

DOWNING PLACE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH CAMBRIDGE

PLACE MATTERS



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Cover photograph - Dedication Weekend, November 2021 Celebrating our final coming together in our newly refurbished building. Image by Mike Thornton, https://www.stillvision.co.uk/

FROM THE MINISTER

Few of us can quite believe that on 31st May Downing Place Church will be five years old! To mark the occasion, it is very good to be able to welcome back John Bradbury. Now General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, he was crucial to so much that led to the union and to helping us envision what we might be as a church in the centre of twenty-first century Cambridge.

Despite the widespread approbation for the work we did to the building, it is rather understated compared with the Frauenkirche in Dresden, which I visited on my recent sabbatical journey to Germany. It is well known that the eighteenth-century building was devastated in the Allied bombing of February 1945. The image of the twisted organ pipes (right) bears witness to that damage.



The organ today

Fifty years later, it was wondrously restored to its Baroque glory, and rewards visitors with a truly impressive wow factor. Today, the organ is typical of the grandeur that typifies the entire church, which draws thousands of worshippers and tourists.



Robert Greenberg, an expert in music from the high Baroque of the seventeenth century, sums up

art of that period as a fine balance between 'extravagance and control'. One can see that in the sanctuary of the Frauenkirche, and hear it in the music of J. S. Bach. In both, there is an exuberance that sparkles alongside a skill and order that ensure stability and inspire confidence.

I am writing this on Ascension Day, and the profound imagery of Jesus Christ returning to glory at the right hand

of God is similarly both extravagant and controlled. Ascension is an *extravagant* image in that it is rather awe-inspiring to conceive of the one who having been born in a cave was then enthroned in such majesty that even the bling of high baroque could not express it. And Ascension is *controlled*, in that it is an idea which seeks to describe how Jesus Christ is restored in good order to the rightful position for one who is 'the image of the invisible God'. (Colossians 1.15)

Similarly, we might use the idea of 'extravagance and control' to express what God was doing in in other aspects of Jesus' life and work, such as the birth and

the dying and the rising. These are enormous concepts that, in modern parlance, 'blow the mind'. By God's lavishing of divine love upon creation through the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection we might find at play an 'emotional extravagance' (Greenberg's actual phrase). After all, they are immodest concepts, that have frequently been articulated with exaggerated language and paintings. But alongside the extravagance we might find them to be intimations of God's measured control, seeking to rescue and reconcile all things.

I can't help but wonder that this mix of extravagance and control might explain my personal love for Baroque music, but I think it also inspires me for the life and work of Downing Place Church. The fifth anniversary is not much to celebrate. Not much, that is, unless it is a sincere rededication of ourselves to the original vision that brought us together: that we could better be the Reformed witness in the centre of Cambridge if we were united than if we persisted in our separate witness, with all the duplication and burden that meant.

I believe that a fruitful and effective fulfilment of that vision will require of us a Baroque-like mix of extravagance and control. On the one hand, we need to practise extravagant risk-taking, which provides enriching worship inside the building and difference-making encounters with God's radical love outside in the world. On the other, we must exercise controlled stewardship of the resources with which we are blessed. As our erstwhile Treasurer implied at the recent AGM, that controlled stewardship is obviously about prudence, but not about preserving every penny we can. Rather, it is about spending it adventurously, so that God's mission is imaginatively served, and the Bank is not so full that the Charity Commission is unhappy. Control is also required if we have daring plans for how to live under God's reign of generosity and justice, mercy and peace. Our mission activity may need to be unreserved in its compassion, but it must not be naive or incompetent. In short, extravagance without control will be illdisciplined and short-lived. By the same token, control without extravagance will be mean-spirited, and an entirely inadequate witness to the super-abundance of life-giving things that God offers and asks through the person and work of Jesus.

As I am delighted to join you in welcoming back John on 4th June, so I am more than proud to have been caught up with you in these first five years of our renewed mission and ministry. I am all the more so because of my confidence in your determination, by the extravagant and not always very controlled power of Pentecost, to see it flourish, for the blessing of the community, the satisfaction of the church, and the glory of God.

Nigel Uden

ANDY MCKENZIE - A PROFILE

I have lived in Cambridge all my life, and my brothers Lewis and Peter and our parents Ruth and (Francis) Alan, were all born in Cambridge. My brothers and I went to school at Morley Memorial primary and Netherhall secondary, and we all attended Emmanuel URC in Trumpington Street.

My Dad had the longest connection to Emmanuel as he was first taken in 1921 by his father (Alan Lewis) who owned a leather goods and saddlery shop on Regent Street. My Mum had extensive family in Cambridge and her parents ran a drapers shop on Mill Road, on the corner of the street where I now live.

Our family life was always busy, as Dad ran a Scout troop and was a lay preacher; my Mum loved music and helping people,



The McKenzie family in 2019

including the Guides and church groups. We boys were encouraged to become cubs and scouts, but also to enjoy our hobbies: aged 8, I especially enjoyed going to Saturday art classes led by Kay Meltzi, at Homerton College.

