heavily involved, I want to thank her for her faithful service to the church.

Linda Pearson Hospitality:

Linda has also served the church for many years in terms of hospitality. And, like Katie continues to serve. However, Linda has officially stepped down from her leadership role. Debborah McGivern has stepped up to taking on this role and is doing it brilliantly.

I want to make special reference to Linda, who was my first secretary. She is a faithful servant and her work for the church must be recognised. I am pleased she hasn't dropped her call to make cakes for special occasions.

Philippa Waller Safeguarding:

Safeguarding is often an unnoticed role within the life of the church, and Philippa has served the church brilliantly for several years. This is an important role within the life of the church. Currently Debbie MacBean has stepped in to cover this role, but this is a short-term solution. We need to get someone else into this role as soon as possible.

I want to thank Philippa for her commitment to the church in overseeing this challenging role. She has supported us in ways we often don't see, and I have fully appreciated her service.

Cafe Church:

One thing I have missed since taking on Haverhill is Cafe Church. We have a great team of people that have faithfully stepped in which has enabled me to be in Haverhill. Thankyou.

Cafe Church continues to be an opportunity for us to invite those that may find it easier to access church in a more informal way. I think it is important that we prayfully consider how we develop and advertise Cafe Church as we move forward.

Pastoral:

I need to thank Jean Silk for her continued faithful commitment to the church in this area. Jean has a committed team that meets regularly and supports the church. Again, this is an area that involves lots of work that is often unnoticed and can be taken for granted. We have had some incredibly challenging pastoral needs over the last twelve months, and the pastoral team has continuously stepped up to the plate and served the church incredibly well. Debbie MacBean and I support the leadership of the pastoral work, and we truly value the way in which they serve the church.

As we continue to grow, it is at the forefront of my mind that we have a team that continues to develop and serve the church effectively. We need wisdom to discern how best to develop and continue this essential work of our church community.

Sarah Devereux:

The recent loss of Sarah is a big loss to the church. I want to personally reflect on her service to the church, she was a prayer warrior, an intercessor, and faithful member, preacher, servant and role model. Her thanksgiving service and funeral will take place on Tuesday, 12th of August. This will be a significant occasion for the church.

Sarah has always kept me on my toes and has been a rock of support. I, and the church will miss her tremendously, but know that she is now in glory with no more pain or suffering. We thank God for her.

Uganda:

I must thank Steve Munday and Hannah Nunn (Kickstart) that has made it possible for many of our young people to visit and serve in Uganda in the next few weeks. This will be an incredible experience for our young people, and we thank God for this opportunity. We look forward to hearing how God uses them and how they will grow from the whole experience. What an opportunity.

Mission Disciple Enabler – Debbie Gilbert

I am so excited to work alongside Debs in her new role starting in September. I must be honest and say I wasn't expecting this appointment, but I am totally convinced this is how God is leading us. I am looking forward to next year's report as we look back and see how this takes us forward (no pressure Debs). I believe this is our first step in creating a team that helps serve our community and strongly believe God's handprints are all over this appointment. Watch this space and pray for Debs and her family as they take on this new role within the church.

Emma Hilson

We are so thankful for Emma and her family as they have faithfully served the church over the last few years. They are now entering into a new season, but I believe we haven't seen the last of Emma in her service within the life of the local church.

I want to thank her for her commitment to us, how she has grown, and helped the church grow. She is so willing, and it has been a pleasure for us to have her in the life of the church.

We need to pray that Emma concludes her academic work well and that she, alongside the church, discerns her next steps. She has done a remarkable job as a student, whilst serving the church so well. Thank you, Emma.

Conclusion:

As we move forward as a church, and now in partnership with Haverhill, I believe prayer is an essential part of our progress. I am so thankful for the prayer that takes place within the life of the church, personally, on Sunday's, in the Tuesday, and Friday groups, in homegroups, and the group that meets on Monday's. I believe prayer is an essential ingredient for a healthy and thriving church. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you". This is our purpose, to pray and seek God always.

As we do this, we will see God move within our community. I believe we are seeing God move, but He has much more for us.

I want to thank you all. I want to give special thanks to the elders: Ian, Jennie, Debbie, Neil, and Al (who is thankfully back on the team). They have been incredible, and I am so blessed to have them with me on this journey. I also want to thank their families for what is often unnoticed support.

I want to end by thanking my wonderful wife, Lucy, and three children, Jessica, Luke and Sophie, who all continue to inspire me and see the challenges and reality of living with me daily. I couldn't do what I do without them.

God bless, Chris (***Chris Kemshell***)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

It's been another busy year for the Church and, once again, we have seen God bless us in many ways.

Our AGM last year was preceded by a Prayer Weekend and the Slide party in Jean and Richard's garden. What better way to begin a new year in the life of our Church, especially as we had just begun the discussions on a possible Mission Partnership and were preparing for the recruitment of a Mission & Discipleship Enabler. I've written separately about the Mission Partnership so will just reflect a little on the journey we've been on with the recruitment of the Mission & Discipleship Enabler.

We began thinking and praying about this possible new post over 3 years ago, had a grant from URC approved 2 years ago and finally went out to advert last September. From the applications we selected 3 good candidates for interview. One in particular, Pete, stood out and we quickly arranged for him and his wife and young son to visit the Church on a Sunday when Chris did an informal interview in the service. We subsequently offered him the post but he had also been offered the role of Pastor at a Church in Ipswich. After some days of prayerful consideration he felt that he should take the post in Ipswich.

We were obviously disappointed but have learnt in this process to be patient as we felt very strongly that God had the right person for us. We advertised again in February. Our patience was tested again as we had a lot of unsuitable applications and only two or three suitable for interviewing. We actually knew both candidates and were really disappointed when one pulled out just prior to interview. Again, it would have been easy to feel very despondent but we knew we had to continue to trust God. Before we interviewed Debs Gilbert, although we already knew her well and were well aware of her giftings, we weren't sure if this was right for her or the church. Well, she blew us away in her interview with the vision she had for the role and the Church and the journey she had been on with God to get to the point of deciding to apply. Although slightly shell-shocked, the interview panel & all the other Elders were unanimous that we should offer her the post. The rest, as they say, is history, and we look forward to Debs starting in the role from 8th September. Please continue to pray for Debs and all the Gilbert family as she takes on this new challenge.

It has been a joy to see the Church continue to grow and it feels like every Sunday we have new people coming along. Our average attendance continues to be just over 100 with around 40 children and young people regularly attending. Our membership numbers dropped slightly to 88. We have just lost our dear sister Sarah Devereux who God called home on the 1st July. Chris has written more about Sarah but, as a former Elder and a predecessor to me as Church Secretary, I must acknowledge the enormous contribution she made to this Church in leadership and service. We also said a living goodbye to Ruth Wylie as she moved back to Scotland to live with her son and family. Ruth had such a gentleness about her and a sense of peace whenever she spoke or prayed. We miss her but I know she is still in touch and following God's work here and continuing to support us in her prayers.

One family decided to move on to another Church but, as Chris has said, we have seen quite a large number of new people start to attend regularly and who now consider LFC to be their Church. Several of these are expressing interest in membership so we hope to have a number of names to bring forward soon. We have not had any baptisms this year but we were delighted to lend our old Baptistry to Sawston Parish Church when one of the former members of our Junior Church was baptised. Conversations are being had with some about baptism, so we do hope that we will have the Baptistry up in the Church again soon.

Most importantly we have continued to see people coming to faith, some through Alpha, some through personal evangelism and some from responding on a Sunday. We give thanks to God for the way that he continues to bless our Church and our community.

There are many other things I could cover but these are covered elsewhere in this report so I want to say some more thank yous.

First and foremost, we must thank Chris for his continued Ministry at LFC. With the commencement of his Ministry at Haverhill, as part of the Mission Partnership, we no longer directly "employ" him for part of his time but he, of course, continues to be our Minister. The AGM almost coincides with the celebration of 12 years of his Ministry at Linton. We continue to pray for his health and we give thanks to God that he has stayed reasonably well and avoided any hospital stays for over 2 years. Pray that God will continue to uphold him, particularly as he gets to grips with his new responsibilities at Haverhill, as part of the Mission Partnership.

