



**DOWNING PLACE  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE**



**ISSUE 42  
JUNE 2022**

# CONTACT DETAILS – DOWNING PLACE URC

**Address:** Downing Place United Reformed Church  
Downing Place  
Cambridge  
CB2 3EL

**Telephone:** 01223 756635

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

**Minister:** The Revd. Nigel Uden  
[nigel.uden@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:nigel.uden@downingplaceurc.org)  
01223 314586 (manse)

**Pioneer Minister:** The Revd Alex Clare-Young  
[alex@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:alex@downingplaceurc.org)  
07544 858918

**Children's Ministry Team Co-ordinator:**  
Elza de Bruin Lara  
[children@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:children@downingplaceurc.org)

**Open Table Co-ordinator:**  
Alison Binney  
[opentable@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:opentable@downingplaceurc.org)

**Church Office:** Elaine Barker  
(Elaine's rest day is Tuesday)  
[elaine@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:elaine@downingplaceurc.org)  
01223 756635

Ann Auger  
(Ann's normal working hours are Monday-Friday 9-5)  
[ann@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:ann@downingplaceurc.org)  
01223 375446

Jess Uden  
[jess@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:jess@downingplaceurc.org)  
01223 756635

**Church Secretary:** Margaret Thompson  
[secretary@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:secretary@downingplaceurc.org)

**Clerk to the Elders' Meeting**  
Owen Saxton  
[clerk@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:clerk@downingplaceurc.org)

**Treasurer:** Ian Strachan  
[treasurer@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:treasurer@downingplaceurc.org)

**Hospital and Hospice Visitor:**  
The Revd. Deborah McVey  
[hospitalvisitor@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:hospitalvisitor@downingplaceurc.org)

**Directors of Music:** Mark Dawes  
[mark@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:mark@downingplaceurc.org)

Ian de Massini  
[ian@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:ian@downingplaceurc.org)

**Audio-visuals:** [av@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:av@downingplaceurc.org)

*The cover image shows the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, photographed by Ken Rathje during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Read more about Ken's visit from page 16 onwards.*

## FROM THE MINISTER

A generation ago, the then Moderator of the United Reformed Church commenced his address to the 1993 General Assembly by suggesting that ‘God is very big.’ He might have said ‘beyond us’, for surely that is true. As Isaiah hears God say, ‘my thoughts and ways are not like yours’. (cf 55.8)

Hundreds of years earlier, Meister Eckhart urged caution in our God-talk. One paraphrase renders his fourteenth century thought as,

*‘God is a word who speaks only for himself.  
You and every other creature wish to speak for God, but you can’t,  
and if you try, you best be careful.  
Seriously, be careful.’*

Little wonder, then, that the Moderator went on to speculate whether a suitable symbol of Christian faith might be a question mark. I do not think he meant it to signify a questioning that reveals we have no faith; rather, one that indicates we are always ready to explore, to ask, to ponder, to think as a way of taking God seriously on the zig-zag pathway to faith.

Inevitably, those who interrogate religious ideas risk losing faith, but my own sense is that it’s unaddressed questions that lead to agnosticism more than do those enquiries that are honestly and openly grappled with. Similarly, religious enquirers will reach a rich array of conclusions. Something akin happened when the Elders thought about God at a recent away day. I asked them to speak for ‘just a minute’ about what Jesus meant to them. To listen to their replies was a great privilege; I was deeply moved by it, and my own faith journey was enhanced.

Some had an *ethical* focus, describing the Man for Others as ‘a unique life on earth, whose purpose was and is to show us ... a way of living life’, an ‘example ... that cannot be ignored’, ‘a pivot around which my life revolves, finds its orientation, direction and energy, correction and encouragement’.

Understandably, Jesus as an example also leads to ‘guilt and frustration that we are so very far from his example’, yet alongside appreciation that he is a ‘constant guide’, who loves, ‘no matter what’.

Some emphasised *relationship* with God: ‘Our Father’, of course, which ‘means being held in God’s palm’, but also describing how Jesus ‘stands alongside every person and affirms their dignity - he doesn’t condemn’, he ‘never lets me go’; ‘I



am held, accepted and shaped by Jesus' steadfast love.'

Several used more overtly *theological* language. Some used it to express what they could affirm: 'Jesus is the Son of God'; 'death and resurrection mean hope can break through what seems impossible', and others to acknowledge what doctrinally was beyond them, even as they clung to the relationship: 'I'm not sure how much of the Bible is fact, but there is a helpful point to many of the stories.' 'I am not very interested in or persuaded by the virgin birth, and always unsure of what I feel about the resurrection and the crucifixion. He is my faithful friend'.

And then there was the future perspective: 'Jesus Christ gives me hope for humankind.' Maybe that's because of the image another elder chose, 'He is my conductor in all senses of the word. He leads my daily life and determines my tempo. He co-ordinates my life with others. Electrically and physiologically, by example, he is the tangible conduit by which I live and breathe and have my very being. He validates my travel through life's journey.'