Scouting was a big part of our lives: as a young boy Dad had attended a troop which met in the Emmanuel tower, and one of his best friends introduced his cousin Ruth at a family party. The troop had various homes, including Castle End Mission, and eventually we all helped build new headquarters at Newnham Croft school.

The Emmanuel Sunday school was also very important, and as my brothers and I got older we joined YPSEG (Young Peoples Sunday Evening Group) which was started by Anthea and Tony Coates for the young people of Emmanuel and St Columba's.

After school I joined Eaden Lilley as a management trainee - at the time it was one of three department stores in Cambridge. The Lilley family were part of Emmanuel, often hosting church garden parties at their house in West Road. I worked and studied in Cambridge and London for qualifications in the Distributive trades, but also continued to enjoy attending YPSEG and Tony Coates' ministry, becoming a member of the church at 18.



YPSEG in Germany, 1991

Anthea and Tony were very influential in my commitment to church life, and Anthea also finally persuaded me to become totally vegetarian when I visited them later, in Geneva.



YPSEG trip 2004

YPSEG was important for me, first as a young person myself, and later as a leader, helping others to have a greater understanding of the community and fellowship of the Church. I was also part of FURY (Fellowship of United Reformed Youth), helping with local and national events. I was always supported by many others in the church such as Pippa Jones, David Flynn, Eileen Groth

and Derek Wales, and all YPSEG parents - thank you all, your support was much appreciated! Our annual YPSEG holidays were special occasions, memorable experiences that enhanced our life together. Our first European exchange trip to the Stiftskirche in Landau created many friendships, as did others in Antwerp and all over the UK. In 2019, before we left the Emmanuel building, a group of former YPSEG members - Julia (Wright), Simon (Rowland) and Annette (Cooper) - organised a reunion to celebrate with Anthea and Tony what YPSEG meant to them. Many came from all over the UK, and Eileen from the USA. As we socialised, we shared our memories and experiences together in recognition of what YPSEG had done for each one of us.



YPSEG Reunion 2019

Life changed for me in 1993 when I took voluntary redundancy, and with it the opportunity to travel - a quick journey around the world, visiting relatives in Australia and old Emmanuel friends in the USA and Canada, before resuming my studies as a mature student and rethinking what I would like to do. A year taking Art 'A' level and a GCSE in Computer studies at Cambridge Regional College allowed me to apply for the Art Foundation course.

Art and Design have always been an important aspect of my life, and whilst working I enjoyed many types of creative evening classes. My two years at CRC helped me to focus on the importance of lifelong learning and, with the advice of teachers, I applied to university. I considered a range of options before taking up a place to study Two-Dimensional Design (Graphics, textiles, and illustration) at the University of Hertfordshire.

The course was exactly the right thing for me to do, and it transformed my life.

Whilst at college and University I worked part-time at Emmanuel for a while as administrator, and at Campkins Camera shop using my retail and display skills. I used St. Barnabas Open Access Print Studio to create and exhibit my Printmaking artwork.

In 2000 I returned to work at Cambridge Regional College to help run the

Printmaking workshop, and I started to teach printmaking, which I continue to do. My focus now is as a tutor and teacher of Art, Design, Printmaking and Textiles for the Art Foundation, Level 3 students, and an adult leisure class - a challenging occupation, especially with lockdown and the reliance on digital evidencing for creative practical work.

I continue to create and exhibit my artwork through local, national, and international galleries and shows, and I am a member of the Cambridge Drawing Society. Lifelong learning continues to inspire me. In 2007 I received my MA in Fine Art Printmaking from the Cambridge School of Art at Anglia Ruskin University.

My family has now spread out around the UK. Lewis and Sue are based in Potton, Peter and Alison in Macclesfield and their children and grandchildren, my nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews, are in Letchworth, Manchester, and Bedford. Many of my friends and YPSEG members have also relocated and wherever they are I send my very best wishes.

My parents, who lived in Rathmore Road all their lives, cherished their spiritual life at Emmanuel URC. As I continue my own faith journey at Downing Place URC, I hope to develop my own family history, to balance my working life and to try to help others, especially young people, to find fellowship and community in their own life journey.

MIDSUMMER LECTIO DIVINA

William and Deborah hope to offer a further 4 week series of Lectio Divina.

This will start on Friday 16th June and run on Fridays until the 7th July, timing as before from 8.30 to 9.30am.

Do be in touch with Deborah McVey if you would like to know more or to be put in touch with someone who will commend the experience.

