



DOWNING PLACE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE

PLACE MATTERS



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ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Church Office is now up and running at the Downing Place site!

Owing to the size of the room and the current restrictions, the administrators will work in the office at separate times to ensure social distancing; and while instructions are in force to work from home wherever possible, we will continue to do so.

We will also continue to be occupied elsewhere in the building unpacking and **sorting the Church's belongings, while giving priority and space to the** construction work which is still continuing in the building. Please bear with us if we are away from the office when you call; or if it takes us a day or two to respond to enquiries.

FROM THE MINISTER

We are now in the weeks for rehearsing again the narratives of Holy Week and Easter. Maybe you are like me, and find that each year a different aspect gets your attention. It could be the Cross – where Isaac Watts tells us we see ‘the power, the wisdom or the love’ of God. Another year, perhaps it’s the penitent thief, sharing whose experience we, however flawed, are ‘allowed to hope’, as Emily Dickinson has it.

This year my attention has been gripped by the stone of Jesus’ tomb. Two days earlier, it had sealed him in, but on the Sunday, ‘exceedingly great’ though Mark says the stone was, it was rolled away. That’s worth pondering.

That open tomb enables the women to get into it, to discover for themselves the good news that their Jesus had been raised from death. He hadn’t meant that *he* was finished, but that his saving work was.

That open tomb shows us that Jesus wasn’t locked up in it – it was a place for dead people, and he wasn’t to be found amongst them. This vacated space points to how everything he stood for remained vital, in every sense of that word.

Mark also uses that empty tomb to emphasise how there are no barriers that permanently separate us from God. Just as the dove descended from heaven at Jesus’ baptism, and the Temple curtain was torn apart from top to bottom when Jesus breathed his last, so, too, the gaping entrance of the rocky grave keeps open forever the way to God that Jesus pioneers.

And, as one writer has it, ‘the stone was not only once-upon-a-time-rolled-away, but once-for-all-time-rolled-away; the past act of God definitively affects the present, and cannot be undone.’ (M. Eugene Boring)

So, no ordinary stone.

This Easter, we are also eagerly anticipating our return to the redeveloped Downing Place Church building. Its open doors – some of them automatic, in a very up to the minute sort of way! - may not be ‘exceedingly great’, but I do see them as an exceedingly eloquent metaphor of that rolled away stone.

Just as the open tomb let those women in, so the doors of Downing Place Church need to be open to enable anyone who wishes to come in. We have more windows so that people can see in. We have improved access so that people can



get in. Even as we observe sensible safeguarding policies, particularly for our staff and volunteers, we have not done all that work just to give ourselves a nice **hiding place. It's about letting in both friends and strangers in order that all who** wish may encounter the living love of Jesus Christ, as they are welcomed, **accepted and embraced. That's one of the ways we gain the life in all its fulness** for which Jesus came.

Just as the open tomb shows that Jesus is not locked away there, so the open doors of Downing Place Church also represent how Jesus is not locked-up in our church building. We only come in, in order to take out his grace and truth. We come in to be nourished, nurtured and nudged into that witness and service which sometimes will be based in the building, but will often be the things we do in the community. Some of them will be overtly Christian. Many, though, will be the good and charitable works to which Jesus beckons us, but in which we take our place alongside other citizens, who, whatever their convictions about God, are committed to the common good.

Just as the open tomb is symbolic of how there is nothing that can come between us and the love of God, so the open doors of Downing Place Church must draw people into an encounter not just with us, but with God, too. Over the past three years we have committed ourselves to worship that exposes us to the presence of God, to teaching that enables our encounter with God, to evangelism that gives an account of the hope we have, and to activities that encourage our partnership with God in pursuit of a world characterised by inclusion, wellbeing and sustainability. Even as those priorities might chime with many political agenda, for the Christian they are the response of faith to the God whose love we exist to proclaim.

And just as the open tomb was not just for the history books, so we are called to ensure that the open doors of Downing Place Church will be a metaphor of the empty tomb in the centre of twenty-first century Cambridge. In every season of **the church's year I can think of a topical by-line** for us: at Christmas I think we should be Incarnational, at Whitsun, that we should be Pentecostal. But actually, authentically to be the Body of Christ, we are to be a Church of the Resurrection, living out in the here and now the undying power, wisdom and love of God. In **the end, that's what allows us to hope.**

I wish you the fullness of Easter's joy.

