



**DOWNING PLACE  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE**

# **PLACE MATTERS**



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## 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)  
07394 330003

**Pioneer Minister:** The Revd. Dr 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)

**Facilities Officer  
and Caretaker** Elaine Barker  
(Elaine's rest day is Tuesday)  
[elaine@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:elaine@downingplaceurc.org)  
01223 756635

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

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

**Marketing and  
Communications  
Officer**

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

**Church Secretary:**

Until 6 May: Margaret Thompson  
From 7 May: Pippa Jones  
[secretary@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:secretary@downingplaceurc.org)

**Clerk to the Elders' Meeting**

Until 6 May: Owen Saxton  
From 7 May: Augur Pearce  
[clerk@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:clerk@downingplaceurc.org)

**Treasurer:**

Until 6 May: Ian Strachan  
From 7 May: William McVey  
[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)

*Cover image - Pigeon Peas, the subject of this year's Christian Aid appeal.  
See page 34 for more information.*

## FROM NIGEL UDEN

After sabbatical, I want more than anything to say thank you. I am conscious that most people's careers do not include sabbatical leave. That I had fourteen weeks away from normality (including a fortnight's holiday) was, however, a precious gift, which I deeply appreciate. The change of routine and rhythm was beneficial physically and spiritually.

I am grateful for and very touched by the generosity that provided me with such helpful financial assistance and presents for both the Retreat in North Wales, and the journey around Germany in J. S. Bach's footsteps.

Due to my absence, many people in the churches undertook additional tasks, both employees and volunteers. Please know of my personal gratitude for that, especially the freedom from my usual work that it gave. A particular mantle fell to the shoulders of the two Church Secretaries, Margaret Thompson, and Carole Scullion, and I would like to acknowledge the dedication and excellence of what they did – as always.



Last but not least, the whole experience was a gift in a profound sense. My life has been blessed with some real privileges, and in the sabbatical's silence and different pace, I found that innumerable threads from the past six decades – words, music, experiences, images – were woven into a renewed and renewing fabric of faith. For that I feel thanks beyond words.

Soon, I will write more fully to give you a greater sense of what I got up to. For now though, I say thank you to each of you, and to God.

In conclusion, as the Coronation approaches, I note how the Bible urges people of faith to pray for those who lead us. For me, that is part of citizenship, whatever form of government a nation has. As we expect much from them, so I feel it important to support them with intercession. As Martin Luther prays for those in authority: 'may they be enlightened by your grace and rightly teach and lead us by your good word and good example.'

Warmly,

*Nigel*

## VISITORS FROM THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN THE PALATINATE

The Protestant Church in the Pfalz, a wine-producing area of Southwest Germany, has a long-standing relationship with the United Reformed Church. So it is that a dozen of its people attended the URC's jubilee service in London on 15<sup>th</sup> April. Seven of them spent the remainder of that weekend in Cambridge. They have spoken most appreciatively of the hospitality they received from the denomination, from Westminster College, and not least from Downing Place Church. Hearty thanks to David & Penny Flynn, Deborah & William McVey, Mark Dawes, and Ian de Massini for their part in all of that. It was a privilege for us to have them join us in worship – including the choir – on 16<sup>th</sup>. The Church's President, Pfarrerin Dorothee Wüst, spoke eloquently of the value of such church partnerships in today's world.



*Meal hosted at the McVey's on the Sunday evening for our visitors from the Palatinate*

Emmanuel Church members retain rich memories of the link it enjoyed with the Stiftskirche in Landau, itself a Pfalz Church. My recent visit to Germany commenced with a visit to Landau, and there I had the warmest of welcomes from the Stiftskirche. I believe there is real potential for us to re-ignite that link. In an era when it is so easy for bridges to be burned, part of our Christian witness can be a building of them, a walking across them. Although no one from Landau

was with us on 16<sup>th</sup> April, I have come home with a clear indication from Dekan Volker Janke and Pfarrerin Heike Messerschmitt and their Stiftskirche colleagues, that they would like to enter into discussions with Downing Place Church about how a link might work these days. Neither they nor I feel we should simply try to re-create what was there before. Too much is different now. But the idea of establishing something that draws into fellowship across church and national boundaries has so much to commend it. I am asking the World Church and Public Issues Group and the Elders to consider it in order to bring some careful proposals to the Church Meeting in due course. If you have thoughts, please do share them with me.

I think that the visit of Pf Wüst, with Anja, Axel, Christoph, Hannah, Oliver, and Sara, was an inspiring starting place.

*NPU*



*The Stiftskirche in Landau*

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This May 2023 edition of *Place Matters* marks the end of my first year as editor of the Downing Place URC monthly magazine. The year seems to have passed very quickly. As I noted in last July's issue, a research journal editor has the luxury of selecting what to publish from the many submissions received, week on week, whereas it's a bit different with a community 'magazine' such as *Place Matters*. I continue to be grateful for those who send me news-content month by month, about what's going on in and beyond Downing Place. Then there are topics and themes, many or most of them topic-al, that lead me to 'commission' articles from members and friends who are well-placed to "inform, educate, and to entertain" (John Reith, 1922 for the inception of the BBC). The 'themes' have nearly all been suggested by others - the Ukraine theme only three months ago, suggested by Jess Uden, being a good case in point.

Amongst the many contributions to this issue, three of them, in very different ways, address the theme of monarchy in the United Kingdom: to mark, and to reflect upon, the coronation of King Charles III at Westminster Abbey on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Five of our Downing Place members have generously shared their own recollections of the coronation, 70 years ago, of our King's mother. Next, as we anticipate, and later reflect on, the musical feast in which the coronation will be embedded, Mark Dawes takes us on a tour (for me, a joy-ride) of music written and 'performed' at a millennium of coronations. I shall certainly be singing along with Parry and Handel! Finally, Augur Pearce brings his knowledge and his spiritual insight to a historical-ecclesiastical perspective on monarchy, and the coronation of monarchs.

Now, whilst many, probably most, readers will want to join in the May 6<sup>th</sup> celebrations, I realise that others will not. Fair enough, say I: it's not difficult to understand why, in a democratic society, many of us take exception to the fact that taxpayers contribute to the maintenance of the households and activities of one particular, privileged family. That is not to deny that (some/most) members of the royal family fulfil a hectic round of engagements in the national and international interest of their 'subjects'. Just as many folk mourned the recent death of Queen Elizabeth, many will mark the accession of her son, and acknowledge his efforts to represent us in an unequal society. I am sure that Downing Place URC can accommodate both republicans and monarchists, as we try to understand, and to include, those around us, in this most unequal city in the UK.

Finally – for now – my appreciation of those who contribute to the content and the production of our magazine grows with every issue. I thank you all.

## MEMORIES OF THE CORONATION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II: 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 1953

*Editor: King Charles III's mother was the UK's longest-serving monarch, and her coronation 70 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1953. Those born after that event might well live through only one UK coronation, and many born before it might have been too young to recall it. The 1953 coronation was the first to be televised in full, and 27 million people across Britain watched the coronation live, on black and white BBC Television, many having purchased or rented television sets for the event. I must have listened to it on 'the wireless', the Home Service programme, but I cannot recall the event! I am grateful to the Downing Place members who responded to my invitation to share with us what they recall of that day in 1953 – not only the ceremony itself, but also any recollections of listening/watching with family and friends. Now, read on – note that one lady other than the Queen makes two appearances: I couldn't resist including both ...*

### **Freda Bradbury**

I was born and brought up in a suburb of Luton which was only a 30 minute journey to London by train. Our local Church had a large number of my mother's cousins in the congregation, and one of them invited us - mum, dad, my older sister and me along with many others, to watch the coronation on their newly acquired T.V. I was a young teenager and very interested to watch this amazing event. I took no notice of the fact that we were very crowded in a smallish living room. Of course the screen was small but we were watching history and we were sharing in it.

When the main ceremony was over and the return journey to the palace of the newly crowned Queen going to start, one 'auntie cousin' and her daughter, who was several years older than me, got up and left in a hurry with the intention of catching a train to London and joining the crowds to see the Queen as she drove past on her return journey. I was very envious that my parents had not had this enterprising idea to take us to London too. The general consensus of the rest of the room was that they were wasting their time, money and effort. Not so. Very recently said daughter was remembering the thrill of it all as her mother's idea had worked. She was recalling this as we were speaking together of the upcoming coronation.



