



**DOWNING PLACE  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE**

## **PLACE MATTERS**



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*Cover photograph: the courtyard in full bloom in June 2022.*

*Photograph taken by Ann Auger*

## FROM THE MINISTER

One of 2022's anniversaries mark 150 years since the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams. He was a renowned English composer of the first half of the twentieth century. Whilst I admire and like much of his music, I realise that part of my appreciation is because the year before he died, I was born in Dorking, near to which he lived at Leith Hill Place. In a childhood and youth full-to-overflowing with music making, I was frequently aware of his legacy. Not least, the Leith Hill Musical Festival, in which village choirs combined for competition and concert performances. Of course, we choirboys knew it as the Lethal Festival.



A distinctive feature of Vaughan Williams's work was the breadth of styles at which he managed successfully to excel. There's the Radio 3 material, like the symphonies. One of those evocatively depicts the sea, setting words of Walt Whitman. Of a different ilk, there are the Classic FM favourites: things like *The Lark Ascending*, with a solo violin recreating both the bird's song and its flight, and almost enabling listeners themselves to soar heavenward. And then there are Vaughan Williams's many additions to the repertoire of any hymn-singing church. Indeed, his influence on Christian worship is truly significant. He was the first music editor of *The English Hymnal* (1906), which sought to offer something other than the Victorian sentimentality that some feared had come to characterise too much worship of the early 1900s. Most of us will know at least one of his hymn tunes: *Down Ampney*, for 'Come down, O love divine', *Sine Nomine*, for 'For all the saints'. In addition, and much played this year, has been his rich arrangement of the *Old Hundredth*, for 'All people that on earth do dwell', composed in 1953 for the Queen's coronation. So much for which to be grateful there.

There is definitely a high brow element to Ralph Vaughan Williams's music. Equally important, though, throughout his life he was devoted to folk song. From early on, he spent a great deal of time travelling round the English countryside collecting innumerable communities' distinctive words and melodies. Eventually, he amassed a collection of over eight hundred songs. They were the basis of some of his very serious work, not least the piece for Harp and Strings, *Five Variants on Dives and Lazarus*. This weaves its haunting sounds around a folk song he'd found in both Worcestershire and Warwickshire. He famously used other folk songs as the inspiration for hymn tunes. I think of *Kingsfold*, for 'I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest,"' *Monks Gate*, for 'Who

would true valour see', and *Forest Green*, for 'O little town of Bethlehem'.

It seems to me that part of Vaughan Williams's genius was to find in the culture and experience of everyday life vehicles for super-sophisticated classical music, for down to earth community singing, and for Christian worship. As the church seeks to have purchase in the contemporary world, maybe this agnostic son of the Rectory can help us understand how vital it is to gain the world's hearing by hearing what the world is saying. Then, taking that seriously, our task is to let the melodies of the Gospel mingle with the realities of the world until we sing a song that is at once both relevant to people's lived reality and redolent with the good news of Jesus. Another of the folk tunes Vaughan Williams borrowed came from relatively local to us, *King's Lynn*. Rejoice & Sing invites us to use it for words of G. K. Chesterton, in which we maybe hear a word to arrest us for the challenging times in which we live:

O God of earth and altar,  
bow down and hear our cry.  
our earthly rulers falter,  
our people drift and die;  
the walls of gold entomb us,  
the swords of scorn divide,  
take not thy thunder from us,  
but take away our pride.

And if we also need a word to encourage, it is to another of the folk songs Vaughan Williams heard, *Sussex*, that we so often sing Love Maria Willis's prayer:

Be our strength in hours if weakness,  
in our wanderings be our guide;  
through endeavour, failure, danger,  
Father, be thou at our side.

May it be so.

*Nigel Uden*

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I was both surprised and honoured back in March to be invited to succeed Sheila Porrer as Place Matters Editor. Last month's, June 2022 edition was my first as editor, under Sheila's generous supervision: and I am grateful for her assurance of assistance, when needed, as I settle into this new role. It will be very good to work alongside Ann Auger in 'putting together' each issue. Ann knows and understands the character of our magazine, and its 'shape' and content, like the back of her hand. She also knows, as expert type-setter, how to make everything fit onto the pages, where best to position pictorial material – so that its content and appearance make such a positive contribution to the evolving identity of Downing Place URC.

I am learning about Place Matters production as I go along. My previous editorial experience, over the last 30 years or so, has been in connection with academic journals; in particular as editor of a UK-based mathematics education research journal. One of the first things that I became aware of, as Place Matters editor, is that it differs from editing a research journal in one important respect. A journal editor has the luxury of selecting what to publish from the many submissions received, week on week. It's a bit different with Place Matters, and with any church 'magazine', I imagine. Much of the regular content is notices of one kind or another: some of it to keep us in touch with events at Downing Place, especially worship; some to bring to our attention other events that might attract our interest, and/or our support. Then there are reports of recent events, information about the month's Special Cause, Junior Church, and pastoral news – and the Minister's Letter. We ought not to take these for granted, because all of them require time and care on the part of the contributors. They enable us to engage more fully with the life of our fellowship, in thought, in prayer, and in action.

And then there are those more 'one-off' contributions, such as the Profiles that Sheila so cleverly introduced four years ago, in which Downing Place members and friends share with us something about themselves. These articles tell us about things like childhood, education, coming to faith, about friends and family, about 'day jobs', and much more. This series has been warmly and enthusiastically received, not least because it helps us get to know one another better. But perhaps that sharing of aspects of 'who we are' is a characteristic of many other one-offs: like the Living in Lockdown contributions last month, and Stephen Thornton's contribution to this issue.