I'd also like to thank my fellow Elders. At last year's AGM, Neil Summers was elected as an Elder and has been a real asset, particularly being able to pick up a lot of Al Wood's technical work during Al's break from the Elders. Neil and Kat have had a really tough year with damage and ongoing disturbance to their home. Neil's dad also died suddenly and unexpectedly on Christmas Eve and, more recently, his grandmother has also passed away. Neil and Kat have been amazing in the way that they faithfully and calmly carried on, both continuing to serve the Church in many ways in spite of all the difficulties they've had to deal with. We pray that they will continue to know God's blessing and peace in their lives. Debbie MacBean continues to be a valuable member of the leadership team and does an amazing job leading the children's work. Jennie Papa has settled well into the Eldership and taken a leading role in Prayer Ministry, leading Alpha and now organizing Pulpit supply for the Sundays Chris is at Haverhill. Al Wood has just rejoined us after his break from the Eldership and dived straight in by putting this Annual Report together!

There are too many other people to thank individually. Without you we could not sustain the breadth of activities we have at the Church. Some months ago, Chris focussed a Cafe service on Serving and everyone filled in a “Volunteer“ form. This set out what you already do in the Church but also drew many new offers of help in every part of Church life. We are still following some of these up, so don’t think we’ve forgotten. Many thanks to every one of you.

Over the coming months the Church will have more important decisions to make, particularly as we consider with Chris and Haverhill how the Mission Partnership should develop and move forward. We pray that we will be guided by God in all our discussions and decisions, and that He will reveal His Will clearly to each and every one of us. ***Ian Burns, Church Secretary***

MISSION PARTNERSHIP

Just over one year ago we commenced our discussions with Old Independent Church Haverhill (URC) and Clare (URC) about a possible Mission Partnership, whereby Chris would become Minister of all three churches. The first couple of meetings went well but it quickly became apparent that there were some key differences on some theological issues between Clare and the other two churches.

After a pause in the summer, the Synod informed us that Clare had withdrawn and that Linton and Haverhill could continue working towards forming a Partnership. Discussions & prayer progressed over the autumn, with helpful facilitation from Steve Munday. Members were kept updated through Church meetings and engaged in helpful discussion and raising questions, some which we couldn't always give an immediate answer to!

We regularly reminded the Church that there was no set of rules on this but that the URC Eastern Synod had simply set out some broad principles and a bit of a "road map" to guide churches in their discussions.

Over this time, there was a growing sense of unity amongst both sets of Elders and in the Church, that this was of God. Importantly, Chris also shared his increasing belief that the Partnership was aligned with God's will and seemed to be part of the fulfilment of prophetic words that had been received over recent years, both from within and outside our Church.

As we got to know our friends at Haverhill better, it was clear that they were very faithful and shared a heart for evangelism and a very similar vision to ourselves. By the end of the year, Chris and both sets of Elders were ready to bring a formal proposal to our respective members, that the two Churches should enter into a Mission Partnership and Chris be called to become the Minister at Haverhill.

At a special Church Meeting on Sunday 19th January 2025, 54 voted in favour and 3 against, meaning the proposal was passed by 94%. We also separately invited our adherents (non-members) to vote, so that we could see how the whole Church felt. They also voted overwhelmingly in favour. On 23rd January, Haverhill voted unanimously in favour of the Mission Partnership and to call Chris Kemshell as their Minister.

The induction service took place on Saturday 22nd March at Haverhill and, on Sunday 23rd, both congregations joined together at Linton for a service of celebration. Both services were really well attended by both churches and by many friends, family and many others who wanted to show their support.

Chris didn't formally commence at Haverhill until beginning of May so it's still very early in the development of the partnership, but there are encouraging signs;

- Significant early growth in numbers at Haverhill
- Linton continuing to see new people joining
- People from both Churches attending Alpha courses
- Supporting each other over Easter events
- Some Linton folks supporting the Haverhill Hub

Both sets of Elders have just reflected on the first few months and will respond to any immediate issues. We plan to meet together in September when we will start to consider longer term plans for the Partnership and begin to explore a bit more how we can support one another, making good use of the resources we have and identifying what else is needed so that the Partnership and both Churches can thrive in growing God's kingdom and support all of us on our spiritual journey.

As Chris and others have preached on, we fully expect change. This won't be all at once but will be more gradual. We'll continue to keep the Church informed and will of course, fully involve you in any significant decisions that need to be made as we move forward. Please do give us any feedback or any ideas and suggestions that you may have.

Ian Burns

PRAYER LIFE

Prayer Ministry Team

We have recently reinstated the Prayer Ministry following Sunday morning services. This was initially started just prior to the pandemic and, as so many other things, ceased when we were unable to meet together. We are now back up and running with this, making prayer available to all who need it, with an increasing number of people beginning to use this ministry.

Monday evening prayer group

A group of ten people have been meeting in the church to pray every Monday evening since May last year. The Lord directed us that the purpose of our prayer was twofold. Firstly, to pray for Chris's healing and his ministry; and, secondly, to pray for the church, with special emphasis on our decision regarding the mission partnership. In addition to these things, we have since been led to pray for: God's glory to be revealed, for purity, for the equipping of the church for ministry, for discipling and care for newcomers, for the Alpha course, for repentance and a deeper hunger for God, for the new ongoing relationship with Haverhill, for our witness and for God's kingdom to be built in this area.

Tuesday morning prayer group

The Tuesday prayer group continues to meet to give thanks to God and to pray for those within our Church, its leaders, each other, and for the wider world. Everyone is very welcome to join us, even if it's just for a few minutes!

Friday morning prayer group

Tina, Jean and Sarah met every Friday either on zoom or at Sarah's for prayer for many years. Our prayer time would be for concerns for church, world situations and friends we knew who were in need. We would start with a scripture, worship song and then be willing to be led by the Spirit who we knew would help us. Following Sarah's failing health, and now in her eternal home, we have closed this meeting for the time being. ***Jennie Papa***

SUNG WORSHIP

Our sung worship ministry continues to be a vital and vibrant part of our church life, facilitating encounters with God through music and song. Psalm 100 says that our worship to God should be with joy and gladness and as a worship group, we aim to embody this "joyful noise", both to glorify God as well as encourage and lead others in worship during church services.

We have a diverse mix of singers and musicians who enjoy using their gifts and talents to praise God and lead the congregation in our various services. This year we have welcomed a few new faces to our ranks, and have valued the youth and young people regularly contributing. We play both modern songs and cherished hymns, with a continuous effort to select pieces that are both relevant and meaningful to as many people as possible, although if you haven't heard your favourite hymn in a while or have a suggestion for a new song do let us know.

The past year has been marked by numerous blessings and significant moments in our sung worship, including the always-special Carols by Candlelight and Sunrise Service atop Rivey Hill on Easter morning.

We extend our deepest thanks to every individual who has contributed to the Sung Worship ministry over the past year, as well as the valuable behind-the-scenes support of the tech team to ensure that our worship is heard and seen clearly to enable everyone to participate fully. Each person's commitment, talent, and willingness to serve week after week is a powerful testament to their faith. We look forward to another year of worshipping our Lord with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. ***Neil Summers***

Praise & Prayer

Our Praise & Prayer services, held on the second Sunday evening of each month, complement our regular Sunday morning worship by offering a more informal, unstructured, and deeply reflective space to engage with God. Our aim is to create an environment where the Holy Spirit is welcomed to move freely, guiding our worship, prayers, and fellowship in spontaneous and meaningful ways.

The Praise & Prayer services over the past year have been a series of rich spiritual experiences; we have enjoyed evenings that have been both wonderfully lively, filled with exuberant praise, and others that have been profoundly calmer and more reflective, fostering deep personal contemplation and communion with God. This balance allows for different expressions of worship to flourish while Jesus remains at the heart of these experiences. We aim to provide an open space for individuals to share what is on their hearts, offer spontaneous prayers, read scripture, or bring prophetic words as the Spirit leads.

