



**DOWNING PLACE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE**



**MONTHLY MAGAZINE – ISSUE 20
MAY 2020**

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MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

It seems hardly possible that this is the last letter that I will write for Place Matters. Leaving a community that has been very significant to one is never a straightforward thing, but leaving just at the moment is perhaps even stranger than usual. Not to be able to gather, and bid farewell; not to be able to shake hands; not to be able to sit at table together and mark the moment makes this moment of taking my leave very odd indeed.



The situation we have found ourselves in in the last few weeks has turned the world upside down. Things we took for granted a few weeks ago, **we no longer take for granted, and we've** rapidly become accustomed to a new form of life. In the midst of the grief and suffering that many have been going through in this time, we have also learnt a great deal about ourselves, our communities and about our churches. Some of what we have learned we will do well to take with us into the future, as we begin to return to something more like what we have previously known as normality.

I have found it extraordinary how quickly church life has found expression in all kinds of new ways. Elders' Groups have found new life on the phone or on-line. A Facebook group sprang up which has become a place of prayer, mutual support and laughter. Meetings have happened by 'Zoom' (that I'd never even heard of a few weeks ago). We have a group of young people from the congregation meeting for bible study on-line. Information about where supplies can be found and who might deliver basic essentials to those shut away has circulated at speed. Many acts of kindness have been performed. We've discovered the extraordinary things that one can do with the camera on a phone, and cheap video-editing software, and our worship is reaching many, many people beyond the life of the regular worshipping congregation.

It should not really surprise us that we have the ability, as God's people, to respond at speed and transform our life in double quick time. For in some ways, that is what we have been doing over the last three and a bit years that I've been ministering with you, first with Emmanuel, and then as Downing Place. For we have been on a journey which has been all about discerning the will of God in the here and now, reaching out for the Kairos moments that God has given us, and

moving forward in faith - often at speed. What we have done in the last few weeks, hopefully ultimately in a temporary way, has been exactly the same process, condensed in timeframe.

Within the Christian faith there is a creative tension between the injunction to 'be still and know that I am God', and the injunction to get up and go to a new place, to do a new thing, singing a new song. Perhaps these Coronavirus times are calling us to explore both aspects of God's call at the same time? The call not to always be on the move, dashing from one thing to another, and simply to be, and at the same time, to find new ways of working, living, loving and sharing.

God never wills suffering. God always wills us to discern something deeper of God's truth for us out of every situation, however. Out of this situation, I wonder whether we might learn to inhabit a way of being church that is just slightly less busy, and focussed on perpetual movement, and yet makes full use of the tools and resources we've recently learnt are at our disposal and can be used in our worship, witness and service to such great effect? What that might look like, we can't possibly at the moment know, but it will be a good question for us all to explore. A question that, as Downing Place, I will have to leave you to contemplate as you continue on your journey as God's people without me as one of the ministers. They are questions I will have to contemplate with new friends and colleagues, seeking to support the flourishing of the United Reformed Church as a whole.

So, in this strangest of times, I bid you farewell. I hope that out of these strange times, new life in Christ will be experienced, new truths from our reading of scripture emerge, a newness of vision for what being the people of God can be will come forth, and a true valuing of human fellowship in person cause us to raise our hearts in thankfulness.

Thank you for all you have given me in the time I have been with you. Thank you for the generosity of your farewell, which has been overwhelming. Thank you for being such wonderful companions along the way over many, many years of membership and ministry with Emmanuel, St. Columba's and Downing Place. You will remain very much in my prayers as you journey into the future. Please pray for me too, as I move onto a new phase in ministry and take up new challenges.

Yours in Christ,

John.

JOHN BRADBURY AN APPRECIATION



As John moves from Cambridge, to become the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, it is my privilege to offer this appreciation of him.

No appreciation of John can say everything that might be said, and this one doesn't pretend to. Rather, I hope it will provide stimulus for each reader's personal reflection and thanksgiving. I should like to use Johannes Brahms's *Second Piano Concerto in B flat major* as an analogy. It's his Opus 83 and was completed in 1881.

To use a piano piece to speak of John is not entirely surprising. His own skills as a pianist are both innate and finely-honed, and certainly of concerto-playing standard. Moreover, although he pursued theology rather than music as a career, those who heard his performance of Liszt's *Petrarch Sonnet 104* at the concert on 15th February will know his touch remains assured. That he agreed to play during his final service – this time a Rachmaninov *Prelude* – was an especial delight, though it sharpened our awareness of what we are going to miss.