MEMORIES OF HILARY CAMPBELL (5 MAY 1928 -8 MAY 2023)

It was with great sadness that former members and friends of Cherry Hinton United Reformed Church learnt that Hilary Campbell passed away on May 8th. She had just reached the age of ninety five. She was a highly respected member, Elder and Church Secretary of Cherry Hinton Road URC and contributed to the life of the church in so many ways. She taught my children in the Junior Church and was active in the luncheon club. Margaret King remembers cooking regularly with her for people in the community. Barbara Boud remembers that she was also very involved with Christian Aid and Traidcraft. As Church Secretary she oversaw the



amalgamation of Cherry Hinton Road URC with Emmanuel URC with Lance Stone so the transition was as smooth as possible.

According to Hilary's memoirs, she was born in a little town called Isle-Adam on the river Oise about twenty miles north of Paris. She and her mother moved to London in 1933 after her father died and they settled in Hampstead Garden Suburb. After two years at the local elementary school, Hilary was sent to the Junior department of Henrietta Barnet School for girls. She was due to move to the senior school, but at the outbreak of war in September 1939, she and her family moved to Bournemouth to stay with relatives. . In October 1940, the family moved to Thornhill, a village about fifteen miles north of Dumfries in south-west Scotland. After a few months in Thornhill village school, she went to Dumfries Academy and was educated there until she went to Edinburgh University in October 1945, obtaining a first class degree in geography. She met her husband John when he came to stay with her family in Thornhill. His parents were friends of her parents. At the time John was a student at Glasgow University and Hilary was still at school. John then joined the navy and they began to write regularly to each other. After Hilary finished university they married and had four children. They started married life in Glasgow but moved south in 1951 when John got a job in London and they settled in Caterham in Surrey. They were active in the Congregational church in Caterham under the leadership of Rev. Stuart Jackman and then Rev. Derek Richmond. In 1967 they moved to Cambridge to a house in Hills Road because John's job with BP moved from London to Harlow. Hilary initially obtained a job in a further education college before becoming a part time lecturer in geography at Homerton College. Hilary was not only bringing up for four children, but she

also looked after John's parents.

John and Hilary became committed members and Elders of Cherry Hinton Road Cambridge. At the time Cherry Hinton Road URC was a thriving church with a large Sunday school. Friends remember their passion for Scottish country dancing as they would often give demonstrations in the church of their dancing. Jan Tucker's first memory of them was their Scottish dancing on a lawn. After John died at the early age of sixty, Hilary downsized by moving to a much smaller modern house in Hartington Grove and she became Church Secretary. She was always extremely approachable, friendly and eager to help. She kept an open house in Hartington Grove and because it was so near to the church it was handy for her to help with the luncheon club and the Tuesday Fellowship.

Hilary's daughter Kate writes that apart from being an Elder, Treasurer, and Secretary, she ran small Bible study groups, helped with PHAB, luncheon club and Friendship Circle, and was an authorised person to witness weddings. She could be seen with John at 9pm after the PHAB group had finished, laying out the hall for the playgroup. She also helped with social events, shows and Sunday school, and with leading services.

Hilary was very good at adapting to circumstances and knew when it was the right time in her life to move. She moved to Reading to be near to her daughter Alison when she was eighty, keeping in touch with Cherry Hinton Road friends and never missed sending Christmas cards. She also enjoyed hearing news of Cherry Hinton Road and then Emmanuel URC and latterly Downing Place URC, through reading Place Matters. She was sorely missed by friends and former members of Cherry Hinton Road after she moved.

Alison writes that Hilary settled well into Park URC in Reading and made many new friends. One of her last outings, after she became too frail to attend regularly, was to go to their centenary anniversary tea party last month. She is fondly remembered by the congregation there who valued the contribution she made to the life of the church. She also became secretary of the Residents Association in the place where she lived in Reading for the first few years after she went there.

Hilary died in the early hours of May 8th. Her daughter Kate was by her side at her final moments and all the family had seen her on her ninety fifth birthday. Her health had been failing over the past few months and she is now at peace. I am so grateful to Hilary's family for all the help they have given me in filling in the gaps of Hilary's life. All of us from Cherry Hinton Road URC are so grateful for all that Hilary achieved for us as there is no doubt that she kept the church going for many years.

Penny Milsom

SO GLAD I WENT

It was Palm Sunday. I'd had a busy day and a busy week. I was tired, it was nearing six o'clock and I had said I would go to the Open Table social meeting at 7pm. I wondered about ringing to see if it was OK to give it a miss.

The wondering was brief. I dismissed it because every other time I have attended Open Table, be it a social or a service, I have returned thoughtful and enriched. I set off for Downing Place.

I had no idea what had been arranged, and discovered that it was a session by Dr. Helen Bell, who I had encountered several times in our church building, and who works for Connected Lives, an organisation dedicated to helping relationships thrive. Helen is one of a team offering a huge range of courses, groups, training and development in parenting, family relationships, support and learning through play. www.connectedlives.org.uk

Helen is the Cambridgeshire Hub Director, and says her favourite words are 'being-with'; how can we be alongside one another in a relationship? She cleared a table space and began to quietly unpack a variety of intriguing bags and unusual boxes, all made of natural, tactile materials. Gradually the people who were arriving for the session finished the moist, sticky vegan chocolate cake pieces Helen had supplied, and gravitated towards the table. There was an air of anticipation and respect. We had been told that Helen was a storyteller, but noone knew what was going to happen.

