



**DOWNING PLACE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE**

PLACE MATTERS



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Cover photo: Mellow fruitfulness

Photo by Tim Rowland

FROM THE MINISTER

You might like to read this in two bites: up to the Northumbrian picture, and then, after a break, through to the end!

The seasons are turning. Across Europe, heat and drought seem to have accelerated the coming of Autumn, with leaves changing colour and falling early. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), the bicentenary of whose death was marked a few weeks ago, wrote of this in *Ode to the West Wind* (1819):

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low ...

In those first lines, writing of the Wind with a capital W, as if it were a person, the speaker addresses the Wind and describes how it drives away the summer, bringing in its wake the cold and darkness of winter. The Wind seems to be regarded as a necessary evil, even if one that eventually means Spring is on the way, for, as Shelley concludes:

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

This unrelenting sequence of meteorological seasons is the literal shape of our year, but it is also a metaphor for so much else in life. Little is changelessly permanent. Governments have their season, and then go. Shakespeare's Jacques, in *As you like It*, is candid in his depiction of the 'seven ages of man', telling of how we journey through life's seasons, from 'mewling and puking' infancy, via teenage, and middle age, to dotage, 'sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything'. (Act II. Scene 7) The Church's year has a seasonal shape, too. Relentlessly, we progress from one Advent to another, as the liturgical seasons change and we recall the narrative of the Saviour's birth and life, death, and resurrection.

And here's the thing: never do these changing seasons leave us quite where they find us. Each year there is something to learn, something fresh to discover. This



September my hair is whiter than last. The fate of Ukraine has profoundly reshaped what the world looks like since last Winter yielded to Spring and Summer. Moreover, spiritually speaking, I for one am not quite the same each time Easter comes round, turning Mary's 'night, and ours, to Day'. (Malcolm Guite, 2012) That Day always dawns differently, for where the surprisingly risen Lord is celebrated, surprises will inevitably continue. After all, Easter is not a remembrance, it's a here and now experience.



For a fortnight, a few weeks ago, as I stepped out along the beach each morning between Seahouses and Bamburgh, I was struck by the thought that the life of Downing Place Church is similarly seasonal. More importantly, I realised that our seasons are turning, too. As a Church, we are not where we were even four years ago. From 2018 until 2020, we were in the season of uniting; from 2020-2021, we were in the season of both building redevelopment and Covid-19 with all its works; and from 2021 until now, we have passed through the season of settling into the renewed premises, even as we also explored what they were equipping us to be out in the world. For Christians, wind is a familiar metaphor of the Holy Spirit, and she – 'enemy of apathy' as John Bell and Graham Maule depict her – is forever blowing the Church into its next surprising season. I am, for example, struck that, even as the wild wind of coronavirus buffeted us so cruelly into a sustained pandemic, the Spirit also inflated us so that we might discover unprecedented ways of worshipping – unprecedented in style (what we do within the service), unprecedented in fellowship (who is embraced as Sunday

morning, Sunday evening and Thursday congregations evolve in their increasingly inclusive profile), and unprecedented in reach (who is able to access the church's worship as we meet in person and broadcast on the internet).

I cannot help feeling, however, that just as Autumn is a radically different season from Summer, so Downing Place Church is entering another significantly different season. I believe it is the season after the detailed work of uniting, after the all-consuming work of building transformation, and after the weirdly debilitating yet also re-awakening impact of Covid. Those things are vital parts of our story, but we cannot afford to linger there. The wild Wind has brought us through something of a winter, and urges us to recognise that Spring is never far behind.

In truth, I sense that we are not all up for Spring. Some of us are quite simply spent. And do you know, that is fine. What is more, it is entirely Biblical. Remember Elijah? He gave himself utterly, until he said, 'It is enough', asking that he might die. And the Lord says something like, 'So be it, only make sure you anoint others to take over from you, because there is still plenty to do.' I think of the Gospel narratives of Jesus Christ, too; just as we read of him being taken from us, the writers have him call his followers to take over the work of witnessing in the power of the Holy Spirit to the reality of Jesus's victorious love.

The new season for Downing Place Church is no different. We have some Elijahs whose work, at least for a period, is completed. How grateful we are to them – Owen Saxton, Ian Strachan, and Margaret Thompson. They have been the ones who set their time and skill and faith alongside that of so many others, and led us in an unprecedented season of sea change. It was as if they were indeed named Elijah – without show, but with unquestionable commitment, they lived out what that name means, that Jehovah is their God. As the season turns, upon whose shoulders might their mantles now fall? In truth, a few people have made suggestions of other church members who might be approached, and for that let us be grateful. It is a sign of their concern for the vitality and fruitfulness of the congregation's next season. What we now need is for people to sense that the Wind is filling their sails with zeal for what lies ahead and to feel able to take their place in the next leadership team.

Apart from anything else, I am conscious that the time is right for a new generation to be enthused for leading the church into its tomorrow, in partnership with our excellent and much appreciated paid staff. In particular, I think that fresh blood inevitably means different styles of working and fulfilling these tasks. Elisha was not like Elijah. We no longer live in the era when people could so easily give endless hours of their lives to the Church. Apart from anything else, they are giving endless hours to their work, to their loved ones and

to other voluntary organisations. Besides, I am persuaded that the God who galvanised us to make a fundamentally new chapter possible for the United Reformed Church in the centre of Cambridge, by reconciling and uniting two previously distinctive and independent congregations, and by so dramatic a transformation of a nineteenth century building, is also the God whose purposes will need to be served today in seriously different ways, which are as relevant to a digital era as were our predecessors' ways relevant for their era. As I have said a hundred times (and the words are not mine but inspired by John Hall), we can learn from, even love, the past, but we cannot live there.

There is one other changing season about which I believe the time has come to be open. I expect to retire in 2025, at the latest. Despite my deep affection, respect, and gratitude for you, it is not my intention to seek an extension of my service here, and I say that for three reasons. First, because I shall have been with you for fifteen years, initially as minister of St Columba's Church, and then with Downing Place Church and I intuit that it will be the correct moment for you together to be enabled to call a minister for the united church. Secondly, because I will have been in full-time ordained service for forty-one years, and a change of pace will be sensible. And thirdly, because in terms of energy and innovative ideas, I believe it will be the time to move beyond my emphases of uniting the churches and inhabiting the reinvigorated premises into yet another new season, this time of cutting-edge ministry and mission for the second quarter of the twenty-first century – further surprising and life-giving experiences of the eternal Easter. Alex Clare-Young is already pointing us towards much of that, and I hope that the next couple of years will enable us to establish the team that can help us newly to glorify God and bless the community.

Maybe yours was an earlier season; how I respect that and honour you. At the same time, I would like to beckon those for whom the next season has much to offer you and something to ask of you, too. Could some of you be the Elishas upon whose shoulders Elijah's mantle might now land?

This comes with my warmest greetings and sincere prayers that everything which has so far absorbed us might continue to thrive and flourish, as God's wild Wind blows us where we have never been before.

Nigel Uden

PAT AND OWEN SAXTON – A PROFILE



Retirement dinner, 2016

Owen begins:

I grew up in Nigeria, Durham and Scotland, but like Pat have been largely based in Cambridge since coming up as a student in the late 60s. My father, from London, had met my mother, from Dumfriesshire (where I was born), before the war, at Edinburgh where she trained as a teacher, and they married on his return from service in India. They moved to Cambridge (40 Bateman St) while he did a two-year BA in History, and then to Ibadan, Nigeria for most of the 50s where he taught history at a university newly established and attached to London University. My brother and I had a wonderful time, running around in nothing more than shorts and shoes most of the time – we hated having to wear a shirt too, to go to a morning-only school run by the partners of university staff (my mother included) – with summers in Scotland. I got to know lots of Gilbert & Sullivan through the university's Arts Theatre productions, and played Puck aged 11 when they staged *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

We returned to the UK in 1960, my father taking a post at Durham University where he became Academic Registrar, and where my brother and his family still live. My mother started a local consumer group and worked at the CAB. My brother and I went as 'day boys' to the Choristers' School – where the staff generously helped us catch up with all the schooling we'd missed in an extraordinarily aspirational atmosphere; Tony Blair and Rowan Atkinson were there as younger brothers of my own contemporaries. I went on to Glenalmond in Perthshire, completing A-levels early (thanks again to exceptional staff), where

I started playing the organ in my last term. I spent a gap year first *teaching* at the Choristers' School (how ridiculous that now seems!) and then as a 'university apprentice' with AEI, a large company, sadly gone long ago, that made everything from semiconductors to railway engines in Rugby, where generous churches allowed me to practise the organ.