This range of ideas seems to me to be like a patchwork. Not one of them is complete in and of itself. After all, God's ways aren't our ways. But together the picture is enhanced and enlarged. I find each thought stimulating and nourishing the others. Moreover, do you notice how not one of them is dogmatic, assertive or exclusive? I sense that Meister Eckhart would be content that in speaking of God, each elder was seriously careful.

I comfort myself that the difficulties each of us has with speaking of what we think about God are ultimately immaterial because what really matters is what God thinks of us. And of that we are given wondrous intimations in those key Biblical narratives of a manger in a stable, a cross on a hill, and an empty tomb in a garden. At their heart lies what one elder called 'a code, the example of life that cannot be ignored'. Cracking Christ's code leads to a life which compels us to love as he loved, embracing all, and stopping at nothing,

Such a God is indeed very big. So, I have found, are the benefits of thinking and speaking carefully of God. But not *so* carefully that we dilute the potential of God's love to rescue the world, for whatever else I may wish to say, ultimately Jesus is 'love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be'. Amidst all the persistent question marks, that'll do for me. After all, as we live life day to day, what more is needed than that?

*Nigel Uden*

# LIVING IN LOCKDOWN

*Tim Rowland writes:*

One morning, two years ago, an envelope came through my letterbox. It bore the NHS logo. The letter read, “The NHS has identified you ... as someone at risk of severe illness if you catch Coronavirus ... The safest course of action is for you to stay at home at all times and avoid all face-to-face contact for at least twelve weeks from today ...”.

From March 2020, for two years, life was very different for all of us from what it had been: we're only just emerging from those ‘lockdown’ limitations and restrictions. We know all too well what anguish and distress many people experienced during those two years. I was relatively fortunate. I would smile during Zoom conversations, as I confided how I longed to take a letter to the post-box at the end of the road. A visit to our local Co-op was just a dream.

Upon being appointed to succeed Sheila Porrer as Place Matters Editor, I contacted a few Downing Place friends, and wrote: “I’d be grateful if you would write about some of the ways in which your day-to-day life was different in those two years - of necessity. Things that you couldn't do, people that you couldn't see, places that you couldn't get to, how you felt about Sunday worship on YouTube (etc etc). And perhaps some good thing that you found yourself doing that you hadn't considered before”.

I was indeed grateful to receive their contributions to this June 2022 Place Matters piece. Now – please read on.

*Carys Lee*

I wear many hats – mother, wife, daughter, sister, employee, line manager, church member. Life is easier when I wear a small number of hats at a time, but when March 2020 came along, I was suddenly compelled to wear many hats simultaneously and I’m afraid to say that it gave me a metaphorical headache.

Due to school and nursery closures, my husband and I found ourselves having to educate and entertain our two daughters (aged 6 and 2 in early 2020), whilst also working remotely from various bedrooms in the house. We are fortunate in many ways – we have jobs which are mainly compatible with home-working, and we were able to spread our hours over the day (and night) to meet our contractual obligations. We have a garden and the means to order a steady supply of craft supplies to keep little hands busy. We have a good internet connection and multiple electronic devices. However, there were plenty of days when I couldn't wait for bedtime. Worrying about all the things that I had to do,

hadn't yet done, or might never get the time to do was challenging. There was also the worry about my wider family, friends and colleagues – all in subtly different situations and none facing the exact same set of challenges. What they say is probably true - we were all riding the same storm but some of us were in yachts, some of us were in dinghies and some of us were drowning.

The ebb and flow of the pandemic brought us renewed energy at periodic intervals, with many happy reunions and the return of exciting activities. Visiting my mother and brother in the summer of 2020 when it became legal for us to travel to Wales again was a particular highlight, as was visiting my mother in law in Ireland for Easter 2022 after a 2½ year gap. Returning to the church building for in-person services was particularly wonderful. I had missed the togetherness – and the mental space afforded by leaving the house to meet others.

Whilst challenging, the lockdowns provided us as a family with some joyful experiences we would not have had otherwise. I have fond memories of listening to *The Aquarium from the Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saëns in our sunny garden whilst my eldest daughter painted a Seascape (a particularly creative Music topic lesson!). There's also memories of doing a Junior Church crafts sent to us through the post, and of half listening to my eldest daughter's Google Classroom lessons. These moments still make me smile and make me so grateful for the community of people who provided "virtual" support to families such as mine during the pandemic.

Now that we are entering a "new normal", I can hopefully revert to wearing one hat at a time – and I rejoice in the freedom of that.

*Trish & David Whitehead*

We had booked our trip to New Zealand to visit relatives in March 2020, via Dubai and Australia to avoid political unrest in Hong Kong and rumours of a new virus in the Far East. Two weeks before our trip, New Zealand slammed its doors because of Covid.