1. Violine
2. Violine
Bratsche
Violoncell-Solo
Violoncell

So to the analogy of John and Brahms's Concerto. First, a general point. My

ancient edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* says that Brahms inherited Robert Schumann's 'horror of display for display's sake'. Equally so John. He has no front, no side. What you see is what you get, with neither presumption nor pretence. Horror of display, however, does not mean that either Brahms or John lack brilliance. Elsewhere, one of you has described John as a polymath, and it is frequently true that he can speak thoughtfully and wisely on many a topic. That is of course true of his professional field, but also of so much else – not least legal, financial and management matters. Then there's the way he mastered the editing of services recorded on his telephone, which is extraordinary. And how he can cook!

A page of a musical score for a concerto, showing staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, and Piano. The score includes dynamic markings like 'dolce' and 'p dolce', and a section marked with a boxed 'A'.

Secondly, and more specifically, the piano part in the concerto is obviously crucial. It gives the piece so much that everything hangs on. The pianist leads. Such has John been as minister of Emmanuel and then Downing Place churches. His analytical skills, his strategic thinking and his articulate and diplomatic presentation of far-sighted, even prophetic ideas have been invaluable in encouraging the uniting of two churches that were similar in many ways, but seriously different in some important ones. I sincerely believe that his role in our uniting was pivotal and peerless.

Thirdly, as in any large work of classical music, there are themes that get introduced and then developed. Brahms, for example, uses the French Horn to haunting effect at the start of Opus 83, giving it a tune that other

instrumentalists then play with. Something similar is required of leaders in most fields, and not least of Christian ministers. John both thrives and excels at it. In many contexts, but not least in the pulpit, he wondrously takes an idea – most frequently Biblical – and develops it with history, theology, current affairs, and all sorts else, in order to push out the boundaries of our thinking and lengthen the horizon of our vision, so that we then have something to ‘play with’. Rather like Brahms, John’s development of ideas takes us on some fascinating diversions, but invariably brings us eventually to a coherent conclusion.

Fourthly, the third movement of the concerto, an *Andante*, begins with an exquisitely lyrical tune for the ‘cello. So lyrical in fact, that Brahms himself later adapted it into a song. This ‘cello theme lasts for over three minutes, and even then, when the piano comes in, it is more by way of accompaniment than take over. True, there is a rather strong piano interlude, but then the movement closes, in tranquillity - the ‘cello returns to the tune as the piano gently supports. I believe that to be another of John’s strengths in ministry, as he complements his dependable leadership with committed facilitating of others in their work for the church. As such, he accompanies those who offer ministry amongst children, he supports elders in their distinctive role, he encourages musicians to cultivate and bring to flower their ideas and contributions. And that is to give just three examples. In fact, he stirs so many of us to give the best we can.

There is also a heartfelt sensitivity to that Brahms’s melody for the ‘cello. I do not find it maudlin or sentimental, but it speaks to my soul, it kindles my emotional intelligence. The pastor in John has that sensitivity, too, whilst instinctively resisting the saccharine. If you have ever needed his unshockable ear, his broad shoulder, his careful counsel, you will know his pastoral care can be as soothing as that *Andante*, even as it can also be as rousing as that Liszt *Sonnet*. And that sensitivity has also been apparent in his dedicated commitment to the evolution of Open Table.

My Grove’s *Dictionary* was published in 1928, just thirty years after Brahms died. Fuller Maitland concludes its entry on the composer with these words: ‘It is even yet early to attempt to define Brahms’s position among the great masters ...’. Well, as sad, even disappointed as we are to see John go from amongst us, I sense it is because we recognise he has rare talent that equips him for the next chapter of ministry against a broader backdrop. The United Reformed Church will now be blessed, in the ways we have been, as John gives himself to it as selflessly as he has to us.

I believe I can speak for us all, when I say that he goes with our profound gratitude, and also with our affection, esteem and prayers.

PASTORAL NEWS

A gift in memory of Joyce and Kenneth Webb, members at Cherry Hinton Road, has been received from their niece in St Neots.

We are being reminded frequently that the events of the last month have been unprecedented. These are anxious times. Thankfully, for those under the care of clinics at Addenbrooke's, treatment continues. Thanks are also due to our willing group of church members and friends who deliver to, email and 'phone those confined to home.

Elsewhere in this issue we mark John's departure with very mixed feelings...