I spent seven happy years at St John's Cambridge doing a BA and PhD in physics (too slowly: Pat had to support me for most of the last year!) where I learned to program when we still used paper tape, and practised on the organ in the chapel (when Stephen Cleobury didn't need it). I was introduced by a clever mathematician friend to Emmanuel; to the large and active student society ProngSoc attached to Emmanuel and St Columba's; and to Homerton, where an extraordinary number of lively women teacher trainees with congregational or other church backgrounds were lodged together on a single corridor – Pat amongst them.

The fact that AEI also made electron microscopes proved the trigger for my choosing research in that field, through almost three decades of fixed-term posts and research fellowships. These instruments see detail as small as individual atoms (or atom *columns* in crystals at least), ten thousand times smaller than light microscopes, but the images are difficult to interpret directly, and I devised ways to do this by digital image analysis and computer control of the microscope, creating a large program Semper for the purpose, still in use fifty years on (though only at a few labs now!) – spending time at labs in France, Arizona, Denmark and especially Germany, though always based at Cambridge, where in the '80s we had built special equipment to support 'the best microscope in the world'. Without leading to a permanent post anywhere, this did earn two substantial prizes over the years. I was also one of the founders, and for twenty years non-exec director, of Synoptics Ltd, now listed on AIM as Scientific Digital Imaging, that has never made any great profit but has provided a living for 20-30 people.

In parallel, I had another life that came to be even more important to me, teaching Physics at New Hall (now Murray Edwards), where I managed over the years to change the subject from one the women shied away from to one most wanted to pursue, often getting results better than most of the older colleges. In parallel, I was at various times the Praelector, presenting students for degrees (initially a largely solo effort with little college support); the Admissions Tutor (including travelling to the Far East for many years interviewing those applying to Cambridge regardless of College); and the Senior Tutor (responsible for student welfare as well as academic provision); the University's Senior Proctor; and a governor at a multi-academy trust of south London schools.

Pat continues:

I was brought up in Cuffley, Hertfordshire: an only child to parents who met at the Midland Bank (now HSBC) where my father worked his way up to be manager of the foreign department of the City branch in London, commuting daily for fifty years, and my mother a shorthand typist. I went to Ware Grammar School, and then Homerton College Cambridge to train as a primary teacher, studying Music and English in parallel with child development psychology. I sang with the large University Musical Society choir conducted by David Willcocks – and once by Benjamin Britten – in Cambridge, Ely, Aldeburgh and the Royal Albert Hall (in those simple days we just drove down to London and parked in the next street!); also in a lovely smaller choir called the Ichthyans that regularly led services in various churches constructed around a series of anthems. I met Owen as a student; his mother arranged for me to join them for Christmas one year without telling him; his surprise at my arrival was matched by mine at their huge labrador Rebel whose paws went straight on my shoulders.

I taught first at St Matthew's, Cambridge for five years, where I learned how to manage a class of excited children, living in a house shared with three other young women. Owen and I married half-way through this period on a very wet day, in St John's chapel, and moved into a lovely but *very* narrow house off Mill Rd, where we stayed until our first child, Libby, was due, and then spent ten years in Eachard Rd near our present house on Huntingdon Rd, which we bought from Daphne King in 1985. Our second child, Ruth, arrived a little later.



Wedding umbrellas in 1972!

I spent some years at home while they were small, relying on an invaluable baby-sitting circle that included Deborah McVey, Val Cooper and Margaret Underwood, but then returned to teaching, as ‘supply’ and part-time in the first instance and then full time, ultimately at Teversham CE Primary, a very happy school where I taught the reception class – which had always seemed to me the most important year of the children’s school lives.



The family in the garden in 1980

I supported Owen’s students for many years through regular entertaining – weekly dinners for many years, and an annual lunch in our garden for 40-50! Together, we organised the Christian Aid Week collection in Cambridge and the nearby villages (~1800 collectors!) for twelve years.

The girls loved holidays by the sea with my parents (retired to Swanage, Dorset) and several periods in Bavaria, where Libby went to the local school and where we all enjoyed chair lifts to the mountain tops for picnics in alpine flower meadows and swimming in the lakes. Libby is now Reader in Film Studies at Queen Mary College, London, and Ruth is an architect – responsible for the Alison Richard Building on West Road amongst other things; they have both been wonderfully good to us both. Libby has a daughter just a year old now; Ruth has three children, the youngest with Down’s Syndrome. I spent two days in London weekly for about ten years looking after the grandchildren so that Ruth could work; getting older has reduced what I can do, but we still help out as

much as possible.

I have always loved gardening and feel very lucky to have a lot of space where we now live, though frustrated that what I can do is now restricted by arthritis and low energy (especially remembering how I used to go everywhere with two children on my bike).

Church:

Pat had church-going (Anglican) parents, and was led to the URC through college friends who went to Emmanuel; Owen's parents were not church-going, but he became interested at school and particularly during a gap year when religious beliefs were heatedly debated at the Rugby research lab. We both went to college Christian Union meetings for some time in parallel with ProngSoc, and to the St John's early morning communion on Sundays (where we took turns cooking breakfast for 40-60 people on a two-ring cooker in the middle of the college hall), ultimately preferring the more open minds at the free churches.

ProngSoc was a formative experience for many: generously supported by the ministers (David Geddes and Ronnie Spiers), it had 140 names on the 1969 address list; it offered twice-weekly 'bread and cheese' lunches raising money for overseas development, with invited speakers on Sundays; weekly discussion groups, often jointly with other free church societies; two punt-breakfasts in the summer, in Grantchester Meadows; occasional leading of services at village churches; and trips away in some vacations (to help churches, or purely as holidays).

For some years, Emmanuel offered monthly 'alternative services' where various different forms of worship were explored in the hall in parallel with the more familiar form in the church; we shared leadership with the Rowlands and others. Libby and Ruth were part of a large thriving Young People's Sunday Evening Group led by Anthea Coates and others including Andy McKenzie. We both became members in 1975; we've served several terms as elders, some of them jointly, and Owen has been Elders' Secretary / Clerk since 2017, through the forming of Downing Place. Pat was a Junior Church leader in the Nursery – with a regular pattern including teaching and worship as well as play – for fully forty years, and has recently been Deputy Safeguarding Officer. Owen acted as organist for 18 months around 2002 before Mark Dawes came – and enjoyed setting up the new digital organ which has offered much to offset his sadness at losing the Father Willis at Emmanuel!

The world has seemed to us a darker place in several ways since 2016, and the church reminds us both never to give up on it!

DOWNING PLACE - AN ECO CHURCH GOING FOR GOLD



On 16 May 2021, our church meeting voted to register as an Eco Church. Eco Church is an award scheme “to help as many churches as possible celebrate what they’re doing to care for the environment and decide what to tackle next.” The founders, A Rocha (“The Rock” in Portuguese) are our Special Cause for September, and David Chandler from A Rocha spoke at our Sustainability Service on July 31.

