



DOWNING PLACE  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE

## PLACE MATTERS



MONTHLY MAGAZINE – ISSUE 12  
JULY-AUGUST 2019

## CONTACT DETAILS – DOWNING PLACE URC

Website: [www.downingplaceurc.org](http://www.downingplaceurc.org)

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## **Clerk to the Elders' Meeting**

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## **OTHER DOWNING PLACE HOMES**

Cherry Hinton

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I am in the midst of the busiest two months of my time as a Moderator of the General Assembly. Apart from anything else, this article affords me the opportunity to thank you for your forbearance. In truth, I miss being amongst you with the frequency and regularity that is normal. That said, I am experiencing the Church in ways that I would not do otherwise, which I value more than I can say, and this seems a good moment to share some of those encounters with you.

### Trinity Wimbledon

On Easter Day I was preaching at Trinity URC in Wimbledon. When I worked in Southern Synod, I had a great deal to do with this church, and it was a joy to return. There I found a serendipitous synergy with our work in Downing Place; they are just a year ahead of us in the decision to buy a digital organ to replace their rather needy – and enormous – pipe organ. It was instructive to listen to the story, to see the instrument they bought, and to realise how carefully churches need to research what will be the right instrument for their building, for their style of worship, and for their mission-shaped aspirations. Given the place of music within our life and work, it is vital that we select an organ that will serve **that as well as possible. It was a special privilege to dedicate the instrument ‘to undergird Trinity’s music-making, soothing us in our sorrow, rousing us in our joy, speaking eloquently when words fail us’.** It will be good for us to secure an instrument to do just that.

### Channel Islands

A fortnight later I took the ferry, first to Guernsey and then to Jersey. Visiting the United Reformed Churches there I immediately felt embraced by their warmth and appreciation. For some years, they shared a minister. They lived on Jersey but spent a week each month on Guernsey. Now, however, it is not possible for the Wessex Synod to provide ministry of The Word and Sacraments at all. I met two congregations who, despite sadness at having no minister, have not let it blunt their commitment to being witnesses to Jesus Christ in their communities. It was an inspiration to see their beautifully maintained buildings, their use of them as community resources, and their desire to engage **ecumenically, living out God’s love as and however they can.**

## Church of Scotland

Then with just about enough time to re-pack the suitcase, I headed for Edinburgh, to represent the URC at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. This is always a great privilege, and the Kirk offers warm and kind hospitality. The first two days included real ceremony as on the Saturday the Moderator, The Right Reverend Colin Sinclair, was inducted and the Lord High Commissioner, The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, addressed us, and on the Sunday we filled St Giles Cathedral for Morning Worship. On Monday we got down to business, and there was a different sort of privilege in eavesdropping on a sister denomination wrestling as the URC does with drastic fall in membership and numbers of ministers and with the need for greater financial austerity. I was reminded of the elderly pastor in Sicily who last year told Simone Maghenzani and me that changed circumstances are not reasons for giving up on mission and ministry but for finding new ways of proclaiming the grace of God.

And is that not the nub of it for us, too? Throughout history the church has been changing, forever adapting to new worlds, new cultures, new eras. That change is axiomatic to being alive. What is unchanged is the grace that God lavished upon the world in Jesus Christ. Our task, too, as Downing Place is to help the world know it – and to know it not in ways that spoke to the eighteenth century but that will arrest the twenty first.

I may often be far away - and as you read these words I will be in North America, visiting the United Church of Canada and in the United States, the United Church of Christ - but please know that you are never far from my mind, nor from my prayers.



*Nigel Uden*

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

## GOD'S LOVE IS EVERYWHERE

One Sunday we made a river. The congregation could gather on the river bank at Philippi to share the story of Paul and Lydia. Acts 16.9-15



Everyone had been invited to wear purple for the service, led by members of the congregation.



Paul was called and inspired to share news of God's love in Macedonia.



Lydia, a seller of purple cloth, told of her joy in hearing of Jesus. We can all remember to share God's love everywhere.

## GOD'S LOVE IS EVERYWHERE

Everyone is invited to take part in a summer challenge.

Please take a selfie or bring back a postcard from anywhere you travel this summer. Then add it to the board in the Garden Room [starting in August]



Travelling or not –  
In Cambridge –

Find this Ditty Door  
While there, look for some angels!

Then, or later, sit somewhere and count ten birds, dogs, bicycles or tourists or all four!

## GOD'S LOVE IS EVERYWHERE

## WHAT EXACTLY IS THE PRAYER CORNER?

You may have noticed that after Downing Place Sunday services, someone goes to sit in a corner of the church – to the left of the door in Emmanuel, or on the pew nearest to the piano at St. Columba's.