My purpose in writing this Editor's note is to thank those who make Place Matters what it is month on month, and also to ask you to consider whether there

might be something that *you* could contribute. Perhaps some event that you recall, or something that you look forward to: about an interest of some kind, or something that puzzles you. If you'd rather not sit down and write, be assured that someone would be pleased to come and talk, transcribe the conversation, and seek your approval before it appears in Place Matters. You can find my contact details, and Ann's, on the back page of each issue.

Greetings to all,

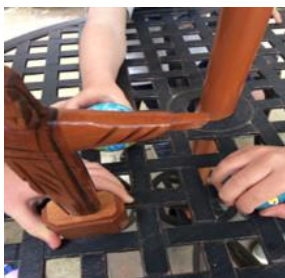
*Tim Rowland*

# AN INSIGHT INTO OUR RECENT JUNIOR CHURCH SESSIONS WITH THE YOUNGER GROUP

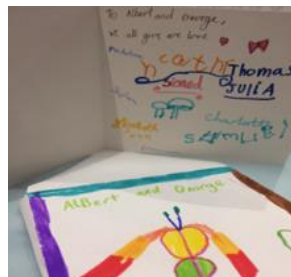
On Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the children continued their exploration of another passage from Revelation describing the vision of the 'tree of life'. As you can see from the photograph, as we read the passage we built up a representation of the vision which included the river of the water of life, the tree of life bearing a different fruit each month. Its leaves were for the healing of the nations of the world, some of which were shown on a poster of welcome. We pulled the blinds and turned out the lights to shine a torch on the scene representing the light of the Lord God, the only light needed. As our activity, the children made leaves for the Tree of Life with requests for healing written on them. These were hung on the branches of the tree together with pictures of twelve fruits.



The following two Sundays were filled with a very special activity for the children, of which you will read more towards the end of this Junior Church update.



On Sunday June 12<sup>th</sup>, Janet helped all the congregation think where we find out about God. With the children, we went into the garden and hunted for things which reminded us of what we knew about Jesus. We looked at the



objects we had found and remembered things about Jesus. Jesus had told his disciples (John 16), and us, that they knew some things but had more to discover. We help each other. We made a card for Downing Place's newest baby, Albie, and his big brother George. We sent our love.

As mentioned above, the children have been busy with a very special activity, led by Jane Bower. This is what Jane wrote about the exciting project she took on:

'I was interested to read a query from Junior Church for someone to work on creating a song or hymn with the group, and first met with the children on May 29<sup>th</sup>, when I told them our plan and held up a blank pad of paper, saying these were my ideas so far. I had deliberately started with no plans at all, so that all ideas came from the children. The words and the tune did not yet exist, but were somewhere in our heads, and perhaps God, who, as Sioned said, creates everything, would help to bring them out. We started an open discussion about heaven and I jotted down notes. The following Sunday there was a different set of children, with different ideas, some of which were entirely opposite to the first group's. This enabled two views to be expressed in the song.

I took my jottings home and looked for potential rhythms and rhymes in them. Gradually they formed themselves into three verses, with a chorus to knit them together. I was having a stressful time with computers, lost credit cards, and a broken-down van, and found to my great interest that working with the children's lovely, open ideas and the melody they seemed to generate was rather like praying. It calmed me and put the trivia into perspective.

It was a privilege to work with the Junior Church and I hope you enjoy our song when you hear it.'

*Elza de Bruin-Lara, Lorraine Thornton and Daphne Thomas with help from the JC team and Jane Bower.*



## PROFILE – SHEILA AND ROBERT PORRER



We met in 1963 in Vienna where we had both enrolled on a month's German language course before going up to Oxford to read Modern Languages, and have been together ever since. We became engaged after we graduated, and married a year later – as did many of our contemporaries.

We have lived in several different places following Rob's career – Harrow, Chesham in Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, Edinburgh, Auckland in New Zealand, and now retired to Cambridge. We had our children in Chesham – Katie and then Andrew two years later. We now have three grandchildren – Emily (10) in Cambridge, and George (11) and Alice (8) in Hertford. But before all that we came from very different parts of the country.



1967

### ***Robert:***

I was born in a small village in Dorset, where my mother and two sisters had been evacuated during WW2. They had rooms above the village bakery found for them by three aged spinster “aunts” (actually distant cousins) who ran the village Post Office. At that time my father was a radio operator in the Merchant Navy, so heard of my birth over the BBC short-wave service while waiting for his

ship to dock in Newfoundland. After the war the family moved back to a fire-bombed house in West Wickham, Kent. I was educated at a direct grant independent grammar school in South London – not a very happy experience, since I was not sporting, though found solace in music thanks to a music teacher who was brilliant at choirs, orchestra and at encouraging instrumental playing. I was told to take up the viola (I had a long arm!) and had tuition from a wonderful and very experienced teacher from the Royal Academy of Music, herself a pupil of Henry Wood (as evidenced by a signed photograph of him on her grand piano!). I continued playing in orchestras throughout school and university until my career made this impossible. However in Edinburgh I had the viola restrung and was invited to join a famous Edinburgh orchestra – the Really Terrible Orchestra (RTO) – which was founded by the writer Alexander McCall Smith and friends for fun and grew to a full-size symphony orchestra. We played to sell-out concerts in Edinburgh, London and New York where audiences enjoyed the travails and uncertainties of the RTO's performances.