We are grateful for the faithful attendance each month, which demonstrates a hunger within the church for these dedicated times of focused prayer and worship, and we extend our gratitude to all who have led or participated in these services. ***Neil Summers***

Contemplative Prayer

The contemplative service aims to provide a space for church members who find quiet reflection helpful in their worship. We do not follow a precise definition of contemplation, rather, allowing those that lead to focus on topics and reflections that they deem relevant or interesting.

Over the last year we have had four people who have led sessions: Ian, Emma, Katie and myself and we have also participated in the Easter and Christmas reflections services. Due to my work travel commitments, I'm extremely grateful to those who have lead sessions.

Attendance varies considerably from 10 or so, down to 2 (and in one case for Emma, just 1). However, numbers isn't the goal – the goal is to give space for those who seek some time to reflect on aspects of our faith with a focus on stillness. Services will normally contain scripture, prayer and some liturgy, but also music, readings, poems, sounds and video may also be used, the objective always to explore God in our stillness. Contemplative prayer falling on the same week as café provides an almost opposite experience from the relaxed, open nature of the café service with something completely different.

While there is not an official programme, since last year's prayer weekend I've been attempting to complete a series of three reflections based on a card I saw with just three words on it: holiness, integrity, humility. These spoke powerfully to me as topics to reflect upon. As I explored holiness in preparation for the service I discovered far deeper insights than I had expected, simultaneously making me feel increasingly insignificant but also very significant - my understanding from those who attended these sessions indicates that I was able to convey at least a portion of my wonder to those present. My plan had been to do three consecutive services, one focussed on each topic. Unfortunately with my travel, Christmas and Easter falling as they did this has not been possible. This has resulted in my doing the holiness reflection a second time, with integrity last month and will conclude with a reflection on humility this month.

We will skip August as many people are away, but I have topics in mind for the autumn but will need to pull together a programme.

I pray that the contemplative service will continue to be a space where church members can come to find both stillness and the still small voice of calm. ***Dominic Binks***

ALPHA GROUPS

Alpha continues to go from strength to strength. We are currently coming to the end of our second course so far this year, and plan another for the Autumn, with numbers growing all the time. Through these sessions people have a forum in which to ask questions and discuss issues they cannot bring to other arenas. We offer a safe space for discussion and prayer as we introduce the Christian faith to people who want to discover more about the truth of the gospel, but it is also offered as a refresher to people wanting to reinforce their foundations, so open to all. We operate in a relaxed atmosphere, beginning each session with a bite to eat, which really breaks down any barriers people have, and allows everyone to get to know each other.

There is a core group of people who continue to prayer for both the leaders of the course and those taking part. Our grateful thanks goes to them for their commitment and support – it really makes a difference.

Jennie Pappa

TECHNOLOGY & PUBLICITY

Technology continues to play a vital role in how we worship together, communicate as a church family, and reach out to our wider community.

Audio Visual During Services

The tech team has continued to make great progress in enhancing the quality of our Sunday services, both in person and online. We've recently added a second camera in the main church building, which gives us more flexibility and better coverage for our livestream and in-church visuals. We also now have a new computer which has made streaming much smoother and more reliable. Joel Wood has continued to use his AV skills to benefit the church by helping us install additional equipment in the hall to improve the live streaming of our café service. A big thank you to Tim Rossiter for his ongoing leadership and commitment in organising the team every week – and a warm welcome to Ronan and other new members who've joined the rota and settled in brilliantly.

Planning Center & Church App

We continue to make good use of Planning Center and the Church App to support and organise different areas of church life – from rotas to service planning to safeguarding. This year, the focus has been on helping more of our leaders get familiar with the system. Looking ahead, we hope to explore more of what the platform can offer, particularly to help reduce admin and better equip leaders in their ministries.

Website

With our new church partnership with the Old Independent Church in Haverhill, it's time to start thinking about how we reflect that on our website. A redesign is overdue so if you're someone with web design skills or a passion for communication, please do speak to Al, we'd love your help!

Social Media

Social media has taken a bit of a backseat this year while Al has been on sabbatical. Now that he's back, we'll be looking to post more regularly again and keep telling the stories of what God is doing in and through our church. If you enjoy storytelling, photography, or have a creative streak, we'd love to hear from you.

Looking Ahead

As we continue to grow as a church, our prayer is that all the tools and technologies we use would ultimately serve to draw people closer to God and to one another. As Paul writes in Colossians 3:17:

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Whether it's running a livestream, updating a calendar, or posting on Instagram—may it all be done to God's glory. ***Al Wood***

OPEN TO ALL!
PLEASE CONTACT JANE WHITMORE TO FIND OUT MORE!

THANK YOU TO THE URC FOR LETTING US USE THEIR CHURCH SPACES

LINTON URC ART GROUP

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS:
WHY OUR ART GROUP MATTERS

WHAT IS IT

OUR ART GROUP IS A SAFE AND FRIENDLY SPACE WHERE PEOPLE COME TOGETHER TO PAINT, DRAW, AND BE CREATIVE—NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!
WE MEET REGULARLY, SHARE STORIES, TRY NEW THINGS, AND HAVE A CUP OF TEA WHILE WE WORK ON OUR ART!

WHY DOES IT MATTER

THIS GROUP IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST MAKING ART. IT'S AN OUTREACH PROJECT THAT HELPS OUR COMMUNITY STAY CONNECTED, HEALTHY, AND HAPPY.

5 WONDERFUL REASONS THAT WE MEET

1. **FELLOWSHIP AND FRIENDSHIP**
   MANY PEOPLE FEEL LONELY—BUT THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE TO. OUR ART GROUP OFFERS FRIENDSHIP AND LAUGHTER. WE TALK. WE SHARE. AND WE LIFT EACH OTHER UP.

2. **A BOOST FOR MENTAL HEALTH**
   BEING CREATIVE CAN EASE ANXIETY AND LIFT LOW MOODS. PAINTING AND DRAWING HELP US EXPRESS FEELINGS WE CAN'T ALWAYS PUT INTO WORDS.

3. **KEEPING OUR MINDS & HANDS ACTIVE**
   ART KEEPS OUR BRAINS TICKING AND OUR FINGERS MOVING. IT'S GREAT FOR MEMORY, FOCUS, AND COORDINATION—AND IT'S FUN! WE ARE OPEN TO ALL LEVELS OF ABILITY; IT IS A SPACE TO GROW.

4. **CONFIDENCE & PURPOSE**
   LEARNING NEW SKILLS AND FINISHING A PIECE OF ART GIVES US A SENSE OF PRIDE. SOME OF US HAVE EVEN EXHIBITED OUR WORK!

5. **A CHANCE TO BE SEEN & HEARD**
   OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY IS FULL OF LIFE, TALENT, AND WISDOM. THIS GROUP GIVES US A PLATFORM TO SHINE—AND A PLACE WHERE WE'RE TRULY VALUED.

WHY ITS OUR CREATIVE OUTREACH

WE WELCOME ANYONE WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE FEEL LEFT OUT—ESPECIALLY THOSE LIVING ALONE OR ON A LOW INCOME. THE GROUP IS FREE, WELCOMING, AND OPEN TO ALL.

IT'S OUTREACH BECAUSE WE'RE REACHING HEARTS, NOT JUST HANDS.

WE WANT TO SHOW JESUS' LOVE AND EXPRESS IT AS WELL AS TALKING ABOUT IT AND ART GROUP GIVES US THAT OUTLET.

COME JOIN US OR HELP SPREAD THE WORD

OUR GROUP SHOWS THAT IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START SOMETHING NEW. WHETHER YOU'RE CURIOUS, CREATIVE, OR JUST LOOKING FOR COMPANY—YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME.

TO FIND OUT MORE PLEASE SPEAK TO JANE WHITMORE.

A CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECT

TO FIND OUT MORE, SPEAK TO JANE WHITMORE

Family, Children & Youth Work

Jellybeans

Jellybeans is an outreach parent and toddler support group that exists to provide encouragement fun, sanctuary, a hot cup of coffee and cake for local parents with babies to preschool-age children. Activities include messy play, crafts and toys in the toddler room and soft play and a quieter area in the baby room. The session includes snacks and closes in singing. We regularly, openly but gently acknowledge the Christian faith in our activities.