Nigel Uden

TIM AND JUDY ROWLAND – A PROFILE



Tim and Judy with sons Mark and Simon and daughters in law Elisabet and Helen at Estremoz Castle, Portugal, in 2016

We met when we were both students at Southampton University. We had friends in common, and because of them we got to know each other better. Tim was part of a group that made regular visits to cathedrals for Evensong, including Salisbury. Judy went on a few occasions, and on one of these it turned out to be just the two of us - the rest is history!

But before then – Judy writes: I was born and brought up in Bristol, where my father was a secondary school teacher. My mother was born in the Forest of Dean, but the family moved to Bristol when my mother was twelve. Her mother was an accomplished pianist and had played for the silent movies - I think I disappointed her when I gave up the piano after Grade 4! The family went to Horfield Baptist Church, which is where my parents met and married. I was born 11 years later, an only child - but I did have a cat called Tim ... My first memory of church is going to Sunday School. I was baptised as a believer when I was 13, and my faith was nurtured in a thriving youth group. I have always enjoyed books and language, and at 18 I went to Southampton University to read English; it was a revelation living in hall and having friends on tap! I was part of the Baptist Society, involved in taking services at small churches in the New Forest.

And Tim: I grew up in Leyton, close to the other end of the M11. My introduction to Christian worship came, aged 7 or 8, when I joined an Anglican church choir. Two choirs later I was ‘head chorister’ in Leyton parish church. I still enjoy the Anglican liturgy. My father was a printer in the City, and an enthusiastic violinist. My mother was a talented actress, and am-dram a lively presence in our family. By happy coincidence, the school that I attended from 11 to 18 was notable for its annual ‘school play’: Derek Jacobi played Hamlet in a production as I joined the school – look on Google! I joined in those productions as soon as I could, with two summers on the Edinburgh Fringe. I had enjoyed thinking about numbers from childhood, and aspired to a place at university simply in order to spend more time doing mathematics.

We got engaged on Judy’s 21st birthday, and stayed on in Southampton for a year after graduation, Tim to do an MSc and Judy a PGCE. We were married at the end of that year, and moved to Yorkshire, where Tim became an Assistant Lecturer in Mathematics at Bingley College of Education and Judy began teaching in a primary school in Otley. We tried a Baptist and an Anglican Church before eventually settling at the Bridge URC in Otley, having been taken along by friends. Mark was born in 1975 in Otley’s small hospital; the staff must have thought Judy was very holy because she was visited by our URC minister, the Anglican vicar and the Baptist minister who had married us! Simon was born in March 1979. His due date was when we were at a church weekend at an isolated Ecumenical Centre - where we were cut off by a heavy snowfall; fortunately Simon hung on for another week ... (the nuns who ran the community had been praying for us!)

Later that year we came to Cambridge, where Tim took up a lectureship in mathematics education at Homerton College. Judy found it hard at first with a six month old baby - the pavements seemed too narrow for a pram, with bikes strewn across them, and the skies too big - no surrounding hills! Our Otley minister had attended a course at Westminster College just before we moved, and recommended Emmanuel. When we tried it we were impressed by the preaching (and the nursery!) and we became members in 1980. Once again Judy became involved in Junior Church, and Tim was inducted as an Elder. We somehow resisted joining the choir until one Sunday, when John Turner invited “those singing from the four-part hymn book” to give it a try: we are so glad that we did! For 30 years now we have been members of a chamber choir, Cantilena, with weekly rehearsals, three concerts each year and occasional evensongs. (We were fortunate to have Mark Dawes as director for six years!)

Tim writes: at Homerton I welcomed the prospect of being paid to ‘do’ mathematics in public! I also became aware of my growing interest in the

teaching and learning of mathematics, and I completed a PhD in mathematics education. In the late 1990s I commuted to work at UCL in London for three years, before returning 'home' to work at the then-new Cambridge University Faculty of Education.