Margaret Thompson

DOWNING PLACE URC ONLINE SERVICES MAY 2020

3rd	Easter IV	Nigel Uden
10th	Easter V	Neil Thorogood with Nigel Uden
17th	Easter VI	The Worship, Discipleship and Spirituality Group with Nigel Uden
24th	Easter VII	Nigel Uden
31st	Pentecost	David Cornick and Nigel Uden

Watch online at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7GOuqsJi5A2PFacVyp4YOg>

PROFILE—JENNY JACOBBERG

I was born and brought up in Edinburgh, the second eldest of four children. My father was a potato breeder with the Scottish plant breeding station, and my mother an excellent homemaker, always happy to entertain visitors. During my teenage years I went to the local parish church, where I became a member. I still meet up with friends from Youth Fellowship there.

After studying Economics and Psychology at Edinburgh University, I worked in Glasgow as a Systems Analyst, before moving to St Andrews University as Data Processing Officer, responsible for implementing the first computerised student records system. More importantly I met Fred and we were married in the Martyrs Church there.

Fred had moved to Cambridge, where I found a job with Applied Research of Cambridge, later bought by McDonnell Douglas Information Systems. We developed computer-aided design systems, and I was involved in documentation and product support. After 18.5 years, I decided that working for a large American company was not ideal, so left to join Cambashi, a small strategic marketing consultancy working for companies that develop IT for manufacturing industry. Our main business was customised consulting projects, but over time we have also developed sophisticated computer models of our target markets and specialised sales training programs – how to sell into manufacturing industry. I was Operations Director, till I retired (after another 18.5 years!), but I am still involved as a non-executive director.

The minister who married us in St Andrews suggested that I join St Columba's, where I quickly felt very much at home among so many Scots. Our son, Ian, and our daughter, Shona, attended Sunday School in Fulbourn and at St Columba's, also helping with the creche. Ian became a member before he left home.



on holiday – between Ibiza and Formentera



Shona, Alex, Elise and Jacob at Christmas

During the 1990s, I was part of a team of three, who led one of the Junior Church groups during term time. Then I helped with the older group between 2011 and 2014. Latterly we had a monthly meeting with a member of the congregation who talked about aspects of their life, work and faith – those were fascinating sessions! **I've had a number of other roles within the Church, usually to do with finance, buildings or personnel. Fred's parents were Jewish refugees and he is agnostic, but has always been very supportive and involved in my work with the church. I am currently serving as an Elder and am convenor of the Pastoral care group.**



For the last ten years I have been one of the Church representatives on the Board of Trustees for the Group Therapy Centre, which has been through some challenging times. I am much impressed by the work of the therapists, who are helping some of the most vulnerable in our society.

My main hobbies are playing competitive bridge and keeping somewhat fit. I enjoy walking and have completed the Spey Way, the Fen Rivers Way and the West Anglian Way (all in many stages!). My immediate and extended family are very important to me. I hope to be able to return to looking after our grandchildren, Elise and Jacob, one day a week, once the Covid-19 crisis is over. Shona and Alex are on the front line in two London hospitals. Ian is doing his bit by dj-ing from his living room for Social Distancing Dance parties, keeping spirits up on Saturday evenings and midweek.

I value the many friendships I have made through Church and keep in touch with several people who have moved away. Downing Place has ambitious plans for the future – it should be an exciting time for everyone involved.



Fred and Ian (with a scarecrow?) at Ickworth

TIME FOR GOD

Over the years we have welcomed nineteen young people as volunteers. There are many good memories and stories to tell. We keep in touch and know, for instance, that some keep an eye on our website, as well as visiting again; sometimes with children! We have had messages of concern and good wishes for the congregation. Some of the more recent volunteers have had their university courses disrupted.

All are being assured of our love and prayers for the well-being of themselves and their families.

In USA - Chris and Audrey

In France - Clemence

In Germany - Katrin, Carina, Barbara, Eva, Sarah, Imke, Michael, Carsten, Johann-Friedrich, Patrick, Maren, Maria

In the UK - Paul, Elena, Rachel

In South Korea - Melody

Rosemary Johnston

ONGOING CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Each week, usually on Friday so parents can prepare, our families receive material by email and sometimes something in the post to link with the Bible readings for that Sunday. The ideas are also attached to the congregational mailing alert about You Tube worship. Some grandparents who pass on the material are now included in the Friday mailing. If anyone else would like to receive an early version please let me know. *Rosemary*



SELF HELP AFRICA

Ted Dennison reminds us that Self Help Africa was to have been our monthly cause for May, if the coronavirus had not intervened.