## Joan Grayer

I watched the coronation in 1953 on television (black and white). Many of my friends went to watch the procession in London. They spent the night on the street so as to have a good viewing position. One eminent member of Emmanuel had the best possible place to watch the coronation. Ebenezer Cunningham was, in 1953, the chairman of the Congregational Union. This was the nearest we had to 'head of church'. He was therefore invited to Westminster Abbey along with all the other church leaders. After the coronation he was given the chair (blue Velvet) that he sat on at the event.



## Sally Williams

My memories are of the day and not the Coronation. I was living in a small Gloucestershire village with no electricity and therefore no television. My grandfather, as an engineer, had installed a generator in his garage which powered electric lighting, radio and a telephone, but nothing else.

The village had organised a band (mainly people press-ganged into taking part, with little musical ability but lots of enthusiasm, and intent on enjoying themselves) to parade the three lanes before ending up at the village hall and recreation ground. I blew some kind of whistle.

Then there were all kinds of races for the under 16's, I remember because I was nearly too old to take part. This was followed by tea in the hall - sandwiches, jelly and cakes (plain, no cream etc.), tea for the adults and squash for the children. The best bit came at the tea when all the young people were given a very basic Coronation mug, which I still have.

Then my mother and I went home to listen, with grandfather, to the BBC six o'clock news and hear about the ceremony. In Gloucester my school friends had arranged to watch the ceremony on relatives' or neighbours' sets. The girl from a Plymouth Brethren family also had not seen it.

[Sally adds: "I remember the day well because life was incredibly dull ..."]



*Photograph by Sally Williams*

## Tony Bottoms

As a missionary's child in the days before regular air travel, while my parents worked in what's now Bangladesh I attended a boarding school in London (Eltham College). In the school holidays, I lived with an aunt and uncle in Yorkshire, but for half-term breaks this was considered too long a journey. For the half-term when the coronation happened, I therefore stayed with some friends of my aunt and uncle who were farmers in Kent. Their farmhouse was not yet connected to the electricity grid (yes, really!), so obviously they had no television. But luckily, the residents of the nearest village (Four Elms, near Edenbridge) had arranged to set up a TV in the village hall. I was 13, and just beginning to take an interest in public affairs, so the coronation was of great interest to me. I was therefore given a pack of sandwiches, and I went and watched the rather small screen for many hours. Of course, I can't now remember much, but I do remember a few things. One was the anointing during the service – clearly a moment of special significance, when a canopy was placed over the Queen. Another was the strange moment when Prince Philip paid formal homage to the Queen. And after the service there was a very long procession – in the pouring rain! The Queen of Tonga (a place I had then never heard of) gained much approval by insisting on travelling in an open carriage despite the rain. Oh, and when I got back to school we were all given a Coronation Spoon!



## Chris Baker

King Charles' mother, Queen Elizabeth II was crowned on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1953. Most people were excited at the prospect of seeing this colourful event. Magazines told the story and explained the various items of the regalia - all brilliant in gold and glittering with diamonds and other jewels. It is interesting to see the adverts in these publications. For example in the 'Everybody's' magazine (priced 6d) there was an advertisement 'Buy a Tie next week and win either a 100 guineas continental holiday or a 14" television set or a de luxe Radiogram.'



Televisions were a luxury and we didn't have one but we were invited to a Coronation Party at a friend's house.

They had a television (black and white of course) and we all crammed into their

*Photograph by Sally Williams*

sitting room to watch the spectacle. Many of us had copies of the Approved Souvenir Programme of the Coronation which was sold for the King George's Jubilee Trust for 2s 6d. This programme gave details of the processions to and from Westminster Abbey. There was also the complete Order of Service, so even if the pictures were not very good (and they were quite snowy) we could follow the service. One of the memorable elements of that service was the presentation of the Bible by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who said, 'Our Gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the Law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; this is royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.'

Then, of course, the service grew to the great climax with the actual crowning with the glittering St. Edward's Crown. There had been much speculation about whether the Queen would be able to cope with its weight, but she managed admirably.

Eventually the service drew to a close and we watched the great procession back to Buckingham Palace. I don't remember most of the people, though who could forget Queen Salote of Tonga who, despite the rain, refused to have the carriage closed and happily waved to the crowds, who loved her for it.

After it was all over we relaxed in the garden and played silly games (it was not raining in Devon). The whole ceremony had been filmed in colour and so later we were able to go to the cinema and relive the event, drinking in the colour.

There were many souvenir publications and I still have the Scrap Book I made at the time. And I suppose every child was given a Souvenir Mug which I still have and, if you were very lucky, a Coronation Crown (a coin worth 5/-).

As a matter of interest the Christian Herald published a small souvenir booklet which included an article on the Queen's Nonconformist Ancestry. It said, 'Many other of the Queen Mother's relations in the West Riding have been among the pillars of the Free churches. One such family was the Burnleys, of Gomersal, near Leeds and their associates. Thomas Burnley was a leading Congregationalist, and it was he or his son who gave the land for the building of the Grove Congregational Church, Gomersal of which the Burnleys have always been great benefactors. Others of the Burnleys were for two or three generations associated with Birstall Congregational Church, and another local family – that of the Firths of Keckmondwike, headed by Sir Thomas Freeman Firth Bart., which, intermarried with the Burnleys one hundred and fifty years ago or so, were stalwarts of the famous Upper Chapel in that town.'

## CORONATION MUSIC – FROM ATTWOOD TO ZADOK

*Mark Daves writes:*

Let's begin with a quiz: For whose coronations were the following pieces of music written?

*Festival Te Deum* – Ralph Vaughan Williams

*I was glad* – Henry Purcell

*This is the Day that the Lord hath made* – William Knyvett

*O Hearken Thou* – Edward Elgar

*Orb and Sceptre* – William Walton

*Zadok the Priest* – George Frederic Handel

*Psalm 98* – Andrew Lloyd-Webber

*O taste and see* – Ralph Vaughan Williams

*Oh grant the King a long life* – Thomas Attwood

*I was glad* – Hubert Parry

*Kings shall see and arise* – Frederick Bridge

*Crown Imperial* – William Walton

The answers all appear somewhere below ....

It is likely that the coronation of a monarch has always included music. King Edgar's (975) coronation (the earliest for which the order of service survives) included *Unxerunt Salomonem*, the antiphon which was later translated to become the words for *Zadok the Priest*. The order for King Stephen's coronation (1135) refers to the king being accompanied to the church with the 'sound of trumpets and of chanting'. On many occasions the music was written especially for the service. Some of those pieces have since become part of the standard choral or orchestral repertoire, but there does not initially appear to have been any expectation that this would happen. Many of the key musicians of their time were commissioned to write music for coronation services, alongside other composers who have since vanished into obscurity. The figure that towers above all others is George Frederic Handel.

Handel's first commission, after becoming a British subject, was to write four anthems for the coronation of George II in 1727. The most famous of these, *Zadok the Priest*, has been used at every coronation since. Indeed, at the next coronation, that of King George III in 1761, William Boyce, the master of the King's music, declared that *Zadok the Priest* "cannot be more properly set than it has already been by Mr. Handel", and therefore included Handel's setting in the service, for which he composed all of the other music. It would not have been unusual were Boyce to have decided to re-set the words to *Zadok*, given that Thomas Tomkins set them for the coronation of Charles I (1626) and Henry

Lawes did so for Charles II (1661).

Another important coronation text that has been set by many composers is *I was glad*. Purcell wrote a version (for James II in 1685), Francis Pigott created another for Queen Anne (1702), and Thomas Attwood's was written for George IV (1821) and reused at his brother William IV's coronation (1831). Hubert Parry created the definitive version for Edward VII (1902). It was traditional for the boys of Westminster School to shout "Vivat!" at the start of coronation services. Parry cleverly incorporated "Vivat Regina/Rex" as an optional section of his setting of *I was glad*, sung by the trebles, many of whom were choristers from Westminster School. (The 'vivats' are usually omitted when sung by parish or cathedral choirs.) Parry's setting has been used at all subsequent coronations.

Nineteenth century coronations were not particularly fertile ground for new compositions. The services for George IV and William IV both featured significant amounts of music by Handel, (alongside *Oh grant the King a long life* by Thomas Attwood at William's service). The only new choral composition to be sung at Victoria's coronation (1838) was William Knyvett's *This is the Day that the Lord hath made*.

By contrast, the four coronations that took place in the twentieth century included a wide variety of pre-existing music and exceptional new compositions.

The coronation of Edward VII (1902) included music from the previous four centuries. It featured works by Tallis, Gibbons, Purcell, Stanford and Stainer, as well the newly-commissioned setting of *I was glad* by Parry, and *Kings shall see and arise* by the director of music for the service, Frederick Bridge.