This has occasioned some interesting reactions. Twice, when I have done this, I have been asked if I am OK. Mostly, people walk by, going for coffee or seeking someone out. Both reactions are fine by me. But they show that **perhaps people are not fully sure about what I am doing, not fully confident it's relevant to them, and not fully comfortable with the idea of approaching.**

The small team of Prayer Corner volunteers is keen to make it clear what the Prayer Corner is. First, it is for anybody and everybody. Secondly, it is for any mood, any reason or none. It is not essential to be in difficulty or trouble – though if you are, or someone you know is, we are there. You might be joyful, thoughtful, grateful, puzzled, or just want to sit quietly and pray, alone or with **another. You might simply want to share something that's happened during the week, to you or someone else. You might not want to share anything, but just to know that someone is praying for you, a friend or a situation. Anything you choose to say is completely confidential, unless you ask for it to be shared.**

Prayer is a natural, normal and necessary part of Christian life. Take a seat and **have a brief moment between the service and the week's busyness. You might also consider taking a turn on the small team, being willing to sit briefly after the service and say a prayer with or for anyone who wants it.**

In the past, prayer was offered quietly in each of the back corners at Emmanuel while communion was being served. It would be good to know how people in our joint congregation feel about this whole matter. We welcome constructive comments, positive and negative, to help us seek the best ways of serving our congregation and visitors through this quiet ministry.

*Jane Bower*

## **DATE FOR YOUR DIARY – SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER**

The South African theologian, The Revd. Professor John W. de Gruchy, will be preaching at Downing Place.

### **JOHN DE GRUCHY: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY**

John de Gruchy is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Cape Town and an Extraordinary Professor at the University of Stellenbosch. During his thirty years at UCT (1973-2003) he served several terms as Head of the Department of Religious Studies, and acting Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities. At the time of his retirement he was Director of the Graduate School in Humanities, and Deputy Dean of the Faculty, and then, from 2004-2017, a contracted Senior Scholar for the purpose of mentoring younger academics and doing research. He has lectured in many countries and authored or edited more than thirty books and many journal articles. His books have been translated into German, Korean, Japanese and Swedish. With his wife Isobel, he is now a resident member of the Volmoed Community for Reconciliation and Healing near Hermanus where he writes, gives seminars and makes furniture.

## WHAT CYSTINOSIS MEANS TO OUR FAMILY

As some members of Downing Place know, at the age of 15 months, our first grandchild, Finlay, was diagnosed with Cystinosis. It is a very rare, life limiting, genetic condition with a ratio of 1 in 100,000 live births.

Eventually his diagnosis was confirmed after he had stayed at 8 kilos from the age of 9 months. The length of time for the diagnosis is not to be criticised, as Finlay was the only baby in Cambridgeshire with the condition.

In effect, Finlay has too much Cystine (an amino acid) in his body, which will crystallise on all his organs, brain tissue and his retinas.

The kidneys are the first to be damaged and that was the case when he had the tests at 18 months. Nutrients, which would normally help growth were leaked away through his kidneys and he had rickets which has affected the growth and straightness of his legs. Recently Finlay had screws put into the inside of both knees to help them grow straighter.

**Finlay's consultant is based at Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham and has a clinic at Addenbrookes.** Depending on his condition, Finlay visits both centres about every two months on average, with frequent blood tests. He also has annual eye tests to check for crystals, which are already forming.

**The main drug, Cystagon, was developed in America in the 50's when certain children were showing signs of malnutrition and kidney failure resulting in death, by about 7 years old. It is however not very efficient because it doesn't pinpoint exactly what is needed.** It also causes bad breath because the tablets dissolve in the stomach and sometimes the smell seems to come through the pores. Not good for a teenager! I could say more, but I think that anyone who wishes to will find a lot of information on the internet.

Currently Finlay takes multiple tablets X3 a day, eye drops every two hours and has a Growth Hormone injection daily.

Finlay has enjoyed a near normal childhood, playing football, privately and for the school team. He's represented the school in various sporting tournaments and frequently messes around with his mates.

## Research

The first child to be diagnosed in Britain with Cystinosis, was Jonathan Terry, son of John and June Terry. How isolated they must have felt! I don't know much about those early days, but I think the parents were very proactive in finding organisations and other families overseas.

Jonathan founded the Cystinosis Foundation UK in 1998. For many years he was the charity's central organiser dealing with hundreds of enquiries from home and abroad. He organised International Conferences for professionals and families who mixed freely, which resulted in interesting conversations. Charity status was achieved in 1999 and the fund raising began in earnest. There are 3 centres for the research in England but Sunderland University was the one that was trying to create a new drug—a Pro-Drug -- to replace Cystagon. Professor Anderson and her team spent 15 years developing the drug. Unfortunately Roz passed away last year but her battle for funding has resulted in a grant from the Medical Research Council of £1.600,000, to enable the setting up of pre clinical trials over the next 2 years, moving into Clinical trials after that.

Many families fund raise, climbing mountains, having cake stalls, running marathons.

I make marmalade, chutney etc and sell it over coffee time at Church.

**The Local Church and Mission group of St Columba's and now Downing Place,** have contributed £500 per annum, for the past 12 years, from the Lewis Gibson money. **That's quite a commitment!**

Thank you

In the Queen's New Year Honours 2019, Jonathan was awarded an MBE.

Unfortunately in May, Jonathan passed away. He was the oldest person with Cystinosis in Europe at about 53.