Judy writes: I gradually returned to full-time teaching, the last 21 years at St. Luke's Primary School. It was a real privilege to work there, with a committed staff and pupils from a mix of social and ethnic backgrounds. For many years I was copy-editor for a Routledge journal, and I continue to work with authors on the language presentation of their work. When I retired I became a magistrate, spending ten years in the adult and youth courts. I became an Elder (jointly with Tim) five years ago, three years in Emmanuel and the last two (jointly) with Tony Bottoms at Downing Place.



Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim

Tim's research led to travel and to 'visiting' positions in Europe and beyond. In 2012 he took up a part-time professorship in Norway. Together we travelled to Trondheim every two or three months for six years - we hope to return to the 'gastronomic capital of Norway' to see friends there before too long. One other highlight came from being invited to be language consultants for an English language series of Shanghai Maths books. It culminated in our being invited to Shanghai in 2017 for the launch of the books at the annual education book fair.



Signing books in Shanghai, August 2017

Many members and friends will know that Tim has been unwell in recent times, with three stays in hospital, having been diagnosed with a chronic lymphoma six years ago. Thanks to the dedication and expertise of his Addenbrooke's carers, and the prayers of so many of you, the chemotherapy resulted in his being in deep remission. Tim is now pleased to be able to contribute to church life again!

Looking back, we give thanks for three decades as Emmanuel members; our boys, Mark and Simon, enjoyed Junior Church and later YPSEG (the Young People's Sunday Evening Group), which was an important part of their lives. We now have two daughters-in-law and five grandchildren aged from 6-19, and we are hoping to get together with them all again for a weekend later this year.

Looking forward, we are grateful to be a part of the new Downing Place community, and to being able to worship in another stunning building.

TRANSFORMATION... FROM HALL TO HUB

It is a long time since we vacated the former St Columba's buildings. Now that the work on the buildings attached to the main Church is completed, it is worth noting what has been achieved over the past couple of years of planning, design and building. As a reminder, this is what the old St Columba's Hall looked like before work started.



This large space has been enhanced by opening up the wall (on the right in the picture above) through the corridor and conservatory to the courtyard garden and by creating a suite of rooms and offices at first floor level.



October 2019



March 2020

In October 2019 the supports are in place to permit removal of the wall, while in March 2020 the ironwork for the new first floor is in place

Even with the images produced by Jack Boyns, from Archangel Architects it was difficult to envisage how good the reality would look, as seen in some pictures taken by David Thomas in early March 2021 (below). The quality of the workmanship is particularly impressive.



Hub – ground floor from the Church side, looking towards the kitchen servery at the far end, with entry to the courtyard garden and the Gibson Hall on the right.

The introduction of a first floor across the left-hand half of the old hall has been done very sympathetically, with the beams highlighted. Overall the feeling is of a light and open area, with a lot more daylight than in the past coming through roof lights.

We must all be looking forward to the completion of the building works in the Church (i.e., the Sanctuary, Emmanuel Room, Chapel and Welcome area). Some patience is still required since, once the builders have finished towards the end of April, we will need a couple of weeks for the installation of the Audio-Visual equipment and for everyone to be trained in its use.

Robert Porrer

Photos by Robert Porrer and David Thomas



Looking up at the new first floor



The first floor rooms/offices

ELSEWHERE IN DOWNING PLACE....



Oak blocks being laid in the Sanctuary



David Thomas managed to capture the moment when the builders' portable toilets were lifted out, meaning the main part of the works really were finished. A member of the congregation suggested this caption ...

Startled builder spends a penny and gets free flight

THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP DURING THE PANDEMIC.



The Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship closed for the first time on March 17th due to the first lockdown because of the Coronavirus. Despite the Pandemic we have tried to keep the fellowship going by telephone contact and a monthly newsletter compiled by Wendy Roe which has **been much appreciated by members.** **At first we met in different people's gardens** when we were allowed to meet outside in groups of six. In September when we were allowed to have socially distanced services, we had meetings in the chapel at St Athanasios Church. The Greek Orthodox Church gave us permission to have two services in the church hall where there was no limit on numbers, Nigel Uden very kindly conducted a harvest festival service for us. The Fellowship closed again on November 3rd due to the second lockdown. However after the second lockdown had finished we were able to have a carol service, again conducted by Nigel, in the church hall on December 15th. Since the third lockdown some of us have been able to meet up by Zoom every week. We have had two quizzes, a Bible study on the book of Ruth, a sharing of Springtime themes and a session **led by Nigel on "Preparation for Easter"**.