Lockdown here followed, with its catalogue of grim statistics. We stayed at home, missing contact with grandsons and other family and friends, forming a 'bubble' with a friend who lives alone. We were sad to miss the last few months of worship at Emmanuel, but grateful for the online services from there and Westminster College Chapel, also an occasional Evensong from Christchurch Cathedral NZ, with son-in-law Malcolm in the choir.

Other electronic privileges were conversations with family on WhatsApp, and music lessons on Zoom for Trish's clarinet and Dave's baritone horn. Trish was able to submit recordings of 'Clarinet 3' parts for 4 Villages Orchestra pieces,

assembled and posted on YouTube. Dave also had work meetings and RAeS branch lectures on Zoom.

We felt very fortunate to have a large garden, and spent pleasant times there, growing tomatoes and beans, and morning glory flowers in the greenhouse. An attempt at sourdough bread was unsuccessful.

As restrictions eased, we enjoyed a chilly picnic at Rutland Water with our Sheffield family, and eventually were allowed to visit them and see their 'new' (Victorian) house. We hope to visit New Zealand at the end of this year.

Overall, we have escaped lightly, but are still feeling an ageing reluctance to arrange activities such as days out, holidays, concerts and theatre visits.

Trish and Dave Whitehead

May 2022

### *Helen Spring*

I was one of the lucky ones. For many people lockdown was grim, a time of loneliness, stress, and anxiety. But for me it involved nothing worse than adapting the normal patterns of life.

I no longer went shopping but our daughter bought what we needed and delivered it to the back gate. Tony and I then painstakingly wiped everything with disinfectant.

The normal pattern of Sundays changed. Instead of going to church we watched the services online, sitting on the sofa with a cup of coffee. The family Sunday lunch became the family Sunday quiz on Zoom.

Birthdays had to be adapted. In May, keeping to the 2-metre rule, we left our grandson's birthday presents on his front doorstep, blew kisses, waved, and sang Happy Birthday on the pavement.

Christmas required creative adjustment. We opted to stay at home and as our daughter was joining us for lunch it had to be an al fresco occasion. We put up fairy lights, hung baubles on a bush and wrapped ourselves in coats, scarves, and rugs. Christmas lunch was a Waitrose Cod Mornay (5 minutes in the microwave) followed by a ready-made dessert. I remember that first lockdown Christmas with great fondness.





But my overwhelming memory of lockdown is the early morning walks. Setting out before breakfast, walking across Midsummer Common along the river and into a deserted town. Usually-busy roads were empty. In the few shops that were open, assistants could be seen carefully disinfecting shelves and surfaces before customers arrived. Council workers steam cleaned pavements and litter bins. Home-made rainbows appeared in people's windows and messages were chalked on pavements and pathways. "Stay home, stay hopeful, be kind"

Perhaps it was the messages, perhaps it was the lovely weather, but in that first lockdown Cambridge seemed a kindly, gentle place to live, where spring flowers flourished in the sunshine, squirrels chased each other across a deserted Christ's Pieces and herons abandoned the riverbank to stroll along the paths on Midsummer Common.

*Elaine Barker*

In the summer of 2019 I had the task of emptying St. Columba's church as well as packing up my home of over 20 years - I would not be returning to the home in which I had happily brought up all 3 of my kids. Only Matt was still living with me by then but it was a wrench to leave. So it was I moved to 1 Little St. Mary's Lane. I unpacked knowing it was only for a short time and moved to working at the office in Emmanuel. We settled in well and loved living there.

Then came the lockdowns starting in March of 2020, when I began working mainly from home; until we had to pack up Emmanuel church over the summer of 2020 ready for moving back to the Downing Place church site - Pembroke needed us out of the Emmanuel building. During this time I was producing the videos which Nigel was making to go up on our You Tube account for church members to watch each Sunday. I became aware from talking to many of our church members that with the lockdowns they had no idea how quiet it was in the city centre. I fell in love with Cambridge all over again as I saw it at its most peaceful without traffic, tourists or students! I



began including pictures from my dog walks to show those who were not venturing into the centre what it was like. It is amazing how we managed to do the videos when none of us knew where to start at the beginning. We learned so much.



*During lockdown, Elaine took many photos for Church members to see what town looked like without all the students and tourists.*

*Here we see a completely empty King's Parade*

I had always thought I would enjoy working from home but I very soon realized that I am very much a people person and I really did not enjoy the lack of contact that home working involves. After a brief stay at Westminster College in one of the cottages for a few months I finally returned to the Downing Place site and started to make it home for both my family and for the church. Such a strange and yet interesting couple of years but what an amazing place we now have as our “home”.



*Trinity Street at the height of lockdown*

*Andy McKenzie writes:*

Lockdown for me was ‘business as usual’. In the first one the college gave everyone two days to download the Teams app, organise and link all our classes and tutorials, then everyone, students and staff alike, were then told to stay at home and get on with it.