Churches are realising the role they can play in the Climate Crisis: there are now over 5000 Eco Churches registered in the UK, across several Christian denominations, including 24 in Cambridge. We recommend taking a look at the [Eco Church](#) website. After much thought, our DPURC application has been submitted by the Sustainability Group. There are three levels of Eco Church award – Bronze, Silver and Gold, and we expect to receive a Bronze Award.

There are already 8 Gold award churches in Cambridge. So what does it take to reach Gold?

Eco Churches are assessed in five key areas of church life:

1. Worship and Teaching: For this aspect, the Sustainability Group was delighted to discover that we have already reached Gold Award level.

2. Buildings: Our redevelopment of the Downing Place site has put us in a good position, but we are lucky enough to have jurisdiction over three other buildings, and they need work to assess and lower their energy usage; our rating here is approximately Bronze.

Unfortunately, at the moment DPURC has had to answer “NO” to the following issues on the Eco Church BUILDINGS survey:

- measuring our energy use and calculating the carbon footprint of our church premises.
- setting sufficient targets for reducing the carbon footprint of our church premises and achieving year-on-year improvements in energy efficiency.

- offsetting the carbon footprint of our church premises for those things we can't reduce.

The Sustainability Group suggests that we could gain points by addressing our church and individual carbon footprints: we would like to explore the carbon footprint of our buildings and the activities in them, BUT ALSO to include in this the many efforts of our members and adherents to lower their **personal** carbon footprints responsibly. In order to address the Carbon Footprint question, we need to establish a “baseline” - that is, where we are now. Each year we can then look at how we have improved.

A Rocha's [Climate Stewards](#) do interesting work on this problem, helping to measure church and individual carbon footprints, and particularly guiding churches to compensate for the damage our consumption of fossil fuels does in the rest of the developing world by responsible offsetting.

3. Land: We have created a lovely courtyard garden, with plants entirely donated by members and friends wishing to affirm their commitment to the natural world. This has given us many points, but we do not have much other land to work on – we await suggestions here.

4. Community and Global Engagement: This is the area requiring most attention. Of the 26 questions posed, we can give positive answers to about half. Here are some actions suggested:

- organise events providing an opportunity for local people to engage with local leaders on local environmental issues
- engage with our local MP, local council or Public Service Board on environmental matters
- work with local sustainability movements like Transition Towns and Cambridge Carbon Footprint
- host a green fair, showcasing local produce and highlighting local environmental issues
- actively promote Eco Church to other local churches

5. Lifestyle: We need to find out more about how each of us is contributing to lowering our own footprint. We suggest using the [Climate Stewards](#) carbon footprint calculator, which we now explain.

We hope that several Downing Place members and friends will complete the Climate Steward carbon calculators for [Individuals](#). We would like to



complete our baseline year by September 30, with a view to repeating the yearly calculation each September / October. The important thing about energy use is not necessarily to be doing everything perfectly right at the start, but to see where we are, so we can set goals and make progress.

For INDIVIDUALS the categories are: Home, Private transport, Public transport, Air transport, Food, and Expenditure. (Expenditure is a broad category, including such things as telephone and broadband, insurance, clothing, eating out, and more. The online calculator keeps it simple, however). These are all explained with the Climate Stewards calculator for [Individuals](#). It is fairly straightforward to use that online calculator, making best-estimates of things like annual public transport travel, although you will need a record of your gas and electricity use in kWh. One Downing Place member clicked on [Individuals](#) and used it to make a rough calculation of their household carbon footprint for the last 12 months. The result looked like this:

	Measure of carbon dioxide emission in metric tonnes (tCO₂)	Cost, at £20 per tonne of CO₂ (to nearest £)
Home	6.27	£125
Travel (car and public transport)	2.54	£51
Travel (air)	0.35	£7
Food	1.85	£37
Expenditure	0.92	£18
TOTAL	11.94	£238 to be offset

They were somewhat shocked to see just how much gas – mainly for home heating – contributed to their carbon footprint. This has motivated them to consider – not for the first time – any feasible alternatives.

Your footprint can be downloaded on two PDF sheets: the file name includes the date. Please experiment and work out your footprint for the year to September 30; there is a help sheet that you can consult for each section. Please also let us know other factors you think should be considered. We will keep all information anonymised.

Once complete, print out your carbon footprint, and send or hand it to Margaret Reynolds (mrriba@btinternet.com) by Monday 10 October for anonymous inclusion in this past year's calculation. And, if you can, please start thinking about what reductions you could produce for September 2023. We plan to tally

all the individual transport and food results we receive, so that those sections of our DPURC footprint give a more representative picture of all of us in the congregation.

Meanwhile, the Sustainability Group will make similar calculations for our community at Downing Place, drawing on the online calculator at [Small Organisation](#).

Let's go for gold!

Sustainability Group members:

David Tatem	Convenor + Green Party member
William McVey	Member + Trustee Cambridge Carbon Footprint
Chris Wright	Member + Climate Change Activist
Jess Uden	Member + Climate Change Activist
Ian de Massini	Former Member 2020-21 + Climate Change Activist
Margaret Reynolds	Member + Low-carbon Architect

A ROCHA UK RESTORE OUR LAND – SEPTEMBER'S SPECIAL CAUSE

If you attended, or were able to access, the Service led by our Sustainability Group on Sunday, 31st July, you really don't need to read further! A Rocha advocate David Chandler and William McVey gave us many examples of the ways in which A Rocha encourages us all to *'care for God's Earth..... because it's the right thing to do.'* 'A Rocha' means 'Rock' in Portuguese, the Rock upon which we stand. One could argue that 'caring for God's Earth' is vital to our Christian faith and to our worship.



Downing Place is already committed to expressing our care for God's Earth through embarking on the EcoChurch journey, one of the initiatives of A Rocha, and you can read more about how to play your part in progressing that elsewhere in this issue. We have just received confirmation that our bid for the Bronze Award

is being assessed. The short video clips that David Chandler showed during the Sustainability Service, illustrated other aspects of their work both across the World and here in Britain. It is to one of these UK projects to rewild and restore land in this country, that we invite you to make donations as the September Special Cause.

A Rocha UK says: ‘Can you help us restore land for nature here in the UK at a new and ambitious scale? We are looking to raise £50,000 to help to achieve our land goal, part of our big green vision. In cities, towns, villages and gardens across the UK, our plan is to transform 75,000 acres of Christian-managed and church-linked land for nature by 2025.’

The best way to give is by going to <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/restoreourland> adding Gift Aid, if able, and indicating that you are a member of DPURC—this maximises the amount of Gift Aid which A Rocha will receive.

If this is not possible, cash or cheques (payable to DPURC) can be given at the retiring collection at Downing Place on September 18th or given to Ann Auger at other times during the month. Please note that we can’t claim Gift Aid on donations collected in this way - our Gift Aid envelopes are only for donations to the Church.

Thank you for your gifts, whichever way you choose to give them.

ALZHEIMER’S SOCIETY—JUNE SPECIAL CAUSE

We raised a total of £1,442.45 for the Alzheimer’s Society during June, which included £400 from our York Street fund, £668.04 from the Lunchtime Concerts and £344.41 from the retiring collection on 19 June, plus sundry other donations.

In addition, we were able to send £220.24 to Islamic Relief to be split between their Bangladesh and Afghanistan appeals, following the retiring collection on 24 July.

Ann Auger



FUNDS RAISED DURING CHRISTIAN AID WEEK BY DOWNING PLACE URC.

Thanks to everyone who made a donation to the work of Christian Aid during Christian Aid Week back in May. Thanks too to the WCPI group who agreed to suggest Christian Aid as the monthly cause for May.

As well as the figures we can trace, we know there will have been donations made directly to Christian Aid; which will not show here unless they were directly linked to Downing Place.

These are the figures we do know about:

Total raised £2,501.05.

This consists of:

£400 donation to Christian Aid as monthly cause from the York St. funds
£562.63 from Wednesday lunchtime concert donations
£1,538.42 from envelopes, retiring collection and personal donations via the e-envelope.