The group celebrated its 10-year anniversary last July with a huge cake and lots of smiles. We normally welcome between 25-35 children through the door each week. There have been a number of weeks this year where we have had to limit numbers to 35 due to health and safety reasons. Placing the 'sorry we are full' sign on the door is always bitter-sweet.

The core team has comprised Philippa, Siiri, Wendy and Emma. However, this year we have welcomed Kat on board. Her creative presence has been wonderful. An answer to prayer as Phillippa, who has served on team avidly for many years, has had to step back and focus on work commitments. The core team has been wonderfully supported by Ruth, Jane and Maggie, Joanne and John. We are very thankful for their commitment and assistance.

Sadly, this week, for the first time in a long time, the group has been unable to open due to staffing, so we would welcome prayer for God to continue to bring new people forward. If you feel led to assist on a Thursday morning please speak to one of the core team.

Our final session of the year is 17th July. Please hold those moving up to primary school in your prayers. We reopen on 11th September and hope to welcome some more new faces. ***Emma Hilson***

Open the Book club - Linton Heights Junior School

This club is a 'drop-in' club run at Linton Heights Junior school on a Tuesday lunchtime. The club provides an opportunity to hear and explore a Bible story, short reflection prayer and craft in the library. The puppets sometimes make an appearance or the occasional box of Lego.

We see a regular core group of 7-8 children attending, however depending how exciting the craft is (and sometimes how wet and rainy it is outside!) we have had up to 22 children crammed into the tiny library doing crafts listening to worship music and Bible stories. But equally, there have been times when just 2 or 3 walk in. When this happens it is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the children more.

We see the greatest numbers at key Christian festival times - Easter and Christmas. There is certainly a hunger to know more about faith. We have had children wanting to read the stories direct in the Bible, children writing and gifting us verses of Scripture and there have been some big questions asked. The aim is not to teach on the Christian faith (there are clear boundaries around what we share for good reason) but it provides an outlet for Children that might be intrigued to ask us questions about what we believe and why in a safe space. We have recently linked with the Beacon youth workers that visit the school at the same time and they often bring children into the club to see what we are up to. The large multicoloured cross on the pulpit was created by the open the book group. Their faces lit up when they saw their work on display in the centre of the church when they attended the church for the Heights Easter service.

Please do pray for more members to join the team. It would be lovely to see the team grow at present the team consists of Donna and Emma. If you are feeling led and can spare an hour 12-1pm term-time on Tuesdays, please speak to Emma or Donna.

Emma Hilson

CRECHE, JUNIOR CHURCH & LIGHTHOUSE

We have a lovely group of children regularly attending crèche now, mostly 3-5 year olds. We regularly have visitors come and join us and enjoy getting to know the visiting children and parents/grandparents over a coffee while the children play. With a group of mostly older children, we are able to have more focused learning times as well as lots of play.

We have had several new families join us in Junior Church, and it has been lovely to see these children settle into the group and the Church family. One of the changes we made this year to Junior Church is to have a 15-20 minute free time at the end of each session. This gives the children opportunities to build friendships and for the leaders to spend more time building relationships with the children. We have really enjoyed having youth helpers on Serving Sundays, and really see them grow in confidence to lead games and small group times. They bring lots of energy, fun, and enthusiasm! As you will have heard from Chris on Sunday mornings, we have been very short of volunteer leaders and helpers. Our heart is to be a really inclusive Junior Church, so to make sure we can serve all the children and their needs, we need to expand the team. We are really grateful to the people who have responded to this call. We now look forward to September with a slight reshuffle in groupings, and several crèche children moving up!

Over the past year, we've hosted several outreach events specifically for children aged 0–11. These have been promoted through local schools, social media, and posters around the village. As a result, we've had the joy of welcoming many village families into the Church for different events. We have continued to work with St. Mary's to put on events, working particularly closely with Sarah Thorne, their children and family worker. After many years serving the community, Sarah has retired and is enjoying a well-earned rest! We're excited to keep working alongside St Mary's in our united vision to share the good news of Jesus with families in our village community.
Some key highlights from the year include:

- Christmas, Easter and Summer Lighthouse: These termly Sunday morning outreach events are full of fun! The teaching is brought to the children in a fun way, with crafts, games, food, singing and more! Jan and Mandy work very hard planning and running these sessions and are supported by a fantastic team of helpers.
- The Light Party and Easter Trail (joint with St. Mary's): Both of these events grow in popularity each year, attracting both church and local village families. We're incredibly grateful for the many volunteers who give their time and energy in so many ways. We continue to pray that every family who attends experiences the love and light of Jesus.

Christmas party: Thank you to Paula and her family for organising a Church Christmas party/disco. We had great fun dancing, playing games and singing along to music old and new!

Junior Church/youth Bowling Trip: We had a brilliant bowling trip in Cambridge earlier this year, followed by lunch. It was a great time of fun and fellowship.

A big thank you to everyone who leads, helps, prays for, and encourages our children each week. It's such a joy to see them continue to grow in their faith and walk with God.

Debbie MacBean

YOUTH GROUP

The youth and young people (YP) group on Sunday mornings is blossoming with increase in numbers and in spiritual growth. The Christian insights and emotional intelligence of some of the young people is humbling.

Who we are:
There are up to 17 youngsters who attend with 14 who are regular

The group consists of 9 older young people who are in school year 9-10 and 8 younger ones (youth) who are in school years 6 and 7.

There are currently six leaders - Ang Wood, Alasdair McBean, Jennie Papa, Tina Rice, Emma Hilson and Janice Rossiter

What we do:
The aim of the group is to provide Christian teaching and fun on Sunday mornings with occasional social events. We use Lumen studies from Youth for Christ, as a basis for most of our sessions.

- 1st Sunday of the month the YP work with adults in a team serving. Some in worship group, some in tech and some in junior church etc
- The Youth meet upstairs in their smaller group
- 2nd and 4th Sundays both groups meet together upstairs and sometimes in the garden
- 3rd Sunday the Youth help with Café church

Several of the YP are off to Uganda shortly.

Future plans:
We are very excited to look forward to an influx of new year 7's in September when we will divide the group by age and meet in different rooms (the upstairs room and the vestry)

The current year 11's will stay in church but can also join other teams if they would like to.

Next term we are thinking of changing the group names as the current ones are rather old fashioned!
Janice Rossiter

RIDLEY STUDENT PLACEMENT (EMMA HILSON)

"Man plans his way, but the Lord establishes His steps" (Proverbs 16:9).

This verse summarises of my Christian walk to date. I write this report after completing my final week of teaching at the college and during my final week in placement at Linton as a Student Family worker.

Background
Five years ago, I was firmly rooted in policing, then unexpectedly God stepped in and made it clear that I needed to study! Graciously, the constabulary granted me a career break to explore Christian ministry and undertake a theology degree at Ridley Hall, and Anglican Theological college. Shortly after starting the course, Linton kindly offered me a volunteer placement as a student family worker.

Last summer, after 15 years of service, I was led to lay my uniform down, hand my warrant card and explore Christian ministry on a deeper more committed level. Since that date there have been countless hurdles and challenges, but God has been gracious and always made a way. Backed by the church, both financially and in prayer, I embarked on a third year of study.

The course
We have covered various modules in the Old Testament, New Testament, relationships management, ministerial practice, further reflective practice and a dissertation.
I am now a few assignments away from obtaining a degree in Theology, Ministry and Mission.

When I responded to the call to study at Ridley I was given simply two words - "Go" and "Grow". I can honestly say that the course and placement has grown me in many ways. Often in ways that I had least expected!

As would be expected from a course in Christian theology, there has been opportunity to develop a broader understanding of the Christian faith alongside deeper Biblical insight to reveal who God is and what that means for us today. However, the

greatest learning has not come from textbooks or lectures, but from what many would term the 'hidden curriculum'. Insight gained by living and doing Christian life alongside others. The greatest learning has come from my placement here at Linton.