Since moving to Cambridge my musical interests have been limited to participating in (and presenting at) the U3AC jazz appreciation course.

### ***Sheila:***

I was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, from Yorkshire stock on both sides of the family. However, when I was ten my father's work in the Bank took us to Manchester, where he had his first branch manager post.

I was an only child, born just after the war, when my parents had already been married for ten years. I was, and still am, quite short of family, with just one cousin, older than me, whom I hardly knew. However, I didn't see it as a disadvantage at the time, feeling very sorry for friends who always seemed to be fighting with their siblings. I did though have plenty of friends at home and at school, so wasn't lonely. I was also a great reader.

My parents weren't churchgoers but sent me off to the Methodist Sunday school – my mother had been in the Methodist church before she married, while my

father was cheerfully agnostic. My mother was a very good pianist, with phenomenal “finger memory” – she could still play pieces from her youth. She had been a teacher, but not from choice. In the 1920s times were hard and the only way to get higher education was to take a local authority grant to train as a teacher and agree to teach for some time in local schools. She gave it up with some relief when she married. Her two years of teacher training at Leeds were very happy ones, though, and she made good friends.

My father had entered the bank after School Certificate and done very well – nowadays of course both my parents would have been at University. They were very sociable, keen bridge players, especially my father, and I would be taken along with a book or my homework and parked in the “other room” when they visited friends for a bridge evening.

I was fortunate to get a place at Manchester High School where I did well academically, though less well in other things. I have always been pretty hopeless at sports and still can’t catch or hit a ball. I plodded through the piano grades, but definitely hadn’t inherited my mother’s ability! However, I was left with an appreciation of music, and did enjoy singing in amateur choirs for years, until my voice gave up on me.

Meanwhile I progressed through the Methodist youth organisation, singing in the choir at the Church Anniversaries, and competing in local Eistedfodds, part of the Methodist tradition. I kept up the Methodist connection when I went up to Oxford, being a regular attender at Wesley Memorial Church, and a member of the Methodist society.

## **To Oxford:**

### ***Robert:***

I took a degree in German and French at Mansfield College, Oxford (then a Congregational foundation, established as a “centre for dissent” in Oxford after the law was changed in 1875 to permit non-Anglican institutions at Oxford and Cambridge). The three years there were immensely stimulating – not just the academic side but the opportunities for personal development. One life-changing experience was tutoring in the Easter vacation “O” and “A” level school children from London docklands (one of the poorest areas, well before gentrification) who, thanks to Mansfield’s link with a University Settlement there, were able to come and spend two weeks studying and revising at the College. Another was being the electrician for a College Ball and lighting, among others, Spencer Davis and the Nashville Teens, and floodlighting the college for the first time. And of course, Sheila figured largely in my life at Oxford, and we took advantage of

many cultural and social activities (of which one memorable theatrical experience was seeing Richard Burton as Dr Faustus with Liz Taylor as Helen of Troy performing in the OUDS production).

***Sheila:***

I was reading French and German at St. Anne's College, at once the oldest and the newest of the women's Colleges. Oldest because it started life in 1879 as the Oxford Society of Home Students with barely an inch of property to its name; and newest because it only received its royal charter in 1952. Rob and I were both of the privileged generation who had grants to pay for tuition and for maintenance, and were able to live in College for all our course. What luxury, to have all our meals provided and our major laundry done! Rob had a "scout" to make his bed, but we women at least had to do that ourselves.

We did not need to take part time jobs to finance ourselves, indeed were discouraged from doing so, even in the vacation, when we were expected to get ourselves abroad and practise our languages. The year abroad, normal for linguists these days, was not recommended, and this is something I regret. St. Anne's prided itself on being a friendly college, and I certainly found this. Now in Cambridge I am the Secretary of the local branch of the Alumni Association.

**Careers:**

***Robert:***

After Oxford I joined Kodak as a Marketing Trainee, moving into personnel work, but I was always interested in moving into careers advice. In 1971 I moved to the Polytechnic of Central London (now University of Westminster) where I established the Careers Centre and in 1979 I moved to be Head of the Careers Service and later Head of Student Services at Leicester Polytechnic (now De Montfort University). In 1990 I became Director of the Careers Service at the University of Edinburgh, and in 1995 also became Director of Student Services,

managing seven other specialist services as well as Careers, including ironically the Centre for Sports and Exercise and even the Chaplaincy!. After early retirement from the University of Edinburgh in 2002 I developed my consultancy activities, including eighteen months in New Zealand as a consultant helping the



University of Auckland to develop a new world-class Careers Centre. Earlier consultancy included work at ten UK universities and colleges as well as work in Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Romania and Hong Kong and extensive lecturing in the UK and overseas on careers education and guidance, strategic planning and performance management.

As a careers adviser I am fond of saying that we all have wonderfully planned careers in retrospect. However, there is a constant theme of people-centred social service throughout my life (which derives from my mother) but complemented by an interest in strategy, change management and development of services (which comes from my father). So, in addition to working at a strategic level within the university, I have always been active in working with others professionally. I have been Chairman of AGCAS, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services; Convener of the Scottish Graduate Careers Programme, and Convener of AGCAS (Scotland). After retirement I was awarded Honorary Life Membership of AGCAS and the AGCAS Lifetime Achievement Award. I have been an active Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts since 1995 and have been Chair of RSA Scotland and later Chair of the RSA's Fellowship Council, which represents the 30,000 Fellows worldwide. I served as an active committee member of the Alumni Association of Mansfield College, supporting developments including outreach work which has resulted in the College having (at 90+%) the highest level of entry within the University from state schools/colleges.