*Daphne and David Thomas, the proud Grandparents of Finlay Thomas*

# JULY DIARY

Monday 1st	12.30pm	Prayers for the life and witness of our church, followed by a simple lunch	At the home of David & Penny Flynn
Tuesday 2nd	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship with a Wimbledon theme: strawberries, cream and games!	CHR
Wednesday 3rd	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert: Victoria Ayano Royce (piano)	Emmanuel
Thursday 4th	1.30pm	Knit Cafe	Emmanuel
Sunday 7th	10.00am	Choir Practice	Emmanuel
	11.00am	Morning Worship with Communion led by Revd Dr John Bradbury	Emmanuel
	10.30am	Morning Worship with Communion led by Revd Pat Heap	CHR
Tuesday 9th	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship Topic to be announced	CHR
Wednesday 10th	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert: Christine Stevenson (piano)	Emmanuel
Thursday 11th	10.30am	Ferried Friends	At the home of Rosemary Johnston
	11.00am	Midweek Worship led by Revd Deborah McVey	Emmanuel
	1.30pm	Knit Café	Emmanuel
	7.30pm	Singing Housegroup	At the home of David & Penny Flynn

Saturday July 13th.	3.00pm-5.00pm	Christian Aid Thank you party	St. Luke's Church
Sunday 14th	10.00am	Choir Practice	Emmanuel
	11.00am	Morning Worship led by Revd Dr John Bradbury	Emmanuel
	12.15pm	Followed by Church Meeting	
Monday 15th	4.00pm	<b>Officers' Meeting</b>	Emmanuel
	7.30pm	Book Group: 'Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine' by Gail Honeyman	At the home of Helen Spring
Tuesday 16th	2.30pm	The Word Together Bible Study Group	Fulbourn URC
	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship Speaker: Janet Tollington	CHR
Wednesday 17th	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert Nigel Blomiley (cello) Jessica Zhu (piano)	Emmanuel
Thursday 18th	1.30pm-	Knit Cafe	Emmanuel
Saturday 20th	10.00am-12.00	Fulbourn Coffee Morning	Hall Farm, 3 School Lane, Fulbourn
Sunday 21st	10.00am	Choir Practice	Emmanuel
	11.00am	Morning Worship led by Revd Nigel Uden	Emmanuel
	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Wendy Roe	CHR

Tuesday 23rd	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship Speaker: Wendy Roe 'Girl Guiding Today'	CHR
	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting	Emmanuel
Wednesday 24th	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert Performer to be confirmed	Emmanuel
Thursday 25th	11.00am	Midweek Worship with Communion led by Revd Dr John Bradbury	Emmanuel
	1.30pm	Knit Café	Emmanuel
	7.30pm	Singing Housegroup	At the home of David & Penny Flynn
Friday 26th	12.00- 3.00pm	Fair Shares Café Closing Celebration (please let Ann know by 30 June if you plan to attend)	Emmanuel
Sunday 28th	10.00am	Choir Practice	Emmanuel
	11.00am	Morning Worship led by Revd Dr John Bradbury	Emmanuel
	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Revd Chris Baker	CHR
	7.30pm	Open Table for LGBT+ folks and their allies. Refreshments at 7pm.	Emmanuel
Tuesday 30th	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship Speaker: Liz Russell Tudor Dancing	CHR
Wednesday 31st	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert Nicholas Jackson (tenor) Christopher Gould (piano)	Emmanuel

## AUGUST DIARY

Thursday 1st	1.30pm	Knit Cafe	Emmanuel
Sunday 4th	10.00am	Choir Practice	Emmanuel
	11.00am	Morning Worship with Communion led by Revd Dr John Bradbury	Emmanuel
Tuesday 6th	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship Speaker: Charles Mather on Music	CHR
Wednesday 7th	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert Stephen Armstrong & Friends	Emmanuel
Thursday 8th	11.00am	Midweek Worship with Revd Deborah McVey	Emmanuel
	1.30pm	Knit Café	Emmanuel
Sunday 11th	10.00am	Choir Practice	Emmanuel
	11.00am	Morning Worship with Revd John Bradbury	Emmanuel
Tuesday 13th	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship Speaker: Margaret Vidall <b>'The Origins of Father's Day'</b>	CHR
Wednesday 14th	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert Chiyon Wong (piano)	Emmanuel
Thursday 15th	10.30am	Ferried Friends	At the home of Liz Barrow
	1.30pm	Knit Cafe	Emmanuel

Sunday 18th	10.00am	Choir Practice	Emmanuel
	11.00am	Morning Worship led by Revd Nigel Uden	Emmanuel
Monday 19th	7.30pm	Book Group: <b>'Chronicle in Stone'</b> by Ismail Kadare	At the home of John & Maureen Kendall
Tuesday 20th	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship Topic to be announced	CHR
Wednesday 21st	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert John Richens (piano) Ros Hart (violin)	Emmanuel
Thursday 22nd	11.00am	Midweek Worship with Communion led by Revd Nigel Uden	Emmanuel
	1.30pm	Knit Cafe	Emmanuel
Sunday 25th	10.00am	Choir Practice	Emmanuel
	11.00am	Morning Worship led by members of the congregation	Emmanuel
Tuesday 27th	2.30pm	CHR Tuesday Fellowship Visit to Scotsdales	CHR
Wednesday 28th	1.00pm	Free Lunchtime Concert The Himley Trio	Emmanuel
Thursday 29th	1.30pm	Knit Cafe	Emmanuel

# BIBLE READINGS AND PRAYER TOPICS

## JULY AND AUGUST 2019

Below are the Bible readings we will be following in worship at Downing Place during July and August. You are invited to read them before coming to church.