Being able to support our students to complete their art projects was a major concern. Not all of them coped well, but the majority were still able to create and complete the projects they had started, but it was much harder to assess and grade them.

This new experience became a time for adjustment: sitting at a computer is not something I would choose to do, and not being active meant discovering new routes around my neighbourhood on essential late afternoon walks.

Although I live near a busy street and can hear people, I only saw anyone via a screen in a tiny box, so started imagining my family, friends and other faces

through drawing and painting. I was grateful for the recorded Downing Place YouTube services. Whilst watching I was also able to create, make and paint, and they became an important part of my routine.

In the period of uncertainty for the second lockdown, supporting students was much harder as most were reluctant to show themselves on screen, or even to talk during lessons. When delivering lectures, I became conscious that teenagers, especially, were struggling to retain a routine, so they might be in bed and didn't want to be seen. The timing was different, and as Art students they were really motivated to be back in college to access the workshops: they were glad to get back after Easter last year.

The whole lockdown experience was a combination of self-inflicted personal confinement, enduring 'cancelled culture', becoming used to new communication technology whilst still trying to encourage others: staying personally motivated was generally challenging and exhausting. It is only now as we adjust to 'normal' life, even with the threat of Covid still around, that we can appraise how things have changed and contemplate what we have all been through, our shared life experience - that will allow us to have hope and faith for our future together.



*'Sister' and 'Brother' - Andy's niece and nephew re-imagined during lockdown*

## GOING PLACES – OR MISSING OUT

The May 2022 Place Matters announced the formation of a new, informal Downing Place Group- **Going Places**

About 15 people of all ages have already signed up for this new, self-running social group, which is open to everyone with some connection to Downing Place, but we need to clarify a couple of points.

1. You do not need to organise or even initiate any ideas for social gatherings - you can simply respond to what others suggest.
2. You need only respond to the get-togethers that interest you - but if your name isn't on the list, you won't hear what's happening!

So, if you don't want to miss out on informal opportunities to meet for:

- a day at the seaside
- barbeque/tea in someone's garden
- a walk or ramble
- theatre/cinema/concert get together
- punting
- pub outing
- poetry reading
- pole vaulting, pizza making, ice-cream tasting ... or whatever ... then please do contact Jane Bower or Tim Rowland to be placed on the list.

We welcome all ages, and those who may not normally attend our Sunday morning services but are connected to the church in other ways. We will be kicking off with our first idea very soon.





# JUNIOR CHURCH ACTIVITIES IN APRIL AND MAY

On Easter Sunday the Junior Church met as a single group including a visitor, with ages ranging from 3 -13 years. We began by singing We Have a King who Rides a Donkey that was learned the previous week and focused on the chorus 'Jesus the King is Risen'. We listened again to the story of the women finding Jesus's tomb empty on the first Easter morning and talked about how they might have felt. We then looked at a collection of 'empty' objects most of which aroused feelings of sadness, concern or disappointment, but then looked for examples of emptiness being something positive and to be celebrated. The empty cross and the empty tomb came to be seen as symbols of hope and promise and the sign that Jesus had risen. We then went into the garden where fun was had by all as the older members of the group helped the younger ones in an Easter Egg Hunt, collecting baskets of hollow eggs with the reward of a little chocolate when all the eggs had been found!

The first Sunday of May, we started our session with singing and the percussion instruments. We then spoke about 'miracles' and how happy the disciples must have felt when they were fishing all night long without catching anything followed by a big catch upon Jesus' guidance to throw the net at the other side of the boat, and meeting Him again. We practised crossed, puzzled, surprised and happy faces which we used during the story. We also watched the story on the screen in the room. As craft activity, the children made fish out of paper plates and cupcake cases, which were proudly shown to our parents and the entire congregation when we returned to the main church for Holy Communion.



On 8th May, following on from the Christian Aid video shown in church, we had a discussion with the children about the world as a gift from God and about how we can work together to protect it. The children each unwrapped parts of a puzzle and figured out that by working as a group they were able to complete a map of the world jigsaw. We located Zimbabwe and looked at some African gifts that Katie had been given. The children decorated world map templates and were given Christian Aid puzzle sheets.

On 15<sup>th</sup> May the younger children explored a passage from Revelation describing the vision of a 'new heaven and a new earth'. We used a wipe board and rubbed out a drawing of a city where sadness existed. The children then drew a new more beautiful city with parks and gardens, where tears were drawn and rubbed out to be replaced by a shining sun. The children then decorated and cut out paper flowers, folded the petals and floated them on a tray of water. As we watched, the flowers opened like water lilies. We then dried and refolded the lilies to see them reopen again as water lilies do each new morning.



Some of the children wrote messages in the centre of their flowers telling of God's love for the world or mentioned 'tears' that needed to be wiped away. The messages included 'I wish the war between Russia and Ukraine will stop' and 'God always makes a new day', beautifully combining our hopes for the future.