The name says it all – this charity works in Africa establishing schemes whereby communities can help themselves out of poverty. At this moment, though, it is deeply concerned about the impact of the coronavirus. They quote a colleague in northern Malawi:

Covid-19 has arrived in south-east Africa. There have been outbreaks in the bordering countries of Zambia and Tanzania in recent days, and soon it will be here. It is coming. The communities that we work with have few defences, and are extremely vulnerable. It's imperative to act as fast as possible to help keep them safe.

Self Help Africa, like other charities including Christian Aid, is working to supply soap and handwash, jerry cans to transport and store water, and health supplies and education in the communities it serves.

You can donate to Self Help Africa on-line at <https://selfhelpafrica.org/uk/covid-19-appeal>

By telephone on 01743 277170

Or by sending a cheque to Self Help Africa, Westgate House, Hills Lane, Shrewsbury. SY1 1QU

Please don't send donations to the Downing Place Church office, as Ann and Elaine cannot deal with them at this time.

See more about the work of Self Help Africa on their website www.selfhelpafrica.org

SPECIAL CAUSE

The Special Cause collection for March (The Olive Tree project) will be counted and sent off when normal office business resumes.

DOWNING PLACE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

BIBLE READINGS AND PRAYER TOPICS

MAY 2019

Below are the Bible readings we will be following in worship at Downing Place during April. 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 prayer support.

On the back page there are prayers from our Virtual Prayer Circle on Facebook which you might like to use.

May 3rd Easter IV
Acts 2.42-47, Psalm 23
I Peter 2.19-25, John 10.1-10

May 10th Easter V
Acts 7.55-60, Psalm 31.1-5 and 15-16
I Peter 2.2-10; John 14.1-14

May 17th Easter VI
Acts 17.22-31, Psalm 66.8-20
I Peter 3.13-22, John 14.15-21

May 24th Sunday after Ascension
Acts 1.6-14, Psalm 8.1-10, 32-35
I Peter 4.12-14, and 5.6-11, John 17.1-11

May 31st Pentecost
Numbers 11.24-30, Acts 2.1-21
Psalm 104.24-34, 35b, I Corinthians 12.3b-13
John 20.19-23



ARROW PRAYERS FOR MAY 2020

1. Pray that God will hold us all in His everlasting arms during this uncertain time of our lives . . . remember those who have died . . .
2. Pray for each member of your family by name – and especially those with whom you are sharing this period of your lives.
3. Pray for the nurses and doctors working in worrying conditions and often concerned about insufficient supplies of PPE.
4. Pray for the equipment managers, ordering sufficient equipment, and dealing with the problems of distribution.
5. Pray for the delivery drivers, the ambulance drivers, and the Army Medical teams and the volunteers working with them.
6. Pray for vulnerable residents in care homes, who do not understand the present difficulties and the staff who support, care and feed them.
7. Pray for all vulnerable people in community homes, where they may find the whole idea of lockdown incomprehensible.
8. Pray for prisoners and all in confined situations, where the options for isolation are limited, and for the prison staff under exceptional stress.
9. Pray for the workers in supermarkets stacking shelves, on the tills, and helping shoppers keep their distance inside and outside the stores.
10. This would have been the first Sunday in Christian Aid Week – pray for the developing countries where access to medical care is limited.
11. Pray for families with young children, who need constant care, as they become accustomed to new ways of being together.
12. Pray for the teachers and school age children, particularly the children preparing for external exams and teachers working from home.
13. Pray for the teachers taking their turn to care for the children of our many key workers, and for children where home is a dangerous place.
14. Pray for anyone you know who is not used to working from home and find the conditions oppressive with unexpected family pressures.
15. Pray for the homeless in our city, who, thanks to the City Council have been found night accommodation in three empty hotels in the city.
16. Pray for the volunteers who prepare and deliver their meals, from the Salvation Army during the week, and from Jimmies at weekends.