(The e-envelope total stands at £1,733.10, which includes the £400 from York St. funds, and £283.10 from the first two Wednesday lunchtime concerts, leaving £1,050 from individual donations via the e-envelope.

The total received directly by the Treasurer, from the second two concert donations, envelopes and retiring collection, was £767.95. These together total £2,501.05.)

We can be sure that the funds you have so generously given will go to meet urgent need throughout the global south and in Ukraine.

REFLECTIONS ON A PRAYER WALK – 3RD JULY 2022

Deborah McVey writes:

In the early days of lockdown when we all discovered the wonders of Zoom and online worship I ‘found’ the Nazareth Contemplative Prayer Walk. It was led in turn by two priests from St Martin in the Fields (SMITF), Trafalgar Square, Richard Carter and Catherine Duce who founded the Nazareth Community.

I was captivated and still watch every Saturday morning at 8 am on the SMITF Facebook page. Viewers were taken online around different parks and parts of London which were of course deserted. It was a rare treat and helped with the sense of restriction we all knew sharply at that time. Specific landmarks and views prompted thought and prayer, with poems and scripture added in. Gradually it led to viewers putting prayers in the ‘chat’ and friendships being formed. Through this and other online worship from SMITF, including the Wednesday Eucharist ‘Bread for the World’ which is followed by listening groups, one year later I became a Companion of the Nazareth Community. It is something like a third order and is online. It continues to fascinate me that a Christian community can be built online.

The regular ‘Nazareth Walk’ each Saturday put into my mind the idea of offering a Prayer Walk to the Open Table Community; so it was that in early July we set off from Downing Place ready and open to allow an awareness of God’s presence with us as we walked. We weren’t always quiet, because we wanted also to find God in one another as we spent time walking. Our first prayer was indeed to find God’s presence in our surroundings, in our companions and in our own body, mind and spirit, our heart spaces. So we walked, praying to be in touch with our deepest being, and in so doing, open to the Holy Spirit of Jesus.

First stop was in Little St Mary’s Churchyard, a tranquil moment to observe an ancient church and the relatively newer tower of former Emmanuel. We thought of those who grieve in any way, not only for lost places but for loved ones.

Yet we remembered new life here; the old stones of a C12th church used to create a new space for community gathering, a place of natural beauty for birds and wildlife, Emmanuel being re-created for a different purpose. We prayed for that building’s future use to continue to bring praise to God. In conclusion we listened to a prayer of St. Therèse of Lisieux and St. Theresa of Avila for peace within.

We walked down LSM lane and gathered as a group halfway across Coe Fen to see the tower of Emmanuel, Peterhouse College, and the Fitzwilliam Museum, bounded by an ancient wall. We were surrounded by the natural world, stinging

nettles - representing life's painful places. We were reminded of the verse from Galatians, "*You reap whatever you sow . . . if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.*" And we shared a poem by *Wendell Berry* (2003)

"When despair grows in me . . . I rest in the grace of the world, and am free."

On we went across Fen Causeway at the lights, continuing halfway across where we gathered to sing *How shall I sing that majesty* to the tune Coe Fen. We made a good job of it and attracted a little attention from passers by! We thought of the writer in his time, John Mason, son of a Dissenting Minister, educated at Clare Hall, appointed a curate in 1668, eventually Rector of Water-Stratford. The tune 'Coe Fen' was written by Ken Naylor in 1958. He taught music at the Leys School (just over the hedge), where he taught from 1953 to 1980.

We turned towards the river and went through the wrought iron gate into Hodson's garden and Folly. Standing beside the river we enjoyed some silence together, then each person named a prompt for prayer; giving thanks for hidden gardens and bold rivers at the heart of our cities and towns. In the same way as trees, both the lungs and bloodstream of our urban environment. We reflected on holidays on water and beside water and gave thanks for kayaking and swimming. Thanks for water, and prayed for those places where water is scarce, drying up and expensive. (This was before the drought and just after a thunderstorm). A prayer pledging to act to mitigate climate change where we are, here and now.

Off we went over the footbridge and alongside the river past the learner pool, to the sluice and bubbling water. We continued to think about water; it's sustaining properties, and those who manage the waterways for our benefit and wellbeing, not least to maintain fish and water life. We sang again, "*Come to the waters . . . and I will give you life.*"

Then a short distance away to the tunnel under Fen Causeway, where we paused to reflect on the dark times in our lives. Several scriptures were shared including Jesus' words in Matthew: "*I am with you always, to the end of time*", and from Isaiah 43 "*Do not be afraid for I have rescued you, I have called you by your name, you are mine.*" The Feast of St. Thomas the apostle fell on the day of our walk. Often known as 'doubting' Thomas, we wondered if honest and courageous Thomas, would suit him better? We thanked God for him and his courage in asking awkward questions that drew from Jesus most comforting words: "*I am the way the Truth and the Life*" We listened to Malcolm Guite's poem for St Thomas, "*We do not know... how can we know the way?*"

On our way back to the church we paused on the path across Sheep's Green and shared another poem by R S Thomas, *The Other*. Then on Laundress Green we

paused to remember all those in serving roles, past and present, those whose work is hard who may still be enslaved to others. We remembered those on zero hours contracts, those who have no work or who long to work but cannot because of ill health. We remembered that to serve others is our calling as followers of Jesus, in whom we find that service is perfect freedom.

As we walked back up Mill Lane this time we peeped in at the building site in that huge area which is being redeveloped. The song *Behold, behold, I make all things new, beginning with you and starting from today . . .* came to mind spontaneously. We considered Creation and re-creation and the hope that humankind is constantly renewing and being renewed, as we wandered 'home' to Downing Place.

A most fitting end to an hour and a half's walk was the gathering in the Hub to bless one another with the words of the Grace. We were very ready to enjoy a cup of coffee!

PS Do please ask me about the Companions of Nazareth or visit the SMITF website if you want to know more.

Deborah McVey



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

As you might have read in the previous edition of Place Matters, the children worked with Jane Bower on a song for our Junior Church sessions and for special occasions in church. The All Age service in June was such an occasion. The children had practised their song 'how far away is heaven?' with Jane a couple of times during Junior Church and also at home, and were all ready for their contribution to the All Age service.



They did sing beautifully, accompanied by Jane on the piano, for and with the rest of the congregation 'how far away is heaven?' and how surprisingly near heaven can be, and how we can push it away. We look forward to singing their song on many Junior Church sessions and All Age services to come.

The first Sunday of July, the children decorated and gave blessing cards to the congregation. They enjoyed making them and certainly enjoyed handing them out, making sure that everyone received a card

On 10 July David Tatem led the service and during 'Sharing together' time demonstrated how learning a new skill can become second nature although may take a long time to learn. Using juggling as an example he gave the children some basic tips and the congregation was delighted by the impressive attempts made by members of the Junior Church to juggle three balls in the air. Romain Lara then joined the children in their own session and entertained them to a show of how it should be done. He confessed to spending many hours as a student practising and we were all in awe of his talent! We continued the session by listening to the story of the Good Samaritan and suggesting



ways of working out the best thing to do when faced with difficult situations. We then plaited pipe cleaners and made ‘What would Jesus do?’ bracelets.

The last Sunday of July, the theme was “The Lord’s Prayer.” We followed on from the Sharing Together and discussed the prayer in Junior Church. We made a pair of foldable “Praying Hands” and decorated them. The children took home the Roots material which accompanied the Session to complete in their own time.

On 7 August, Chris Baker talked in church about the passage from Genesis when God tells Abraham that he would have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and gave out stars to be decorated in Junior Church. With the holiday season, we only had one child in church that Sunday so enjoyed an informal session chatting as we decorated our stars, recapping on the story and sharing news about the wonders of the stars in the sky over Arizona and the impressive exhibition of the planets on display on Midsummer Common.