The placement
Observing this church walking alongside one another, through trials and celebrations, continually modelling the Christian faith has been inspiring. Praying and worshipping alongside you all the past three years has been a blessing. Hear how God has worked in your lives, guided you through challenges and drawn you closer to Him has been a privilege and humbling. Thank you for sharing your stories

They have taught me to trust in God, listen closer to His still small voice and to follow Christ on a far deeper level than any textbook could ever cover. It has shaped my faith (and my family's faith) considerably.

Next steps
Many people are asking "What now Emma?" ... All I can do is refer back to the verse at the top of this report and say "I'm praying on it"... I will let you know when I know, but in the meantime over the summer, my focus will be firmly on my family. Rob, Eleanor and Oliver have 'given me up' in faith, in many ways the past three years, to residential weeks away at college or late night essay writing so I will be stepping back for a short while to be more with them and listen to God as to what the next season brings.

I would like to express a genuinely heartfelt "Thank you" for your continued support, prayers, and encouragement. 1 Tim 1:12-15

God Bless you all. ***Emma Hilson***

Mission Updates

The Church continues to give 10% of our income to a small number of mission causes, both at home and overseas.

Here is some brief information on all the Causes we regularly support.

Beacon youth trust

The Beacon Youth Trust has had another very full, active and positive year. We are extremely grateful to Linton Free Church who, along with other funders, enable the work to take place. We rely entirely on grants and donations from local organisations (including both churches in the village) and individuals to be able to run the work and have the services of employed youth workers.

Please see the attached annual report of the work of Beacon Youth Trust written for the Parish Council (with whom we have a new 3-year SLA to provide local youth work) in April. It provides a good overview of all the general youth work undertaken during the year and the large number of local young people interacting with this. It does not report on the overtly Christian work of Christian discipleship and enquiry also undertaken by Beacon Youth Trust (as the Parish Council does not provide funding for this). This aspect of the work has continued throughout the year, swapping to meet on Monday afternoons. We are seeking to meet early in September with representatives from both churches to reflect on how this is best organised and focussed for the interest of Christian young people and enquirers as things move forward.

Cynthia Mukoko has been on maternity leave since October. During this time, Gareth Williamson, previously working in a different role for Romsey Mill, has acted as Lead Youth Worker. Prayer would be appreciated as we reflect on possible best ways forward as Cynthia's maternity leave draws to an end and we look at how staffing can work (and be afforded) as the work continues to develop.

The trustees of Beacon Youth Trust (made up of representatives from both Linton Free Church and St Mary's Church) are mindful of the old and rather decayed nature of the Youth Centre situated on the recreation ground. It is a good location and, in many ways, a good facility, but we are well aware that it will have to be replaced at some point. We will report back to both churches (and have had an initial discussion with the Parish Council) as things begin to progress with this.

Uganda Project, 25 July to 7 August

While the planned project to Uganda this summer is not officially a 'Beacon' project, it has considerable overlap in terms of some adults and young people participating and the support provided for it. All funding has also gone through Beacon Youth's accounts (as the obvious place to host this). We are very grateful to Alasdair MacBean, Treasurer of Beacon, for overseeing this. Four young people from the Free Church are participating.

Everyone involved is extremely grateful for the considerable generosity of people at Linton Free Church in supporting this project. It has made a huge difference and seems a concrete example of real Christian giving to help and support others. Please do pray for this project, both for the health and safety of all involved and for the impact we hope that the experience will have on the young people's lives and faith.

Steve Munday, Chair of Trustees, Beacon Youth Trust

Reach Haverhill

Reach continues to carry out its vital work supporting individuals and families in need across Haverhill, the surrounding villages, and Newmarket. Sadly, the demand for their services has remained high, but their commitment to bringing practical help and hope to those facing hardship has not wavered.

As a church, we're proud to support Reach both financially—through regular giving from our tithes—and by hosting fundraising events. This year, we once again held our popular Bangers, Beans and Mash lunch, which raised funds and awareness for their work. We hope to host another event later this year or early next.

We were also privileged to welcome Henry Wilson, Reach's Founder and CEO, to speak at one of our Sunday services. It was inspiring to hear firsthand how God is working through Reach to make a real difference in our local communities.

For more about their work or ways to get involved, visit www.reachhaverhill.org.uk. ***Al Wood***

Through Faith Missions:

We at Linton Free Church continue to support Through Faith Missions (TFM), a Sawston-based charity with over 30 years' experience in equipping and supporting evangelistic outreach across the UK and beyond.

TFM's mission is to share the good news of Jesus Christ in a way that is both biblically faithful and relevant to today's world. Their work includes organising large-scale missions, offering evangelism training, leading chaplaincy work at public events and festivals, and supporting local churches in their own outreach efforts. One of their distinctive approaches is their "Walk Missions," where small teams travel through towns and villages, engaging with people in everyday settings and offering prayer and conversation.

A key part of TFM's vision is to raise up a new generation of evangelists and to explore innovative ways of reaching people with the gospel—whether in the UK or through their growing partnerships overseas, such as in Kenya. They are also preparing for a large Suffolk-wide mission in 2025, which will involve many churches and volunteers.

Last October, we were delighted to welcome Dan Holland from TFM to preach at one of our Sunday services. His message was full of encouragement and practical ideas for sharing God's love in our community.

If you're interested in finding out more about TFM's work or getting involved in a future mission, do visit their website at www.throughfaithmissions.org. ***Al Wood***

The Khoury's

Issam & Abla Khoury evangelise and minister with Arab communities in Halifax, Canada and travel to Jordan when they can to support churches they helped to establish.

Issam visited the Church recently whilst travelling and shared at café church how God had spoken to him in his ministry. ***Mark Newton***

A note from Issam & Abla on the 27th of June:

Today, Abla and I celebrated our 55th wedding anniversary.

Our three children called and congratulated us. Bassam and Diala said something like, "How did you manage to stay together all these years?"

As Abla and I reflected on these years, we came up with an answer. In addition to our increasing love towards each other, we concluded that we are where we are now by (1) God's grace and by (2) God's faithfulness.

By the grace of God, we were able to overcome difficulties in our marriage and to resolve conflicts between us. We know we could not have done these things by our own strength or wisdom. As we reviewed some of these situations, we could vividly see how God's grace has enabled us to forgive each other and grow in loving each other. (First Corinthians 15:10)

By the faithfulness of God, we have been able to reach this stage in our lives. God has been faithful in providing for our needs, because we trusted Him for ourselves and our three wonderful children. In our ministry of evangelism and making disciples in Syria,

Lebanon, England, Jordan, and Halifax, God has been faithful to use us to impact many people's lives despite our weaknesses. (Second Timothy 2:13)

Abla and I are grateful for your commitment to support us, to pray for us, and to encourage us through your many letters, emails, and telephone calls. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

At this age, Abla and I are committed and motivated to spread the gospel and to disciple believers for His Kingdom wherever the Lord leads us.

Still serving the Master with you by His grace.

Issam and Abla

SMALL GROUPS

WEDNESDAY EVENING – BURNS

For some time the Elders had recognised the need for another Home group in Linton and last summer, Alison and I felt God was asking us to open up our home for a new group. We were particularly keen to encourage newer Christians who may have recently completed Alpha to join us, as well as others of course.

We had a really good response with about 14 people initially expressing interest. As time has gone on, some have found it difficult to attend but we still consider them part of our group and support them in prayer and sometimes in practical ways. A few others have joined during the year and the group has gelled well.

The first series we did was based on Alex Jacob's Discipleship book, followed by a series on Fruit of the Spirit. We've been really encouraged by the way people have engaged and participated and expressed their appreciation.

Prayer is an important part of our evenings and earlier this year we decided to devote a whole evening to praying for Hannah Gilbert and the whole Gilbert family as Debs is part of our group. This happened to be around the time that Chris preached on Fasting and Prayer and so we suggested that we should all try and fast in some way during that day. I think everyone did some form of fasting and we really felt God's presence with us that evening.