George V's service (1911) reprised many of the successful pieces from the previous coronation, as well as new works by Elgar (*O Harken Thou*), Stanford (*Gloria*) and Parry (*Te Deum*).

At the coronation of George VI (1937) (Edward VIII having abdicated before a coronation could take place) the music was overseen by Ernest Bullock and Henry Walford Davies, who again aimed to include music from 'Tudor times to the present day'. This included anthems by Byrd, Wesley and Howells. The service saw the first performance of Vaughan Williams' *Festival Te Deum* and William Walton's *Crown Imperial* (originally for orchestra, but now often played on the organ) and concluded with two of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* marches.

Over the past year or so, as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations for Queen Elizabeth II and then on the occasion of her funeral, Ian and I have played some of the music from the late queen's coronation (1953). This included *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace* by Samuel Sebastian Wesley and the new commission from

Vaughan Williams of his motet *O Taste and See*. Walton's *Orb and Sceptre* received its first performance at the 1953 coronation, as did Vaughan Williams' setting of *Old Hundredth*, with fanfare, orchestra and organ. Extraordinarily, this was the first time a congregational hymn had been included in a coronation service.

The order of service for the forthcoming coronation of King Charles III (6 May 2023) has not (at the time of writing) been published, but it has been announced that new compositions will include Andrew Lloyd-Webber's setting of Psalm 98, as well as pieces by Paul Mealor, Patrick Doyle and Tarik O'Regan. Female composers will be well-represented for the first time, including Sarah Class, Roxanna Panufnik, Shirley J. Thompson and the Master of the King's Music: Judith Weir. It has also been announced that Greek Orthodox music will feature during the ceremony, as a tribute to Prince Philip. It is expected that the now traditional repertoire of Parry's *I was glad* and Handel's *Zadok the Priest* will feature, as well as music by other British composers.

I recently heard two 'coronation experts' discussing the forthcoming service on the radio and one commented that King Charles has expressed a desire for his service to last a mere hour and a half (as opposed to the 12 hours that some medieval coronations lasted). The other responded that this was not looking likely, given the amount of music that will be involved. What, therefore, is the function of the music, and where does it appear in the service? At the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the music was either liturgical (forming part of the communion service), or functional (taking place while other important things were going on).

As the Queen processed into the Abbey, Parry's *I was glad* was sung. Then, when the communion section of the service began, there was an introit. Our services in Downing Place often begin with lines from a psalm, and in this case the choir sang two verses from psalm 84 ("Behold, O God our defender"), in a setting by Herbert Howells that was composed for the service. Also newly-composed was the gradual (which announced the gospel reading), *Let my prayer come up*, by William Harris. After the gospel reading the creed can be said or sung, and unsurprisingly it was sung, using the setting from Ralph Vaughan Williams' G minor mass.

The next important section of the service was The Anointing. During this a hymn was sung ... but only by the choir. This was *Veni Creator Spiritus* and then, as the monarch moved to the altar to be anointed, the choir sang *Zadok the Priest* (by Handel of course).

After that the Queen was presented with the official symbols of her role, culminating in the crowning (using St Edward's crown, memorably described by

one of the radio ‘experts’ as being too heavy to wear for long. “It is 5kg. It weighs a ton.”). After the crowning, George Dyson’s new setting of the *Comfortare* (“Be strong and of a good courage”) was sung.

Other members of the royal family and senior peers then came forward to proclaim their fealty to the newly crowned queen. This took a while, so was an opportunity for the choir to sing five anthems: *Rejoice in the Lord alway* (sic) by John Redford, *O clap your hands together* by Orlando Gibbons, *I will not leave you comfortless* by William Byrd, *O Lord our Governour* (sic), commissioned from the Canadian composer Healey Willan, and *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace* by S.S. Wesley.

During the preparation for communion, Vaughan Williams’ setting of *All people that on earth do dwell* (including some wonderful fanfares) was sung as a congregational hymn, followed by his setting of the Sanctus and then, while Queen Elizabeth took communion, his new, beautiful setting of *O Taste and See*. The *Gloria in Excelsis* that followed communion was by Charles Villiers Stanford, and the service ended with a three-fold Amen by Orlando Gibbons.

Before the service concluded with the singing of the National Anthem, the queen needed to prepare herself, with different clothing and the imperial crown. While this took place in a side-chapel, the choir sang William Walton’s new setting of *Te Deum Laudamus* (“We praise thee, O God”), which is both lyrically appropriate and sufficiently lengthy. As the procession left the Abbey, two *Pomp and Circumstance* marches by Elgar (numbers 1 and 4) were played by the orchestra, separated by a new *Coronation March* by Arnold Bax.

A final note should go to the trumpet fanfares. There were no fewer than eight of them! Seven were composed by Ernest Bullock, with the final one by Gordon Jacob.

To conclude, what will our choir at Downing Place be singing to mark the coronation? The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) has commissioned Joanna Forbes L’Estrange, to compose a new anthem called *The mountains shall bring peace*. This is dedicated to our own Eric Nye, and is very much in the style of Parry or Stanford, with multiple sections that consist of broad, sweeping and beautiful melodies. One particular device that the composer uses is that every time the word ‘King’ is sung it appears on the note ‘C’ (for Charles). The RSCM is encouraging choirs to sing this anthem as part of their project called ‘Sing for the King’, and we will therefore sing it on the Sunday immediately following the coronation.

I am looking forward to hearing the new music at the coronation service, and wonder which of the new pieces we might still be singing in the decades to come.

# MONARCHY, STATE, CHURCH: A HISTORY OF CORONATIONS

*Augur Pearce*

Coronations symbolise how monarchs' relationships with their people, and with the divine, are understood – the latter having implications for the former.

Royal inaugurations existed well before Christianity. The Roman soldiers who plaited Jesus' Crown of Thorns already had a notion of what crowns meant. The Celtic and Germanic peoples settling in Scotland and England seated leaders on a stone or raised them on shields. The Stone of Destiny at Scone in Perthshire had an English counterpart at Kingston, where Mercia met Wessex. If inauguration did nothing else, it showed the people what their king looked like.

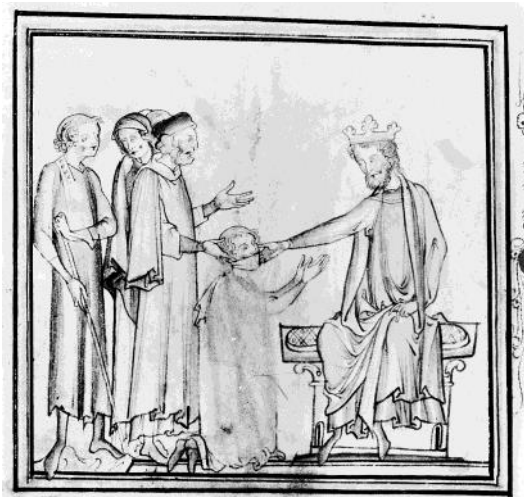
Pre-Christian rulers might be considered gods or gods' descendants. Already when Christianity spread over 7th-century Britain, kingship was a well-known institution and the tension between pro- and anti-royal strands in the Scriptures had been resolved, to majority satisfaction, in monarchy's favour. The king, designated by God through popular choice, battle or heredity, carried God's authority but was expected to accept God's ultimate sovereignty and to rule by Christian principles. Since Scotland became one nation under Kenneth I, and England under Æthelstan, no British king has not professed the Christian faith. A 1543 Act of Parliament recognised it was the calling of *all* English monarchs – not just Henry VIII, to whom Pope Leo X had attached the label two decades earlier – to be Defenders of the Faith; but also that all English monarchs ruled 'by the Grace of God'.

From at least the 10th century in England (and 14th in Scotland), kings were anointed after the manner of Hebrew kings and priests and Christian bishops. From roughly the same time they also took oaths, some with a religious content. But oaths did not create duties, they acknowledged them. Nobody imagined a king was free from such obligations in the months before the oath was sworn. Equally, the rightful successor was king before anointing: the oil did not make the monarch. Nor could unwilling archbishops prevent coronations – William I, Mary I and William III each found bishops willing to replace Canterbury.

However, only from Stuart times was there certainty who the next king would be. Until then, coronation might make a claim more secure, especially at changes of dynasty.

God's sovereignty is signalled repeatedly in the coronation regalia: crosses surmount crowns and the royal orb. The king's personal faith is indicated by receiving Holy Communion; following, since Stuart times, the Book of Common

Prayer, though the Roman Catholic James II declined any celebration. Constitutional, even miraculous, implications have been attached to divine appointment. The belief that a monarch could heal scrofula, 'the king's evil', a distressing lymph node infection, 'by touch' flourished for nearly 500 years from Henry III's time. The 13th-century writer Bracton, acclaimed for his statement that the king is 'under God and the law, for the law makes the king', went on to say that if the king fails to correct an injustice 'it is punishment enough for him that he await God's vengeance. No one may presume to question his acts, much less contravene them.'