17. Pray for the key workers on public transport – in trains and buses and all who manage the transport of those without private cars.
18. Pray for those who have been laid off, and have turned to Universal Credit for their only income - particularly pray for those with families.
19. Pray for those volunteering in the Cambridge Food Bank, and making sure there is help and food for those who need it.
20. Pray for our political leaders at this time, and for the Prime Minister, who has himself been ill, and continues to convalesce.
21. Pray for the politicians and medical experts, who make decisions concerning the management of contact and how to effect changes.
22. Pray for the Police and local councillors who have to manage whatever plans are made, and need to act with acceptable authority.
23. Pray for John Bradbury who starts his new role as General Secretary of the URC this month and will be based at the URC Church Office.
24. Pray for Nigel Uden, as his period as a Joint URC Moderator ends, and he returns into full-time pastoral ministry in Cambridgeshire.
25. Pray for our Church Officers and Elders as they seek to keep pastoral care and concern for our congregation in these uncertain times.
26. Pray for Ian and Mark and their ministry of sharing music – particularly using music in worship to hold the congregation together.
27. Pray for Ann and Elaine in the Church Office, dealing with the practical details of contact with a scattered congregation.
28. Pray for those who are unwell in any other way, and for doctors and nurses under great stress – and for the chaplains in our local hospitals.
29. Pray for the staff at Arthur Rank House – so that those who are able can spend their last days in a supportive and comforting place.
30. Pray for your family and friends – this would have been a holiday weekend – pray that we may spend some time together in some way.
31. Day of Pentecost. This is a prayer from ROOTS:
Come, Holy Spirit, fill my home with peace;
Come Holy Spirit, fill my heart with love;
Come, Holy Spirit, fill my life with your power. Amen.

Two Prayers for Uncertain Times

Living, loving God, we praise you -
and through times of peril and concern

we lean into you. . . .

For in Jesus Christ. . .

You have trodden paths as difficult as ours
revealing there is a love that nothing defeats -
a love that bears us through.

Even as we strive to behave responsibly
and to care reliably

for we know
that in uncertain times, we might trust
you are with us,

our refuge and strength
and our faith, hope and love might be renewed
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

Amen

Loving God,

In You we have our life and breath and well-being.

Thank You for this time of spring, sunshine
and growth all around us.

Each day brings new challenges for us
and yet we feel vulnerable and fearful
for ourselves and for those whom we love.

Help us to remember that You are all around us,
loving, embracing and blessing us
as we try to re-fashion our lives
in the weeks and months ahead.

God of hope,
fill us with Your love and life-giving Spirit.
Enable us to reach out to those we know
in the love which springs from You. Amen

These prayers have been used by the Downing Place Virtual Prayer Group
more details from Alison Binney – alisonbinney@hotmail.com



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2020

SUNDAY 10TH MAY – SATURDAY 16TH
MAY

This year's Christian Aid Week will be different from any other in the 75 years since Christian Aid began after the end of the Second World War. The coronavirus pandemic means that all the normal CAW activities – the house to house collections, the street collections, the fundraising events – will be impossible. Yet the need for Christian Aid has never been greater.

The more developed part of the world in which we are privileged to live is suffering greatly in the pandemic, but there are health services, good communication and distribution systems, well established hygiene measures to help us to cope. In less sophisticated societies the impact of the pandemic threatens to be huge, with health services unable to meet the challenge. Even more at risk are the overcrowded refugee camps in places like Lebanon or Bangladesh.



Christian Aid is working in some of the most difficult areas to help to combat the virus. Teams are working in the Cox's Bazaar camp for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and in camps for internally displaced people in Nigeria, for example, teaching good hygiene and providing protective equipment, as well as continuing their usual programmes of supplying food and essentials.

Christian Aid are also promoting a petition to our Chancellor to suspend debt payments due from developing countries to free up funds to fight the pandemic. To find out more about Christian Aid's pandemic work and sign up to the Debt Jubilee petition, go to the Christian Aid website.

The coronavirus emergency will be devastating for less developed countries, but their underlying problems will not go away. The theme of the 2020 Christian Aid Week is water – Every Last Drop -, and the droughts caused by climate

change. This is a problem especially in Africa, and in this Christian Aid Week the focus is on Kenya. Rose Jonathan struggles to feed her family after a six hour return journey to fetch water – Christian Aid wants to build her an earth dam near her home.



Christian Aid have already built an earth dam for Florence’s community – you can see a short film about the difference this has made on the Christian Aid website – go to <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week/resources>.

And Christian Aid continues its campaign for climate justice, the fight against climate change and its effects on the world’s poorest communities. Dr. Rowan Williams, Chair of the Christian Aid Board, writes in the current Christian Aid magazine:

‘Christian Aid has worked for 75 years alongside communities living in poverty. The greatest driver of poverty in the immediate future is the impact of the climate crisis, so it is right that we should emphasise this. That’s why, this year, we invite you to stand together with us to give, act and pray prophetically – and to be prophetic means first of all to see, and to help others to see, how human actions look in the light of God’s kingdom.’