Through my RSA activities I became governor of North Cambridge Academy, a city-based secondary school with the highest level of disadvantaged pupils in the County. At the NCA I have been active in helping the school develop its careers provision – leading to it being one of the first schools in the County to receive the award of the national *Quality in Careers Standard*. I have also led an RSA initiative focussing on inequality in education and in access to employment, which now links with a major *Region of Learning* project covering Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. I am currently Chair of My Cambridge, the Local Cultural Education Partnership which aims to increase participation in creativity, arts and culture, especially for disadvantaged young people.

### ***Sheila:***

After Oxford I wasn't at all sure what I wanted to do, even though I was now engaged to be married to a future Higher Education Careers expert. I was attracted to academic research, but not at all sure how that would work with marriage. So I enrolled on a graduate secretarial course – I have always been grateful for the typing, and I actually enjoyed the shorthand, a bit like learning a new language, but not so useful these days. However the pull to research won

out, and after getting married I went to the Warburg Institute at London University to start on a M.Phil in Renaissance studies, soon converted to a Ph.D.

The Warburg was a unique research institute, founded by Aby Warburg, who had left Germany in the 1930s, and dedicated to the study of the survival of the classical tradition in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Several distinguished scholars were on the staff, but the Director at the time was Ernst Gombrich, who generously shared his knowledge with humble research students. We were all invited to his home for supper where he played the cello and his wife the piano. The Warburg was also unique in that all its volumes, even rare and valuable ones, were on open shelves. Aby Warburg had been a heavy smoker and had insisted that smoking be allowed in all the building. I guess that has now changed! In the days before computers, the Warburg was renowned for its photographic collection of works of art on classical themes, indexed according to subject. It was rumoured that the armed forces sent people there to research suitable names for the next submarine or rocket.

But I was working on French Renaissance texts, and in particular on a learned debate in church and university circles about Saints, which highlighted the crucial conflict between Biblical texts and Church tradition in the very years when Luther was first becoming known. This challenge became the centre of a bitter European debate involving more than one famous name, including St. John Fisher who wrote three “books” or lengthy pamphlets on the question. My focus was on the French originator of the debate, Lefèvre d’Etaples, a pious and respected scholar in Paris, well known in his time but whose name is now mostly associated with the first full translation of the Bible into French.

His other work is rather obscure, but his Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles and the Psalms did get him into hot water with the Catholic establishment. All these texts were of course written in Latin, so I had to brush up my school Latin. I sat in the reading rooms of the British Museum to peruse them, in the days before the new British Library had





taken over its functions I finished the Ph.D., but then had to think about getting it typed. I reasoned that I couldn't expect a professional typist to cope with Latin, French and the odd bit of German, so the typing qualification came in useful. I typed out the whole thing – two volumes, four copies on carbon, no Tipp-ex, only a rubber. I even added a Latin colophon at the end saying it was typed by the author!

By this time I was pregnant with our daughter, who duly arrived before my viva, so that had to be fitted in between feeds. The three distinguished but very friendly scholars who conducted the viva expressed a wish to see the baby, so Rob brought her in to be introduced!

That doctorate then disappeared from view as I tried to adapt to motherhood but surfaced again much later when we were in New Zealand and I had an Honorary Research Fellowship at

Auckland University. I finally managed to turn it into a lengthy critical edition and translation of the key texts, which was published by Droz in 2009.

In the meantime, as well as bringing up our daughter and son I taught languages at various levels, doing a PGCE at Leicester in 1985, and ending up teaching in the French department of Edinburgh University. I also worked for the OU, teaching Renaissance culture and Latin language, and profoundly admired those students who managed to combine studying for a degree with a full-time job and/or parental responsibilities. There were also evening classes in French and Latin over the years, and later U3A reading groups in medieval Latin.

### ***Sheila and Robert:***

Our journeys to Downing Place URC have started quite differently. Rob had no Church tradition when growing up – his school ran a six day week, so Sundays were valuable family (and homework) time. Sheila moved from the Methodist Church to the Church of England in Chesham and Leicester, but in Edinburgh we both became members of the Church of Scotland at our local Parish Church in South Edinburgh - our Minister there for a few years was the father of our new Pioneer Minister! We have always thought it important to fit in to where you find yourself, so it seemed a natural move. And we felt more at home in the



1979

Church of Scotland than we had ever done before. We liked the services, the preaching, the social commitment, the concern for members through the system of Elders. Sheila started by running the car rota offering lifts to hospital appointments, etc., and ended up as an Elder and editor of the monthly magazine.

Around 2010 we decided with great reluctance that we had to leave Edinburgh to be nearer family and old friends in the South. Our daughter was settled in Cambridge where she was working as a student advisor at Anglia Ruskin. She is now also one of the LibDem City Councillors for Market Ward, which includes Downing Place! Our son has a small software firm and lives in Hertford, where he too is a LibDem Town Councillor. We googled Cambridge and Church of Scotland and to our surprise up came St. Columba's, where we soon felt very much at home.