Due to our recent absence and everyone being very busy, we've not been able to meet much since Easter but hope to meet regularly again from September. ***Ian Burns***

WEDNESDAY MORNING

The Wednesday Morning Housegroup is thriving - we meet in the green room at LFC and regularly have up to 16 people in attendance. We start from about 10am with a cuppa and a good old natter and catch up, followed by a bible study and prayer and we aim to finish by 12 noon. Everybody is happy to attend and leaves feeling seen and cared for.

Unfortunately, that is not the whole story.

This group was started 20ish years ago to cater for those who find accessing evening meetings difficult for many reasons. As everybody is now 20ish years older we are increasingly experiencing many health issues. We lost dear Sarah Dev recently and have dear Celia missing at the moment. We have recently had two members with skin cancers removed and many people facing difficulty accessing doctors and hospitals. Most people in the group have mobility problems, joint pain, sight or hearing problems and many have more than one of these issues.

I feel that I need to ask the church for more support.

I have ladies in their 80s very willingly making hot drinks for each other and carrying them across the room. The system works well and nobody complains, as I say the group is thriving but I can foresee a situation arising when this will no longer be the case.

So, if you have time on Wednesday mornings to support our group, or if you are on your own and would appreciate company, please come along and join in.

See me for more details. God bless ***Paula Martin***

Wednesday Evening – Rodgers

Chris & Caroline Rodgers' home group continues to meet every other week on Zoom. We start with a bible study, sharing prayer requests and updates, and close in prayer for the group. We are currently mid-way through Matthew's gospel and before that worked through the book of Daniel. We meet for in-person social events around once a term. People from 7 families have joined regularly during this last year. ***Chris Rodgers***

Tuesday Evening – Beta Group

The Beta group continues to meet as a house group every Tuesday evening at 8pm on zoom. Zoom serves the group well as we have members with young children and those who live a fair distance away. We average 8 members and this year we have a new member who joins as and when she can. We are a lively group who enjoys the fellowship and open discussions, but we also continue to pray for each other throughout the week with updates on our whatsapp group.

This year we have completed a study about self-esteem – seeing ourselves as God sees us, a discipleship course based on Alex Jacobs book and we are currently following the prayer 24/7 course on 'unanswered prayer' as we endeavour to support a member who has recently been bereaved. ***Tina Rice***

Wednesday Evening – Al & Ang Wood

Our Wednesday night house group continues to be a place of warmth, growth, and deep community. We feel incredibly blessed to gather each week with a group of people from a wide range of life stages and backgrounds, all united by a shared desire to know Jesus more and support one another on that journey.

This past year has brought its share of joys and challenges, and it has been a real privilege to witness the way our group cares for one another—both through faithful prayer and practical help. Whether someone is facing a personal challenge or celebrating good news, the group is always quick to rally round, offer encouragement, and remind one another of God's presence and goodness.

Our studies continue to centre around the Lifebuilder series, which prompt rich conversation and learning. A particular favourite this year was a study on Gratitude, which sparked some of our most meaningful discussions. More recently, we've been exploring the parables of Jesus, and after the summer break, we're excited to begin a new series based on Practicing the Way by John Mark Comer.

Fellowship and fun are also important to us, and highlights of the year include our summer BBQ and our festive Christmas party, both of which gave us the chance to deepen friendships and welcome others in.

Our WhatsApp group remains active throughout the week as we share updates, encouragement, and prayer requests—helping the support and unity we experience on Wednesday evenings to carry through into daily life.

A verse that continues to capture the heart of our group is this:

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." – Galatians 6:2

We're so grateful for what God is doing in and through our group, and we look forward to seeing how He continues to shape us in the coming year. ***Al Wood***

Thursday Evening – The Binks

Numbers dwindled a little over the last year with the departure of Ruth to her native Scotland and Penny Coulson joining Paul at Ian's group coupled with Steve's rather overloaded schedule and various illnesses leaving Thursday Evening Homegroup reduced to a core membership of Penny Cook, Richard Silk, Mandy and Alex and ourselves. With people being away and work commitments the numbers have on occasion been very low and we began pondering the future. We had a season in the early part of 2025 meeting on-line (as usual) but solely for prayer. (And a wonderful Burn's Night Supper at the Silks)

After Alex and Mandy's long-awaited move to Sawston in February we took the decision to mix things up a bit with Alex and Mandy offering to host in-person meetings. We announced that after Easter we would start with a new series of studies beginning on May 1st. We now meet in person at the Jacobs' for the first two Thursdays of each month with these

sessions led by Alex on the theme of Women in the Old Testament. Remaining Thursdays are online sessions just for prayer within the group.

We have been blessed by the addition of visitors (Janice and last week Penny Coulson made a return) and a couple of new members (Helen and Carmen) so, while we will probably revert to just online over the summer, come September we plan to continue this split in-person/online arrangement and Alex will be continuing with Women of the New Testament.
It's also high time we planned another social! ***Dominic Binks***

PROPERTY GROUP

It's been a quieter year on the property front but still plenty going on. Old, historic buildings like ours always present challenges to maintain and to keep functional and suitable for both Church and community use.

The largest job completed was the rebuilding of the wall at the front of the Church hall, shared with houses in Horn Lane. Over time, builders debris had accumulated in the narrow gap between the hall and the wall and ivy roots had broken through the wall in places, destabilising it. The wall has been skillfully rebuilt, all the debris removed to reveal the drainage conduit and the ivy dealt with. Fortunately, we can now see that there is not a problem with damp on the hall wall but on the inside, where the chairs are stored, the wall does need replastering and decorating. Thanks to the Rodgers family for allowing Shane the builder to do most of the work from their garden and for supplying water and electricity!

There are a number of other issues in the hall which need to be addressed, including redecoration, improving lighting, reviewing storage and upgrading the kitchen. Some of these items are potentially very costly and so we do need to start thinking more strategically about how this space will need to be used in the future. A working group has started thinking about the kitchen and, over the summer, we hope to sort out the various storage areas and cupboards that are perhaps not really being best used.

This summer we will also have our "quinquennial" (5 yearly) inspection by a surveyor. We anticipate issues will be identified that we need to address although we do inspect the buildings annually ourselves and try to action things that need addressing.
Once again our thanks to our property team of Richard Silk, Will Crowhurst, Doug Irish and Tim Rossiter who quietly get on with regular and one off maintenance jobs. Paul Coulson has also now joined the team. Thank you to others who've helped out from time to time and also those that regularly cut the grass in spring and summer. I'd also like to thank our cleaner, Anna Campbell, who in addition to keeping our buildings clean also undertakes some caretaking duties such as setting up furniture for Cafe and other events, putting bins out and undertaking regular electrical & fire alarm testing.

We always have a long list of jobs that need doing around the Church and will need some other volunteers to help with these. Look out for appeals for some of these jobs and possibly a work day in the autumn when we can tackle some of the jobs together.
Ian Burns

FINANCE REPORT

Linton Free Church – Report on accounts as at 30 June 2025

	30 June 25	Projection 25	30 June 24
Income			
Giving	52,264	49,550	56,589
Tax recovered	0	0	0
Investment Income	2,221	1,848	1,240
'Ministry' gifts	4,760	5,000	5,356
Property	540	540	1,540
Property Grants	0	0	0
Other Receipts	1,140	1,290	2,285
Normal Income Total	**£60,925**	**£57,880**	**£67,010**
Non Church Receipts & Spec Collections	12,439	0	3,810
Total Income	**£73,364**	**£57,880**	**£70,820**
Expenditure			
Ministry	9,730	8,524	15,488
Mission	6,412	14,188	2,067
URC Ministry & Mission	31,596	32,250	28,908
Church & Hall Upkeep	13,077	9,825	8,728
Other Payments	2,076	3,950	7,017
Property	0	0	0
Normal Expenditure Total	**£62,890**	**£68,737**	**£59,099**
Non Church Payments etc	7,922	0	3,110
Total Expenditure	**£70,812**	**£68,737**	**£62,208**
Net Normal Income / Expenditure	**-£1,966**	**-£10,857**	**£7,911**
Total Cash Balance	**£99,617**		

Comments:

Income:

The Giving figure is much as expected.