She began by passing round a box of small, thick felt hearts. We each took one and were invited to share something that had 'made our heart sing' that day. A small collection of delights, simple and beautiful, revealed a little of our day to each person, many of whom were strangers to me and to others.

Helen placed a large cloth bag in the centre of the table. It was full of something, but I couldn't tell what. She opened the drawstring and drew the whole bag out into a flat circle. There were small sounds of pleasure as we saw that it contained fine sand. She spread it out until it reached the upturned edges of the cloth.

With measured, calm movements and minimal speech, she took from a bag some small wooden figures and placed them in a group, standing in the sand. They looked as if they belonged together.

She then placed a solitary figure a little way off. We all stared intently, and the atmosphere was very still. Then I realised. It was we, not Helen, who were going to create the story.

Helen gave only small prompts to get us started. How did we think the solitary

person was feeling? Was there anything we might add to the sand tableau that might improve it for them?

It quickly became apparent that there were as many stories as there were participants. Some said of the figure that they were lonely, feeling rejected. Others said they were glad to get away for some peace, and that the group didn't look that interesting. People began to suggest that we needed trees, a river, benches, a coffee kiosk. (Picture 1)

Whatever we suggested, it seemed Helen had it in a bag or box. Delightful small models and symbols emerged and were placed. We began to interact, laugh, move things around. When the sand had become quite full, Helen asked us each to take a new figure and place ourselves where we would wish to be. Interestingly, most gravitated to be somewhere alone. I crossed the river and sat under a tree. Jokingly, I said what I'd really like would be to cook a fish on a barbeque by the water. Amazingly, Helen produced a teeny tin bucket and minute wooden fish (Picture 2).

After a thoroughly engaging time, Helen drew us back to being quiet and passed round a box of halved dates. We each took one and ate it quietly, reflecting on what we had gained from the session. We remarked on the sense of peace, trust and serenity that prevailed. Several of us had found the simplicity of the session moving.

I walked in the dark back to my car, thoughtful and enriched. I kept thinking how I had almost phoned to pull out. Thank you, Helen. So glad I went.

Jane Bower



Picture 1



Picture 2

[Editor: Place Matters readers might recall Alex Clare-Young's account of an 'Out the Box' event with Helen on Good Friday, in the forest near Trumpington Meadows — see the May 2023 issue.]

PIONEER MINISTRY UPDATE

The last month has been a busy one for the Solidarity Hub, with work out and about, the start of our work with Cambridge Land Justice, as well as the launch of two new projects, Solidarity Craft and Solidarity Doubling. In May I had the privilege of preaching on creating 'Arks of Solidarity' at Sidney Sussex College and, in June, I will be preaching on 'Work and Justice' at St Cat's. I have also had the joy of speaking with the Student Christian Movement on 'The Character of God'.

Solidarity Crafts is an exciting opportunity for us to meet people across varying spaces, with a meeting on Thursdays from 10am-12noon in the Hub at Downing Place, and a second meeting on Fridays from 5-7pm at the CB1 Community Room. There are lots of opportunities for people to get involved with crafts that show social and ecological solidarity including stone painting, mini messages – written and sewn – post-card colouring, and blackout poetry. There is also the opportunity to join in with our larger projects which, at the moment, are the LGBTQ+ Solidarity Quilt and a massive piece of artwork which we are creating to display on the fencing at Strawberry Fair.

Solidarity Doubling is a Microsoft Teams based digital space for people who struggle to complete their admin tasks alone. By creating a space together, and checking in every hour, we encourage each other in our daily tasks, forming a community who work together, instead of alone. It is particularly valued by people who are autistic or experience AD(H)D. We are trying out doubling on a Thursday afternoon at the moment. If you would like to join us, ask me for the details!

There are two other opportunities to join in with the work of Solidarity Hub this month. On Sunday the 11th of June at 2pm, Simon from Christian CND will be visiting us to talk about their work. We would really value a good number of folks from Downing Place attending, as Simon is travelling especially to be with us for that event. I will be having a packed lunch at Downing Place between the service and the event, and you are very welcome to join me! On the 25th of June at 7pm, Solidarity Scripture will be on the twin themes of 'Pride' and 'Shame'.

I am also looking forward to our presence out and about at Strawberry Fair and Cambridge Pride. I will be stewarding and available for pastoral care at Strawberry Fair. If you see me, please do say hi! If you would like to help out on our stall at Cambridge Pride on the 17th of June please do let me know. We will also have a slot on the Community Stage at 4pm. It would be great to see some familiar faces in the tent!