Last but not least, we are planning to acquire a song book for the younger children and would love to hear from any of you who play a musical instrument and might be willing to help us once in a while. It would be lovely to have someone accompanying the singing with the younger children in the first 5 - 10 minutes of the Junior Church session. Please get in touch if you think you could help.

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



*Ken Rathje in Jerusalem*

## MY PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

*Ken Rathje*

I would like to start my reflection by thanking all of you who prayed for me and my travels over the Easter break from studies in the Cambridge Theological Federation. I would also like to thank the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem, the Presbyterian Liaison Office in Jerusalem, and the Church of Scotland who planned my trip and escorted me from site to site. Additionally, I must thank the Cheshunt Foundation, at Westminster College, for the small scholarship that enabled me to live in the land of the Bible, a life-long dream.

Pilgrimages can be defined as a new “way we see, discern, and shape the world...an exercise in transformation” (quote from Rodney Aist, Author of *Jerusalem Bound, How to Be a Pilgrim in the Holy Land*). Pilgrimages can also be personal in evolution and Trinitarian in our approach, but more importantly, pilgrimages can aid our personal development by providing a space for new ‘unplanned’ liminal moments, leading us to a deeper faith.

Sites we visited included Jericho, the city of the moon, and I was able to see the ruins of the walls that were destroyed by Joshua. I also took a gondola ride to the top of the mountain that was reported to have been where Jesus was tempted after He fasted for 40 days.





*Mount of Temptation, Jericho*



*Capernaum*

Near the Sea of Galilee, we stayed in Tiberias. Then we went to the uncovered ruins of Capernaum, where Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law.



*Sea of Galilee*

After we left Ibiline, we went to Cana and then Nazareth. We ended the day going to the precipice overlooking the Jezreel Valley where the people of Nazareth were going to throw Jesus off of the edge because they were angry with Him.



*The precipice overlooking the Jezreel valley*

On another day we went to see the sites of the Beatitudes, Peter's Primacy, took a small boat out on the Sea, and ended the day with a Eucharist Service on the top of the Hippos ruins, directly across from Tiberias. It is the site where Jesus said told his disciples, 'You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.'



*The Beatitudes Site*



*The site of Peter's primacy from John 21*



*The Hippo Ruins*



*Palm Sunday procession*

We made it back to Bethlehem for Palm Sunday, and as I handed out palm crosses to children, I preached on the goodness of God in my life at St. Andrews, the Church of Scotland in Jerusalem.



The next morning, we went to the Jordan River at the base of the Sea of Galilee where many perform full immersion baptisms, and I re-affirmed my baptismal vows



*Re-affirmation of Baptism in the Jordan River*



*Good Friday procession  
on the Via Dolorosa*

Then on Maundy Thursday evening, a few of us met with a larger community of Christians and went to the Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Jerusalem for a service conducted in English, Arabic, Dutch, Danish, German, Swedish, and in sign language. After the service, we all walked back up to the Mount of Olives and held a candlelight service at sunset.

The next morning was Good Friday. We got up early to walk the Stations of the Cross on the Via Delorosa, a street in Old City Jerusalem. I got to pray for health care workers at Station Three.

Then Easter morning, day twenty, we went into the Old City of Jerusalem at 04.30 to take part in the sunrise service at the Augusta Victoria Hospital that overlooked the Jordan Valley. It was an amazing experience to be there on Easter morning.



*Easter morning Sunrise Service overlooking the Jordan Valley*

As I thought about this trip, I realized that Jesus pulled me closer to Him, but had always accepted me where I was. It is acceptable, right, and noteworthy to worship Jesus in the normal planned moments of worship and life, but what a gift it is to find Jesus in the unplanned liminal moments of life and evolve into an agape love for Him, His Father, and the Holy Spirit.

Pilgrimages present these opportunities for us to be fed with the Spirit and evolve in an unplanned way, but we must be open in our minds and hearts to do so. The best way we can do this is by “learning the unforced (and unplanned) rhythms of Grace” as it says in The Message Bible in Matthew 11:28-30. Amen

# Singers needed for anniversary choir



If you love singing, join the URC's 50th anniversary choir!

We're looking for voices in a variety of styles, to reflect the diversity of the denomination, to sing at the Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving on October 1, at Methodist Central Hall Westminster.

Members of the choir will receive the music in advance and have a rehearsal day in central London and then a final rehearsal on the day at the hall ahead of the service. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Please register your interest [here](#). For further information, please email the team [here](#).



## SPECIAL CAUSE FOR JUNE

Downing Place URC is no stranger to Alzheimer's, the disease which brings much foreboding and appears to have overtaken a cancer diagnosis as the one to fear. Most of us can name someone we know, including friends and members of the congregation. Our aim is to be a Dementia Friendly Church.