*Christian Aid Tea*



We have both been active in Downing Place. Rob was invited to join the group planning the coming together with Emmanuel and subsequently has had a major role within the Building Group managing the physical development of the (now) Downing Place URC premises. The Building Group's work will finish at the end of the contract period in Summer 2022 and Rob was asked to take on the convenorship of the new Property Management Group, which looks after the physical estate of DPURC. Sheila is an Elder, edited this magazine for three and a half years, and works to support Christian Aid in Downing Place and throughout Cambridge as current Chair of the Cambridge committee. We have both been glad to find in this Church the same qualities we had been grateful for in Edinburgh. We are sure these qualities will be enhanced rather than diluted by our rebirth as Downing Place – but we do hope we keep the Scottish connection alive!



*At the Dedication Festival tea in November 2021*

# DOWNING PLACE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING ON MAY 22<sup>ND</sup> 2022

## **Resolution on Government plans to send refugees and asylum seekers to Rwanda**

**Church Meeting agreed unanimously** that a letter be sent from Church Meeting to the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister containing the following resolution, which had been prepared by the World Church and Public issues Group who urged members to forward it through social media and in writing to MPs:

The Members of Downing Place United Reformed Church, meeting on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022, deplore in the strongest terms the proposal to offshore certain refugees and asylum seekers to Rwanda, or to any other country, for the following reasons:

It is inhumane and totally lacking in compassion for those who have struggled through extraordinary difficulties to escape persecution and to reach these shores and seek asylum in a country with which they have some affinity

It will punish the victims and leave the cruel and greedy perpetrators free to find other means of exploiting vulnerable people

Rwanda has a notorious history of human rights abuse and will be quite unsuitable for people from other African countries and cultures or from other parts of the world and a threat to their lives. If refugees wished to go there, they could have done so in the first place

Implementing the policy will be unworkable and extremely expensive, an unnecessary drain on the finances of the British people

Government resources should rather be put into establishing safe routes for asylum seekers, and effective ways of combating people smugglers

Britain's reputation as a place of welcome to refugees will be damaged even further than it is by present inhumane policies.

We urge the Government to abandon this policy and redouble its efforts to work with the French and others to stamp out people smuggling and bring those seeking asylum here through safe and compassionate routes.

# DOWNING PLACE URC (Cambridge)



**Thank you!**

Your gift of £142,620 to the United Reformed Church Ministry and Mission Fund in 2021 has helped to ensure our continuing ministry and witness to the communities that we serve as a family of churches in the United Reformed Church. Thank you very much for your support during this difficult pandemic period.

*L. Nevard.*

Revd Lythan Nevard - Moderator (Eastern Synod)



## THE UK HOUSEHOLD ENERGY REBATE: WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT COULD WE DO WITH IT?

As we know, the cost of living is rising month by month. Food prices are rising at the fastest rate in more than a decade, and Ofgem's energy price cap is set to soar later this year.

Enter Chancellor Rishi Sunak, with £21 billion of support for households across the UK. Every British household will receive a £400 grant towards their energy bills from October, with additional support for those in greatest need, including a new £300 payment to those receiving state pensions.

Many of us will be glad of the support: but some of us might be asking “Why me?” The money will be paid to every household in the country, irrespective of ‘need’. Those who own more than one home will receive multiple payments – one for each property.

It came as a welcome surprise when the Chancellor himself announced that he will give his £400 energy bill rebate to charity, and suggested that other ‘wealthy’ households could do the same. Apparently the response so far has been good. People are already trying to donate £400 cost of living payments to charity after Rishi Sunak announcement ([inews.co.uk](https://www.inews.co.uk) - subscriber link)

Some Place Matters readers might be wondering whether they were able make some response themselves, by donating at least part of their forthcoming energy rebate to a charity that will assist those most in need of support to feed themselves and to keep their homes warm later this year. Some already do something similar with their state pension Christmas bonus payment. Please keep in mind charities such as:

- the [Cambridgeshire Surviving Winter appeal](#),
- [National Energy Action](#) [National Energy Action \(NEA\)](#) - the UK's leading fuel poverty charity;
- and the [Cambridge City Foodbank](#)

On the other hand, if you and your family are struggling to keep up with these price increases, help is available from Cambridge City Foodbank in the form of gas and electricity top-up vouchers.

*Tim Rowland, Editor, Place Matters*

## CONFESSIONS OF A PARTYGOER

I have something I need to get off my chest. I admit that I was once a frequent government partygoer. In mitigation, this was a long time ago – my party seasons were all in the late 1990s – and they all took place in Richmond House, then the HQ of the Department of Health, not across the road in No 10 or the Cabinet Office. There was never any impropriety, drunkenness, abuse of junior staff, brawling or vomiting in the corridor. How could there have been? They started at 6pm and were over by 8pm, with the available alcohol strictly limited to one and a half glasses per person invited and signed for by the organiser. No ‘bring a bottle’ or wine fridges dragged up Whitehall in those days. And I could even make a reasonable case for saying that each occasion was indeed ‘work’, but I will come to that.

However, this was no ideal world. Women had yet to break the glass ceiling into the top of the civil service. White, middle class and male, the top civil servants were all privately educated and recruited directly from Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh or St Andrews. If you were ‘L’ or ‘G’ you kept that to yourself and the categories ‘BTQ+’ had yet to impinge on the collective consciousness, let alone be openly acknowledged. Any black or brown faces you spotted in the building were clearly from security or the kitchens.