The highlighted passage may be the focus for 'Sharing Together'.

Overleaf are prayer topics for each day, suggesting church and related matters, and a reminder of regular weekly events that need our prayers.

Then, on the fourth page, you will find the names of church members preaching elsewhere this month.

July 7th: Isaiah 66.10-14; Galatians 6.1-6, 7-16; Luke 10.1-11,16-20

July 14th: Deuteronomy 30. 9-14; Colossians 1.1-14; Luke 10. 25-37

July 21st: Genesis 18. 1-10a; Colossians 1. 15-28; Luke 10, 38-42

July 28th: Genesis 18. 20-32; Colossians 2,6-15,(16-19); Luke 11.1-13

August 4th: Ecclesiastes 1. 2,12-14; 2. 18-23; Colossians 3. 1-11;  
Luke 12. 13-21.

August 11th: Genesis 15. 1-6; Hebrews 11.1-3,8-16; Luke 12. 32-40.

August 18th: Jeremiah 23. 23-29; Hebrews 11.29-12.2; Luke 12. 49-56.

August 25th: Isaiah 58. 9b-14; Hebrews 12. 18-29; Luke 13. 10-17.

### Great Bird of the Wide Skies

May the maker of the yellow beak, the black bird, be with you

May the maker of the broad wing, the brown thrush be with you

May the maker of the fantail, the white dove, be with you

May the great bird of the wide skies descend upon you

*John Johansen-Berg*



## ARROW PRAYERS FOR JULY 2019

1st/2nd Pray for people taking holidays during the summer months . . . that this may be a time of rest and reflection. Pray for those who cannot afford to go away, because of caring responsibilities or lack of money.

July 3rd/4th: **Pray for the chaplains, medical and support staff at Addenbrooke's and Papworth, and for the scientists working for on the Addenbrooke's site** - thank God for their love and care at all times.

5th/6th Pray for Street Pastors and workers in NightLite, as NightLite moves to their new home in Hobbs Pavilion on Parkers Piece. May God be with them!

7th Pray for our Ministers, John and Nigel – for good health and job satisfaction! May God be with them and guide them through the summer.

8th/9th Pray for the Mission and Local Events Group, which meets on Tuesday – and for continued local witness of DPURC members in the local community.

10th/11th Pray for Church Related Community Workers (CRCW), and for John Proctor who addresses them in conference today; and the communities they serve.

12th/13th Pray for our Elders and Pastoral Visitors and thank God for the work they do in visiting and keeping the lives of members in their prayers.

14th Pray for Church Meeting after worship today – when the accounts will be considered. Thank God for the Treasurers and Management of DPURC.

15th/16th Pray for the Officers who meet on Monday, as they deal with the many decisions that have to be taken in developing a new church and congregation.

17th/18th Pray for the Finance and Management Committee that meets on Wednesday. Thank God for all those who share their skills for our church.

19th/20th Pray for Carina, our current Time for God worker, and thank God for all she (and all our TFGs) have shared in the life of the Café and the Church.

21st Pray for music in worship – for Mark and Ian - as well as the choir and orchestra, all of whom share their skills to enhance our worship!

22nd/23rd This week, we thank God for the Fair Shares Café – which closes on Friday. We thank God for all those involved with setting it up in 2001 – in particular, Jan Nicholls, Paul Franklin, Paul Quilter and many more . . .

24th/25th We thank God for the cooks in the Café – and particularly the supported workers and all who have worked alongside them. May everyone find new and fulfilling work as the Café closes.

26th/27th We thank God for the welcome and witness of all in the Café – as we celebrate the friendship and fellowship shared for nineteen years, and we welcome all those who have been a part of the Café during these years.

28th **We pray for Morning Worship, and for the 'Open Table' service this evening,** and for all who find this service a blessing in their daily lives.

July 29/30 Pray for the chaplains at Arthur Rank House and local Care Homes – and for elderly people in the community who need loving care and support.

31st Pray for the Group Therapy Centre as they settle in to their new premises.  
Pray for the staff and all those needing help at the moment.

## **ARROW PRAYERS FOR AUGUST 2019**

1st Pray for the City of Cambridge – for all involved with local government, and **pray for those living on the streets, and for Jimmy’s and Winter Comfort.**

2nd /3rd Pray for the Cambridge Folk Festival – the organisers, the performers and the many people camping out for three full days! May God be with them!

4th Pray for Rosemary Johnson and the Children’s Ministry in DPURC – and thank God for the church members who help with all ages on Sunday mornings.

5th/6th Pray for Ann Auger and Elaine Barker, working in the Office through the summer, supporting the work of the Ministers and Elders in times of change.

7th/8th Pray for the Wednesday Concerts in Emmanuel – for the performers and those who come to listen to the music. Thank God for the gift of music

9th/10th Pray for Eddie’s, and pray that all the supported workers have now found alternative activities to replace their work in the Fair Shares Café,

11th Pray for the Traidcraft Stall and for Lorraine and Stephen Thornton who keep it well stocked. Pray for the farmers and craftspeople whose goods are sold.