The work of the Alzheimer's Society at <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk> gives much useful information about the condition, its different manifestations and research being undertaken. Guidance on where support may be found also features, for example, Day Centres, including one in St Matthew's Street. A particular focus at the moment is coming together for carers, where Dementia Advisers are funded to visit, to be a listening ear, and provide support in what is always a unique situation. CrISP courses (Carer Information and Support Programme) also provide much valued advice for those whose caring is all day, every day.

When the Special Causes for 2022 were chosen, the intention had been to focus on the local Cambridgeshire group, but it has proved impossible to make contact, and not for want of trying - the respondent on the national help line was very helpful, yet ultimately unsuccessful herself. For this reason, support for the Alzheimer's Society for what it considers the most urgent area of the work is sought. You can give directly (website above), by a gift channelled through Downing Place URC, or through the retiring collection on 19 June.

*Margaret Thompson*

### PREVIOUS SPECIAL CAUSE DONATIONS

We are pleased to report that we sent a total of £1815.58 to April's Special Cause, the Zaian Centre at Oasis Shirley Park School in Croydon. The total comprised £400 from York Street as usual, £669.32 from the retiring collection on Easter Sunday and direct donations from members; and £746.26 from our weekly Wednesday concert collections.



## MONTHLY CAUSES AND DONATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR

The World Church & Public Issues Group is trying to get ahead on plans for 2023, so that there will be a clear schedule ready by January. It would therefore be very helpful if friends could send any suggestions for causes - either new or continuing - to either Chris Wright or David Reynolds by Tuesday 14 June.

This will allow us to have a productive initial discussion at our June meeting - the last one before the summer holidays. Please give a brief explanation of why you feel this particular charity is important and include a link to the website so that we can follow up ourselves. Many thanks.

*We received this message from Marian Koroma from the Sallymay School, our March Special Cause*

Dear Anne

I acknowledge receipt of £1761.31 from Downing place church as a donation towards SallyMay School.

On behalf of the school and as a founder and proprietress, I wish to say a huge thank you to all those who contributed/donated to the school. I must say that you have put a smile on the face of those children that you've never met (although I'm hoping that some of you will plan to visit at some point).

I have now sent the money to Sierra Leone and it would be used to construct water/tank in the school campus (which has been a challenge). This water tank when completed, will not only be useful for the kids and staff, but also for the entire community.

Finally, I want to apologise for not coming back to you earlier on, this is because I was hoping that everything (water) will be ready so that I could show you the completion of the water tank. However, my brother (Solomon Williams) who is overseeing the project has been in touch. I'm trusting God that by the end of the month, water would have been available in the school.

I look forward to come in person to thank you all for your tremendous support.

God bless you

Marian Koroma



Thanks to everyone for their support during Christian Aid week. Thanks to those who came to the lunch on May 8<sup>th</sup> and brought food, thanks to those who made their way to Cottenham on May 15<sup>th</sup> for the Cambridge Christian Aid service, and thanks to everyone who donated.

There are now so many different ways to give to Christian Aid that it is difficult to know immediately just how much we have raised. All on-line donations, whether through the e-envelope or the website, should be recognized as coming from Downing Place, and all cash and cheques will be paid in and recorded by Ted Dennison, our Cambridge Treasurer. So we hope that eventually Christian Aid will let us know the total from Downing Place, so I can pass it on.

In the meantime, thanks for your generosity - Christian Aid's work is needed more every day.

*Sheila Porrer*

## CHANGES IN THE CHURCH OFFICE

From 1 June, the staffing in the Church Office will change as we respond to the growth in the use of our building and of our mission in the city centre by increasing the administrative support needed to underpin it. These changes have been agreed by the Elders.

Jess Uden will join Ann and Elaine on a half-time contract, as our *Marketing and Communications Officer*, working on the website, our screens and our social media accounts. Her base will be in Reception. She will continue to support the Hub Hospitality Initiative.

Ann has moved upstairs to Meeting Room 3, where she will continue to work as our *Finance and Compliance Officer*. She will continue to organise the weekly concerts, produce the weekly notices and this magazine each month and will support the Pioneer Minister and our new Music Outreach group (which has yet to form). She has a new direct phone number - 01223 375446.

Elaine will remain based in Reception as our *Facilities Officer and Caretaker*, looking after the building and running our busy programme of hirings. We will be recruiting an Assistant Caretaker on a very flexible, part-time contract to look after the premises out of hours and when Elaine is on holiday, and support her with the practical aspects of running the building.

*Stephen Thornton*  
*Elder with responsibility for staffing matters*

# JUNE AT DOWNING PLACE AND WIDER AFIELD.....

‘Connected Lives’ continues.



Circle of Security Parenting Group

Connected Lives is a charity that exists to support family life in all its messiness. We run groups and courses for parents and partners to help families thrive and we are starting a new group in the centre of town.

The groups give parents and carers a map to understand their babies' and children's emotional needs and space to reflect on their own strengths and difficulties. We all have times when we struggle to be the parents we want to be and meeting with trained facilitators and other parents can help us work out what's going on.