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



URC MINISTERS' GATHERING

MAY 2022

In May, at a comfortable centre in Staffordshire, about 300 United Reformed Church ministers met for fellowship, encouragement and challenge. It was a thoroughly worthwhile setting aside of four days in this jubilee year of the United Reformed Church. There was a rich mixture of realism and vision, of human honesty and theological insight. Speakers included 'our own' John Bradbury and David Cornick, as current and past General Secretaries of the denomination.



John Bradbury

<https://urc.org.uk/ministers-gathering-2022-the-urc-at-50/>

In his opening comments, John quoted the twentieth century American writer and activist, James Baldwin (1924-87), 'Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed that is not faced'. Downing Place Church members will recognise the authenticity of that, and how worthwhile it can be, too.



David Cornick

<https://urc.org.uk/ministers-gathering-2022-who-is-the-united-reformed-church/>

David Cornick, helped us recognise that the ‘facing’ is not in our strength alone, as he cited Callum Brown (1953-): ‘the church is an event of the Holy Spirit’. David suggested that our identity, USPs, and success matter less than being part of the movement of that Spirit here and now. I profoundly believe that the creation of Downing Place Church four years ago is evidence of that. For decades, our forebears (including some of you) had pondered the relationship between Emmanuel and St Columba’s, but only when it seemed to be right to both the Holy Spirit and to us did union commend itself to the Church Meetings and become possible. An event of the Spirit in contemporary history, indeed!

There were also rich and enriching talks by the Irish poet, Pádraig Ó Tuama, formerly leader of the Corrymeela Community from 2014-19. Initially, he spoke of *temptations*, as things that can ‘get under our skin’, shaping both the attitudes and the actions of ministers. He suggested that Jesus was not so perfect as to be exempt from temptations, like taking a short cut, or indulging in artistry, or enjoying position and pizzazz. As I listened to Ó Tuama, he helped me wonder if the things that get under *our* skin can make us afraid, and therefore timid and ineffectual. But then he really made me think: ‘We’re not so afraid of devastation as we are of the possibility of possibility’. Settled into our newly refurbished premises, might that be what frightens us – that now God may want to do something difference-making in us and through us – ‘the possibility of possibility’?



Pádraig Ó Tuama

<https://urc.org.uk/ministers-gathering-2022-before-the-jubilee/>

Ó Tuama then went on to speak of *time*. He urged us as ministers, saying ‘if you’ve no time for interruptions, you’ll miss the things that really matter’. Seeking wisdom for what to allow ourselves to become as a church in the city centre, we do well to heed this cautionary word. After all, is it not in the gaps that we most commonly hear God? - more than when we have so crammed the diary with meetings that listening to God gets nothing but the dregs of our time when listening is impossible.

Apart from a dose of Covid-19, at Yarnfield there was much more to equip and sustain us for these demanding days of ministry and mission, when The Church looks very little like it did forty years ago. As we learn what it means to be faithful disciples of Christ in the twentieth century, the arrest and caress of the Holy Spirit can indeed challenge us, but as I take my place amongst those striving for the evolving fruitfulness of Downing Place Church I would be even more alarmed if we were deprived of the Spirit, and of all her gifts and fruit. So, in David’s words, may there be a great deal that enables us to ‘rejoice in being part of the eventful work of the Holy Spirit’.

Nigel Uden

I, too, enjoyed opportunities for both learning and fellowship at our Minister's Gathering. Nigel mentioned that the minister's gathering which we both attended was set in the context of the URC's Jubilee year, enabling us to 'rejoice in being part of the eventful work of the Holy Spirit'. For me, the content that most inspired and challenged was that which unpicked the biblical meaning of jubilee and encouraged us to rejoice in new ways which are ever more faithful to the topsy-turvy justice-centring new world order to which Jesus calls us.

Two particular contributors helped us to explore these themes. Daily Bible studies led by Dr. Meg Warner, tutor in the Hebrew Scriptures at Northern College, focussed on Leviticus 25, where what one should do when it is time for jubilee is described. Meg explained that in both Isaiah 61 and Leviticus 25 'proclaiming liberty' is a key feature of jubilee. She went on to explain the need to forgive debts and give property back to our tenants as vital jubilee practices. It struck me that this is exactly the journey that Downing Place has embarked on - exploring how we might give our wonderful new building back to those who might use it as a safe space, whoever they are, without legalism or othering.

'Othering' was another key theme in Meg's studies, she reflected that 'We refer to immigrants as aliens, a way to deny the humanity of other people. How would our world look if we understood ourselves to be aliens in our countries, communities and churches?'. We often see contemporary culture as different from church in ways that we posit as problematic or 'other'. What if, instead, we chose to see church culture as 'other', and sought to learn new Gospel truths from those who are not part of our Sunday morning congregation?

Iain McLarty, who facilitates training and worship resources for the Church of Scotland, enabled us to 'rejoice' in new words and tunes in ways which challenge norms and enable us to respond faithfully to the radical call to justice that is core to living out jubilee. I greatly enjoyed Iain's music workshop and loved singing 'Darkness is a Gift of God', which he taught at the Gathering, with you all in church in June. Iain encouraged us to look at hymns through the lenses of liberative theologies and introduced us to beautiful music from around the world. I particularly enjoyed singing a Cuban Kyrie: <https://redcreate.org.ar/kyrie-de-la-misa-cubana/>.

As we move forward in worship and in jubilee, I hope that we will continue to give what we have freely, learn from other people openly, and sing joyfully.

Alex Clare-Young

ANNUAL UPDATE ON THE URC MINISTRY AND MISSION (M&M) FUND

The URC Finance Committee recently circulated its annual update on the Ministry and Mission (M&M) Fund. [An explanation of the purposes and operation of the M&M fund can be found at [The Ministry and Mission Fund Principles and Practice.pdf \(urc.org.uk\)](https://www.urc.org.uk/The_Ministry_and_Mission_Fund_Principles_and_Practice.pdf)]

I am grateful to Ian Strachan and Margaret Thompson for forwarding the update message. The full report includes some detailed financial information, and a letter of thanks to church members, with a request that it be included in church magazines and websites. What follows is your Editor's abridged version!

Income. In 2021, the second year of the pandemic and lockdowns etc., the income to the M&M Fund reduced by £800k (4.4%) to £17.2m in 2021, but in the circumstances, this is a good result. Investment and other income took the gross income of the M&M Fund to £18.85m.

Expenditure. Total expenditure in 2021 was about £800k less than the total for 2020, largely due to a reduction in activity and fewer ministers etc. than originally budgeted. The costs of stipendiary ministers and church-related community workers represent over 81% of total expenditure.

2022 Budget

Budgeted income for 2022 includes an expected further reduction of 6% on church contributions, with investment and other income similar to 2021. Budgeted expenditure for 2022 is in line with the outcome achieved in 2020 and 2021.

Some details of this expenditure budget are given in the table below. By way of explanation of the 3 expenditure categories, *Direct Ministry Costs* refers to stipends, pension and NI contributions for stipendiary ministers and church-related community workers. *Ministry-related Costs* include the costs of ministerial training and synod moderators. *Other Costs* relates to several other activities funded centrally, including children and youth work, ecumenical and international links, and administration.

2022 Budget		Cost per Stipendiary Minister	Cost per URC Member
Direct Ministry costs	£13.1m	£43,390	£335
Ministry-related Costs	£3.0m	£9,801	£ 75
Other Costs	£3.6m	£11,809	£ 91
TOTAL	£19.7m		£501

The right-hand column shows that in order to meet this budget, an *average* giving of £500 per member is needed. We are all asked to give according to what we can afford and as we sense the call of God on our finances.