Non Church Receipts and Special Collections relate to the income from Beacon, Reach, Sale of Cakes and Mosquito Nets. (The Mosquito Nets total is currently £4,517 and with gift aid will exceed £5,000).

Expenditure

We have started to receive reimbursement from Haverhill and Synod relating to Ministry costs.

The contribution of £4,014 relating to the Uganda trip has been paid from the Lyn Agnew Legacy.

The repairs to the church wall costing £5,050 has been paid.

Overall

I have adjusted the Projection figures to take into account when we normally receive Gift Aid. Despite the modest net deficit, the financial position looks satisfactory.

We should not forget that almost 10% of our income, say £6,093, is earmarked for Charitable Donations, and this would then increase the net loss, but this will be covered by Gift Aid.

Will Crowhurst

I just want to follow up Will's report by thanking him again for all the hard work he does behind the scenes looking after our finances with great skill and diligence. This year we have started to try and give him a bit more support by setting up a Finance group consisting of Will, myself, Matt Waller and Rowena Biddlecombe. This is still in the early stages but we were able to help Will with the Church budgeting process and have begun looking at various Financial policies that we should have in place as a Charity.

We must also thank each and every one of you for your ongoing amazing generosity and faithfulness in giving. Whenever we have had an appeal, you have responded brilliantly.

Above all we give thanks to God for his endless generosity that enables us to continue His work in this Church and community.

2.Corinthians 9:8 "God is able to graciously provide you with everything, so that you will always have all you need – with plenty to help others too". Also see verses 9 –15 and give glory and thanks to God!

Ian Burns

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01/01/2024	To	31/12/2024

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Giving	115,302	-	-	115,302	102,526
Tax recovered	23,689	2,100	-	25,789	25,557
Investment Income	1,230	-	-	1,230	1,028
Rental Income	2,218	-	-	2,218	1,954
Specific Ministry Gifts	-	9,241	-	9,241	6,960
Special Collections	-	1,308	-	1,308	5,533
Other Receipts	-	8,227	-	8,227	3,505
Property	-	2,080	-	2,080	12,480
Property Grants	-	-	8,563	8,563	83,210
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	142,439	22,956	8,563	173,958	242,752
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	142,439	22,956	8,563	173,958	242,752
A3 Payments					
Ministry	20,342	11,067	-	31,409	28,807
Mission	30,882	3,471	-	34,353	28,585
URC Ministry & Mission Fund	57,816	-	-	57,816	48,792
Church & Hall Upkeep	12,711	4,150	-	16,861	22,840
Property	1,036	5,677	8,563	15,276	115,209
Other Payments	4,641	5,493	-	10,135	9,815
Special Collections	-	1,308	-	1,308	-
	-		-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	127,427	31,167	8,563	167,157	254,150
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	127,427	31,167	8,563	167,157	254,150
Net of receipts/(payments)	15,012	- 8,211	-	6,801	- 11,397
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	64,822	25,442	-	90,264	101,661
Cash funds this year end	79,835	17,231	-	97,065	90,264

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	General Account	36,330	-	-
	Special Funds Account	-	7,231	-
	Deposit Account	40,000	10,000	
	COIF Account	3,505	-	-
	Total cash funds (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	79,835	17,231	-

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	See Notes		-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	IAN BURNS	14/7/25
Jennie Rea	T. PAPA	14/7/25

Linton United Reformed Church Year ended 31st December 2024
Notes relating to accounts

Voluntary Income	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	**Total**
Cash collections	1,800	855	0	2,655
Non- Gift Aid giving	19,810	5,350	0	25,159
Post Gift Aid giving	3,600	1,800	0	5,400
Gift Aid giving	90,092	8,550	0	98,642
Tax Recovered from Gift Aid giving	23,689	2,100	0	25,789
				157,645
Other Income				
Dividends & Interest	1,230	0	0	1,230
Rental income	2,218	0	0	2,218
Property Grant	0	0	8,563	8,563
Non church receipts	0	2,993	0	2,993
Special Collections	0	1,308	0	1,308
	0	0	0	**18,313**
Total	0	0	0	**173,958**

Cost to Organisation of Ministry	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	**Total Cost**
Additional Ministry etc	9,755	11,067	0	20,822
Car mileage & allowance	3,485	0	0	3,485
Manse costs	3,992	0	0	3,992
Minister's expenses	1,522	0	0	1,522
Telephone and Mobile	1,129	0	0	1,129
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0
National Insurance	458	0	0	458
				31,409

Cost to Organisation of Mission	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	**Total Cost**
Catering	1,062	0	0	1,062
Mission Donations	14,710	1,207	0	15,917
Creche	0	95	0	95
Junior Church	0	1,008	0	1,008
Miscellaneous Mission	0	161	0	161
Training	7,566	800	0	8,366
Worship Group	543	0	0	543
Youth Work	0	201	0	201
Beacon Youth Trust	7,000	0	0	7,000
				34,353

URC Ministry & Mission Fund	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	**Total Cost**
URC Ministry & Mission Fund	57,816	0		57,816

Cost to Organisation of Church & Hall upkeep	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	**Total Cost**
Cleaner	2,875	0	0	2,875
Consumables	541	0	0	541
Electricity	2,151	0	0	2,151
Equipment	25	0	0	25
Gas	1,356	129	0	1,485
Insurance	4,812	0	0	4,812
Repairs	0	4,021	0	4,021
Church Telephone	700	0	0	700
TV Licence	170	0	0	170
Water	82	0	0	82
				16,861

Cost to Organisation of Property Improvements / Repairs	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	**Total Cost**
Professional Fees etc	0	900	0	900
Improvements & Repairs	1036	4,777	8,563	14,376
				15,276

Other Costs to the Organisation	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	**Total Cost**
Church Expenses	172	0	0	172
Special Events	250	0	0	250
Miscellaneous	1,279	2,500	0	3,779
Non Church Funds	0	2,993		2,993
Pastoral Gifts & Expenses	888	0	0	888
Preaching fees	1,210	0	0	1,210
Printing & Publicity	843	0	0	843
Special Collections	0	1,308	0	1,308
				11,443
Total	127,427	31,167	8,563	**167,157**

Financial Information for Annual Report 2024

Funds	Income	Expenditure	C/f	Balance Brought Forward	Balance Forward
Restricted	18,655	-26,865	-8,211	25,442	17,231
Endowment	8,563	-8,563	0	0	0
Third Party	2,999	-2,999	0	0	0
General	143,741	-128,729	15,012	64,822	79,835
Total	173,958	-167,157	6,801	90,264	97,065

Other Interests

The United Reformed Church (Eastern Province) Trust
hold the following for the benefit of Linton United Reformed Church

COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund Units	Value 31/12/24	£13,558
Church & Hall at Horn Lane, Linton, Cambridge. Valued for insurance purposes during 2002 and increased in line with the recommendations of the insurer.		£4,450,950

Restricted, Endowment and Third Party Funds Account for Year Ended 31st December 2024

Opening balance at 1st January 2024		
Represented by:		
Building / Property Fund	15,157.72	
Lyn Agnew Legacy	4,914.00	
Church Ministry	26.47	
Property Grant	0.00	
Proposed Property Refurbishment	5,677.05	
Mission	66.40	
I & A Khouri	0.00	
Church Gas	0.00	
Repairs to wall	0.00	
Training	0.00	
Special Collections	0.00	
Non Church Funds	0.00	
		25,441.64
Receipts		
Building / Property Fund	1,080.00	
Lyn Agnew Legacy	0.00	
Church Ministry	11,040.55	
Property Grant	8,562.96	
Proposed Property Refurbishment	0.00	
Mission	2,605.00	
I & A Khouri	2,000.00	
Church Gas	129.00	
Repairs to wall	1,000.00	
Training	800.00	
Special Collections	1,308.37	
Non Church Funds	2,993.45	
		31,519.33
Payments		
Building / Property Fund	-4,021.02	
Lyn Agnew Legacy	-500.00	
Church Ministry	-11,067.02	
Property Grant	-8,562.96	
Proposed Property Refurbishment	-5,677.05	
Mission	-2,671.40	
I & A Khouri	-2,000.00	
Church Gas	-129.00	
Repairs to wall	0.00	
Training	-800.00	
Special Collections	-1,308.37	
Non Church Funds	-2,993.45	
		-39,730.27
Closing balance at 31st December 2024		£17,230.70
Represented by:		
Building / Property Fund		12,216.70
Lyn Agnew Legacy		4,014.00
Church Ministry		0.00
Property Grant		0.00
Proposed Property Refurbishment		0.00
Mission		0.00
I & A Khouri		0.00
Church Gas		0.00
Repairs to wall		1,000.00
Training		0.00
Special Collections		0.00
Non Church Funds		0.00
		£17,230.70