12th/13th Pray for the ‘Mayor’s Day Out’ on Tuesday, and for all the people for whom this is a very special event every summer in Cambridge.

14th/15th Pray for Ferried Friends who meet on Thursday. Thank God for the drivers and hosts that make this a rewarding experience for our older members.

16th/17th Pray for the young people of Cambridge and District who come into the centre of town every Friday and Saturday night – Police, Street Pastors and NightLite.. May they stay safe!

18th Pray for DPURC members who are leading worship in local churches today. **May they know God’s love as they share the gospel of Jesus Christ. (See p.5)**

19th/20th Pray for the cleaners and caretaker who serve in our buildings – their work is only noticed when it has not been done! Thank God for them all!!

21st/22nd Pray for our new Prime Minister and the government as they seek to resolve the conflict around Brexit

23rd/24th Pray for the Greenbelt Festival where many friends from the URC share **discussion, worship and prayer. Pray for God’s Spirit to be with them.**

25th Pray for all those taking part in Worship at Downing Place today. May people of all ages know **God’s power and presence around and within them at all times.**

26th/27th Thank God for Bank Holiday Monday as we share time with family and friends –may this be a time of relaxation and refreshment at the end of summer!

28th/29th Pray for young people preparing for new schools or college at the start of a new school year. Pray for teachers and lecturers and all the support staff.

30th/31st Pray for the young unemployed – any you know – that they may be able to find work and activities which will help them enter full-time work.

# CHURCH MEMBERS LEADING WORSHIP IN JULY

July 7<sup>th</sup>

Penny Flynn – Bassingbourn  
Deborah McVey – Sawston Free  
David Thompson – Buntingford  
Janet Tollington – Melbourn  
Nigel Uden – Havant

July 14<sup>th</sup>

Janet Bottoms – Castle Camps  
Wendy Roe – Whittlesford  
David Tatem - Buntingford  
Janet Tollington – Stetchworth and Cheveley  
Nigel Uden – Rhyl

July 21<sup>st</sup>

John Bradbury - Whittlesford  
Penny Flynn – Castle Camps  
Wendy Roe – Cherry Hinton Road  
David Tatem – Melbourn  
Janet Tollington – Cambourne  
Nigel Uden – 9.30 Fulbourn; 11.00 DPURC

July 28<sup>th</sup>

Janet Bottoms – Fowlmere  
Wendy Roe – Haverhill  
David Thompson – Cheveley  
Janet Tollington – Trinity, Burwell and p.m. Fulbourn

# CHURCH MEMBERS LEADING WORSHIP IN AUGUST

August 4th

Elizabeth Caswell - Melbourn

Janet Tollington – Stetchworth and Cheveley

August 11th

Elizabeth Caswell - Wickhambrook

Penny Flynn – Little Abington

Wendy Roe – Whittlesford

David Tatem – Lumen, London.

David Thompson - Fulbourn

Janet Tollington – Buntingford

August 18th

Janet Bottoms – Melbourn

David Thompson - Stetchworth

Nigel Uden – 9.30 Fulbourn; 11.00 DPURC

August 25th

John Bradbury - Whittlesford

Maureen Kendall – Buntingford

Wendy Roe – Castle Camps

Janet Tollington – Bassingbourn

Nigel Uden - Plymouth



## SISTERS HONOURED AT WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

On Saturday June 1<sup>st</sup>, a large company gathered in the sunshine to celebrate a special occasion at Westminster College, the URC's Resource Centre for Learning in Cambridge. In part, the college was celebrating the inauguration of its new Association of Alumni and Friends of Westminster, but the day was also marked by the unveiling of a new Cambridge Blue Plaque bearing the names - as the plaque records - of the 'twin sisters and intrepid biblical scholars' Agnes Lewis and Margaret Gibson, who gave the site on which the college is built.

The plaque was unveiled, appropriately, by Professor Janet Soskice, emeritus professor of theology in Cambridge and author of an acclaimed biography of the twins (*Sisters of Sinai*, 2009). She described how the land had been donated by the sisters in order to facilitate the move of the English Presbyterian college from London to Cambridge, a move for which they had campaigned strongly. However, Downing Place URC also has a strong connection to them, because they played a major role in the first half-century of the life and mission of St Columba's church. In 1905 they purchased the York Street Mission, in what was then a very poor district in Cambridge, and themselves worked in it for many years. Later, Margaret Gibson was to buy the land on which the Gibson Hall in St Columba's now stands. So, as we walk along Madingley Road past the gates of Westminster, all of us will be able to point to the plaque and say to our friends 'these sisters are part of our story too'.

*Tony Bottoms*



*Photographer: Perry Hastings Photography*

## TRIBUTE TO RAY STONE

On June 3rd, 2019, twelve members of the Tuesday Fellowship attended the funeral of Ray Stone which was held at Bar Hill Ecumenical Church. Ray had died peacefully ten days previously on May 18th, 2019 at the Arthur Rank Hospice .