Contributions to the M&M Fund in 2021 and beyond

Thank you for your continuing efforts over this past year's extraordinary circumstances to maintain the income of your local church and thereby to make your contribution to the M&M Fund. We recognise that it is still likely to be some time before any of us really knows what the financial 'new normal' will look like in our Church and, indeed, given the current turmoil in the world, perhaps we have to learn to live with more uncertainty that we have known for a generation.

A letter to all church members - from the URC Treasurers.

Dear Friends,

After two years of pandemic and lockdown, we can now worship together in person and find fellowship again. But for most of us it is not simply a return to how it used to be; some people have not returned to church, and some have died or become too frail. Now we have significant European turmoil and its likely effect on fuel and food prices for us in the UK.

Thank God that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb. 13 v.8). Whatever else changes, He is our rock, our cornerstone.

Financially, things were extremely tough for churches in 2021. Plate offerings had collapsed; some regular givers had to reduce or entirely stop giving to support God's work; those churches which hire out their premises had seen income from that source disappear, and the URC might have been faced with a serious financial crisis last year.

But through the generosity of individuals, churches and Synods, income to the M&M Fund in 2021 fell by only 4.4%. With a similar reduction in expenditure,

the M&M Fund result was a deficit that can be comfortably covered by reserves.

So, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2021 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as a priority. With churches and individuals under financial pressure, 2022 is not going to be an easy year either, and we are reconciled to dipping into our reserves more seriously as a result.

However, if we are to fulfil the call of Jesus to be His witnesses in the world around us, we need ministers and other workers “on the ground” and we need shared resources which are often best created centrally. That all comes from the M&M Fund.

Again, thank you all! Yours in Christ,

Ian Hardie (Treasurer), Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)

THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP



Since the last report in February 2022, the CHR Tuesday Fellowship has continued to meet weekly apart from July 19th, when the meeting was cancelled because of the heatwave. The Fellowship now meets in the hall of St Athanasios, the Greek

Orthodox church, instead of the chapel. In the chapel there were difficulties arising from the chairs having to be moved each time to accommodate the children who have their Greek classes there. Although in the hall, there is far less storage space, as we only have the use of one small cupboard in the kitchen; the hall is spacious, light and airy, and now that the piano has been repaired, we have become very comfortable in our new home.

During this time we have had a variety of meetings with some excellent outside speakers, such as Margaret Jude; Alex Clare-Young, the Pioneer Minister; and Bernadette Kelly, a host to a Ukrainian refugee. Margaret Jude talked about her experience during lockdown and Alex, who had just started their new job at Downing Place URC, spoke about the need to communicate and help the young people in Cambridge in all kinds of settings.

It was so moving to hear Bernadette's experience as a host. She said there was a considerable amount of administration involved which required the efforts of both her and her husband. In addition, they helped their guest negotiate the paperwork while she was still in Ukraine. It was so inspiring to hear that the Ukrainian lady had settled well in their home and was now starting a new job in Cambridge. We were also so pleased to raise £50 for the Ukrainian Appeal.

In addition to the outside speakers, Nigel Uden led a most moving Pentecostal service on May 31st. We had 'members' own' meetings where members gave talks on chosen subjects as well as having quizzes. Anne Disney told us about her favourite hobby, collecting photographs of boats of every description as well as collecting model boats. Wendy Roe talked about her most valuable work as a leader of the Rainbows (the pre-Brownie organization for very young children). Pamela Cressey talked about the wonder of trees. We were also very much entertained by Carole Scullion's medley of Jubilee songs which were selected from every decade of Queen Elizabeth's reign.. We had a teddy bear's picnic, a strawberry and cream tea and two lovely afternoons in Pamela Cressey's garden.

We are now very happy to welcome anyone who would like to join us at our meetings in our new premises.

Penny Milsom

LEN BOWER'S DIARIES PART 4

Editor: In the July 2021 issue of *Place Matters*, Jane Bower introduced us to the diaries kept by her late father, Len. She is donating them to the Great Diary Project, an archive of personal diaries based in the Bishopsgate Institute in London. Jane explained that her father kept a diary for most of his life, and that he had asked her to keep and read them. Jane began with some extracts from one year, and these were followed by further episodes in December 2021 and February 2022. As the incoming Editor, I was delighted that Jane agreed to continue the series: here we have Episode 4. The year is 1993. (Please note: Len Bower's sense of humour led to some interesting 'word-inventions' – and we have been faithful to his original text).

An occasional series of extracts from my father's diaries. As always, names/initials have been altered, and any views expressed are his own! Harry/H is a long-term friend and former bandsman of Dad's, who is now housebound and ill; Dad regularly goes by bus to attend to all his needs. Pete, his cousin, in the Wirral, is also housebound and ill. Dad frequently goes by train to stay and care for him.

Jane Bower

January. Put on my Marks' long johns for the first time this winter. Minister felt unwell towards end of service and was taken out. Church broken into p.m. Smashed doors inside, etc. Mess.

Mixed grill meal tonight, a poem. P.T. asked me, for a Professor/lecturer colleague, for a drawing for a pollution lecture – a double decker bus emitting clouds of noxious exhaust gases. Did it p.m.

Light, zephyr breeze (from the west, therefore true). Changed into a chimey/chimney howling banshee from time to time later. Did a Valentine card for Jane as usual (Sid, the illiterate wrestler, undying and unshaven).

Sorted out an airlock problem in central heating intestines. M.D. rang to say the poster she asked me to do must be changed. It wasn't the White Rose Barbershop Singers, it's the White Rosettes Barbershop Chorus. Scream. (*They're still going strong – Jane*)

Church a.m, the sun blinding the congregation as always in this period of the year. Afternoon did a four foot map of Europe for C. G., giving a Wednesday group talk in a couple of weeks' time. Question:- Why, if he's giving a talk on some, presumably pet, subject, didn't he do his own map? (I thought it was some map to go up in the church for Christian Aid or something. The 'taken for granted' symptoms are unpleasant. Hope all the other speakers don't form a

queue for visual aids.)

February. O. and C. going to Italy for a week – Florence, I think. Going to a city has no appeal to me; shops, traffic and so on, thousands of people. A grassy plot, a bit of wall, a wild flower, ah, that's different. Ditto, I think, most man-made things apart from the arts. Come to think of it, I don't like art galleries, all the paintings seem dead. I have to identify with the artist, his hand holding the brush, the sounds in and out of his studio, his interruptions. It's hard to feel this in an art gallery, so I peer at the technique, as a technician. Same in a musical concert; I can't hear the music for feeling all the rows of people! I think perhaps I'm most alive when I'm creating – writing, making music, drawing or painting - this suggests that I'm most alive when I'm alone. Interesting thought. Shouldn't think it's true, too simplistic.

It would be nice to be sitting on Filey Brig today, salt grey sea lapping rocks. Vatted and plashed.

Ralph Franklin, the organist/choirmaster, has given in his notice. Too good a musician for our church, he should be in a cathedral really. Pity.

S. walking today with LesGirls. Cleaned her impacted mud-caked boots until they looked poetic, saddlesoaped dreams.

R. M. wants 5 paintings for next 5 weeks of Lenten services. Impossible sorts of ideas (e.g. one of them says '1 million bibles to share between 6 billion Chinese. Leave illustration to you.') Haha! Mad. All very irritating, these half-baked vague ideas that people have. ('Give it to Len, he'll paint it.' Aaaak aaaak.)

March. Din, spring greens (me not keen) spuds and beef fritters. I suppose chopped up spring cabbage leaves are good food. I bought a mass of the stuff, proving that my heart is in the right place. (Heart surgeon in op theatre: 'Right, are we ready? Spring cabbage, nurse?')

About half of Headingley Lane (in length) has been has been prepared, by a giant machine scraper, for a new road surface. This, in parts, has revealed the original cobblestoned road of Victorian days (beautifully laid) and the tramlines still in situ. Nostalgic – every week, on games afternoon when at the City of Leeds School, we all went by tram up to the school playing fields at west park. When the old school closes I presume these fields will be built on. Memories of football, cricket.