Third Party Funds Account for Year Ended 31st December 2024

Opening balance at 1 January 2024		
Represented by:		
Special Funds Account	24,441.64	
Deposit Account	1,000.00	
		25,441.64
Receipts	31,519.33	
		31,519.33
Payments	-39,730.27	
		-39,730.27
Closing balance at 31st December 2024		£17,230.70
Represented by:		
Special Funds Account		7,230.70
Deposit Account		10,000.00
Total		£17,230.70

NB Mission Donations was previously known as Charitable Donations

Funds Received 2024

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Third party funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £
Voluntary Income					
Cash collections	1,800	855	0	0	2,655
Non- Gift Aid giving	19,810	6,658	2,993	8,563	38,024
Post Gift Aid Giving	3,800	1,800	0	0	5,400
Gift Aid giving	90,092	8,550	0	0	98,642
		0	0	0	
Total	115,302	17,863	2,993	8,563	144,721
Gift Aid	23,689	2,100	0	0	25,789
Other Income					
Dividends & Interest	1,230	0	0	0	1,230
Rental income	2,218	0	0	0	2,218
Property Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Other Receipts	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3,448	0	0	0	3,448
Total	142,439	19,963	2,993	8,563	173,958

Expenditure 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Third party funds	Endowment funds	Total funds
Ministry					
Car mileage & allowance	3,484.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Manse costs	3,992.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Manse Telephone & Minister's Mobile	1,129.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Minister's expenses	1,522.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Additional Ministry etc	9,754.84	11,067.02	0.00	0.00	
Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
National Insurance	458.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Totals	20,341.51	11,067.02	0.00	0.00	31,408.53
Mission					
Catering	1,061.98	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Mission Donations	14,710.39	1,206.61	0.00	0.00	
Creche	0.00	94.76	0.00	0.00	
Junior Church	0.00	1,008.18	0.00	0.00	
Miscellaneous Mission	0.00	160.82	0.00	0.00	
Training	7,566.36	800.00	0.00	0.00	
Worship Group	543.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Youth Work	0.00	201.03	0.00	0.00	
Beacon Youth Trust	7,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Totals	30,881.75	3,471.40	0.00	0.00	34,353.15
URC Ministry & Mission Fund					
URC Ministry & Mission Fund	57,816.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Totals	57,816.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	57,816.00
Church & Hall upkeep					
Cleaner	2,874.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Consumables	540.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Electricity	2,150.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Equipment	24.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Gas	1,356.18	129.00	0.00	0.00	
Insurance	4,811.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Repairs	0.00	4,021.02	0.00	0.00	
Church Telephone	700.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TV Licence	169.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Water	82.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Totals	12,710.65	4,150.02	0.00	0.00	16,860.67
Property Improvements / Repairs					
Professional Fees etc	0.00	900.00	0.00	0.00	
Improvements / Repairs	1,035.55	4,777.05	8,562.96	0.00	
	1,035.55	5,677.05	8,562.96	0.00	15,275.56
Other Payments					
Church Expenses	171.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Special Events	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Miscellaneous	1,027.44	500.00	0.00	0.00	
Non Church Transfers	0.00	2,000.00	2,993.45	0.00	
Specific Collections / Giving	0.00	1,308.37	0.00	0.00	
Pastoral Gifts & Expenses	887.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Preaching fees	1,210.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Printing & Publicity	842.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	
SUMUP Charges	251.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Totals	4,641.13	3,808.37	2,993.45	0.00	11,442.95
Total	**127,426.59**	**28,173.86**	**11,556.41**	**0.00**	**167,156.86**

NB Mission Donations was previously known as Charitable Donations
and Special Collections was known as Charitable Donations - Special Collections

Linton United Reformed Church
Calculated balances as at 31 December 2024

	R&P Accounts		Calculated Bank Balances	
Unrestricted funds	£79,834.73		**General Account**	£36,329.58
Restricted funds	£17,230.70		**Special Funds Account**	£7,230.70
Third partyfunds	£0.00		**Deposit Account**	£50,000.00
			COIF Account	£3,505.15
Total	**£97,065.43**			**£97,065.43**

Actual Bank Balances as at 31 December 2025

	Debit	Credit	
General Account			
Statement Balance			£47,162.74
Outstanding entries to be passed			
Credits not yet processed			
Credit 500424		£231.00	
Transfer from Special Funds Account		£50.84	
Debits not yet processed			
Reach Community Projects	-£2,305.00		
Issam Khouri	-£2,305.00		
Reach Community Projects	-£110.00		
Through Faith Missions	-£2,305.00		
KickStart Coffee	-£3,980.00		
Tear Fund	-£110.00		
	-£11,115.00	£281.84	£36,329.58
Special Funds Account			
Statement Balance			£7,281.54
Outstanding entries to be passed			
Debits not yet processed			
Transfer to General Funds Account	-£50.84		
	-£50.84	£0.00	£7,230.70
Deposit Account			
Statement Balance			£50,000.00
COIF Account			
Statement Balance			£3,505.15

Linton United Reformed Church Year ended 31st December 2024
Miscellaneous Information

	Unrestricted	Restricted
Section A Receipts and payments accounts		
Income		
Tax Recovered		
Church Ministry		£1,800.00
Mission		£300.00
Total		£2,100.00
Specific Ministry Gifts		
Church Ministry		£9,240.55
Total		£9,240.55
Specific Giving		
Mission Donations		£1,105.00
Mission		£1,200.00
Training		£800.00
Repair to Church Wall		£1,000.00
I & A Khouri		£2,000.00
Special Collections		£1,308.37
Total		£7,413.37
Non Church Income		
Beacon Youth trust		£2,993.45
Total		£2,993.45
Expenditure		
Ministry		
Church Ministry		£11,067.02
Total		£11,067.02
Mission		
Mission Donations		£1,206.61
Creche		£94.76
Junior Church		£1,008.18
Miscellaneous		£660.82
Training		£800.00
Youth Group		£201.03
Special Collections		£13,008.37
Total		£16,979.77
Non Church Income Transfers		
Beacon Youth trust		£2,993.45
Total		£2,993.45
Church & Hall Upkeep		
Gas		£129.00
Repairs		£4,021.02
Total		£4,150.02
Proposed Property Refurbishment		
Professional Fees		£900.00
Miscellaneous Fees		£1,455.00
Property Improvements & Repairs		£11,885.01
Total		£14,240.01

Linton United Reformed Church Refurbishment 2024

Income

	Income	
Donations	£0.00	£0.00
Gift Aid	£0.00	£0.00
Grant from Listed Places of Worship	£1,481.80	
Grant from Thermosafe Foundation	£2,490.00	
Grant from URC Eastern Synod (* see below)	£4,591.16	
		£8,562.96
Total Income for 2023		**£8,562.96**

Expenditure

	Expenditure	
AV System	-£2,490.00	
Main Building Contractor	-£7,235.08	
Fixtures & Fittings	-£3,159.93	
Professional Fees	-£900.00	
Miscellaneous	-£455.00	
Total Expenditure for 2023		**-£14,240.01**
Net Income		**-£5,677.05**
Income Brought forward		**£5,677.05**
Balance Carried Forward		**£0.00**

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Linton United Reformed Church		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2024	**Charity no (if any)**	1200295
Set out on pages	1 - 10		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* *Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed: [signature] **Date:** 5/04/25

Name: Keith Doughty

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

Address: 5A Greenacres Park, Debenham Corner,
Wetheringsett, Suffolk
IP14 5QE

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	