With peace and thanks, as ever, for all of your support, Alex

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

On 30 April we welcomed Ailsa back to play the keyboard for us and enjoyed revisiting songs learned in previous sessions. Our Bible reading from John's gospel focused on Jesus as the shepherd and 'gate' to the sheepfold. We identified ourselves as being the sheep in the story and played a game to see if we could identify each other's voices without being able to see them, as the sheep in the story had learned to recognise the voice of Jesus. Our craft activity was making woolly sheep and a gated sheepfold to remind ourselves that Jesus loves us, cares for us and keeps us safe if we listen for his voice and follow him.



On 7th May, we were considering Jesus's words, "I am the way, the truth and the life'. We started with a quiz to identify other 'I am' gospel quotes from visual cues. We found a lively video song to sing and dance along to, then the children made collages showing links to the relevant words and some enjoyed figuring out a maze to help children find their way to Jesus.



The second Sunday of May, we talked about how Jesus promised us the 'Spirit of Truth'. We started the session with a true/false questions game, which was great fun. Some questions were simple, others quite tricky. We then sang our Junior Church song with the chorus 'God is here (heart), here (head), here (this room)' and asked ourselves the question how God can be 'here'. We learned that it's the Holy Spirit who wants to be with us and wants to help us to do the right thing in our lives. Sometimes it is easy to do the right thing, but other times it can be quite tricky. We finished the session with a craft activity, making a wheel with the fruits of the Spirit.

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

STARSHINE WALK

Thank you so much to members who supported us in our sponsored walk as part of the Starshine Nightwalk for the Arthur Rank Hospice Charity. We had a great time walking and chatting, and were glad to be accompanied for the first few miles by Solidarity Hub member Hannah, her husband Iain and her dog Margot!

We have raised a total of £400 for Arthur Rank. We are incredibly grateful for your generosity.

Alex and Hazel



Image L-R: Alex, Iain, Hannah, Hazel

PASSENGER

A poem by Kate Green

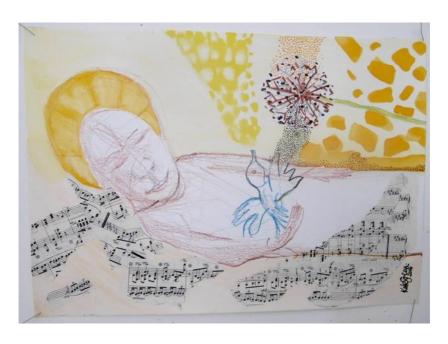
My car is full of prayers. Poked in to the glove compartment, Underneath the seats on scraps of Discarded wrapper, or scribbled on to Old receipts or over-laid on to Old envelopes, and then thrown In to the back -(if sounds of words Didn't quite live up to hollow space And grubby upholstery within.) If I stitched the scraps in to a quilt Of prayerful paper, As an offering of sorts, I could wrap the car twice over And cocoon myself. I've got prayers poked in to every gap, My insulation from Decaying now.

I am waiting in the car today, Composing in the Doctor's car park And watching Sparrows build their nests. All too aware of paper levels rising Round my feet. And then He comes and seats himself Right next to me, He rummages around my feet and hands me back A clutch of prayers -And smiles so lovingly and with such eternal warmth That I am all overcome with grief and joy, at once. He says "I've answered all your prayers." I watch Him as he starts to stitch and Carefully overlap each paper prayer And I see links appear Between unrelated dreams. "I love you with an unrelenting love" He says, "Your scraps and pain and complicated charm Just make me love you more."

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"Keep writing as you wait" he says, "I hear it all" And then my passenger is gone
(But only to the naked eye)
And my paper quilt of prayers, sits folded, on His seat
And I have empty floor and space to fill
With urgent words
Like Sparrows' twigs, combining in to
A nest of dreams.

Kate Green. 2021



SPECIAL CAUSE: CAMBRIDGE ETHNIC COMMUNITY FORUM

Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (cecf.co.uk)

In our 2023 General Assembly, the United Reformed Church affirmed the need to work towards becoming an anti-racist church. This month's Special Cause is one way in which we can engage in that work locally. Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum are a charity working in the field of race equality. A leading organization within the voluntary sector in Cambridge, they work with Black and minority ethnic individuals and groups. They work with both individuals to provide support to those facing discrimination or navigating life as a person seeking asylum. They also give social, cultural, moral, and practical support to groups and develop projects where needed. CECF is currently engaged in three core projects.

The Community Connections South Project at the Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum is focused on bringing economically inactive people closer to the job market, education or training. It supports Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) individuals with their own development needs, as well as actively enhancing self-esteem and building confidence. Individuals are offered one-to-one information, advice, and guidance, to improve their employability. They also receive support to overcome their specific barriers to employment.

Crafting the Self is a health and wellbeing project for migrant and refugee women. Using creative arts and craft workshops this project aims to improve the overall sense of well-being and belonging for those women who participate in their respective communities.

Race for Health is aimed at tackling Covid vaccine accessibility issues. The project is also seeking to increase understanding about health inequalities in Cambridge for our city's diverse minority ethnic communities. This is a partnership project undertaken with Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services (CCVS) and Cambridge City Council, through the Vaccine Access Partnership.