Ray was a longstanding member of Cherry Hinton Road United Reformed Church until he and Julia moved to Bar Hill in October 2000. He was a lovely man, very gentle and courteous at all time. With Julia he ran the Tuesday Fellowship for many years. Friends at the Tuesday Fellowship remember him making the tea every week and also handling the money. He was always the first to notice if anyone was distressed and would be ready to offer a consoling hug as if he knew by intuition just what was needed.

At his funeral, tributes about him were made by his children and granddaughters as he was remembered as a wonderful father and grandfather. In the words of the service, he was referred to as "a real gentleman " and someone " full of warmth and kindness". I can think of no better words which would describe Ray's faith than the words which the Tuesday Fellowship always end their service.

" May God's blessing surround you each day as you trust him and walk in his way. May his presence within guard and keep you from sin, go in peace, go in joy, go in love."

*Penny Milsom*



## OPEN TABLE AT CAMBRIDGE PRIDE



On 8th June, Cambridge held its first ever Pride event. Pride is an important event for LGBT+ people. Whilst the word ‘pride’ can often have negative connotations (it is one of the ‘Seven Deadly Sins’, after all!), for people who have experienced years of shame because of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender - perhaps including having been bullied at school, having been rejected by family or friends, or feeling they have no place in a faith community - being able to go to an event where everyone can be themselves can be a powerful and transformative experience. In this context, ‘pride’ is very far from meaning ‘boastful’ or ‘arrogant’. Many people remember their first ever Pride event as the very first time they were able to relax and feel confident as themselves.

Held on Jesus Green, Cambridge Pride had all the usual Pride elements: entertainment, elaborate costumes, food and drink. It also boasted the world’s first ever Pride parade on punts, which attracted huge crowds despite the rain.

A key element of Cambridge Pride was the Community Tent, a marquee hosting stalls from a wide range of local and national groups, including the Girl Guides, The Encompass Network, Extinction Rebellion, The Kite Trust and SisterAct.

At Open Table, we felt that this was a great opportunity to advertise our monthly services, and to spread an inclusive, affirming message about God's love, so we were delighted to be able to staff a stall from 12:30 until 6pm. In fact, the Community Tent was heaving an hour before the official start time, as heavy rain drove people to seek shelter. At times, the aisles were so busy that everyone was brought to a standstill, but that allowed more time for us to chat and to invite people to leave prayers on our prayer board.

We were so moved by the conversations we had, and by the prayers that people left. People's readiness to do so was heartening; they would often say, 'I'm not a Christian, but...' before writing something down on a heart-shaped post-it note and adding it to the board. The prayers cover a wide range of topics: there are several for the lesbian couple on the bus in London who had been viciously attacked just days before; several for greater inclusivity in churches; some for parts of the world where being openly LGBT+ is potentially life-threatening; and some very moving ones for individuals. One that has stayed with me simply says: 'I am not a mistake'. Another says: 'For Lucy - sorry we didn't make the world kind enough for you.' We will be bringing the prayer board to our next Open Table and incorporating all of these prayers into our service.



John and Alison with the prayer hearts

Overall, we handed out over 100 flyers for Open Table, and 30 people signed up to join our email list, so we're hopeful that the event will have helped to spread the word about our community, and about Downing Place URC in general. More than that, it was important simply to be a visible Christian presence at the festival, to signal to people that God's love is much bigger than some have made it out to be.

We also made some useful connections with other Christian groups. Several of the local Methodist clergy were walking around with T-shirts saying 'Christians at Pride' and are keen to have greater involvement with Pride next year. Great St Mary's had hosted a Pride Brunch the day before and are also seeking closer links with us. Next year, we hope to have a bigger table representing all the various Christian groups in Cambridge which are LGBT+ affirming.

Do come along next year and find out what Pride is all about. Anyone can go - you don't have to identify as LGBT+. In the meantime, if you would like to incorporate any of the messages on the post-its into your own prayers, that would be fantastic.

Alison Binney



Robert, Bob, Emily and Tom: some of our regular Open Table members

## SPECIAL CAUSE FOR JULY AND AUGUST



Blue Smile is a locally based charity which began ten years ago, working across Cambridgeshire. Children's Mental Health is now a national issue, recognised by the Government's Green Paper in 2017.

Blue Smile has helped over 1000 children since it started, and supports increasing numbers of children year on year. They work with Partner Schools, where teams of therapists offer long term one-to-one help. Lately they have also developed an Outreach service which has already helped over 135 children. They work with pupils and parents and also support school staff with training and mentoring. In the last school year they worked with 44 schools and trained 144 clinical staff.

Blue Smile provides trained psychotherapists who use play and art therapy to build a trusting relationship so that children can talk about their worries and feelings. **If a child's emotional and mental health is improved then they are happier and better able to focus on learning in school. Blue Smile frees a child to learn and fulfil their potential. As one parent said, "to be the child they were always meant to be".**

Improved self awareness and having been taught mechanisms for coping with stress mean that the classroom situation is improved not only for one particular child but for everyone else. Life outside school will be better and also, one hopes, the future.

Please make cheques payable to "Blue Smile".