*Edward the Confessor touching a sufferer  
from the King's Evil*

Though lay dignitaries have sometimes crowned kings (famously Isobel Countess of Buchan at the accession of Robert I Bruce), anointing seems always to have been by bishops. This could be presented as supporting the more extreme clerical claims of the middle ages. Mediaeval prelates certainly sought promises for 'the church' which they could invoke in later disputes. But the statutes of the Reformation Parliament put the clergy firmly in their place. I believe Henry VIII's title 'Supreme Head in earth of the Church of England' has always been misunderstood. I find a clue in the Ecclesiastical Appeals Act 1532, which spoke of England as a realm divided into 'spirituality and temporality', but equated 'the English Church' with the spirituality. That suggests Headship of 'the Church' may have meant presidency *over the clergy*. Though Henry did not imagine he himself was a priest, he did believe the clergy could not act or decide properly without his leadership; and Archbishop Cranmer taught that kings shared with clergy the 'cure of souls' of their subjects.

Elizabeth I needed, on accession, to secure passage of the Supremacy Bill, repealing her sister's Acts and reviving her father's. When Secretary Cecil introduced proposals for an oath that would recognise the Queen as 'the only Supreme Governor *of this realm*, as well in spiritual or ecclesiastical causes as in temporal', he suggested this replaced Supreme Headship out of respect for those parliamentary consciences which saw Christ as the church's only Head. I find this somewhat disingenuous, if only because the Bill revived several statutes of

Henry VIII asserting the ‘Supreme Head’ title. In fact after 1558 the monarch was both Governor and Head. The real significance of the new oath lay in acknowledging that spiritual causes were causes *of the realm*, not only of the clergy: so the realm of England (which, according to the revived 1532 Act, comprised temporality as well as spirituality) included religion amongst its concerns. The spirit of all this legislation was thus correctly summarised when Richard Hooker, writing around 1600 and replacing ‘realm’ by ‘church’ in the sense more familiar to us today, declared Church and Commonwealth of England two names for the same thing. He considered any distinction between ‘church and state’ foreign to England’s religious settlement.

Calvinists, of course, disagreed, as did the papacy. Scotland’s Reformers argued for a government located by Christ in church office-bearers. English protestant Dissenters can legitimately maintain that distinction. It is not so clear that Conformists can do so. When Charles I, encouraged by his strong-minded counsellor Bishop Laud, called himself ‘Supreme Governor of the Church of England’ he was combining the two statutory titles to create a third which never received parliamentary endorsement.

Scotland’s Parliament made one important change immediately on Mary I’s abdication; requiring a coronation oath in specifically protestant terms. Monarchs from 1567 were called upon *inter alia* to serve God according to his Word, to maintain the true religion ‘now received and preached’ and abolish all contrary teaching, and to root out of Scotland all whom the Kirk found to be heretics and enemies to God’s true worship. An oath to this effect was regularly taken until the Union with England, and James VII’s failure to do so was one of the chief grounds on which the Scottish Estates held him to have forfeited the crown in 1688. The oath prescribed since 1688 in England is considerably less intolerant.



*The Coronation procession of James II & VII*

Peers have paid homage at coronations since the 13th century. This restated a feudal relationship subsisting since the Norman Conquest, whereby great lords and bishops held land from the king, with mutual duties of service and

protection. Peers, in coronation robes indicating their degree, donned their coronets when the king wore his crown. 20th century coronations, however, became considerably shorter than their predecessors when only one representative peer of each degree swore to be the monarch's 'liege man'.

Besides showing recognition and support, the 'commonalty' also has an interest in the monarch's oath. A conqueror like William I reassured his new subjects they would be governed in a way they already knew, swearing to uphold 'the good laws of King Edward' (a formula updated from reign to reign). Attempts were later made to recognise the role of the rural gentry and urban merchant class in parliaments. Edward II swore in 1308 to observe the rightful laws 'which the common people shall have chosen'. Did this mean the Commons could bind the king without his agreement? Certainly that was not how later monarchs understood lawmaking. Henry VIII's oath reflected actual practice, swearing only to laws 'which the nobles and people have made and chosen with his consent'. The Commons' pretensions to act alone in the 1640s were roundly repudiated by both Houses in 1661; so the oath from 1688 refers to the people's 'laws and customs, and the statutes in Parliament agreed upon' – uncontroversial, given that Parliament includes the monarch.

Coronations, finally, speak of relationships with other realms. Though Edward I meant his incorporation of the Stone of Destiny into the Westminster Coronation Chair to mark English paramountcy over Scotland, the Scots never recognised this, continuing to crown their own rulers, usually at Scone. James VI and I and Charles I were crowned in both realms, and Charles II's Scots coronation in the teeth of the republican régime in London made an important political point.

Scottish coronations ceased from James VII's accession, though William of Orange and Anne both swore the Scottish coronation oath in London. The Act of Union with England applied English succession rules to the united crown but forbade the Scottish regalia (older than most English crown jewels) to be taken south. Separate coronations could have continued, and I have never followed the argument against later monarchs taking the Scottish oath. But instead, Scots elements were introduced into the ceremony at Westminster. When George IV was crowned, a Scottish standard was carried in procession and Scottish peers paid homage alongside English counterparts. The Moderator of the General Assembly presented the Bible to Elizabeth II. Both she and her father's coronation processions saw representation also from the self-governing Dominions.

In short, no two British coronations have ever been the same; yet there has also been much continuity over the centuries in their content and what they stand for.

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

On Sunday 19th March, we were considering the story of Jesus healing the blind man. With the aid of a white cane, we considered having a visual impairment in today's society and ways in which people are helped to stay in employment, with mobility and general living and compared this to the lack of opportunities for the blind beggar in the story. The children played a game, where they were blindfolded and took turns to pick an object out of a box and guess what it was using their senses other than vision. Cardboard spectacles were then decorated and coloured acetate lenses were fitted to change the appearance of the surroundings.

The last Sunday of March we talked about the story from John 4 describing the death and raising of Lazarus. We completed a simple jigsaw puzzle and expressed annoyance, disappointment and sadness to discover there was a piece missing. We likened this to the grief and emotions people might feel at the loss of a loved one and acknowledged that Jesus also cried at the death of Lazarus and comforted his friends. We then shared a story book about the death of a beloved pet before decorating the gift cards which accompanied the potted plants to be given to older members of the congregation on Easter Sunday as an expression of the church's love for them.



*Easter Cards*

On Palm Sunday, we learned a new song 'Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest' as we thought that the people in Jerusalem might have sung a similar song when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey. We then watched a story about 'the donkey who carried a king' which was first very proud that he had carried a

king and didn't want to do normal work afterwards, till he saw a few days later that Jesus had to carry a very heavy piece of wood. If king Jesus wanted to be a servant, then the donkey was willing to serve too. A few children made an Easter garden for in the church during Good Friday and Easter Sunday , whilst others chose to cut tree branches.



*Easter Garden*

On 9 April, although few in number, we started our session with an Easter Sunday Egg Hunt in the garden, searching for hollow eggs containing the words sadness, worry, fear and joy. We then shared the story of that first Easter morning considering the emotions that Jesus' friends must have experienced at different times on that day, ending with the 'joy' of the realisation that Jesus had risen. We sang a fun praise song before making Easter baskets to take home, one for ourselves and another for a friend or family member, including a little chocolate treat! We then returned to church for Communion.

On Sunday 16th we loved seeing Nigel again. He had missed us and brought us pencils from Germany. One of our German guests shared our group activities. We told each other where we had been on Easter Sunday. Some had been at a small church in the Caribbean, two families had been in sunny Ireland, our guest was in Germany and some of us celebrated at home. Wherever we were, the Good News that Jesus was alive again had been shared. We used our finger puppets to pass the Good News around the group. We remembered how Thomas (the one in the Bible who was a friend of Jesus, not the one in our group!) had been astonished to hear from the others that Jesus was alive. He might have eventually told people in India. We looked at the globe. The Good

News has spread to all the countries.

There are churches everywhere. **We would like any member of the congregation who visits somewhere in the next few months to send us a postcard of a church.** We can then see where Jesus's love is shared, and enjoy getting post addressed to 'Children, at Downing Place'. We made a paper chain of people who shared this love with us and used it to decorate our window.