We plan to continue with our Zoom meetings throughout April until May when we hope the weather will be warm enough for us to meet outside again. For the rest of the month, we have a session on sharing memories which have got us through lockdown, a talk by Maureen Kendall on her time with John in Uganda on March 23rd and then another Bible study on the psalms. Despite all our different arrangements throughout this year we have tried to include all our members. Some members do not have computers so we keep in touch by phone, We are so pleased that Barbara and Don Boud are able to join our Zoom meetings by phone. During this time we have been able to make donations out of existing funds to three charities. We have given £40 each to Emmaus, the Sally May Preschool International, and Cambridge Aid. In addition we gave £70 to the Trussell Trust which was raised at the Harvest Festival Service. We have also been able give our annual contribution of £150 to the Bible Society with the help of a very generous anonymous donation.

We are looking forward so much to meeting up once again in person when we can, but if anyone would like to join us in our Zoom sessions, they would be most welcome.

Penny Milsom

MONTHLY CAUSE FOR APRIL



Camfed stands for Campaign for Female Education and is a pan-African organization which aims to empower women through education.

Active especially in rural sub-Saharan Africa, where girls are most in need of support, Camfed undertakes to support girls in their school career, supplying books, equipment, uniforms, personal hygiene items – everything necessary to ensure that girls can complete their education and often go on to university and professional training.

These young women then become part of CAMA – the Camfed Association – where they pass on their knowledge and experience, either in their home communities or in wider society. A network is being built up of young professionals – lawyers, teachers, doctors, entrepreneurs – who can improve conditions for everyone but especially women. Female education has been identified as the single most effective tool to bring change in deprived societies. With access to education women can do amazing things : launch businesses, become health workers, run schools, and lead governments, making the world a better place for everyone. When you educate a girl you educate a nation.

Camfed has already supported more than 4.1 million children to go to school across Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and more than 7 million students have benefited from an improved educational environment.

How to donate:

Via the website at <https://camfed.org>

Or by sending a cheque payable to Camfed to:

Camfed International,
St. Giles Court,
24, Castle Street,
Cambridge. CB3 0AJ

Please remember that you can't donate via the Church office at the moment.



What are we doing about Christian Aid Week this year?

Christian Aid Week 2021 begins on Sunday May 9th. The appeal is entitled “Every Last Drop”, and asks us to **stand in solidarity with communities** suffering a shortage of clean water. Climate Change has meant rainfall is becoming more and more unpredictable across the world, some countries like Bangladesh suffering flooding while others, often in Africa, experience droughts which make their traditional farming methods unsustainable. The 2021 Appeal focuses on drought in Kenya, though Christian Aid is working throughout the world.



Young children collect water for their family in the drought (photo by Adam Finch)

How does Christian Aid help? As always, Christian Aid works with local partners supporting communities to carry out projects. They build dams and pools to store water, pipelines to bring water to where it is needed, dig wells to access ground water, irrigation channels to bring water to crops. They encourage farmers to grow different, more drought tolerant crops and set up marketing schemes so that farmers get a fair price for their produce. They train local people to work with their communities as Climate Change champions, and much more.



*Naomi is Chair of a Climate Change advocacy group in her village
(photo by Adam Finch)*

This year the UK's Christian Aid Week will not be back to its usual form. Coronavirus restrictions will still apply, and make house to house collections, street collections, supermarket collections and all person to person events impossible. Numbers in Church services will still be limited. We in Downing Place have an even more difficult challenge – we will still not be worshipping together in our own Church. We are, though, hoping to be able to have a fund-raising event during World Church Weekend in the autumn.



*A primary school pupil runs a cup of drinking water in Kitui County, Kenya
(photo by Tom Pilston)*

What then can we do for Christian Aid Week? Funds are needed more than ever, and a recent conference held on Zoom by Christian Aid made it very clear that we need to get used to on-line fundraising, not just now, but in the future. The simple truth is that fundraising on-line is cheaper to administer, easier to track and more efficient.