Your donations will support CECF's vital work in the area of race equality and will support our church's hopes for greater inclusion and wellbeing for all in Cambridge.

There will a retiring collection on Sunday 18 June.

Alex Clare-Young

APRIL SPECIAL CAUSE

Last month we were able to send £1,392.63 to *Motivation*, including £350 from our York Street fund, £300 from our Retiring Collection after worship and over £700 raised during our Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts.

We received this message in return:

Thank you so much for your generous donation to Motivation!

Our team here at Motivation would like to express our sincerest gratitude for your donation of £1,392.63 from the Downing Place United Reformed Church Community.

It's great that your organisation has chosen to support our work through one of your events. Your gift of donation will help us provide life-changing support to more disabled people, helping them become more independent, challenge discrimination and improve their lives.

As long-term supporters of Motivation, you will know that support from your community helps us continue our vital work to give disabled people a brighter future. Thanks to you, we can continue to provide wheelchairs, training, and support to disabled children and adults helping them to transform their lives. We can support disabled people, their families, and communities to understand their rights and help them tackle stigma and discrimination.

Once again, on behalf of the people your donations are helping - thank you so much for your recent donation, and for your continued support for Motivation. We can only continue to empower disabled people to improve their lives thanks to the generosity of supporters like you.





Motivation is a disability charity that provides life-changing wheelchairs, training and support to disabled people in Africa and India - enabling greater independence, and a brighter future of equal opportunity and empowerment

Motivation Charitable Trust is a registered charity no 107935

SPECIAL CAUSES IN JULY AND AUGUST AND JANUARY NEXT YEAR.

The World Church & Public Issues Group has agreed that the Special Cause for the month of August, which had been left available for late additions, shall be the *Women's Christian Hospital in Multan, Pakistan*, following the video presentation of the work there of Rachel (Robert Smith's daughter) in the January Service led by WC&PI Group.

The Group also agreed to swap round the Causes listed for July 2023 and January 2024 so that the *Amos Trust/CEPAD* appeal will now be in July, just after a wider Amos 'Water for Life' appeal for this climate mitigation work with its partner, CEPAD. *City to Sea*, which is battling against plastic pollution, will now be our Cause for January 2024.

Chris Wright, for WC&PI Group

PREVIOUS SPECIAL CAUSE - THE ZAIAN CENTRE

It has been just over a year since I spoke to you all about the Zaian Centre, a project that, following the murder of 15-year Zaian Aimable-Lina, is aiming to create a safe space for young people in Croydon.

I would like to thank David Reynolds and the Downing Place World Church & Public Issues Group for recognising the Zaian Centre as a valuable cause for the church to support and for putting it forward as the cause for the month. I would also like to extend my thanks to Nigel and others who gave me the opportunity to speak at the 2022 Easter service. Finally, I would like to thank you. Your overwhelming generosity will undoubtedly go a long way to helping the Zaian Centre become a reality.

I apologise that I was unable to give details on any developments with the Zaian Centre any sooner. Like many similar projects, the early stages have not been straightforward. However, progress is being made, and I am delighted to now be able to share with you a project update.

Andrew Strachan

Update on Ashburton Park Project: April 2023

Following the tragic death of Zaian Aimable-Lina in Ashburton Park (Croydon) in December 2021, his community were determined to take action to honour him, to make the community safer, and to create positive opportunities for young people in the local community to thrive, flourish, and explore their ideas and

aspirations.

In partnership with these friends and teachers, Oasis launched an appeal (the 'Legacy for Zaian' appeal) to create a new youth centre and wider youth provision in Ashburton Park based out of the (currently disused) Ashburton Lodge. The Lodge (a main building and annexe) was owned by Croydon Council, had fallen into disrepair, and was about to be sold at auction. Oasis' vision was to transform the building into a base from which to provide a range of support – from open access youth work and family support, to targeted work with young people at risk of exclusion and exploitation, and to support young people to remain and thrive in mainstream school. Our aim was to do this by forming strong partnerships with (other) local schools, churches and other faith groups, grassroots youth and community organisations and community members, as well as local statutory services.

This initial appeal in early 2022 very quickly raised a total of just over £24,000. Thank you for your support and donations which have been crucial in taking this vision forward. In the year that has followed, we have also secured some other pieces of funding, which we'll say more about below. The headlines of the last year are that we have:

- Worked to secure the Ashburton Lodge building; lease negotiations are now almost complete and additional funds have been raised for development/renovations.
- Designed and piloted a 'trusted adult' mentoring programme to work with young people at risk of exclusion; this has been piloted and additional funds have been raised for a multi-year programme roll-out.
- Worked in partnership with three other local organisations bringing added benefit to young people in Croydon.

