



KINDLE

**Newsletter of the Romford
United Reformed Church at
Western Road**

February 2025

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

It is good to be back at work among you after a long period of sick leave. Thank you for your prayers, understanding and concern over the last months. It has not been easy dealing with a number of health issues, physical and mental, rest, patience, light exercise and prayer were required. Initially I am working reduced hours in both roles. For the church I will be leading worship once a month, doing some pastoral work and attending meetings. My usual work pattern is Mondays and Tuesdays are church days; Wednesdays and Thursdays College days, Friday day off. This is not like the law of the Medes and Persians unalterable or rigid, so if an issue arises on a college day you can still contact me.

I want to give a big thank you to the elders and others who have kept the life, worship and witness of the congregation going over the last few months, they have done a marvellous job. As ever this shows that the leadership of the church is about working as a team, sharing responsibility and that nobody is indispensable.

Over the period I was off work, time for reading, always a pleasurable activity, increased and I read quite widely although many of the books would be classed as whodunits, read and put aside, others like the Bible were read regularly. There was also a slim volume of poetry *Extravagant Love* by Mary Lean that I kept coming back to and one poem/prayer in particular

I am
I am the rock and the tectonic shift,
The shelter and the raging storm;
I am the still point and the spinning stars,
Glimpsed but unknowable,
present and far beyond.
I am the candle and the darkness,
the answer and the questions.
I am home-coming and the journey too.
Grab hold and I'll switch shape —
and yet I do not change.
You can't control me, grasp me, catch me,
second-guess or fathom what I'll do.
My sight spans aeons, lightyears, space.
Hold fast to this alone:
I am — and you are mine.

Over the coming months I am looking forward to getting back to full speed and continuing to work and worship among you especially as we see the shoots of spring and new growth emerge slowly, holding fast to the last line of that poem.

Akison

news



A big thank you to all who organised and helped with the winter collection for the Whitechapel Mission. A big thank you to all who brought clothes, over 100 bags were gratefully taken away by Tony Miller.



Whitechapel Mission

In a recent letter from Keith Aldred he shares with us that some of their 'guests' review their services online and quotes from one :-

“Homeless charity serving up a full English breakfast every single day of the year!

A completely unbiased sanctuary, catering to all and anyone who is capable of walking through the doors.

Come early at 6.00am & get your name on the list for a free hot shower and brand new full set of quality clothes and shoes.

Hot teas and coffees served from 6am to 10am, with breakfast starting at 8am. Bathrooms available with free toiletries on request. Sit and enjoy a Netflix movie in company with London's homeless patrons, meet and talk with others, or sit quietly alone without harassment.

This is a totally non-judgmental environment, and although the organization has a strict and thoroughly enforced policy of absolutely no drugs or alcohol on site and an immediate and permanent banning if caught. Just outside the doors you will see people bent over and slumped against the walls lining the streets, smoking crack pipes and drinking alcohol with the occasional argument or brawl breaking out, and police quickly arriving on scene.

This place and its staff especially get a 10/10 from me. “

Olive

Converts – whether from a Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or an ethnic/tribal background – face the most severe restrictions, discrimination and attacks in Bangladesh. Fearing attack from extremists, they often gather in small house churches or secret groups.

Persecution against men is often more public than that against women; men can be beaten, tortured and threatened, whilst women can face sexual assault, harassment, forced marriage and divorce.

Church leaders are particularly at risk of arrest, although imprisonment is rare.

Churches that evangelise among the Muslim majority face persecution, but even traditional churches such as the Roman Catholic Church may experience attacks or threats made to their clergy.

Conversion to Christianity is viewed as a betrayal, leading to hostility from the community, local leaders and even their own families.

Christians who belong to ethnic minorities can experience persecution on two fronts – first for their ethnicity; second for their faith.

Converts (mostly from Islam, but also from Hinduism, Buddhism or traditional religions) are most at risk of persecution in Bangladesh.

Women and girls – particularly converts – are most vulnerable to both religious and human rights violations from their immediate family, extended family, friends, neighbours and local community.

Christians belonging to ethnic or refugee communities, where they are in a religious minority, can be subject to significant violence. “In many areas, radical groups are compiling lists of converted Christians to attack their houses.”

Bangladesh has risen three places in the latest World Watch List. Although violent protests in August 2024 were largely started by student groups angry about job quota systems, the violence spilled over and targeted Christians. Radical groups used the chaos to attack Christian communities, especially converts



Minister
Rev'd Alison Davis 01708 727955
davisallison7@gmail.com

Kindle
robinmorrison21@outlook.com
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“Legacy: On a Bet and a Prayer”

28 Feb, 2025

SHEERAH NETWORK PRODUCTIONS

Friday | 18:30 – 21:00 BST

ABOUT THE DOCUMENTARY

The Sheerah Network Productions is proud to present "Legacy: On a Bet and a Prayer," a powerful documentary about the life of Mary Stretch, one of the first Black female producer/presenters on BBC radio and television.

Directed by Lisa Leonce and Oge Austin-Chukwu, this film offers a moving exploration of leadership, resilience, and the pursuit of equity, with a special focus on the challenges and triumphs of Black and ethnic minority women in leadership roles. Mary Stretch’s journey serves as an inspiration for anyone facing adversity, reminding us of the strength that comes from faith, perseverance, and a commitment to uplifting others.

St Edwards Church - Romford

5 Park End Road,
Romford RM1 4AT



EVENT AGENDA

6:30 PM

REGISTRATION

Welcome reception. Q&A by
Merchandise on sale.

7:00 PM

PART 1: LEGACY FILM

On a Bet and a Prayer - Feat
Stretch.

8:00 PM

BREAK

8:25 PM

PART 2: Q & A

With the film Producers/Directors,
experienced leaders/business owners
various fields. Plus Mary Stretch.

9:00 PM

CLOSE

WHY THIS SCREENING MATTERS FOR CHURCHES

This documentary aligns with core Christian values of social justice, community empowerment, and equality. Churches have long been central to promoting inclusive leadership and supporting the underrepresented. Mary Stretch's story demonstrates how faith and resilience can empower individuals to overcome obstacles and inspire others to do the same.

This screening offers church leaders and congregants an opportunity to gain insights into how faith intersects with leadership and diversity, encouraging reflection on their role in building a more inclusive community. By attending, church members can be inspired to take action within their own communities, fostering a stronger culture of support, unity, and equity for all.



Mary Stretch [Former Producer/Presenter on BBC R

"I believe God called me to inspire Black and ethnic minority women
foundation through life's challenges, including my battle with
Multiple Sclerosis. I want viewers to leave with a sense of hope—knowing that through hard
work, and
resilience, they can overcome any obstacle and succeed."

ABOUT SHEERAH NETWORK



members can enjoy **£9.99** tickets with the discount code "Church", valid until 4th January 2025!

Sponsored by
St Edward the Confessor
RC Church

TICKETS & TRAILER

Limited Special Offer: Church

Limited Early bird Offer: £7.99

We look forward to
even
future

Lisa Leonce

Dr. Oge Austin-Chukwu



Book Now



Watch Here

ABOUT THE FOUNDERS:

Lisa Leonce: Executive coach, entrepreneur who founded “efiL Limited” with 25+ years working with clients and organisations in leadership, justice and equity.

Dr. Oge Austin-Chukwu: A medical doctor, leadership coach, and author with over 25 years of experience, passionate about justice and equality.