Elza de Bruin, Lorraine Thornton and Daphne Thomas, with a big thanks to all the leaders for their contributions and to Jess Uden for the photos



*16 April*

On behalf of Knit One Give One, I would like a Big “Thank You” to all who supported our Easter Tabletop sale. We also received a generous donation from Windmill Grange at Histon. As soon as I have all the figures a donation will be made to EACH and Sallymay International PreSchool in Sierra Leone. Many thanks to all.

*Anne Disney.*

## ANSELMO AMMENTI: MY REMARKABLE GRANDFATHER (Pt II)

Editor: this article is the second part (of two) of an account of the life of a notable Italian Methodist Minister. I am grateful to Pippa Jones, and her two brothers, for sharing it with us. In the first part (Place Matters, February 2023) they introduced us to their mother's father, Anselmo Ammenti, who was a Methodist minister in Italy during the years leading up to, during and following World War II. Following ministries in Sestri Ponente, near Genova, and in Venice, in 1939 the church synod transferred Pastor Ammenti to the Methodist church in Rome. In May 1940 Italy joined the war as one of the 'Axis' German allies.

*Pippa Jones continues her account:*

In 1929 Mussolini, needing the support of the Catholic Church, had signed a conciliation pact with the Vatican, which since 1870 had dissociated itself from the Italian government. That pact, in cities where the clergy was strong and especially where there was a bishop, marked the beginning of the persecution of Protestants, some of whom lost their jobs.

In 1938 the Italian government passed the so-called racial laws (*Leggi Razziali*), a series of laws to enforce racial discrimination and segregation. The main victims of these laws were Italian Jews and the native African inhabitants of the Italian colonial empire.



Anselmo repeatedly spoke out against the treatment of Jews. This is documented by writers Maria Bonafede [Note 1] and Giorgio Rochat [Note 2], who refer to the schism between Anselmo and his Waldensian colleague Ernesto Ayassot. In November 1939, Anselmo gave an address as part of the Waldensian Church prayer week on the theme of "The Redemptive Power of Christ". Ayassot was scandalised by what he called Anselmo's "improvised digression on the Jewish question" which he, and allegedly also the Waldensian members of the audience, found unacceptable. In fact Anselmo's remarks were a call for Christians to open their hearts and provide moral, practical and financial support. Ayassot's outrage was such that he not only reported Pastor Ammenti to the moderator (E. Comba, who was very much of Ayassot's mind), but also denounced him to the Fascists. Joint services that had been held by the Methodist and Waldensian churches were discontinued.

Anselmo was, however, not alone in his views. He met frequently with Ernesto Bonaïuti, a Catholic priest who had been excommunicated, but continued to celebrate Mass at home each morning. He was quite an authority on philosophy and his lectures in the Methodist chapel attracted a big audience. Anselmo also maintained a close friendship with Giovanni Gervasoni, who was born in Venice in 1909 into a working-class Catholic family, converting to Protestantism in 1930 and admitted into Anselmo's church in Venice. Gervasoni was part of a group of antifascists who met regularly in the church premises and later in Anselmo's home. In 1935 Gervasoni was condemned to five years' imprisonment and sent to the island of Ventotene, from where he kept up regular correspondence with Anselmo. After his release from prison, Gervasoni took up arms (probably in the Anglo-American special forces) and died in the Dachau concentration camp in early 1945.

Anselmo's journeys to Switzerland to collect funds for the church continued. Apparently, however, he was not always allowed to cross the border, as on one occasion when he had been invited to take part in a conference in Geneva where a basis for a possible United Europe was to be discussed.

Surveillance by the authorities provides the backdrop for another family story. A young fascist who had been given the job of informing on Anselmo attended services in the chapel to spy on him. But he became besotted with the young organist - my mother Cecilia, then in her late teens. One day he followed her up the stairs leading to the family flat, declaring his love and threatening to kill himself by throwing himself down the stairwell if she would not accept him. Cecilia observed that from where he stood, halfway up, he might only break a leg, and told him that if he really wanted to die, he had better come to the top of the stairs and jump from there.

In 1939 the church synod decided to transfer Pastor Ammenti to the church in Rome, at Via Firenze 38; its minister was retiring and an energetic and understanding pastor was needed. There was also the looming probability of Italy's joining the war on the side of the Germans, which eventually happened in May



*The family in Venice, summer 1939,  
shortly before the move to Rome.  
Stefano, Anselmo, Fabiola  
Cecilia, Lidia, Rosa*

1940. In the meantime the church congregation had increased and was very active.

Police surveillance of Anselmo continued not only because he drew attention to the treatment of Jews, but also because he helped the Pentecostals. In 1935 the Italian Undersecretary of State, Guido Buffarini, had issued a decree banning Pentecostal worship, but Anselmo invited the Pentecostal congregation to hold services in his church on Via Firenze.

Anselmo also had charge of small groups of the faithful in districts outside Rome. When the rationing of food became a problem, some of these faithful would bring gifts of flour and oil to the minister. Rome was not bombarded by the Allies except for the railway and its district, where there were warehouses and factories. Some of the church members who lived in that area came to live in the social rooms at the church, where there was a kitchen and bathroom. They remained there until Rome was liberated by Allied troops. The following testimony came from the daughter of a family of church members, Luciana Raimondi.

“On 19 July 1943, the San Lorenzo district of Rome was bombed. We lived in an apartment block which, along with about half of the adjacent block, was all that remained standing in the neighbourhood. My father, whose office was normally 15 minutes’ walk away, took an hour and a half to get home, having to climb through piles of debris. We hurriedly packed a few possessions, despite having no idea of where to go. Pastor Ammenti arrived and told us to come immediately to his home on Via Firenze. For several nights my sister and I stayed in the Ammenti house, where a Jewish lady was already a guest. Five other families were given rooms in the buildings surrounding the church. There was also an unidentified young man whom we supposed to be connected with the partisans. Ugo Della Seta, a Jewish professor of philosophy wanted by the Germans, was given refuge.”

Valdo Benecchi quotes Luciana Raimondi’s story as an example of what he considers to be the defining characteristic of Anselmo’s pastoral ministry: his constant readiness to provide welcome, to open his heart and his doors to all, personal risk notwithstanding: hence his description of Anselmo as “*L’uomo dell’accoglienza*” - ‘the man of hospitality’.

When, in September 1943, the Italian government asked for an armistice, the German army moved to occupy Italy (the parts that had not been taken by the Allies) and descended south as far as Casino, close to where the Allies had landed. This caused a serious shortage of food, which had already been rationed for some time; clothes were also rationed. There was a flood of refugees from the

south, including many Polish, Austrian, French and German Jews who had been hiding there. A Rome-based organisation that helped these Jews contacted Pastor Ammenti for help. This resulted in members of the organisation forging identity papers in the Ammenti flat at night during the curfew! A supply of blank identity cards was provided by a church sympathiser who worked in the Rome registry office. It is believed that many Jews were able to avoid persecution or leave the country thanks to false documents fabricated under Anselmo's protection [Note 3]. One of the organisation's leaders, Stefano Schwann, went to Switzerland to get funds, but was arrested in Milan on his way back and tortured. His wife and daughter moved into the Ammenti home, taking the name of Martin and being passed off as Signora Ammenti's cousins.

About this time Anselmo went to the Abruzzi on the pretext of visiting dispersed communities; however he was carrying antifascist leaflets. The train on which he was returning was stopped by the Germans: passengers had to show their identity cards and were searched. When it was Anselmo's turn, he was recognised as a Protestant minister and waved through. His descendants still shudder at the thought of what might have happened had he been searched and his leaflets discovered.

A very tough period followed, in which local Jews and young people were deported to concentration camps in Germany. In reprisal for a partisan ambush in which 33 German soldiers died, 335 Italians were rounded up at random, taken outside Rome and shot [Note 4]. Late in May 1944, the Germans were compelled to abandon Monte Casino, a high point from which they could survey a large area around Naples, thus preventing the advance of the Allied armies which had landed in Salerno. They left because of another landing in Anzio, which caught the Germans between two fires. After a few weeks' fighting in the hills surrounding Rome, the Germans moved north, concentrating the fight in Tuscany. Rome was liberated at the beginning of June, and soon after the church on Via Firenze received from the USA great quantities of food, including powdered milk, dried eggs, sugar and tea, and clothing to be distributed to the members.