This doesn't mean of course that on-line will be the only way to go. You can still donate by phone (call 020 7523 2269 and you will be taken through the process), or by sending a cheque made out to Christian Aid to Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London, SE1 7RT with a covering letter mentioning Downing Place. But if you can, do think of giving your donation direct, either through the Christian Aid website, or if possible in an e-envelope (This also means we can track how much money we have raised). We plan to send out an e-envelope to everyone who is on e-mail, **so please don't be frightened of it** – just think of it as an e-mail with a link to click in order to make a donation – very straightforward! More news and details, maybe a virtual fundraiser, next month.

Meanwhile, a date for your diary. There will be a Christian Aid Week service at St. John the Evangelist Church, Hills Road, on Sunday 9th May at 6 p.m., with a **speaker from Christian Aid**. We hope that it will be “real”, if the **restrictions allow it**. Please watch out for more information in May's Place Matters or in the weekly diary update.

With thanks for thinking about Christian Aid,

Sheila Porrer

TIME CAPSULES – A CORRECTION

You will remember an article in the February *Place Matters* about the time capsules at Downing Place. Please note that the captions on p. 20 should be switched - the parcel in the compostable bag is in fact the 1892 capsule, and the wooden box is the 2021 capsule, the items packed in a writing case discovered at Trumpington St. Apologies for the mix-up.

Commitment for Life

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

I have recently succeeded Madeline Impey as the Downing Place link person for the URC *Commitment for Life* programme, and I am grateful to her for passing on so much information! Commitment for Life is our Special Cause for the month of October, but – as I shall try to explain – I think that it is not too soon to begin to consider our response.

Soon after its formation in 1972, the United Reformed Church instituted a World Development Programme, whose brief was widened in 1976 to include political action, education, financial appeal and cooperation with Christian Aid and the World Development Movement. From its initiation the Programme incorporated a so-called ‘1% appeal’. Each local church makes a joint response in financial support for the global justice programme, and it was suggested that individual church members and supporters might see donation of 1 per cent of their annual income as an appropriate contribution through their church.

In 1992 the 1% appeal was renamed ‘Commitment for Life’. So when we support our October Special Cause, we know that in worship, in prayer and in our financial contribution, we are standing up for global justice through action and advocacy. Since 2019, Downing Place Church Meeting agreed that we would focus on Bangladesh as our Commitment for Life partner. See Place Matters October 2020. As Madeline has done, I aim to share news from Bangladesh from time to time, gleaned from the resources that I will receive from Church House. See also <https://urc.org.uk/cfl>

Despite the change of name, the current URC Commitment for Life leaflet still lists “consider committing 1% of your income” among the ways that we can support the programme. Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed with requests for support for good causes of many kinds, and each person must decide how best to respond. A contribution of [1 penny in each pound of our income](#) seems like a manageable way to stand alongside others in our community in Downing Place in this measured support for our brothers and sisters elsewhere across the world.

If we wait until October to consider our response, that 1 per cent of our annual income becomes slightly more than 10 percent of our October income, and a

more daunting prospect alongside what we give to other causes. So, here's a suggestion, if I may. Perhaps it might be helpful to begin preparing for that 1% contribution now, six months in advance of October - and then to begin preparation even sooner for October 2022.

You can read more about the initiative on our new Commitment for Life web page, which can be accessed via our [Mission](#) page or directly using this link:

<https://downingplaceurc.org/commitment-for-life/>

There is a 'Donate' button on the Commitment for Life page which will enable you to set up either a one-off donation or regular payments spread throughout the year.

I am, of course, still learning how to be our Commitment for Life 'link person', but I would be pleased to discuss the challenge that I present here with you, if that would be helpful.

Tim Rowland

PASTORAL NEWS

We are glad that Paul Whittle was able to preach a valedictory sermon last month, and we wish him and Mary well in their new sphere of service in the Synod of Scotland. Nigel chaired the meeting of the Eastern Synod on 20 March, responsibilities being shared by a number of ministers for the time being, as the discernment process continues to identify a new Moderator.

News from the church family is encouraging since many have had that first vaccination, and the second has followed for a few. However, worries about different health issues are affecting some, and their care is a priority for minister and elders.