Groups run for 8 weekly sessions (1 1/2 hours long) with up to 12 parents and carers attending. There is a mixture of video footage, fun exercises, and lots of time for discussion. Parents who have attended love the groups and since 2010 over 900 have participated.

**Monday face to face Group starts at 10.00 - 11.30 am from 9th May - 4th July (half term break on 30th May) at Downing Place United Reformed Church, Cambridge City Centre**

**Register Now!**

[www.connectedlives.org.uk/circle-of-security-cam](http://www.connectedlives.org.uk/circle-of-security-cam)

or email: [katie.logan@connectedlives.org.uk](mailto:katie.logan@connectedlives.org.uk)

# INTERFAITH PRAYERS FOR PEACE



WEDNESDAY 1ST JUNE, 6PM

DOWNING PLACE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING PEOPLE  
OF GOODWILL FROM ALL FAITHS AND CONVICTIONS  
TO AN HOUR OF PRAYERS FOR PEACE.

THESE PRAYERS PREPARE FOR THE CONFERENCE BEING  
HELD IN JULY SURROUNDING  
**FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF (FORB),**  
THE 18TH HUMAN RIGHT  
AS DECLARED BY THE UNITED NATIONS

THERE WILL BE REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE AFTERWARDS.

## MIDWEEK WORSHIP

Commencing **Thursday 9 June**, and weekly thereafter, there will be a service every Thursday at Downing Place Church to which all are invited. Each service will last half an hour, with refreshments available afterwards. A service of Holy Communion will be offered twice monthly, on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Note that the starting time each week will vary regularly as follows:

First Thursday 11.00am  
Second Thursday 11.00am service of Holy Communion  
Third Thursday 5.30pm  
Fourth Thursday 1.00pm service of Holy Communion  
(Fifth Thursday 11.00am)

For specific information please consult the weekly notices and the diary in Place Matters.

*Alan Rickard*  
*Convenor, Worship, Discipleship and Spirituality Group*





# Bow Down



**Pentecost**  
**Sunday 5th June 2022**  
**Parker's Piece, 8:30pm - 9:00pm**



Bow Down is an opportunity for Christians of all denominations to come together in the middle of our community and pray for God's Kingdom to come in our city, our country, and the world.

We will pray together and close our time together by standing and holding up our phone torches at sunset as an act of unity which symbolises that **Jesus is the Light of the World.**

All are welcome as we witness to the risen Jesus.

Bow Down originated as part of **"Thy Kingdom Come"**, the global prayer movement initiated by Justin Welby that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus over Pentecost.



This event is organised by Cambridge Revival Hub, supported by HOPE Cambridge.

For more information about Bow Down visit:

[www.thykingdomcome.global/events/bow-down-cambridge-2022](http://www.thykingdomcome.global/events/bow-down-cambridge-2022)

or contact: [roger@camrevivalhub.org.uk](mailto:roger@camrevivalhub.org.uk)



# Taiwanese Music Event



**in aid of the Saints Projects Trust**



**Time: 6:30pm, 10th June 2022**

**Place: Downing Place URC, CB2 3EL**

**Music: Ai Dai Wan Quartet**

**Tickets include Taiwanese street food**

**Suggested minimal donation £20**

**To book, scan QR code**

**To donate, open link:**

**[www.saintsprojectstrust.org](http://www.saintsprojectstrust.org)**



UK Charity No:1115724

**Sponsors: Ai Dai Wan Quartet**

**Kang Chiao Bakery**

**LingLing's Steam Kitchen**

**La Maison Du Steak**



**contact: LingLing**

**[linglingssteamkitchen@yahoo.com](mailto:linglingssteamkitchen@yahoo.com)**

\*\*\*\*\*

# Carers Event

JUNE 11TH  
2 - 4:30 PM

---

If you look after someone who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, we can help you find out what support is available to you.

Organised by Cambridge City 4 PCN, come and meet our Personalised Care Team and other local organisations.

An opportunity for your voice to be heard.



Downing Place URC,  
Downing St., Cambridge  
CB2 3EL





# AREA PARTNERSHIP MEETING



Mission in the Synod

Lindsey Brown  
Synod Mission and Training Officer

United Reformed Church  
Cambridge Area Partnership  
June Meeting

7.00 pm  
Wednesday 22 June 2022  
Sawston Free Church

Also on Zoom:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89779587577?pwd=NG5MVkowZ3phcTVJY2h1amxaRWY1UT09>  
Meeting ID: 897 7958 7577  
Passcode: 514130

Pastoral Advocates: Richard Lewney  
Revd Phil Nevard

M&M Advocate:  
Allison Jiggins

A clickable link to the Zoom meeting is here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89779587577?pwd=NG5MVkowZ3phcTVJY2h1amxaRWY1UT09>

If you'd like to attend in person and are in need of a lift, please let the Church Office know .