After the end of the war, Anselmo was transferred to Padua in 1947 for four years, and then to Terni with responsibility for small communities in the Abruzzi and Lazio. Since he was very keen that the congregation in Terni, which had been kept together by visiting lay preachers, should have a chapel, he worked very hard to make this possible. Soon a site was bought and building began. At first, Anselmo and his family lived in a rented flat, and when all was ready including social rooms on the ground floor and a flat above, he moved in. The congregation grew in size.

Unfortunately Anselmo's health began to decline as a result of high blood pressure and heart problems and eventually he had to retire. Local lay preachers were found to carry on the work, and the minister's family were able to go on living there, with my grandmother Rosa Ammenti running the Sunday school and the Tabita sewing circle. On 13 July 1961, after a brief illness, Anselmo Ammenti died, surrounded by members of his family. Moments before he stopped breathing he exclaimed, "*Che luce! Che luce!*" (what light!).



*Anselmo in later life, 1950s.*

## Notes

1 *Azione a favore degli ebrei da parte di pastori metodisti e valdesi in Italia dopo l'emanazione delle leggi razziali, 1938-1945.* Maria Bonafede.

Doctoral thesis, Waldensian theological faculty. 1984.

2 *Regime fascista e chiese evangeliche.* Giorgio Rochat. Claudiana, Turin. 1990.

See also *La chiesa Valdese di fronte allo Stato fascista.* Jean-Pierre Viallet. Claudiana, Turin. 1985.

3 After my mother's death, her elder sister, Lidia, cleared up the mystery of the origin of a small collection of 18th-century ceramic jugs that my mother had brought to England after the war: two Jewish ladies had wanted to reward Anselmo for his wartime work on behalf of their community and, having no money to give to the church, presented him with these fine antiques.

4 The Fosse Ardeatine massacre. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fosse\\_Ardeatine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fosse_Ardeatine)

## A FRIDAY IN THE FOREST – REVD. ALEX CLARE-YOUNG

Dear friends,

This year, Good Friday was a source of inspiration and reflection for me, as I'm sure it will have been for many of you too. I have always been struck by Jurgen Moltmann's reflection that 'The cross is not and cannot be loved. Yet only the crucified Christ can bring the freedom which changes the world because it is no longer afraid of death'. That freedom that bubbles up in the place of fear was apparent to me in both the Good Friday event that took place at Downing Place – where Jane and Ian curated a moving programme of music and words chosen by congregation members, and at the Solidarity Hub Friday Forest meet-up – where Helen, Sonya and I curated a time of story-telling and play for all ages. Both events were absolutely vital, and this article is not a comparison, but I will focus on the second event, as many of you will have experienced the first one first-hand.

Helen is a member of Solidarity Hub who facilitates Connected Lives in Cambridge, a parenting course. You may know that Downing Place Church is one of their locations. Sonya is also a member of Solidarity Hub. Both are parents. Helen, Sonya, and I, heard from those in our communities, in the week before Holy Week, that there was a real need for a Solidarity Hub event for those who would find any Good Friday event in a church tricky, either because of spiritual trauma – a recurring theme which you will hear me talk about a fair bit – or because of age (including young children), or because of mixed experiences of, and levels of experience with, church. In the end, we decided to prepare an event in the forest near Trumpington Meadows – an area near which several Solidarity Hub members live, socialise and work and where there is a need for communities of faith doing things in diverse ways.



We drew on 'Out of the Box'; a method of story-telling which draws on stories we know, but leaves a lot of space for people to bring their own stories to the gathering. We told the story of Easter in a way that was trauma-aware, and encouraged engagement both for those hearing the story from a Christian perspective and for those bringing other faith and non-faith perspectives to the gathering. Out of the Box story-telling also involves movement and symbolism,

which is powerful for many folks of all ages, and includes opportunities for questioning and for play. This method is not just for children – it works well with all ages, and often gives rise to very profound conversations. We also had food and drink, music, and play equipment including an exciting slack-rope, on hand. There were around 40 participants from the ages of 0 to around 60 and of a wide range of nationalities.

Here are some of the things that people said, both during the session and afterwards:

“I really felt a sense of community”

“It was about Jesus, but also about love, about connections, about me”

“You knew who it was about, I like how you didn’t have to say their name”

“I haven’t been in a church for such a long time, it helped me connect again with my spiritual self”  
and

“We would like more of this”



## POETRY AT DOWNING PLACE, No. 4 – JANE BOWER

*Editor: Following Ruth Conolly, Alison Binney and Ann Phillips, we come to our fourth Downing Place Poet. I knew that ‘poet’ was one of Jane’s many creative identities, and I was delighted that she accepted my invitation to share some of her poetry with Place Matters readers. I also asked Jane to tell us something about the circumstances under which she wrote these particular poems.*

*Jane writes:*

My passion is words, spoken, sung, heard, written or read. I have created poems since childhood, and my two reasons for doing so remain the same: either they seem to be born in my head, often overnight, and often in response to a major personal event; or someone has asked/commissioned/challenged me to write one – for an occasion, a magazine, or a competition. My most creative time is always when I wake at about 2.30am. This is when most of my lesson plans, dramas, poems, hymns and slogans have been composed. A pen and pad is always by my bedside.

Tim selected the poems here, and I realise that they are all about the end of life. My younger brother, a consummate musician, took his life aged 33 in the week of my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. *Brother* was written in the month he died. *The Wallflower* and *An Annual Task* were winners in *The Oldie* magazine, the titles specified and open to any interpretation. *The Wallflower* is purely from my imagination – the title immediately suggested a ‘wallflower’ as in a woman who feels excluded or shy, and her name also grew from the title. *An Annual Task* developed from clearing out my filing cabinet to something much deeper which I hadn’t intended when I started it.

I think a lot about the end of life, but equally about the other parts of it.

[www.janebower.com](http://www.janebower.com)

### ***Brother***

Blood of my blood  
Bone of my bone  
There were only two of our kind.  
Your bones’ planes lie under my skin.  
I’ll watch you age on my own face.  
I’ll make my clumsy music for you.  
What became of your skills?  
Your ashes are burnt fears  
Bringing some peace to my tears.

### ***The Wallflower***

Far in a village churchyard's corner tall  
with ferns, a modest stone reads 'Flora Wall,  
Born, lived and died here' and, inscribed below,  
The date of death, some forty years ago.  
I stoop, and brush the lichen from the stone,  
No spouse is there, no child; her name alone.  
And, ruffled by the breezes, bright and brave  
A single wallflower lies upon her grave.



### ***An Annual Task***

Each weighty metal drawer slides on its own slowness,  
Its heaviness hinting, like a cow unmilked.  
I tug and lug the bowed and bulging files,  
Leaf through the papers, fingerends smoothed numb.  
Fine papercuts slice cross-hatched, wincing stings.  
Piled paper weight stands sliding on the floor,  
Each file's load lightened, slipped slim in its slot.  
I set the firepit, coax from logs a flame.  
Feeding sheets in singly, piecemeal, then  
Push to the roar the hefty, half-curved sheaf -  
Another log, from trees that lived and grew -  
And watch a year of words, a year of life  
Crinkle away, important briefly, once,  
Melting to a grey wasps' nest of ash  
Soft-edged in fragile, fringed vermilion glow.  
As I, important briefly, once, will go.



*And finally, in response to the Editor's request that it be included:*

***On seeing the Corpus kinetic clock featuring a metallic beast devouring Time, and discussing it with the poet Ann Phillips, who challenged me to find a rhyme for axolotl***

The grim, axolotl-like,  
knife-jawed bluebottle-like  
creature is what'll hike  
on,  
while its journey orbital  
man's time will belittle  
and whittle  
till it'll  
be gone.

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*A PostScript from the Editor*

Four Downing Place poets so far, then. That prompts me to ask – are there any more? Surely ...

If any other *Place Matters* reader has **two or three poems** that they would be willing to share in a future issue of our magazine, **please let me know** – see the back cover for contact details. Thank you - Tim.

## PASTORAL NEWS

As I sign off as pastoral news correspondent after four years, it is good to be able to share news from an individual member: George Devine has received an invitation to be at Westminster Abbey for the Coronation of the King and Queen on 6 May.

Thanks have been received from the Eastern Synod Office for the contribution from Downing Place for £142,620 in 2022 in support of the Ministry and Mission Fund of the United Reformed Church.

*Margaret Thompson*

## DOWNING PLACE AND DAILY BREAD

The March Church Meeting agreed the suggestion from the Sustainability Group that we should adopt the Daily Bread cooperative as a local project whose ethos and work fitted well with that of Downing Place. Many members have shopped at Daily Bread over the years but others have not heard of it so it seemed useful to provide some introduction to it as well as some encouragement to visit and see what it has to offer. Briefly, it is a wholefood cooperative that operates on an ethical basis with a focus on fair trade and sustainability in, for example, minimising the amount of plastic both in packaging and products. Items such as shampoo can also be bought through refilling bottles.