Commitment for Life

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Dhaka, Bangladesh – Many Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh have condemned the military coup in Myanmar. However, others say they do not “feel sorry” that Aung San Suu Kyi has been removed from power.

Speaking to Al Jazeera at the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar district, Rohingya community leader Mohammad Yunus Arman said the Myanmar military had killed their families in Rakhine state while Aung San Suu Kyi was in power.

“She remained silent about it. She didn’t even utter the word ‘Rohingya’. Once we used to pray for her success and used to treat her like our queen. But after 2017, we realised her real character,” he said.

International relations experts say the coup in Myanmar has removed the “facade of democracy” in the country, and that the probability of repatriating the Rohingya has further diminished. “You can’t have a real democracy when 25 percent seats are automatically allocated to the military, which also controls four of the major ministries. So despite elections, the military never really gave up power,” Azeem Ibrahim, author of the book, *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar’s Hidden Genocide*, has said.

Christian Aid provides critical support for the Rohingya refugees at Cox’s Bazar, and Commitment for Life is honoured to be partnering with Christian Aid in this work.

SUPPORT OUR VACCINATION GRATITUDE GIVING PAGE



<https://events.tapsimple.org/page/christian-aid/united-reformed-church-supporting-a-just-vaccine-rollout>

Last month in Place Matters we asked for your special Easter memories. Hannah Stephenson, Rosemary Johnston and Madeline Impey share their very different experiences of a special Easter

EASTER AS A STUDENT IN NEW YORK

Easter time is special in many ways, it brings love, hope and life during the Spring.

The majority of my life I have enjoyed Easter with my family in Beverley, enjoying happy family times, beautiful spring sunny weather and the pleasure of lovely walks in the Yorkshire countryside.

As a student, in 1999, this changed as I studied in America at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania so I knew it would be a different experience that year. I was very lucky that my parents could come over to America and we could still spend Easter all together. We spent the Easter weekend in New York City! I never thought I would be able to say that I spent Easter in another country and still share the time with family. It was a different, enjoyable and fun time to be in New York! It felt so different to what we see in films, New Yorkers had left the city for the Easter break which made it really quiet! On Easter Saturday I can say that I never thought I would spend it going up the Empire State Building and looking over the rooftops of New York! That evening, we went to Broadway and watched The Phantom of the Opera – what a fantastic experience, great opportunity. Easter Sunday arrived, the weather changed for the better, the temperature had surprisingly warmed up so we enjoyed the Spring weather and flowers in Central Park. The funny part of that morning was when we were walking down the street, all was quiet, a peaceful **Easter Sunday morning when peace was shattered.....a couple came round the corner towards us only to find that they were on their honeymoon in New York and we knew them from Beverley!!** Roars of laughter and screams erupted in the middle of New York! After a lovely and fun weekend I took my parents back to see the university campus, met my friends and visited the Methodist Chapel on the campus where I went with my friends for the late mid-week services.



I wish you all a very Happy Easter time and hope you are able to see family, whether in a social bubble or online and to share Easter with them.

Hannah Stephenson

EASTER IN NEW ZEALAND

Have you come to sing with us?’ asked the excited teenaged girl when I stepped from the minister’s car in Paeroa in New Zealand. It was Easter Day dawn and I had indeed come - more than 11,000 miles. There was an outdoor ecumenical singing of praise and celebration. Then at the steps of the church, part of the Presbyterian Church Aotearoa NZ., the congregation arrived adding colourful flowers to the large cross facing the street. Chrysanthemums! After the service the minister insisted on driving me to Cambridge for lunch. Then she and her husband, the minister of a nearby congregation, had siestas and I was tenderly passed to the parish visitor. We went to walk on a nearby beach. I still have a tiny scallop shell from the shore. Then there was a church BBQ. I slept well, much blessed and thankful.



Rosemary Johnston

THANKS TO JANE BOWER FOR THIS FLOWER PAINTING FROM THE MARCH PLACE MATTERS.



EASTER ON THE CHILDREN'S WARD .

My special memories of Easter are of when I worked on the Children's Wards as a Nursery Nurse. Easter was my favourite time of the year. My memories are of the days when we were still allowed to have eggs on the ward to cook. I used to enjoy making little card hats to go on the boiled eggs for Easter Sunday Breakfast and drawing faces on them.