Yet, what of ‘work’? The parties were all held to celebrate what the government of the day believed was a major event. In my case it was things like the publication of the public health white paper that eventually led to the banning of smoking in public places. While these were opportunities for Ministers to thank their officials, who had done all the hard work, it was not all fun and games for them. Their job was to work the room and persuade the likes of me and other pressure group leaders from across the health sector that what the government was proposing would meet our needs, even when that was patently not the case. Back in the day they called this ‘rolling the pitch’, even if it was done with a glass of cheap chardonnay in hand.

And then, later that night? Whenever a senior civil servant was spotted in the building in the wee small hours, they were not sleeping off a heavy night’s drinking. No, they would be uncomplainingly preparing something a Minister had asked to have ready on their desk by early the following morning. In those days all senior officials knew how to be both ‘civil’ and a ‘servant’.

*Stephen Thornton: May 2022*

## SPECIAL CAUSE FOR JULY & AUGUST



CRRC is a registered charity for the purpose of supporting the resettlement of refugees in the Cambridge area. Cambridge has always been ready and willing to welcome refugees in times of crisis, and there have rarely been more people fleeing persecution and war. Offering sanctuary is a proud Cambridge tradition. We're good at it, we always have been.

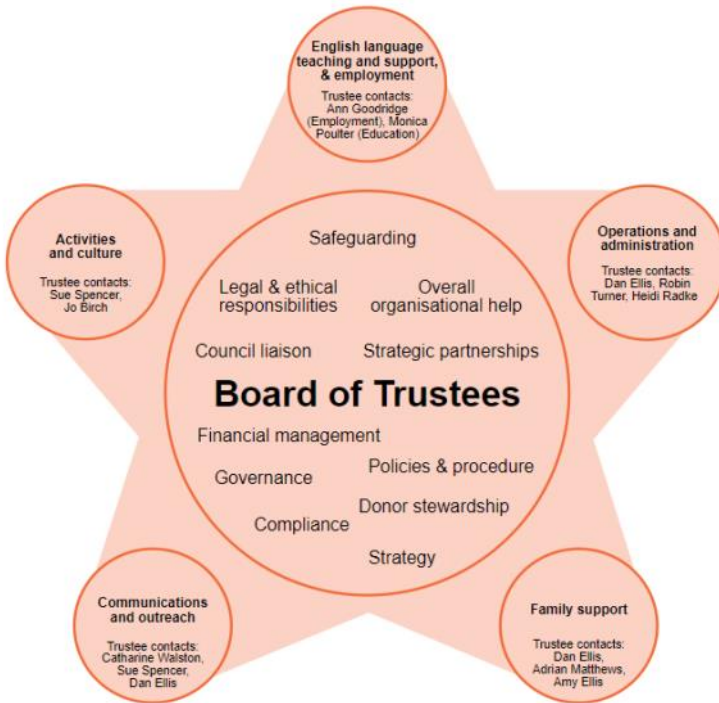
We are a volunteer-run group of Cambridgeshire residents which was formed in 2015 at the height of the current migrant crisis, when the media was filled with images of the misery of the camps and the tragedy of failed attempts to reach them. We wanted to help by welcoming refugees into our community. Originally focussed on fundraising and lobbying local government, we became a registered charity in 2017.

We provide a wide range of practical support to resettled refugee families and work closely with the Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councils and other local stakeholders. We advocate on behalf of our beneficiaries for assistance with housing, healthcare and education. This means:

- seeking out private landlords willing to accept Council rent rates;
- sourcing items of furniture, household equipment and bicycles according to identified needs;
- helping new families to settle in by tidying gardens and equipping homes;
- chaperoning beneficiaries at medical appointments and offering a doula service for expectant mothers;
- providing one-to-one help with homework for school-age children;
- running English for Speakers of Other Languages classes with childcare for the benefit of mothers with young children;
- organising programmes of outings and activities during the school holidays;

- partnering with individuals and groups able to assist with Arabic translation and learning;
- getting the families together once a month for a social event where they can meet each other and our volunteers;
- arranging counselling and advice for beneficiaries;
- giving talks and presentations about refugee issues, particularly at local schools.

## Our structure



You can donate to CRRC online via Kindlink here:

<https://www.cambridgerefugees.org/donate.html>

There is no option for other ways of giving directly; if you're not able to make an online donation, cash/cheques made payable to Downing Place URC can be left in the Special Cause envelopes on Sundays.

## YORK STREET DONATIONS 2022

The annual donations from our York Street fund have now been made for the year, and ‘thank you’ messages are trickling in from our chosen charities.

The donations we’ve made are as follows:

The Bible Society	£1500
Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project	£1500
Cambridge Street Pastors	£1500
Cambridge City Foodbank	£2000
Freedom from Torture	£2000
Music Therapy Research at Anglia Ruskin University	£2000
Connected Lives	£2000
Medical Aid for Palestine	£2000
Romsey Mill	£2000

Some of the responses we’ve received from charities include:

*From Anglia Ruskin University:*

‘Thank you to everyone at Downing Place URC for your generous donation to the ARU Foundation for the Cambridge Institute of Music Therapy Research (CIMTR).

We gratefully received your £2,000 donation to the ARU Foundation account via bank transfer on 13/06/2022.

We will keep you updated with news from CIMTR and the difference your support is making.’

*From Connected Lives, who have been running a Circle of Security parenting group in Downing Place for the past few weeks:*

‘Thank you so much for your very generous donation. That is so very kind and will really help us to run another COS-P group for people who may not otherwise be able to join the group.’