Chris Crowther's wife Terry rang at night, to tell me that Chris had died from a heart attack a week ago. Chris and I were at the College of Art together pre-war when we were 18 or so. What a comfortable friend, like a warm pair of slippers.

Daffodils have appeared in the front garden. On church duty at night, congregation 5, pianist 1.

R.M. called teatime, wants visual aids for her children's address next Sunday – 4 foot clinical thermometer, 18" key, and child's apron in card.

Am I in for a cold? Yes indeed. A stinker. This developed rapidly into Lurgi Class 1. Orrid. Flopped out all day on couch, comforted a little by Benylin. Rang R. M, who collected the new visual aids with cries of gladness.

Feel much the same, chest congested and dishclothly. Enough strength to sit down just about sums it up. Snoozed; inhaled Vick in hot water; Benylin; snoozed. No appetite. Yuk.

Church a.m. Found myself being given a tiny Mars bar by a little girl, for doing the Chinese bibles appeal posters week by week. Never been given a Mars bar in the middle of a service before.

April. Church a.m. Choir gave Olivet to Calvary, the music of which has no appeal to me, like Sullivan without Gilbert's libretto, the melodies more like Victorian salon songs. Heard it often as a boy, as regularly as the Messiah, didn't like it then either, though Dad's singing was always a tingling thrill.

Am taking the penicillin tablets. The side effect, which H. correctly predicted, is diarrhoea every two hours, or it seems like that. Presumably that's how the viruses are expelled; a lousy way to go, even viruses deserve our respect.

(When well again) Made pastry, prepared Bramley apples for a nice apple pie, then couldn't find the rolling pin anywhere. Used the inside cylinder of a kitchen roll with wood stuck down it. Perfect.

To Harry's a.m, with carefully prepared sandwiches, him ham, meese cheese. Posted the now 24 page letter, drawings, stories (mad), poems to Pete.

May. Went to town to get Faure's Requiem on cassette, Jane's birthday request. The Classical Record shop had four different performances, one by an Edinburgh choir and the other three all by different choirs in Cambridge! Got her the one by the Cambridge Singers under John Rutter.

Started on 14 day course of medication, result of startling discoveries re duodenal ulcers. My treatment is now 50 years old, 1943-1993!! Hope this will work. The antibiotic tablets are predictably having the same effect they had some weeks ago. By 9.30a.m. I was an empty vessel.

Jolly birthday-presenty session with Jane sitting up in bed and all surrounding her. They left about 10.30. Jane has an interview for a part time job at Homerton College.

Went Christian Aid collecting with S. a.m. Church duty at night. Format is now discussion led by of some biblical passage. It all stayed glued in the biblical period, no illuminating relevance to today; biblicist meandering through ancient languaged text. loves it.

Afternoon helped at the church jumble sale, taking the 10ps at the door. Helped count the takings. We'd just finished and bagged it all up and wrote the details when S.R. came into the room with the takings of a stall. Restarted the counting. Finished, put it away, S.R. came in with the food/cake takings. Thank you S.

June. Wet, overcast greyth. Bit of shopping on my usual morning exercise, plastic-maced, Flaming June.

C & O arrived. O brought a tape for me to video a 2 hour coronation documentary. I'd wanted to video a Timewatch BBC2 documentary. However, as C was looking forward to the match, I could neither video nor watch it! Aaak! Haha. Lovely. Talk of the O kind (people, places, things, markets, purchases, bargains) – not my preference (ideas, hypotheses, social problems, ethics).

Birthday cards from family. Washed front and back windows outside. Jane rang.

Church a.m. hypothesising on ancient biblical legend as usual.

Les Dawson died today. Brilliant comedian I think, with a wonderful love of words and great skill in combining them.

To church with S. Another organist on trial, very dull, like going back to the thirties. Bach, Handel, wonder what he'd make of Rutter. Last week's trialist had colour. Unfortunately, today's rather elderly chap is a friend of J.V. Ergh.

Father's Day card from jane (as usual!) Posted 'Daughter's Day' card to Jane.

Warm and muggy sticky. Then grey overcast as if heavens would open suddenly, which they didn't (don't open on Saturdays?)

The right new organist has been chosen, as far as I'm concerned. He starts in Sept.

(Dad is caring for his cousin Pete in the Wirral) Shopped for batteries for P (a new Universal Remote Control he's bought). The instruction book was complex, keying in of special numbers according to the make of TV. His TV a Grundig, and the eleven different Grundig code numbers all proved fruitless. I rang the London office of the Remote Control firm, they referred me to another page of the manual called the Search procedure. This outlined 60 or more possible things to so. I did 49 and got the remote control working! Yuk, technology.

(Read 1993 Part II in a future edition of 'Place Matters'.)

GOING PLACES – TEA AT GRANTCHESTER

The May 2022 Place Matters announced the formation of a new, informal, Downing Place social events group - **Going Places**.

Going Places launched itself in June with a visit to Grantchester's Orchard Tea Rooms for afternoon tea. A table was duly booked for 20, at ten to three (of course). The scones and sun brought equal pleasure, the conversation flowed as readily as the tea, and the clotted cream was demolished before it melted. The only fly in the jampot was the traffic queueing in Cambridge due to the Midsummer Fair, which prevented four other Going Places members from reaching us - so in fact on this occasion they were Going Nowhere. Or rather, they had tea together elsewhere. But here's to the next time!

Going Places is a self-running group - anyone with some connection to Downing Place can join. Members simply email the group if they want to suggest an idea of doing something or going somewhere; group members only respond to those ideas which interest them. Events can be for a limited number of people or everyone.

Forthcoming suggestions are learning to play croquet and going on a led walk.

To know what's coming up, you need to join the group, and then to check your email Inbox from time to time. To join, please email Tim Rowland.



FULBOURN URC ANNUAL COFFEE MORNING



Saturday 10 September 2022, from 10am - 12 noon

At the home of Gill & Peter Godber,

Home made cakes, coffee, Crazy Croquet*, Raffle,
Name the Teddy & more!
Donations of cakes welcome.

* Similar to Crazy Golf!



Free admission,
voluntary retiring collection

CAMBRIDGE VOICES

35th ANNIVERSARY GALA CONCERT
CONDUCTED BY THEIR FOUNDER,
IAN DE MASSINI

Sunday 11th September, 4 - 5pm
Downing Place United Reformed Church,
Cambridge

*Festive choral music for all the family,
from Ukraine, Russia, Spain, France, Germany,
USA, Cambridge, plus the World Premiere of
Vaughan Williams' Five Variants upon
'Dives & Lazarus' for unaccompanied choir.*

Faith in Action means what it says!

‘Love God, Love your Neighbour’

September 17th 2022

A very special free workshop day at Ipswich Rd URC in Norwich

Key-note Address from Synod Moderator Revd Lythan Nevard

Workshops:

- Isolation/Mental Health/Well-being
 - Environmental Matters
 - Migration/Refugee Crisis
- Poverty and Money-matters

booking form from Robert at easergo@gmail.com



Booking forms: DP Office or Chris Wright

Cost?

Free! As met by the Synod Mission Committee
Tea & coffee provided. Please bring your own lunch

Travel:

Please carshare if possible and tell Chris if you book

Meditation, Mindfulness and Music

With Reverend Nigel Uden, Ian de Massini
and Dr Elizabeth English

Downing Place Church, 4.00pm
Saturday 17th September



The evening is led by Dr Elizabeth English, Cambridge University's Mindfulness Practitioner, and author of *Journeys to the Deep: A Gentle Guide to Mindfulness Meditation*. Reverend Nigel Uden reads poems from Elizabeth's book, and Ian de Massini evokes meditation through music.