Children and Parents joined in decorating hard boiled eggs, making Easter Bonnets etc. I also used to blow eggs for dyeing and have a special memory of a parent who had to wait hours for their child in theatre and we passed the time dyeing eggs in different colours.



On another occasion I was sent to Gamlingay Baptist Church for an Easter Sunday afternoon service where they presented a basket of decorated eggs for the hospital. It's a long time ago now but I have never forgotten that lovely afternoon .



*Roses in the garden of St. Botolph's Church in Trumpington Street
photographed on Easter Saturday last year by Helen Spring.*

THE SURPRISING TREE



My father was a carpenter; I followed in his line.
I grew up with the feel and smell of cypress, olive, pine.
One boyhood day he hauled into the yard an ancient tree,
Surprising me by saying that its purpose was for me.
My first real job! A feeding trough – I took such care and pride;
The innkeeper'd commissioned it – 'Fit for a king!' he cried.
And so I earned my living from that early moment on -
Now thirty years and more have passed; my father is long gone.
Last week I got an order for a crucifix. I'd let
It go by choice, but what the Romans want, the Romans get.
I searched the workshop – at the back I found that same old wood
I'd used so long ago. No point in wasting something good.
But as I crafted, still I found I took that pride and care.
I smoothed it, out of pity for whoever hung up there.
'Fit for a king,' I whispered, as again it came to me
What use and beauty can be found in one surprising tree.

Jane Bower



WESTMINSTER APPEAL

Augur Pearce writes:

This is the text of my contribution, regarding Westminster College tower, to the Downing Place recorded service broadcast on 14 February 2021. But it has been amended for *Place Matters* to reflect more recent information from the **College's Management Committee meeting on 3 March**. The updated passage is in *italics*.

I want to draw your attention to one aspect of the financial situation at **Westminster College Cambridge, from where much of today's service (and most recorded services for Downing Place Church) come.**

Ministers in the Reformed tradition have been trained on Madingley Road since the end of the 19th century. Westminster and this Church share common benefactors; many members of the College have worshipped at Downing Place or in one of its predecessors. Westminster staff have often preached for us, as Jonathan Soyars did just a few weeks ago. The debt we owe the College for **helping the local church's worship to continue whilst we are between buildings** is self-evident. Our co-operation has been close and we hope it will continue into new fields.

But I don't believe I exaggerate when I say Westminster is currently in crisis. For years now an essential part of the College's income has come from the hosting of conferences, meetings and bed and breakfast guests in its residential accommodation. Those hospitality activities came to a complete halt in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, and still have not been able to restart. I am myself **a member of the College's Management Committee, in which capacity I've seen monthly accounts showing a steadily worsening situation and the dedicated and competent staff reduced to a skeleton presence as first furlough and then redundancy measures have been forced upon Westminster.**

As a result, the College is not now in a position to draw on any reserves to finance its other responsibility – **the care and safety of an historic building**. It's really a cruel irony that the tower which dominates the College building should **now urgently need around seven months' worth of serious repair work**. The tower has a flat roof, and this, with the lead, steel and timber all require attention. *Some temporary work was carried out to the balconies in January to reduce water penetration, but mould is developing inside the building and books have already had to be removed – some seriously damaged. An estimate of the total cost places this at nearly £400K,*

plus detailed surveys, consultants' fees and VAT. If the work is not done there is a strong risk water will damage the rest of the tower and its contents, racking up an even larger bill thereafter.

The Elders are now considering how Downing Place Church might help with the position, repaying some of what we have all gained from Westminster over the years. A proposal will soon come to the Church Meeting, so we are not now launching a general appeal to church members to give from their own resources. [We know those are already facing numerous calls, many family incomes have also been hit by the pandemic. Generous gifts have very recently been made to furnish our own new building.]

But there may be some individuals who would like to come to Westminster's aid. I was asked to make this intervention in today's service so you would all know the situation and remember Westminster College in your prayers, and so that any who feel in a position to help sooner would know how to do it. There is a web page for single or recurring donations:

MAUNDY THURSDAY – 1ST APRIL

A note from David Tatem who conducts the service

‘Maundy Thursday then and now’

Our Maundy Thursday celebration of the Last Supper this year will be recorded and available on You Tube. It will take the form of a guided meditation which will, naturally, also include the receiving of the bread and wine. There will also be other actions that you will be invited to engage in at certain stages, so that as many senses as possible are drawn into the meditation.