How can we give to Christian Aid now that we have no Church services and no envelopes?

- Go to the Christian Aid website and make a donation electronically, either to the Coronavirus appeal, or to the general work of Christian Aid, or ideally both.
- If you aren’t online, you can donate by telephone: to make a donation phone 020 7523 2269 or 020 7523 2085
- Maybe you could even ask a friend or family member to donate for you if they are online, and you could repay them by sending a cheque.
- Christian Aid say they are having difficulty in processing donations by post at the moment.

Giving isn’t as simple as it should be, but your money is desperately needed – please do your best to see Christian Aid doesn’t lose out.

How can we act now that we are staying at home?

- Tell your friends and family about Christian Aid Week and encourage them to donate if they can.
- Sign the Debt Jubilee petition – go to www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/debt-jubilee-petition
- Sign the climate justice petition – go to caid.org.uk/climatejusticepetition
- Think hard about reducing our own carbon footprint to help to share the **world's resources more fairly.**

How can we pray? This we can do at home!

- Sign up for the Prayer Chain – Christian Aid, along with Tearfund and CAFOD, are organising a prayer chain for climate justice to fill the year 2020 with prayer. To sign up go to <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/prayer-chain>
- Pray and worship with others: Christian Aid will be live-streaming daily services with guest speakers during Christian Aid Week. You can sign up by going to <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/christian-aid-week/daily-live-streaming>
- Use Christian Aid prayers in your own prayers. There are many prayers on the Christian Aid website, including this one:

A prayer for a global pandemic

‘Love...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.’ (1 Corinthians 13:7-8)

Loving God, strengthen our innermost being with your love that bears all things, even the weight of this global pandemic, even the endurance of watching for symptoms, of patiently waiting for this to pass, watching while we pray, keeping our gaze fixed on you, and looking out for our neighbours near and far.

Instil in our shaken souls the belief and hope that all things are possible with your creative love, for strangers to become friends, for science to source solutions, for resources to be generously shared so everyone, everywhere, may have what they need. May your perfect love that knows no borders cast out any fear and selfishness that divides.

May your love that never ends be our comfort, strength and guide for the wellbeing of all and the glory of God.

Amen.

A very happy and productive Christian Aid Week to you all.

Sheila Porrer

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

We continue to worship at home.
We have planted nasturtium seeds.

Here are Samuel's



Charlotte and Elizabeth are still looking hopefully.
There might be one just above the polyanthus right hand leaf.



Painting in the garden is fun too.



HAPPY EASTER!

CONFESSIONS OF A TECHNOPHOBE: IS COVID 19 THE CURE?

If there is a gene for technological aptitude, I do not possess it. Brought up handling creative materials, loving books, textures, pens and paper, I am always the last to be reluctantly pushed into purchasing something everyone else has had for twenty-three years. My music is largely on cassettes or vinyl, and it was my father, who will shortly be 100, who finally paid for me to get my first computer as he recognised that my independent business would get nowhere without email.

Yet in the last three weeks I have, with determination and without question, learned to negotiate new intricacies of the laptop of which, without a pandemic, I would have remained contentedly ignorant. And I am not alone in this – there are quite a number of friends and DP members who say the same. There is no doubt that when such changed circumstances and sudden new needs arise, people make extra effort to forge into new territory and make what needs to happen, happen.

Many, many times over the last few weeks I have felt profoundly grateful for the technology at our disposal during this crisis. I have thought of the villagers of Eyam in 1665, and other earlier – and later – lockdowns, with not even a phone available. Now, technology threads its way supportively through my typical lockdown day.

While still in bed, after my essential tea and read, I start each morning by checking my phone for texts, the news online and emails. Once downstairs, I look up a thirty minute workout, plonk the screen on a stool and cavort in whatever way I am instructed. (I do vary this with a scoutstep to the furthest post box - twenty walk, twenty run - if I have a letter to post.) If all goes to plan I finish in time to open up the Downing Place facebook page, knowing that everyone on it will be praying at 9.30. I am not a facebook fan, and am on it merely because it is the only way my two godchildren communicate. I think I **have about five ‘friends’**. But a **private page solely for DP friends is wonderful** – thank you to Alison, whose idea it was. I take pleasure in seeing what others have posted, and usually post something myself – a photo, a thought, a joke, a prayer, a poem. The mix of serious and humorous, prosaic and spiritual, is a healthy one and an encouraging start to my morning.