*Sally Williams*



## SUPERMARKET COLLECTION

Members of Downing Place took up position at the Trumpington Waitrose in May to collect for Christian Aid. We made £271.33 – a total identical, except for a few pence, to the total collected at Tesco earlier in the month! So our two supermarket collections raised £542 or so for this year's appeal which went to help set up maternity services in Sierra Leone.



Many thanks to all those who volunteered, both at the supermarket collections and for the house to house collection, which raised a total of £644.75. Final figures for the Church collection are expected soon.

## THANK YOU PARTY

All volunteers and supporters are welcome at the annual Christian Aid Thank you party on Saturday July 13<sup>th</sup>. This year the party will be held at **St. Luke's** Church, Victoria Road, Cambridge, CB4 3DZ, from 3 to 5 pm. Car parking is available. There will be afternoon tea with homemade cakes, a speaker from Christian Aid and the chance to chat with other volunteers from the Cambridge area. Do come along if you can.

### ADVANCE NOTICE – FILM NIGHTS – AUTUMN 2019

Viewing is offered to members of the congregation, families and friends. Easy parking on street. Lifts can be arranged. The address is not published alongside the publicity for a particular film. This keeps our amateur status and obviates the need for applying and paying for a license.

Dates planned for this Autumn [2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, alternate months] are 9<sup>th</sup> September and 11<sup>th</sup> November. Suggestions for possible films are welcome.

Doors open 6.35 from 7pm viewing, followed by ice cream and conversation.

*Rosemary Johnston*



## MONA COLES' PIANO

Mona Coles was a much loved member of St Columba's Church, elder and Junior Church leader, who sadly passed away at a relatively young age. Her family gave her piano to the Church where it has been played on many occasions, most recently during services in Church. Ailsa has fond memories of playing it at Sunday school parties, Church services, Burns nights, Congregational meetings, Scottish country dancing, Tuesday club meetings, and even in Mona's house at parties when she used to have sing alongs!

Her family wanted it to go to a 'good home' and they are delighted that Elizabeth Thomson discovered that Bramley Court Care Home could use such a piano. The staff who collected the piano were genuinely thrilled to take the piano and referred to it as Mona as they loaded it into the minibus!

It is happily installed in its new home, where Elizabeth played 'Scotland the Brave' on the day it arrived.

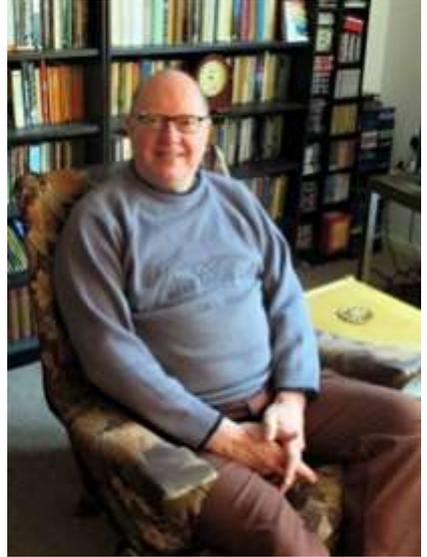
*Jenny Jacobsberg*



## AUGUR PEARCE – ELDER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

*Place Matters* – Augur is an unusual name – do you know where it comes from?

*Augur* – I believe it may be a corruption of the French Auger, possibly going back to the Huguenots, though I don't know of any French influence in the family. My father was from the Home Counties; my mother was the daughter of a naval officer descended from Glamorgan industrialists and a girl from New South Wales, but she used to stay with her aunt in Pembrokeshire and loved it. I lived in Pembrokeshire with my mother from age seven until I went away to school in Ascot and then London, and thought of it as home. But then I was London based until my early thirties.



*PM* – We know you as an expert in law and how it affects the Church – can you say how these special interests developed?

*A* - I did my first degree at Christ Church, Oxford, reading law, and followed that with six months legal training at Chester. Then after two years as an articled clerk I worked as a Solicitor in a firm which specialised in ecclesiastical and charity work as well as education law – very much my fields of interest. I stayed there for ten years, but decided I didn't want to work in an office all my life, so took myself to Berlin.

*PM* - Why Berlin – were you already interested in Germany?

*A* - Yes, I had already learned some German and visited Berlin and loved the city. So I took a rapid course in teaching English as a foreign language, and did some teaching to pay the rent. It was a good time to offer English – two years after the reunification of Germany there was a huge demand for English tuition from people in the former DDR who had had to learn Russian at school – now most people learn English so there is far less demand.

I soon discovered that I had time to spare from the teaching and enrolled at the Humboldt University to do a degree in theology. My German improved enormously of course, but the second part of the course would have meant learning Hebrew through German, and this seemed a challenge too far, so I returned to the UK. While in Berlin as well as teaching English and doing the theology degree, I had been doing a Masters in ecclesiastical law at Cardiff by distance learning and eventually also teaching an introductory course in English law at the University in Frankfurt an der Oder. I was quite busy!

*PM* - So you came back to London?

