



Anna and Chris Hembury

Link Letter no. 46 | August 2025

Contact details:
hemburys@gmail.com



Location: Britain



What we do: Sharing life with people on the margins and supporting them to connect with themselves, each other, the planet and God.



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus with people unconnected to church

Dear friends,

In-tension-al community

Well, it seems it's the end of an era for Matt's House, the intentional community CMS entrusted us with looking after when it bought the former vicarage (where we were already supporting and doing community with folk who lived there). The dream was always to have a Christ-centred residential community who sought to serve, in Jesus' kin-dom establishing ways, the local community. We already had a few soul-full and justice-hungry miscreants up for some version of inhabiting the place, and we hoped and prayed for a couple or family who had been followers of the Way for longer, who might be able to provide a stabilising keel and Spirit-guided rudder to this ship of fools! Turns out that was a big ask for a place like our corner of Hull and there weren't many – actually any – of that ilk, looking for that kind of lifestyle-downgrading folly.

Still, over the many years, we've had people come and go, rules and rhythms attempted – rules brought out allergic reactions; rhythms got going, dance partners changed, music changed, rhythms got going again, circumstances shifted, lost the rhythm, tried again, COVID happened, everyone was exhausted, re-found people for the dance, music back on, slowly finding our feet, getting ready for a good ol' boogie and... sadly, it's just no longer financially sustainable.

It has been hard work trying to hold this community and even harder trying to hold the hope that all the potential – that constantly felt within touching distance – might come to fruition. So, in some ways, at this point in our service we feel some relief in putting down what we were carrying. But we feel much more grief for the ending of something we poured a lot of love into; much more celebration for all the prayers prayed, meals shared, activism generated, youth work expanded, and people supported, sheltered and connected into a wider family; much more gratitude for the privilege of being, and having, companions to wrestle with as we figure out our faith together in this context. We have loved the honest holding of different people and perspectives in tension. We have loved the creativity that tension has birthed. We have loved the strength that tension has provided, to find our footing as we cross cultures and faith perspectives (so much harder to walk on a slack rope). Please give thanks with us for all God's blessing and provision for Matt's House for the



Weekly community meal at Matt's House

Support Anna and Chris Hembury:
churchmissionsociety.org/hembury

**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



past 10+ years, and for God's guidance as we continue to explore how to be a dispersed yet hospitable Christ-centred community together in our neighbourhood.

In-tents-ional community

If Matt's House felt like Good Friday's grieving, our annual summer camp felt like a resurrection reminder. Our responsibilities were mostly centred around the Crew (young people too old to be campers but who can come and serve) and potwash (keeps us humble!). The camp is a strange contradiction of a pretty old-school Christian camp – complete with canvas ridge tents and evening "God slot" – and a work-in-progress contextual re-imagining of how to share Jesus' story for non-churched children and young people. Every year we witness

those we bring from Hull finding life and love and liberation in undramatic ways that change their own stories.

We had some young people on Crew this year who have never been to Breakfast Club or our after-school club or any of our assemblies. They had no previous experience of the Christian faith, other than our young leaders' weekend earlier this year, and have only been coming to our youth club since September last year. And they seemed to get it, the point of it all. They didn't make a commitment to Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, they haven't started reading the Bible (as far as we know!) and they aren't asking to be disciplined in the faith. But they lapped up the whole experience, from worship songs and memory verses to being a part of the community and serving others, and we know it wasn't only camp they encountered in that field. Our part is small, but we are excited to walk alongside them and continue to make space for them to adventure with God.

Potwash, meanwhile, was a place for scouring away at stubborn stuff, wrestling with the theological implications of safeguarding policies and some of the best conversations we had on camp!

We came home from camp simultaneously exhausted and exhilarated, as we do every year, with a renewed sense of what all the rest of the year is all about.

Please pray for the children and young people who came away with us. Life back in Hull can be a hard re-entry after being held so differently and experiencing something inexplicably life-changing. One of the other leaders at camp summed up our prayers perfectly when she put together some of the daily memory verses we taught the campers: May they know that they are fabulous! (Psalm 139:14). May they understand that absolutely nothing can get between them and God's love (Romans 8:39). And may they be strong and courageous, not be afraid or dismayed, remembering God is with them wherever they go (Joshua 1:9). Amen.

Peace,

Anna & Chris



Photos from top to bottom: Campers learn to sign (BSL) the day's Bible verse; fireside fun on the final night of camp; Frontier Camp 2025



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus

It's so encouraging to hear stories from other CMS partners sharing the hope of Jesus with people not yet connected to churches. In England, Fiona is pioneering creative ways of connecting with people who aren't in church. And Andy's story about prisoners in Brazil finding Jesus is incredible. Read more and get inspired by more stories of hope at churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope

Please note that opinions expressed in updates are those of mission partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society. If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this update on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400. Church Mission Society is a Registered Company No. 6985330 and Registered Charity No. 1131655 (England and Wales) and SC047163 (Scotland).