‘Thank you so much for your donation of £2000 to *Freedom from Torture*. Your gift today could help provide counselling, group therapy and ongoing support. It could help pay for an independent medical assessment to support someone’s asylum claim. Or it could help our advocacy work to protect survivors’ rights and hold torturers to account.’

‘Thank you for contributing to *Romsey Mill*’s work. With your support, we will help disadvantaged and vulnerable young people and families develop friendships, confidence and skills, enabling them to fulfil their potential and thrive.’

‘Thank you for your donation of £2,000.00 to *Medical Aid for Palestinians* (MAP). You have done something amazing – you have helped Palestinians living under occupation and as refugees.

With your donation we can help provide emergency medical aid when it is needed and improve Palestinians’ access to healthcare. MAP’s work is only made possible thanks to the contribution of individuals like you. We are very grateful for your support.’

*From The Bible Society:*

Thank you for your gift of £1500 from Downing Place URC.

Your donation will help provide the Bible to people, families and whole communities who are waiting for it. We believe that when people engage with the Bible, their lives can change, for good, and your gift is an important part of that’

On behalf of all the charities we have supported, *thank you*.



## THANK YOU PARTY

Now that Christian Aid Week 2022 is over the Cambridge Christian Aid Committee will be holding the traditional “thank you” tea on July 9<sup>th</sup> for all supporters.

This year’s tea will be held at St. Augustine’s Church, Richmond Road on the afternoon of Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup> – full details below.

Everyone is welcome, you don’t need to have been a collector or fundraiser. There will be tea and cakes, news from Christian Aid and the chance to meet other supporters in and around Cambridge and hear their ideas for fundraising. We hope to have a speaker from Christian Aid to tell us something about the national picture.

**When:** Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 3pm to 5 pm

**Where:** St. Augustine’s Church, Richmond Road (off Huntingdon Road), CB4 3PS. Parking available in local streets.

**Who is invited?** Everyone – organisers, collectors, supporters, friends, the curious, those in search of afternoon tea and cakes .....

Please do feel welcome to come along. If you need any more information do contact me.

Of course this doesn’t mean Christian Aid puts its collective feet up until next May – watch out for news of Christian Aid’s work in some of the world’s most desperate places.

*Sheila Porrer*

P.S. – I hope to have figures for Downing Place’s fundraising in last month’s Christian Aid Week in time for the next issue of Place Matters.



*Jessica, who was featured in CA Week this year, and her five children pictured in the garden where they grow their crops  
Christian Aid/ David Brazier*

## LUNCHTIME CONCERTS - WEDNESDAYS AT 1PM

Free Lunchtime Concerts with a retiring collection for our monthly Special Cause. Booking is not necessary. Come and bring friends!

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 6 July    | Anna Downes (violin) & Tony Bridgewater (piano)         |
| 13 July   | Christine Stevenson (piano)                             |
| 20 July   | Carolee Fairbank (soprano) & Lucy Morrell (piano/organ) |
| 27 July   | Christian Dawson (piano)                                |
|           |   |
| 3 August  | Erina Ishiyama (piano)                                  |
| 10 August | Joanna Lam (piano)                                      |
| 17 August | Olive Murray (soprano) & Christopjer Foreman (piano)    |
| 24 August | Pietro Vinciguerra (piano)                              |
| 31 August | Yukie Smith (piano)                                     |

See more on our website:

<https://downingplaceurc.org/lunchtime-concerts/>



# Celebrate!



Eastern Synod  
Big Day Out  
Saturday 16th July  
Trinity Park,  
Ipswich

## *Come and Relax*

Enjoy the setting of Trinity Park, browse the Synod Market Place, and relax in the grounds.

## *Create*

Through a Jubilee art project art and music, including African drumming/percussion, Handbells, and the opportunity to sing in a live one-off production of 'Jonah Man Jazz'

## *Reflect*

Celebrating faith, hope and love through our past, present and future through Bible study, Jubilee prayer spaces, photography exhibition and storytelling Exploring Faith in Action including tables for peace, eco church and global partnership

## *Have fun*

In the grounds with a craft marquee, bouncy castle, giant games, and fairground sideshows, including balloon modelling and bubble shows

## *Celebrate*

Worship together and eat together

**This is the day that the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it.**  
**Psalm 118**



## MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

3 July	David Tatem Janet Tollington	Melbourn Bassingbourn
10 July	Chris Baker Janet Bottoms Penny Flynn David Tatem	Haddenham Methodist Stetchworth & Cheveley St Ives Bassingbourn
17 July	Chris Baker Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Melbourn Christchurch, Ipswich Fulbourn
24 July	Janet Bottoms Deborah McVey Janet Tollington	Fulbourn St Luke, Cambridge Buntingford
31 July	Chris Baker Janet Bottoms Penny Flynn Janet Tollington	Burwell Buntingford Fulbourn Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford
7 August	Liz Caswell Deborah McVey Janet Tollington	Melbourn Whittlesford Bar Hill am Chappell URC pm
14 August	Liz Caswell Janet Tollington	Buntingford Fulbourn
21 August	Chris Baker Liz Caswell Janet Tollington	Ely Methodist Stetchworth & Cheveley Melbourn
28 August	Janet Bottoms Alex Clare-Young Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Fowlmere Alternative Communion, Greenbelt Stetchworth & Cheveley Fulbourn am & pm