There are two ways to visit, one physically and one via its website. The geographical address is Unit 3, Kilmaine Close, King's Hedges, Cambridge CB4 2PH. The website is <https://dailybreadcambridge.org/> and provides a good deal of information about its purpose, nature and products.

It is not the easiest place to visit without either a car or bike and there are some who used to visit but can no longer do so. Therefore one thing we would like to encourage is for folk to informally get together to make a shopping expedition, or simply to explore. There is a small coffee shop there so it can also be a bit of a social outing!



In the longer term we will explore how our link with Daily Bread can develop in other ways but we are aware that along with many other businesses at the moment they are suffering economically so we are also keen to do something to boost support for them.

*David Tatem*

## MONTHLY SPECIAL CAUSE FOR MAY



May sees the return of Christian Aid Week, and Christian Aid is our monthly cause for May.

With the support of many different Churches throughout the country, Christian Aid has been working with victims of war, natural disasters, poverty, climate change and oppression for over seventy years. Now as the effects of climate change add to the pressures on the world's most vulnerable communities Christian Aid's work is more important than ever.

Christian Aid doesn't believe in handouts. Its aim is always to work with local partners to help communities to help themselves, setting up programmes which empower people, especially women, to reap the harvest of their own hard work.

Every year Christian Aid chooses one or two examples to focus our minds on their work. (The speaker at our lunch last year, Sue Claydon, calls them "poster girls".) This year the focus is on Malawi and on two strong women, Jen and Esther.

Christian Aid has been working in Malawi for almost twenty years. Its programmes cover a range of areas including economic justice, gender inequality, community health, reconciliation and peace making. But climate change and resilience is at the forefront of its work in Malawi. It aims to strengthen the ability of communities to **adapt, transform and respond** to climate change.

Meanwhile, Malawi, like all of us, has been suffering from inflation especially since the war in Ukraine. Food, fuel, fertiliser and school fees have doubled in price in the last 12 months. And hard-working farmers are seeing their harvests fail as the climate crisis brings increasingly erratic weather.

The impact of the recent Cyclone Freddy in Malawi has been devastating. This is the longest-lasting tropical cyclone on record (lasting 34 days), the equivalent of a full North Atlantic hurricane season. Malawi experienced a year's worth of rain during the 4-week cyclone. Floods have washed away crops, over 500,000 people have been displaced and hundreds have lost their lives. There's also an increased risk of malaria and cholera in the immediate aftermath.

Christian Aid is at its most powerful when a disaster happens. It will be there long after the flood waters recede, helping families build back. Our gifts this May will support this work.



## Pigeon Peas

This Christian Aid Week Appeal introduces us to pigeon peas, otherwise known as yellow split peas, a hardy crop which can resist drought and floods and is highly nutritious.

**Jen and her husband** have two acres of pigeon peas, but they are struggling with the effects of the climate crisis. The rainfall is unreliable, and there are more storms, flooding and stronger winds.

Jen's two oldest sons have both gained places at college, but the fees and the price of uniforms are rising along with everything else, and she can only afford to send one of her sons to college unless she can increase her income. A terrible choice to have to make.

*My heart longs to see our children finish school,' says Jen. 'These dreams are very important to me, because by doing so, I'll be sure that I am creating a good future for the children.'*



The pigeon pea is a tough plant, able to withstand a lot – just like Jen. But to make the most of her crop, Jen needs to plant good quality seeds and sell for the best price possible, and not to unscrupulous middlemen.

Your gift could help farmers like Jen plant better seeds, secure a fairer price for their crops, and build happier futures for their children.

## Update on Jen after the cyclone

Jen and her family are safe but had to abandon their home due to flooding. Some of her crops were destroyed. Jen reports that she has lost the equivalent of '2 bags' of yield, worth at least £79. These are vital funds that she'd planned to use to pay for the secondary school fees of one of her children.

**Esther Saizi** is another woman who uses the income from pigeon peas to support her family. She aims to buy tools for her daughter Ziwoone's carpentry business, pay the fees for her daughter Rashida to graduate as a nurse and send her two little grandsons to nursery.

For 10 years, Esther grew pigeon peas on her farm, but she could never secure a fair price for her crop. In 2021 Cyclone Ana washed away her crops, leaving her feeling desperate. But when Esther joined a pigeon pea programme run by Christian Aid's local partner, Nandolo Farmers Association, and started selling as part of a cooperative, she was able to earn much more.

*I was able to sell the pigeon peas at a better price with a better market,' she explains. 'It provided financial stability.'*

Through the cooperative and its equipment, Esther can bake pigeon pea flour bread and boost her income - and also make fish food, using a special machine provided by Christian Aid. With the money she's making, Esther has been able to feed her family and support her two daughters, and also acquire a herd of 13 goats, who provide manure for her crops, saving on expensive fertilizer, store her pigeon peas in a warehouse, safe from floods and storms, and buy a sewing machine.

Your gifts this May will continue to support the pigeon pea project and other vital work around the world.

## How to give.

There will be envelopes in Church for your donations throughout May, and a retiring collection on Sunday 21st May. We hope to have a terminal for online donations available for the retiring collection, so you don't need to worry if you don't carry cash.

There is an e-envelope for Downing Place at

<https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/downing-place-envelope>

Your donation will automatically be credited to Downing Place URC. Or you can donate via this QR code:



## Cambridge Christian Aid Service

The **Cambridge Christian Aid** service for 2023 will be held at **Castle St. Methodist Church** on **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May** at **6.30**. The preacher will be the **Bishop of Huntingdon, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Dagmar Winter**. Please do come.



## Lunchtime Concert in aid of Christian Aid

We are grateful to Jane Bower and Alex Clare Young for putting on a **lunchtime concert** to raise funds for Christian Aid on **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May** – it is entitled “Small Things” as a nod to those pigeon peas! Please do support it - as well as Jane’s “Words”, always entertaining, it is another opportunity to hear our Pioneer Minister play the clarsach, not often heard south of the Border. See the poster below and please put the date in your diary. Refreshments will be available afterwards in the Hub.

For any information about other Christian Aid events, or about Christian Aid, please contact Sheila Porrer.





Free entry,  
all welcome.  
Refreshments  
available  
afterwards.

## Small Things

A concert of words & music for **Christian Aid Week**

Monday 15th May, 1-2pm

Downing Place United Reformed Church

Jane Bower - spoken word  
Alex Clare-Young - clarsach (Gaelic harp)

*Retiring collection for Christian Aid.*



## MARCH SPECIAL CAUSE

Last month we were able to send £1,511.46 to the Kite Trust, including £350 from our York Street fund and over £900 raised during our Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts.

We received this message in return:

Wow Ann! Thank you so much for your wonderful donation from everyone at Downing Place! It means so much to us!

Your generosity means that we can continue to do our important work, supporting LGBTQ+ young people across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.

If you would like to stay up to date with what The Kite Trust is doing, please visit our website ([www.thekitetrust.org.uk](http://www.thekitetrust.org.uk)) and sign up to the mailing list or follow us on social media.

On behalf of all of us at The Kite Trust, thank you again and best wishes,

*Pip Gardner  
Chief Executive*

## AQUAID LIFELINE

**Last month we also donated £500 of our York Street fund to Aquaid Lifeline to support victims of the flooding in Malawi and received this message:**

### **To the congregation of Downing Place URC**

On behalf of each and every one of the 2,109 beautiful children who are under our umbrella of love and care in Malawi.....thank you for your kind and generous £500 donation on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023. I will be travelling out to Malawi again at the end of May when I know I will be shocked at the devastation following Cyclone Freddy which killed more than 600, and left thousands and thousands homeless. Your amazing donation will help families rebuild their lives by providing cement and roofing materials to enable them to construct a simple house. Cement is a luxury that the local people could only dream of so you will literally change their lives by enabling them to build a stronger house that will stand up to the challenging weather conditions.

With grateful thanks

*Josie Charter  
Fund Co-ordinator*

*See back cover for an image of children supported by Aquaid Lifeline's work in Malawi*

## Solidarity Crafts



Cambridge Solidarity Hub is hosting two new 'craft and chat' spaces in the city centre.

Join in with arts and crafts activities on the themes of wellbeing, inclusion & sustainability including stone painting, embroidery, poster-making, multi-sensory eco crafts and more.

Or bring along your own project to work on in good company.

Or grab a cuppa and have a good chat.