Then there are the recorded services. Of all the times in the year for the lockdown to hit, Holy Week is the one which necessitated the steepest learning curve for our gallant team. The first service was memorable for me for other



reasons. On holiday in a cottage in Weston Park the very weekend when it had to close to the public, we were given the whole 1000 acres to ourselves, including the church, which stood empty and open. In a sunlit pew we watched the first service from the Emmanuel building on my phone (see picture) – an emotional experience.

Asked to record some readings for Easter Day, I made myself find out how to make a video – and it was easy. I then made a funny one for my nine year old nephew. He apparently laughed – my only aim!

The next challenge was the elders' meeting on something called Zoom. After initial dithering worry I managed this too. It was a magical moment when I pressed a key and before me in my lounge were equally amazed, beaming faces in little square frames, hands waving excitedly, with calls of 'Hello!' Nonchalantly, I now have Buildings Committee meetings on Zoom too. Zoom has shot into use by thousands, and I was amused to see a lockdown version of Da Vinci's Last Supper, with each painted disciple isolated in a separate box on screen at the virtual meal. Personally I hope that church committee meetings can continue to be held via Zoom after the lockdown, particularly in winter. Several people have commented that this is the first Holy Week when they have 'attended' the service every day. I am amongst them. I would not have made the journey for a short service each day, but was keen to tune in at home. Enormous thanks to John, Nigel, Elaine, Mark, Ian and others for providing worship of such quality. As one member rightly said, it is humbling. And it has reached a far wider audience than our own congregation, including a friend in Bulgaria who requested every service.

Finally, I have taken another technological step. Timed for the lockdown, and in honour of my father's 100th birthday (which may have to be postponed) my play Daddy's Diaries has been made available on youtube. The play was written

in another period of enforced isolation, and about a period of enforced isolation. I was encouraged to take this step by Cambridgeshire Libraries and Frankie Lowe, who filmed my performance at the Corpus Playroom. Go to my website www.janebower.com and scroll down the homepage to the bright pink announcement – the link is there. I, and several friends, are finding that we are **often drawing on my father’s experiences in this time of lockdown.**

So – despite completely unimagined conditions, the life of DPURC is strong and its presence felt, and I know this experience will shape its future. If, like me, you feel frightened of technology and would like to make a tentative start (as many have by joining their first facebook page), help is at hand. If I can do it, anyone can.

Jane Bower

HELP FOR THOSE SELF-ISOLATING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS – APRIL 2020

The issues I have heard mentioned most often for those self-isolating, particularly in the 70+ age range, are boredom, loneliness and problems with shopping.

Fortunately, there are a number of local networks in the city, in some villages and among Church members. I have a list of members who would be happy to make phone contact with others, so do let me know if that would be helpful.

If neighbours and family are not able or available to help with your day-to-day shopping, I can put you in touch with members who have volunteered to provide this service.

Supermarkets are becoming more able to cope with the increased demand for home deliveries, particularly for those who are shielded. If you are still having problems with food deliveries, I have a number of suggestions.

The Cambridge Independent has a website article with a number of local options for deliveries

<https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/coronavirus-keeping-cambridge-in-business-a-z-of-retailers-pubs-and-companies-offering-deliveries-and-new-services-9103457/>

There is also a local website www.cambridgelocalshops.co.uk which lists all businesses who are delivering during the pandemic, both groceries and other

food.

www.clickitlocal.co.uk are using local cycle couriers (including our very own Ian de Massini) to deliver groceries from participating businesses for a flat rate of £3

Other possibilities include:

<https://www.kaleanddamson.co.uk/homedelivery/> for fruit, vegetables, salad, milk, bread, cheese, eggs

<https://www.donaldrussell.com/> for frozen meat, fish, desserts and ready meals

<https://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/delivery-update> for the usual Traidcraft products

<https://freshinbox.co.uk/> for fruit, salad and vegetables

<https://pastaevangelists.com/> for fresh artisan pasta kits

<https://www.hiitkitchen.co.uk/> for fresh meals

<http://www.hilaryswholesale.com/index.html> for fruit and vegetables

Some village stores offer to deliver to people locally – a couple of examples are:

Coton Orchard is still open for food and the post office. They offer home delivery for those self isolating. Ring 01954 210234.

Barker Bros. butchers in Great Shelford - For anyone self-isolating, or the elderly who can't, or don't want to visit, please call on 01223 843292 to discuss delivery to your door.