AUTUMN HOUSEGROUPS

a series of 6 for October to November

The theme is: **'Family, friend, or foe ... Israel and her neighbours'**

They will be led by Revd Dr Janet Tollington, who writes:

'The six sessions will explore the relationship between the people of Israel and other groups who lived around them, using Old Testament texts to discover how kinship ties, land issues, religion etc influenced the ways in which these were understood and developed. Relationships with Egypt and Syria remain a contemporary issue; but places such as Moab, Ammon and Edom (today's Jordan) and Philistia, Phoenicia, Canaan (today's Palestine, Lebanon and Israel) are also highly relevant in today's world. Each session will stand on its own and focus on a specific neighbouring group, although there will be a link between them.

The sessions are open to everyone and won't require any prior study. We will explore a selection of different Biblical texts each week, so bring a Bible with you. Each session will hopefully open up lots of issues for discussion about how we relate to those around us in our own land as well some of the bigger political issues of today.'

Starting **Monday 17th October** at 2pm at the church, and Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm on Zoom.

Further details next month.

Penny Flynn
House Group Coordinator

COME AND SING HAYDN'S NELSON MASS AT DOWNING PLACE URC

My choir, the Cambridge Philharmonic, is offering a Come and Sing event at DPURC on Saturday September 24th from 2.30pm. If you fancy learning (or revisiting) this glorious mass in a day, sign up on the link below - you can either sing, or be in the audience to hear our efforts! Led by our new inspirational musical director, Harry Sever (www.harrysever.com) this will be a wonderful chance to fill our sanctuary with people and music. Limited places available. The link also shows our forthcoming concerts.

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cambridge-philharmonic>

Jane Bower

What is God
asking of
YOU?



Ministry Enquirers' Event

to help you think about God's call to Stepwise, Worship Leading,
Lay Preaching, Lay Pioneering, Ministry with children and young people, the
Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work.

Come and chat in person with those in ministry
and find out what God is calling you to!

Enquirers' Event

Saturday 1st October 2022

10am-1pm at Church House

Register your interest with ministries@urc.org.uk

harmonies of heaven and earth

sacred music for voices

Dunstable, Guerrero, Lobo, Victoria, Byrd, Tallis,
Tavener, Parry and Pärt

October 1 2022 19.30

**Downing Place United Reformed Church
Downing Place, Cambridge CB2 3EL**

luminatus



Tickets £12 Under 18 free

www.adcticketing.com

01223 300085

DIARY

Services are conducted by the Minister, except where shown

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Thu	01-Sep-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	01-Sep-22	Midweek Worship led by Revd Dr Janet Tollington	11:00am	Chapel or Church
Sun	04-Sep-22	Sunday Worship with Communion	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Sun	04-Sep-22	Open Table Social	7:00pm	Downing Place URC
Mon	05-Sep-22	Officers' Meeting	4:00pm	Downing Place URC
Tue	06-Sep-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Tue	06-Sep-22	Worship, Discipleship and Spirituality Group	7:15pm	Zoom
Wed	07-Sep-22	Lunchtime Concert - Ian de Massini (organ)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	08-Sep-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	08-Sep-22	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion	11:00am	Chapel or Church
Sat	10-Sep-22	Fulbourn Coffee Morning (see p.36)	10am	1 The Pines, Fulbourn
Sat	10-Sep-22	Anne Disney's 80th Birthday Celebration	2:30pm	Gibson Hall
Sun	11-Sep-22	Sunday Worship	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Sun	11-Sep-22	Cambridge Voices 35th Anniversary Gala Concert (see p.36)	4:00pm	Downing Place URC
Mon	12-Sep-22	DEADLINE for booking in for the Gibson Lunch		

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Tue	13-Sep-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2.30pm	St Athanasios Church
Tue	13-Sep-22	Elders' Meeting	7.30pm	Emmanuel Room
Wed	14-Sep-22	DEADLINE for submitting items for <i>Place Matters</i>		
Wed	14-Sep-22	Lunchtime Concert - Stephen Lawrence (tenor) & Flora Tsanidakis (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	15-Sep-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	15-Sep-22	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	15-Sep-22	Midweek Worship led by Simone Maghenzani	5:30pm	Chapel or Church
Sat	17-Sep-22	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4.00am	Emmanuel Room
Sat	17-Sep-22	Meditation, Mindfulness and Music With Elizabeth English, Nigel Uden & Ian de Massini. (see p.38)	4:00pm	Downing Place URC
Sun	18-Sep-22	Sunday Worship	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Sun	18-Sep-22	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Downing Place URC
Mon	19-Sep-22	Buildings Group Meeting	6:00pm	Gibson Hall
Tue	20-Sep-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Tue	20-Sep-22	Pioneer Minister Management Group	7:00pm	tbc
Wed	21-Sep-22	Lunchtime Concert - Jessica Lawrence Hares (mezzo-soprano) & Olga Elbourn (piano)	1:00pm	Downing Place URC

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Wed	21-Sep-22	Property Group Meeting	7:00pm	Zoom
Thu	22-Sep-22	Midweek Worship with Communion led by Revd Elizabeth Caswell	1:00pm	Chapel or Church
Thu	22-Sep-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	24-Sep-22	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sat	24-Sep-22	Come and Sing Haydn's Nelson Mass with the Cambridge Philharmonic (see p.39)	2.30pm	Downing Place URC
Sun	25-Sep-22	Sunday Worship led by the Worship, Discipleship and Spirituality Group	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Sun	25-Sep-22	Church Meeting	12:30pm	Downing Place URC
Tue	27-Sep-22	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios Church
Wed	28-Sep-22	Lunchtime Concert - Mifune Tsuji Trio	1:00pm	Downing Place URC
Thu	29-Sep-22	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	29-Sep-22	Midweek Worship led by Penny Flynn	11:00am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	29-Sep-22	World Church & Public Issues Group	7:30pm	Zoom
Sat	01-Oct-22	Luminatus: Renaissance Choral Concert (see p.41)	7.30pm	Downing Place URC
Sun	02-Oct-22	Sunday Worship with Communion	11:00am	Downing Place URC
Sun	02-Oct-22	Open Table Social	7:00pm	Downing Place URC

MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

4 September	Chris Baker Liz Caswell Augur Pearce David Thompson Janet Tollington	Littleport Methodist Bassingbourn URC Melbourn URC Haverhill URC Clare URC
11 September	Liz Caswell Simone Maghenzani Deborah McVey Janet Tollington	Haverhill URC St Neots URC Fulbourn URC Buntingford URC
18 September	Chris Baker Janet Bottoms Janet Tollington	Melbourn URC Fulbourn URC Bury St Edmunds (Whiting Street)
25 September	Janet Bottoms Liz Caswell David Cornick Penny Flynn Simone Maghenzani David Thompson & Deborah McVey Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Fowlmere URC Stetchworth & Cheveley Clare URC Melbourn URC Chieri, Italy (online) St Luke's, Cambridge Abbey Lane, Saffron Walden Fulbourn 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!

7 September	Ian de Massini (organ)
14 September	Stephen Lawrence (tenor) & Flora Tsanitakis (piano)
21 September	Jessica Lawrence-Hares (soprano) & Olga Elbourn (piano)
28 September	Mifune Tsuji Trio (violin, piano & saxophone)

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

LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER 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.

4 September Trinity 12

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 1

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14:25-33

11 September Trinity 13

Exodus 32:7-14

Psalm 51:1-10

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15:1-10

18 September Trinity 14

Amos 8:4-7

Psalm 113

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Luke 16:1-13

25 September Trinity 15

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Psalm 146

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

2 October Trinity 16

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

Psalm 37:1-9

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Luke 17:5-10





The last full moon of summer.

Photograph by Tim Rowland

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Tim Rowland

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

WEB EDITOR: Ann Auger

Please send all items to be included in the October edition to both Tim and Ann
by the cut off date of **Wednesday 14 September.**

The October edition will be available from **Sunday 24 September.**