Progress report

1. Ashburton Lodge

Obtaining the Lodge from Croydon Council has required a fairly long process – against the backdrop of a period of significant change and workload for the Council. However, we are now in the final stages of negotiating a lease agreement on Ashburton Lodge and expect to complete this very soon. We have spent just under £5,000 so far on lease costs (e.g., surveys). Since the original fundraising appeal, we have received further donations of £35,000, taking our current building project fund total to approx. £55,000. This money will allow us to complete the lease agreement, make the building safe, and get a small part of the building into use as a base for development.

The longer-term development of the building and grounds will take place in phases. Looking further ahead, we are really pleased to have some funding already lined up that will allow us to do the first phase of renovations of the building and garden in due course (subject to a consultation period). We will continue to raise funds against the full renovation of the whole site.

2. Oasis 360° Mentoring

While we've been going through the process of securing Ashburton Lodge, we have moved ahead with designing and piloting some of the work that will eventually be based there. We are really pleased to report that in October 2022 we began a pilot of our new 'Oasis 360° Mentoring' programme, designed to support young people to thrive and remain in school. 360° Mentoring promises a 'trusted adult' for every young person at risk of exclusion from mainstream education – someone (a volunteer) *outside* of statutory institutions and services who cares for, loves, encourages, and believes in them. The importance and transformative potential of (even just) one trusted adult relationship has been shown time and again in research, and in our own experience working with young people. So far (as part of the pilot) we've worked with 24 young people from our four Oasis Academies in Croydon, completing a total of 250 hours of mentoring time to date. Already there is interest in the pilot from partners and Local Authorities in other cities outside of London.

Having made a successful multi-year funding bid to roll out the 360° Mentoring programme for Croydon, we are now into the next phase of development – building a network of volunteers who can be the trusted adults for all the young people who need this support. We will give each volunteer mentor the appropriate training, accreditation, and supervision that will allow them to build meaningful and valuable relationships with young people. We had originally thought to call Ashburton Lodge "The Zaian Centre" when it opens. However, after consultation with Zaian's family we have agreed to call it "The 360° Centre" – to reflect the wraparound care it will offer, with the 360° mentoring approach at its heart.

3. Community Partnerships

Over the past year we have worked with three local grassroots organisations reaching young people. We have provided studio space (at Oasis Academy Coulsdon) for *MainzWorld* to run their music courses and mentoring work. We have also partnered with *Reaching Higher* – who have a well-established presence within the Croydon community – for our 360 Mentoring programme pilot. Finally, we are working with P4YE to roll out their Bright Futures Programme to support some of our students (at Oasis Academy Shirley Park) to reintegrate back

into mainstream school. We hope these partnerships (and many more) will form and shape the ongoing work that will be based out of Ashburton Lodge, making the most of the opportunity the building will provide for the whole community.

Thank you again for your support

YORK STREET DONATIONS 2023

Every year, we set aside a sum of money from our income from York Street to be given as larger donations to other charities whose work embraces the Downing Place key values of Inclusivity, Wellbeing and/or Sustainability. You may remember Ian Strachan's very helpful article about the York Street Fund in the last issue of Place Matters.

This year the list of good causes is as follows:

Bible Society £1,500
Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project £1,500
Cambridge Street Pastors £1,500
Cambridge City Foodbank £2,000
Freedom from torture £2,000
Music Therapy Research at ARU £2,000
Connected Lives £2,000

Connected Lives £2,000 Embrace the Middle East £2,000

Camb. Refugee Resettlement Campaign £2,000

We receive many wonderful responses explaining what the donations mean to our charities, and here are some of the responses we've received so far:

The Bible Society

You've responded to an urgent need in the Bible Lands. Right now faith is coming alive for people who until recently only went to church out of tradition. By generously giving the Bible today, you have helped bring incredible change in communities divided by conflict. And the best part is that someone will open the Bible and meet Jesus because of you.

Freedom from Torture

Thank you so much for your donation of £2,000.00 to Freedom from Torture.

Your gift today could help provide counselling, group therapy and ongoing support. It could help pay for an independent medical assessment to support someone's asylum claim. Or it could help our advocacy work to protect survivors'

rights and hold torturers to account.

Thank you again for supporting people who are rebuilding their lives after torture.

Connected Lives (who also use the premises free of charge on a regular basis)

We are very appreciative of the support the church continues to give Connected Lives, though physical space, your friendship and listening ear, and your financial generosity.

This is to acknowledge we have just received a donation of £2000. Please can you pass on our sincere thanks to the appropriate people.

Camcrag

We confirm receipt of £2,000 to support refugees.

Thank you so much for your generous donation and support for our work. This will enable us to continue to send volunteers to Calais and other areas where there are refugees, and to purchase essential supplies to help refugees.

Embrace the Middle East

On behalf of Embrace the Middle East, I am writing to thank you for the generous donation of £2,000 from the congregation of Downing Place United Reformed Church, Cambridge. We are most grateful!