# Celebrate!



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

## *Come and Relax*

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

## *Create*

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

## *Reflect*

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

## *Have fun*

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

## *Celebrate*

Worship together and eat together

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



## MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

5 June	Penny Flynn Janet Tollington	Melbourn Stetchworth & Cheveley
12 June	Liz Caswell David Cornick David Tatem Nigel Uden	Clare Bury St Edmunds Buntingford Fulbourn
19 June	Janet Bottoms Liz Caswell Penny Flynn	Haverhill Stetchworth & Cheveley Sawston
26 June	Liz Caswell Deborah McVey Janet Tollington	Melbourn Trinity, Burwell Salisbury

## DIARY

Services are conducted by the Minister, except where shown

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	29-May-22	Sunday worship led by Dr Augur Pearce	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Tue	31-May-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Tue	31-May-22	Evangelism & Service Group	7:30pm	Zoom
Wed	01-Jun-22	Lunchtime Concert - Alice Bishop (soprano) & David Elwin (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Wed	01-Jun-22	Interfaith Prayers for Peace	6:00pm	Downing Place URC
Sat	04-Jun-22	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	05-Jun-22	Sunday Worship with Communion	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Sun	05-Jun-22	Bow Down (see poster on p.30)	8:30pm	Parker's Piece
Mon	06-Jun-22	Officers Meeting	4:00pm	tbc
Tue	07-Jun-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	08-Jun-22	Lunchtime Concert - Alison Daniels (mezzo-soprano) & Edmund Aldhouse (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	09-Jun-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	09-Jun-22	Visit of Guildford URC	11:00am - 3:00pm	Downing Place URC
Fri	10-Jun-22	Taiwanese Music Event in aid of the Saints Project Trust (see p.31)	6:30pm	Downing Place URC
Sat	11-Jun-22	Carers' Event (see p.32)	2:00pm	Gibson Hall & Hub
Sun	12-Jun-22	Sunday Worship led by Revd Dr Janet Tollington	11:00am	Downing Place URC

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Mon	13-Jun-22	<b>DEADLINE</b> for booking a place at the Gibson Lunch on Thursday 16 June		
Tue	14-Jun-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Tue	14-Jun-22	Worship, Discipleship & Spirituality Group	7:15pm	Zoom
Wed	15-Jun-22	<b>DEADLINE</b> for submitting items for Place Matters		
Wed	15-Jun-22	Lunchtime Concert - Melanie Rose (violin) & Peter Britton (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Wed	15-Jun-22	Elders Meeting	7:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	16-Jun-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	16-Jun-22	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Fri	17-Jun-22	World Church & Public Issues Group	7:30pm	Zoom
Sat	18-Jun-22	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	19-Jun-22	Sunday Worship	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Sun	19-Jun-22	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm for 7:30pm	Downing Place URC
Tue	21-Jun-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	22-Jun-22	Lunchtime Concert - Matthew McCombie (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Wed	22-Jun-22	Area Partnership Meeting (see p.33)	7:00pm for 7:30pm	Sawston Free Church
Thu	23-Jun-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sat	25-Jun-22	Newcomers Coffee Morning	10:00am	The Hub
Sat	25-Jun-22	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	26-Jun-22	Sunday Worship	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Tue	28-Jun-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Thu	30-Jun-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sun	03-Jul-22	Sunday Worship with Communion	11:00am	Downing Place URC

## LUNCHTIME CONCERTS - WEDNESDAYS AT 1PM

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

- 1 June Alice Bishop (soprano) & David Elwin (piano)
- 8 June Alison Daniels (mezzo-soprano) & Edmund Aldhouse (piano)
- 15 June Melanie Rose (violin) & Peter Britton (piano)
- 22 June Matthew McCombie (piano)
- 29 June NO LUNCHTIME CONCERT

See more on our website:

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

## LECTIONARY FOR JUNE 2022

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

### June

*5 June Pentecost*

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:24-34,35b

Romans 8:14-17

John 14:8-17,(25-27)

*12 June Trinity Sunday*

Proverbs 8:1-4,22-31

Psalm 8

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

*19 June First Sunday after Trinity*

Isaiah 65:1-9

Psalm 22:19-28

Galatians 3:23-29

Luke 8:26-39

*26 June Second Sunday after Trinity*

1 Kings 19:15-16,19-21

Psalm 16

Galatians 5:1,13-25

Luke 9:51-62

### July

*3 July Third Sunday after Trinity*

Isaiah 66:10-14

Psalm 66:1-9

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

Luke 10:1-11,16-20



*Lockdown in Petty Cury, Spring 2020.  
Photograph by Elaine Barker  
Read more in our 'Living in Lockdown' feature starting on page 6*

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Tim Rowland

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

WEB EDITOR: Ann Auger

Please send all items to be included in the June edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of **Wednesday 15 June**.

The June edition will be available from **Sunday 26 June**.