

ACT OF DEDICATION The Revd Clare Downing, Moderator, General Assembly of the URC

Introduction

Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! - and the 'unknown God' without a temple in a city full of temples. Buildings as monuments or museums – but should be tool for mission. Might feel as if a goal has been reached – but no doubt there will be changes as time goes on. But it's the church, as living stones, that will bring alive this building made of 'dead' stones. It is the people, filled with the Spirit, walking in the way of Jesus who will be bringers of good news, and so as we dedicate this wonderful building, more importantly we dedicate ourselves.

Promises

I invite those who are part of the Downing Place community to respond to these questions I will ask with the words "we do"

- Will you commit yourselves to the work of worship and welcome in this place? **We will**
- Will you commit yourselves to using this building as a tool in your call to share the good news of Jesus? **We will**
- Will you be faithful stewards of this building, not servants to it? **We will**
- Will you always listen for God's direction as you continue as church in this place? **We will**
And friends of Downing Place, as you are supporting those who worship and work here,
- Will you promise to pray for those who worship and work here, and for their part in God's mission through this place? **We will**

Prayer

Give thanks for:

- the God who calls us to journey together
- the vision of those who planted churches both on this site and at Trumpington Street
- the generations of disciples who have worshipped and shared the gospel from the two sites
- the vision of those who worked to bring the two congregations together
- the commitment of the two congregations to find creative ways forward in mission together and the willingness to let go of treasured traditions
- the skills of those who planned and executed the work on the new Downing Place church

We pray for:

- those who are a part of Downing Place, as members of the worshipping community
- those who work from this place -
- those who make use of the building – hirers, visitors
- may it be a place of inclusion, of peace

As we dedicate this building, we dedicate ourselves afresh to listening for God's call, to following the way of Jesus, to sharing the gospel through our prayers, our words and our action. Thanks be to God. Amen

THANKS Revd Nigel Uden

Whatever else today is, it's a moment of gratitude.

Gratitude to God, whose good hand has provided and guided and caressed us thus far.

Gratitude to those upon whose shoulders we stand, our forebears in Emmanuel and St Columba's Churches, each, at different times, located on this very street, which is why the name *Downing Place* United Reformed Church is so right for the future.

6th November 2021: Worship for the re-dedication of Downing Place Church

Gratitude to each and every member, elder and friend, for there are few who have been entirely divorced from all of this, and we have needed the effort and imagination of everyone, which has been so consistently given, as well as the anonymous donations, which are very far from taken for granted.

‘And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of’ (Hebrews 11.32 AV) everyone else to whom we are grateful. But on behalf of Downing Place Church, tell I must, of at least some. And please forgive me that these are but token thanks, compared with how grateful we feel.

Thank you, Lord Smith, Master of **Pembroke College**, to you and your colleagues, particularly Dr Andrew Cates, for the generous spirit of all our negotiations towards sale, and for the really helpful temporary lease back of the Emmanuel buildings, including accommodation for Elaine Barker and for the Group Therapy Centre. We wish you well in your redevelopment and use of the Emmanuel building.

Thank you, to those who negotiated all that on behalf of Emmanuel and the Downing Place Church, but particularly to Tony Bottoms, David Thompson and Chris Wright.

Thank you, Nigel Walter, Dirk Visagie and Jack Boyns, to you and all your colleagues at **Arch:angel** architects. Your vision and concept, design and dedication are key to why we can be here for this new beginning, which at once respects yesterday and catapults us into tomorrow. Jack, I can imagine that just as your first child was born during this work, so Downing Place Church might feel like the second, such was the quality of the work you gave to it.

Thank you, Stuart Humphrey and Brandon Joubert of **Coulson Building Group**, for such fine work, for such resilience in the face of the pandemic, and for such fruitfully collaborative working, via the negotiated contract, with both the architect and us as the client. Everyone’s contribution mattered, and the leadership given by Tom Gillard and Ian Keys was outstanding.

Thank you, to the late Thomas Krippner and to Ben Egan of **Absolute Audio Visual Solutions**, for so careful a design, and for the ongoing support as, with David Flynn’s devoted in house activity, we experience how to benefit from the sound and screen opportunities that we now have.

Thank you to Douglas Henn-Macrae of **DHMidi**, together with your sub-contractors Douglas, for the design, build and installation of the wondrous Hauptwerk instrument that now affords us eleven organs in one.

Thank you to Paul Whittle, formerly Moderator of the URC’s **Eastern Synod**, to the Synod Resources Committee, to the Eastern Province Trust, and to Penelope Davies-Brown and David Smith, in the Synod office, for the co-operative way in which they have enabled us to make all of this happen.

Thank you to **Westminster College**. Samantha White the Principal will be here tomorrow, but we were blessed by the welcome of Magalie Cooper as Bursar and all her staff, as well as of Sam, in enabling us to use the college, and especially the Chapel throughout the time we had no building at all.

Thank you to the church’s own tireless and assiduous **Building Group** – I name them alphabetically, lest any be treated as more important: Elaine Barker, Lindsey Bellis, Jane Bower, Kelly O’Doherty, Robert Porrer, Margaret Reynolds and, as each of them would say, last but emphatically not least, David Thomas. They had their 48th meeting this week. What more can I say?

Thank you to Jenny Jacobsberg and the **Operations Group** that got us out of here, then out of Emmanuel and now back in here. If Jenny’s middle initial wasn’t R for Rotas, it would be O for organised, and that’s what we needed.

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Thank you, **John Bradbury**. I do not believe we would be quite where we are today without you. Of course others could have done it. But that is not the point. *You* are the one God sent to point out to us where God's good hand was leading, and we are forever in your debt.

Thank you to Ann Auger and Elaine Barker, in the **church office**. Last Sunday we sang of God, 'no work too hard for him'. Well, no ask too much for them. No-one knows how much they do, and we warmly thank you both.

Thank you to Mark Dawes and Ian de Massini, with all our **musicians**, for as if a vanguard for the rest of us, they modelled how the union of two churches is about that counterpoint which isn't about us all singing the same notes, but about two different tunes coming together into something richer.

And thank you to **Church Treasurers**, Stephen Thornton at Emmanuel and for over 20 years, Ian Strachan at St Columba's and now Downing Place. That's an iceberg of a role – you do hours of work and then make reports that few people respond to, but we utterly depend and rely upon you, not least in a project such as this.

And finally, thank you to **Church Secretaries** who are critical to the fruitful effectiveness of a United Reformed Church, and in terms of the union and the redevelopment, initially Chris Wright and Nicholas Morgan, then Yvonne Norgett, the first Secretary of Downing Place URC, then Jenny Jacobsberg, and most recently the indefatigable Margaret Thompson.

In closing these thanks, I return to where I began: 'Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour'. (Rupert Brook, *Peace*.)

GREETINGS

Synod Moderator
Assembly Moderator
Ecumenical partner
Pembroke College
MP for Cambridge
Mayor of Cambridge

Lythan Nevard
Clare Downing
Robert Mackley
The Lord Smith of Finsbury
Daniel Zeichner MP
Cllr Russ McPherson