Similarly, pubs are offering take-away meals and home deliveries – a couple of examples are:

The Plough at Coton takes telephone orders, Tues to Sat 5 to 9, Sunday to 7 30, 01954 210 487. Substantial snack food apart from a home-made pasta with Bolognese sauce. The plough will take orders for delivery or you can collect evening meals. Ready in 30 minutes or less.

The Old Crown in Girton is doing takeaways and home deliveries to the Girton and Oakington area. Tel 01223 277217.

Let me know of other suggestions which may be useful to others.

Jenny Jacobsberg

Convenor of Pastoral Care Group

ELAINE AND ANN – WORKING THROUGH THE COVID-19 CRISIS

As you may have realised by now, Elaine and Ann are still working hard to ensure that as many aspects of church life as possible continue to be in place during this lockdown period. We thought it would be helpful to update you about how we are doing this.

Elaine is in the office in the mornings most days (apart from her rest day on Tuesday). She is picking up emails and phone messages regularly. She is also spending a lot of time in basements sorting out in preparation for our move. Elaine has access to the office printing facilities, so she is printing the paper copies of the Sunday service and associated mailings, *Place Matters* and any other items which cannot be emailed. She can also receive and bank cash and cheques for Downing Place and direct any post which arrives to the most suitable place.

Ann has been working from home since the lockdown started. She retains her normal pattern of office hours (with some meetings in the evening). She continues to look after *Place Matters* and the finances, and the Weekly Update. She is also working with Alison Binney on our new website. She does not have access to printing or scanning facilities, nor to a church chequebook at the moment.

Between us, we have most things covered – **please don't hesitate to contact either of us if we can help in any way.**

elaine@downingplaceurc.org 01223 351174

ann@downingplaceurc.org



CWC HELPLINE LAUNCHED

Cambridgeshire Workplace Chaplaincy has recognised a need for a helpline - to listen and comfort, for those who are finding life difficult at the moment. The day to day adjustments that many are having to make at the moment due to a stressful job or juggling working from home; coupled with responsibilities at home are very stressful for many of us.



Maintaining and enhancing the emotional and mental health of everyone is critical during these turbulent times. The helpline is for anyone in the workplace who needs help with stress and needs emotional support. We urge all to not be too proud or self-reliant and to seek support and help whenever you need it. It's not an admission of weakness.

The CWC Helpline is offering emotional support; a listening ear where we try to help the individual find their own solutions and where this clearly isn't possible, with their permission, we refer to relevant organisations. All calls are anonymous. The service is available during the hours of 9am-5pm Monday to Friday plus an out of hours voicemail if you would like a chaplain to contact you at a later point.

Our multifaith chaplains are a diverse group who are happy to provide support **regardless of whether you're spiritual or religious** – their aim is to listen and comfort.

Call: 0800 246 5193 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and outside of these hours you can leave a message)

www.cambsworkplacechaplaincy.org.uk

Email: info@cambsworkplacechaplaincy.org.uk

Tel: 07985 455221

www.facebook.com/cambsworkplacechaplaincy

www.twitter.com/cambschaplains



THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP



Since the CHR Tuesday Fellowship has been unable to meet because of the lock-down, members have been able to keep in touch via the monthly newsletter edited by Wendy Roe, which has suggested hymns, readings and reflections for members to read at the same time on Tuesdays at 2.30 pm. when we usually meet. We have also been able to contact each other by phone. We have decided, too, to continue our practice of donating to charities, especially as charities are finding their funds are drying up because of the pandemic. We therefore aim to donate to a charity every month, This month we are sending £40 to the East Anglican Children's Hospice.

Finally one of our members, Pamela Cressey has written of her experience of being isolated during the lock-down. She says "There are three reasons for gratitude during the lock-down:

- 1) time and weather to appreciate God's word in the many different birds and spring flowers and watch them flourish
- 2) witnessing and receiving kindness and generosity and a new spirit of caring and sharing
- 3) modern technology enabling communication by phone and computer, internet services so beautifully and reverently offered, and Zoom bringing our whole family together - seeing each other is so reassuring.

We are so grateful for our fellowship for at times like this, we really need each other.

PRAYER FOR A PANDEMIC

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home

Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips

Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market

Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country

Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours.

Amen.





MAGAZINE EDITOR: Sheila Porrer

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

ITEMS FOR MONTHLY

PRAYER DIARY: Maureen Kendall

WEB EDITOR: Alison Binney

Please send all items to be included in the June edition to both Sheila and Ann by the cut off date of Wednesday 20 May 2020.

Any items received after the deadline will not be included.

The June edition will be available during week ending Friday 29 May