There are two advantages in using a recording. One is that it can be used at whatever point in the evening seems appropriate. The second is that a recording can be paused at certain points in order to be able to spend appropriate time on the things you will be invited to do. Doing any of these, of course, will be entirely voluntary.

More details and explanation will be available at the start of the video.



DIARY

Services are conducted by the minister, except where shown

Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun-28-Mar-21 Palm Sunday	A recorded service will be available on our Youtube channel from Saturday evening		Youtube
Mon-29-Mar-21	a half hour service on YouTube available from early that morning		Youtube
Tue-30-Mar-21	a half hour service on YouTube available from early that morning		Youtube
Wed-31-Mar-21	a half hour service on YouTube available from early that morning		Youtube
Thu 01-Apr-21 Maundy Thursday	A Communion service on Youtube available from Thursday morning.onwards Led by the Revd David Tatem		Youtube
Fri 02-Apr-21	A service live on Zoom for Free Churches in central Cambridge. Preacher::Revd Colin Smith (Wesley Church)	10:00am	Zoom
Sat-03-Apr-21	a half hour service on YouTube available from early that morning		Youtube
Sun 04-Apr-21 Easter Day	A Communion service on Youtube available from Saturday evening onwards IN ADDITION A live service of worship at Westminster College Please book with Margaret Thompson	11.00am	Youtube
Sun 04-Apr-21	Open Table Discussion Contact Alison Binney for details	7:00pm	Zoom
Tue 06-Apr-21	Cherry Hinton Road Fellowship Contact Penny Milsom	2.30pm	Zoom

Sun 11-Apr-21 Low Sunday	A service on Youtube available from Saturday evening onwards Led by Revd Deborah McVey		Youtube
Tue 13-Apr-21	Cherry Hinton Road Fellowship Contact Penny Milsom	2.30pm	Zoom
Sun 18-Apr-21	Sunday Worship - a service live on Zoom	11:00am	Zoom
Sun 18-Apr-21	Open Table Communion Service Contact Alison Binney for details	7:00pm	Zoom
Mon 19-Apr-21	Officers' Meeting	4:00pm	Zoom
Tue 20-Apr-21	Cherry Hinton Road Fellowship Contact Penny Milsom	2.30pm	Zoom
Sun 25-Apr-21	Sunday Worship - a service on Youtube available from Saturday evening onwards		Youtube
Tue 20-Apr-21	Cherry Hinton Road Fellowship Contact Penny Milsom	2.30pm	Zoom
Tue 27-Apr-21	Worship, Discipleship and Spirituality Group Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Thu 29-Apr-21	Additional Elders' Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Sun 02-May-21	A Communion service on Youtube available from Saturday evening onwards IN ADDITION A live service of worship at Westminster College Please book with Margaret Thompson		Youtube
Sun 02-May-21	Open Table Discussion Contact Alison Binney	7:00pm	Zoom

LECTIONARY

For the Services during Holy Week, and for people's private reading, we offer here the readings from Mark for each day of that week.

March 28 Palm Sunday

Mark 11.1-11

Isaiah 50.4-9a

Mark 15

Philippians 2.5-11

April 11

Low Sunday

Acts 4.32-35

Isaiah 65.17-25

I John 1.1-2.2

John 20.19-31

March 29

Mark 11.12-19

April 18

Acts 3.12-19

Psalm 4

March 30

Mark 11.20-13.37

I John 3.1-7

Luke 24.36b-48

March 31

Mark 14.1-11

April 25

Acts 4.5-12

Psalm 23

April 1 Maundy Thursday

Announced in the service

(Mark 14.12-72)

I John 3.16-24

John 10.11-18

April 2

Good Friday

Mark 15.1-47

May 2

Acts 8.26-40

Psalm 22.25-31

I John 4.7-21

April 3

Mark 16.1

John 15.1-8

April 4

Easter Day

Acts 10.34-43

Psalm 118.1-2 and 14-24

I Corinthians 15.1-11

Mark 16.1-8