*A.* - No, I went up to Durham for two years to complete my theology degree and graduated in 1997. One of my vacation jobs during this time was working as a **volunteer on Iona, which came in useful when St. Columba's had their pilgrimage** there in 2016. Next step was a Ph.D. because I wanted to teach in a University, so I came to Cambridge to be supervised by David Thompson. I became a graduate student at Magdalene, a connection which is still very much alive and valued today. My thesis compared aspects of the English and Prussian legal systems over four centuries and how these reflected the concept of the 'Christian commonwealth'. **This is when I first got to know John Bradbury, when we both served on the Divinity Faculty Board as postgraduate representatives.** I was pleased when our union brought me into contact with John again.

I then went to Oxford Brookes University to do post-doctoral research into the **Bishop's role in the Manx Constitution, which had a spin-off** in yet another aspect of Church life, this time relations between the Church of England and the Church in the Isle of Man. But a lectureship in law came up at Cardiff, and I applied and got it. There followed ten good years in Cardiff – I enjoyed the teaching and the pastoral side and my colleagues were congenial, but eventually I began to feel I wanted to return to England – strangely enough as an Englishman I felt more of an exile in Cardiff than I had done in Berlin.

So at the end of 2011 I moved back to Cambridge, bought the house where I still live, and was able to pursue my own interests in history, theology and law. I did work for the Government Legal Service in London, and gained some valuable experience, but after eighteen months I had had enough of London working and returned to Cambridge. Now I write articles and pieces for books, give the occasional lecture, attend events at Magdalene, and do voluntary legal work for the URC.

*PM* - Have you always been a member of a URC Church?

*A* - No, that came later. I was brought up in the Church of England and became a Reader while in London, but during my doctoral studies I started attending St. Columba's URC Cambridge, when Keith Riglin was the Minister. (I still see Keith regularly when I am in London, as I serve on a trustee Board he chairs.) Later, whilst in Oxford, I joined St. Columba's Church there, when Susan Durber was the Minister. I liked the welcoming atmosphere, the style of worship, and the conciliar government, the fact that decisions at all levels in the URC are taken by representative councils, not by a single individual. I transferred my membership to City URC in Windsor Place, Cardiff, where I became an Elder and Church Secretary. When I returned to Cambridge I joined St. Columba's, this time as a full member.

But I have always liked to attend different Churches too. I have kept strong links with the Magdalene Chapel community here, and I sometimes go to Little St. Mary's on festival days. I also value Quaker meetings and the Unitarian Church for their liberal views. To keep up my German connections I go to the Lutheran Church in Shaftesbury Road. Conversely, when I was in Berlin I sometimes worshipped in the Protestant *Landeskirche*, sometimes in the English Church, but also in the Old Catholic Church, so I am quite ecumenical. I believe in "reconciled diversity" – not a complete union of the Churches but a willingness to work together and complement each other.

*PM* – You clearly have a talent for languages.

*A*. – Well, it has always been an interest. As well as German, I have a middling knowledge of Norwegian and I can carry on a simple conversation in Welsh.

*PM* – Do you have time for other interests?

*A*. - I like to swim, though not very often these days, and I enjoy board games when I can get enough people together. I offer hospitality to international travellers, and I am something of a cook - I cook for the Downing Place Gibson's lunches, specialising in main courses. Chicken chorizo soup coming up! I'm also an enthusiastic traveller, enjoying holidays abroad and cruises, though I prefer to avoid the hottest parts of the world. I go back regularly to Germany – when I was in Cardiff I organised the exchange scheme which gave me an annual visit over there.

*PM* – A good deal of your time is spent helping Downing Place and the URC in general. What exactly is your role in the Church?

*A* – I have been called “Elder without portfolio”. I don’t currently belong to any group, but am available to advise when needed on legal matters affecting the Church, and I was one of those who drafted our new constitution. I lead services a couple of times a year.

Within the wider Church I have had a number of roles. I have been Secretary of the Mission Council’s Law and Polity Advisory group. What I found particularly interesting was work on same sex marriage and civil partnership legislation, and I presented the Church’s position to a committee of MPs. I’ve also served on the URC Trust, General Assembly’s Faith and Order Committee, and I’m currently re-drafting the Ministers’ disciplinary process for the URC. I was a member of the Synod of Wales for a couple of years, and now I serve on Eastern Synod. I aim to use my legal knowledge to serve the Church where I can.

*PM* - How do you feel about the new Downing Place Church?

*A* - There is a lot of enthusiasm about the new Church and what it can do, which means there is a good atmosphere, and a strong impetus for successful developments like Open Table. Emmanuel have brought real assets to the union and some impressive people, and I feel I have made some good friends.

*PM* – Thank you, Augur, for giving us an idea of your wide-ranging contribution to Downing Place.

**Fulbourn United Reformed Church**

**Invites you to a**

# **COFFEE MORNING**

**on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July**

**10.00 a.m. until noon**



**Hall Farm, 3 School Lane,  
Fulbourn, CB21 5BH**

**Raffle, Stalls, Refreshments**

**ALL WELCOME**

**In aid of Church Funds**

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Sheila Porrer

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

ITEMS FOR MONTHLY

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WEB EDITOR: Alison Binney

Please send all items to be included in the September edition to both Sheila and Ann by the cut off date of Wednesday 14 August 2019.

Any items received after the deadline will not be included.

The September edition will be available in church from Sunday 25 August 2019.