In 'The Hub' at Downing Place Church, CB2 3EL every Thursday, starting on the 18th of May, 10am-12noon.

And at the CB1 Community Room, Huxley House, 8 Mills Park, CB1 2FL, starting on the 19th of May every Friday 5-7pm.

For more info, contact [alex@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:alex@downingplaceurc.org)

**welcoming. inclusive. aware.**



The Church of Scotland

# STAMP APPEAL 2023-2024

**Firmly Planted  
- collect your  
stamps to support  
Malawi project.**



Help the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) improve nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, create youth employment and mitigate the impact of the climate crisis.

The CCAP project, Firmly Planted aims to establish self-sustaining tree nurseries to nurture and protect the environment and protect livelihoods for households and communities.

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE:

Post your stamps to Stamp Appeal 2022, PO Box 9191, Wishaw, Lanarkshire, ML2 0YB  
For other options and more information visit: [www.churchofscotland.org.uk/stamps](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/stamps)

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353

[www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/churchofscotland](https://www.facebook.com/churchofscotland)

[@churchscotland](https://twitter.com/churchscotland)

## JOHN BELL

Lecture and Singing Workshop

**Saturday 20 May**  
**10.00am to 4.30pm**

Ely Cathedral, Ely, CB74DL

**Cost: £10.00**

(No fee for accompanied under 18s)



Ely Cathedral welcomes John Bell to give a lecture and lead a music workshop.

His lecture, 'Imagination as a key to unlocking Scripture,' questions the 'right answers' mentality to the interpretation of puzzling passages and encourages instead the use of one's own experience, insight and imagination to explore their meaning and application.

His workshop will draw on his wide experience of empowering congregational singing to enrich worship. It will be interactive and fun. All are welcome and no previous singing experience is necessary.

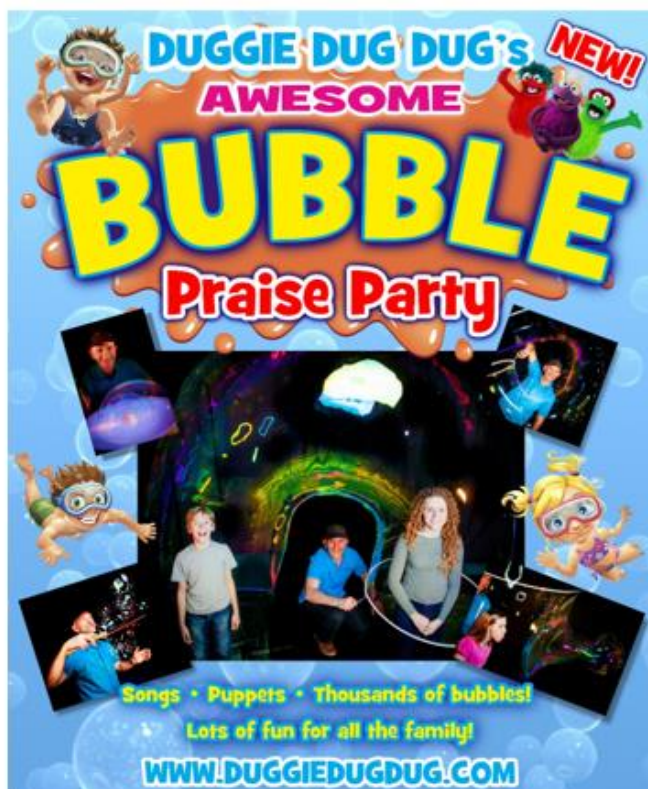
Bring your own lunch or visit one of the many eating places in Ely during the lunch break. Advance booking essential for all attendees. Visit [www.elycathedral.org](http://www.elycathedral.org) and search under events to book.

John Bell will also preach at the 10.30am Cathedral Service on Sunday 21 May.

Book online or, if unable, contact  
Canon James Reveley on 01353 660302.



**United Reformed Church Eastern Synod**  
**Invites you to**



**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June**  
**at 3.30pm**  
**Christ Church, Braintree**  
**7 London Rd, Braintree CM7 2LD**  
**Family Ticket £10**  
**(2 Adults + Children)**  
**or Children £2.50**

For Further Information Please contact Nicola Grieves 07515721172

To book email [admin@urceastern.org.uk](mailto:admin@urceastern.org.uk)

## DIARY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Tue	02 May	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	03 May	Lunchtime Concert - Roland Robertson (organ)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	04 May	Midweek Worship led by Penny Flynn	11:00am	Church
Thu	04 May	Knit One Give One	1.30pm	The Hub
Sat	06 May	Coronation Day		
Sat	06 May	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	07 May	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	07 May	Sunday Service with Communion with the Ordination and Induction of Elders, led by Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	07 May	Open Table Social Gathering	7:00pm	The Hub
Tue	09 May	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	10 May	Lunchtime Concert - Charlotte Leeder (soprano), Persephone Bell (alto) & Marion Caldwell (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	11 May	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion	11:00am	Church
Thu	11 May	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	11 May	Elders Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Sat	13 May	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	14 May	Christian Aid Week Begins		

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	14 May	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	14 May	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Dr Janet Tollington	11:00am	Church
Mon	15 May	DEADLINE for signing up for Gibson Lunch on Thursday 18th		
Mon	15 May	'Small Things' A Concert of Words and Music for Christian Aid Week (see p.??)	1:00pm	Church
Tue	16 May	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	17 May	DEADLINE for submitting items for June <i>Place Matters</i>		
Wed	17 May	Lunchtime Concert - Adrian Oldland (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	18 May	Solidarity Hub - Craft and Chat	10:00am	The Hub
Thu	18 May	Ascension Day Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Emmanuel Room
Thu	18 May	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	18 May	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	20 May	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	21 May	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	21 May	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	21 May	Church Meeting - Annual Accounts and Reports	12:30pm	Church
Sun	21 May	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Church
Tue	23 May	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Wed	24 May	Lunchtime Concert - Nico Buri (classical guitar)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	25 May	Solidarity Hub - Craft and Chat	10:00am	The Hub
Thu	25 May	Midweek Worship with Communion led by the Revd Dr Janet Tollington	1:00pm	Church
Thu	25 May	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	27 May	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	28 May	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	28 May	Pentecost Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	28 May	Solidarity Scripture Meal (Magnifying Minds)	7:00pm	Gibson Hall,
Tue	30 May	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	31 May	Lunchtime Concert - Mifune Tsuji (violin) & Paul Jackson (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	01 June	Solidarity Hub - Craft and Chat	10:00am	The Hub
Thu	01 June	Midweek Worship led by Dr Alan Rickard	11:00am	Church
Thu	01 June	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	03 June	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	04 June	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	04 June	Trinity Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden and Revd Dr John Bradbury	11:00am	Church
Sun	04 June	Open Table Social Gathering	7:00pm	The Hub

## MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

7 May	Liz Caswell Penny Flynn Janet Tollington	Bar Hill Buntingford Melbourn
14 May	Chris Baker Alex Clare-Young Nigel Uden	Melbourn Sidney Sussex College (6pm) Fulbourn
21 May	Chris Baker Janet Bottoms Liz Caswell Penny Flynn John Proctor Janet Tollington	Haddenham Methodist Fowlmere Stetchworth & Cheveley Bassingbourn Melbourn Bar Hill
28 May	Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Buntingford Fulbourn (pm)

### LUNCHTIME CONCERTS - WEDNESDAYS AT 1PM

Free Lunchtime Concerts with a retiring collection for our monthly Special Cause. Booking is not necessary. Refreshments available before and after the concert. Come and bring friends!

3 May	Roland Robertson (organ))
10 May	Charlotte Leeder (soprano), Persephone Bell (alto) Marion Caldwell (piano)
17 May	Adrian Oldland (piano)
24 May	Nico Buri (classical guitar)
31 May	Mifune Tsuji (violin) & Paul Jackson (piano)

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

## LECTIONARY FOR MAY 2023

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

*7 May Easter 5*

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

*14 May Easter 6*

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

*21 May Easter 7*

Acts 1:6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

*28 May Pentecost*

Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21

John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

*4 June Trinity Sunday*

Genesis 1:1-2, 4a or Isaiah 40:12-17, 27-31

Psalm 8

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Matthew 28:16-20





*Children in Malawi, supported by Aquaid Lifeline, smile for the camera.  
Image from Aquaid Lifeline.*

MAGAZINE EDITOR:

Tim Rowland  
tr202@cam.ac.uk  
01223 367884

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

WEB EDITOR:

Jess Uden

Please send all items to be included in the June edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of **Wednesday 17 May**.

The June edition will be available from **Sunday 28 May**.