# DIARY

Services are conducted by the Minister, except where shown

## JULY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Fri	01-Jul-22	Lectio Divina Contact William or Deborah McVey	8:30am	Zoom
Sun	03-Jul-22	Sunday Worship with Communion	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Mon	04-Jul-22	Officers' Meeting	4:00pm	Downing Place URC
Tue	05-Jul-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	06-Jul-22	Lunchtime Concert - Tony Bridgewater (piano) & Anna Downes (violin)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	07-Jul-22	Midweek Worship led by Janet Bottoms	11:00am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	07-Jul-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Fri	08-Jul-22	URC General Assembly begins		
Fri	08-Jul-22	Lectio Divina	8:30am	Zoom
Fri	08-Jul-22	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	10-Jul-22	Sunday Worship led by Revd David Tatem	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Mon	11-Jul-22	Property Group	6.15pm	Zoom
Tue	12-Jul-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2.30pm	St Athanasios Church
Tue	12-Jul-22	Elders' Meeting	7.30pm	tbc

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Wed	13-Jul-22	Lunchtime Concert - Christine Stevenson (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	14-Jul-22	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion	11:00am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	14-Jul-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sun	17-Jul-22	Sunday worship led by Junior Church	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Sun	17-Jul-22	Church Meeting	12:30pm	Downing Place
Sun	17-Jul-22	Open Table Communion Service Refreshments from 7pm	7:30pm	Downing Place URC
Tue	19-Jul-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	20-Jul-22	Lunchtime Concert - Carolee Fairbank (soprano) & Lucy Morrell (piano/organ)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	21-Jul-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	21-Jul-22	Midweek Worship led by Revd Alex Clare-Young	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Fri	22-Jul-22	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	24-Jul-22	Sunday Worship led by Revd Dr David Cornick	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Tue	26-Jul-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	27-Jul-22	Lunchtime Concert - Christian Dawson (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	28-Jul-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Thu	28-Jul-22	Midweek Worship with Communion led by Revd Professor David Thompson	1:00pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	31-Jul-22	Sunday Worship led by the Sustainability Group	11:00am	Downing Place URC

## AUGUST

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Tue	02-Aug-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	03-Aug-22	Lunchtime Concert - Erina Ishiyama (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	04-Aug-22	Midweek Worship led by Revd Deborah McVey	11:00am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	04-Aug-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sun	07-Aug-22	Sunday Worship with Communion, led by Revd Chris Baker	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Tue	09-Aug-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	10-Aug-22	Lunchtime Concert - Joanna Lam (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	11-Aug-22	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion	11:00am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	11-Aug-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sun	14-Aug-22	Sunday Worship led by Richard Lewney	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Tue	16-Aug-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	17-Aug-22	Lunchtime Concert - Olive Murray (soprano) & Christopher Foreman (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC



	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Thu	18-Aug-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	18-Aug-22	Midweek Worship led by Dr Augur Pearce	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	21-Aug-22	Sunday Worship	11:00am	Downing Place
Sun	21-Aug-22	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Downing Place
Tue	23-Aug-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	24-Aug-22	Lunchtime Concert - Pietro Vinciguerra (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	25-Aug-22	Midweek Worship with Communion led by Revd Dr Janet Tollington	1:00pm	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	25-Aug-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sun	28-Aug-22	Sunday Worship led by Revd Prof David Thompson	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Tue	30-Aug-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	31-Aug-22	Lunchtime Concert - Yukie Smith (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	01-Sep-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	01-Sep-22	Midweek Worship led by Revd Dr Janet Tollington	11:00am	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	04-Sep-22	Sunday Worship with Communion,	11:00am	Downing Place URC

## LECTIONARY FOR JULY & AUGUST 2022

These are the readings suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary, as in ROOTS, the material used by our Children's Ministry team. They may be altered if that is the preacher's wish.

### July

*3 July Trinity 3*

Isaiah 66:10-14

Psalms 66:1-9

Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

*10 July Trinity 4*

Deuteronomy 30:9-14

Psalms 25:1-10

Colossians 1:1-14

Luke 10:25-37

*17 July Trinity 5*

Genesis 18:1-10a

Psalms 15

Colossians 1:15-28

Luke 10:38-42

*24 July Trinity 6*

Genesis 18:20-32

Psalms 138

Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19)

Luke 11:1-13

*31 July Trinity 7*

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23

Psalms 49:1-12

Colossians 3:1-11

Luke 12:13-21

## August

*7 August Trinity 8*

Genesis 15:1-6

Psalm 33:12-22

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

*14 August Trinity 9*

Jeremiah 23:23-29

Psalm 82

Hebrews 11:29-12:2

Luke 12:49-56

*21 August Trinity 10*

Isaiah 58:9b-14

Psalm 103:1-8

Hebrews 12:18-29

Luke 13:10-17

*28 August Trinity 11*

Proverbs 25:6-7

Psalm 112

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Luke 14:1, 7-14

## September

*4 September Trinity 12*

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 1

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14:25-33





*Geraniums in the Church's courtyard garden*

*Photograph by Ann Auger*

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Tim Rowland

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

Please send items to both Tim Rowland and Ann Auger  
([ann@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:ann@downingplaceurc.org))

WEB EDITOR: Ann Auger

Please send all items to be included in the September edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of **Wednesday 17 August.**

The September edition will be available from **Sunday 28 August.**