Your congregation's generosity is a lifeline to those living with grinding hardship and marginalisation across the Middle East. What's more, supporting Embrace is a wonderful way to stand with our Christian sisters and brothers as they serve their communities unconditionally in Jesus' name. Your support now, when times are tough for so many of us, is particularly humbling. I know our partners are incredibly touched by your kindness. Even amidst the on-going challenges and complexities of life in the Middle East, your support and prayers are a source of real encouragement, hope and strength for our friends in the region. So, on behalf of the Embrace team, our partners on the ground, and all those they serve, thank you once again for your support – we simply couldn't do it without you!

With many thanks for your congregation's care and concern for our work.

Cambridge Street Pastors

I should be grateful if you would pass on my thanks and those of the other trustees of Cambridge Street Pastors to the members of the church for this extremely generous donation I know that we have had opportunities to speak about our work at the church before, but we can always arrange for this to happen again if required!

Cambridge Churches Homeless Project

I am writing to confirm receipt of the generous donation of £1,500 to the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project and, on behalf of the Trustees, to extend our heartfelt thanks to your congregation for their generosity......

CCHP continues to support the homeless in Cambridge by

- * Providing meals and support services through our volunteer network
- * Providing emergency accommodation and support throughout the year
- Providing funding for the post of Bishop of Ely's Officer for the Homeless

Our ability to provide these services is wholly dependent on the support provided by our generous donors and volunteers and you can be assured that your donation will be put to best use in support of the homeless community in Cambridge.





We are in the middle of Christian Aid Week as I write, but have already enjoyed a delightful lunchtime concert by Jane Bower and Alex Clare-Young which they offered as a fundraiser. The concert featured "small things", inspired by the pigeon peas grown in Malawi, which Christian Aid has highlighted in this Christian Aid Week.

The Cambridge Christian Aid service took place at Castle St. Methodist Church on Sunday 14th, where the Bishop of Huntingdon, the Rt. Rev. Dagmar Winter, preached, reminding us all of the urgent issues of climate justice, and our responsibility to work to make a fairer world.

Many thanks to all who have contributed so far to the work of Christian Aid, attended events, provided refreshments or helped in any way.

I hope to be able to give you a figure for funds raised in the next issue of Place Matters.

Sheila Porrer

STAMPS FOR CHARITY - GOOD NEWS!

In February, I thanked friends for donations of stamps over the years - but to cease donating them by the end of February as the Leprosy Mission had stopped taking them.

Good news however! The Church of Scotland has, for a number of years accepted stamps for the benefit of its projects overseas.

Therefore I will be delighted to receive postage stamps of any kind again. Please see the poster below and in the Hub (beside the drawer for stamps) describing the project being supported for the current year in Malawi.

Ted Dennison



Friends of the Church in India with Churches Together in Cambridgeshire Vellore Link

St Thomas Unity Lecture 2023

Hindu Nationalism and Political oppression on religious minorities in India: An Ecumenical response

given by
Rev Dr D Isaac Devadoss B.Sc, BD, MA, MTh, MPhil, PhD
Associate Professor of History of Christianity
Bishop's College, Kolkata

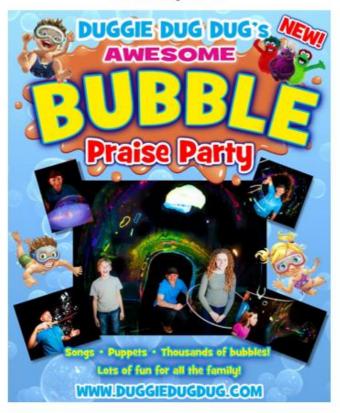


The lecture will end with CSI 75th Anniversary Thanksgiving service.

Refreshments available.

For more information, please contact Rev Canon Fiona Brampton 01480538726 revfiona@norleigh.org.uk

United Reformed Church Eastern Synod Invites you to



Sunday 4th 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

JOIN ERIC WHITACRE AND ANNA LAPWOOD

for a series of co-hosted events in the brand-new performance venue at Pembroke College, Cambridge on 10 & 11 June 2023.

Saturday 10 June, 3:30pm - 5:00pm | Choral Workshop

Join Eric Whitacre for a choral workshop hosted by Pembroke College, Cambridge. Repertoire includes some of his most well-known works: 'Sing Gently', 'The Seal Lullaby' and 'A Boy and a Girl'. Taking place in the brand-new performance venue at Pembroke College, this is your chance to work with Eric in an intimate venue with glorious acoustics, in one of the world's greatest cities of choral excellence. A Q&A session will follow the workshop.

Saturday 10 June, 7:00pm | Concert with Anna Lapwood and the Choirs of Pembroke College

Eric and Anna will co-conduct a stellar concert with The Choirs of Pembroke College. The programme will include some lesser-known choral gems alongside some Whitacre classics. Whitacre's 'Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine' and 'All Seems Beautiful to Me' will be heard alongside Caroline Shaw's 'and the swallow' and Edwin London's arrangement of Bach 'Come Sweet Death'.

Sunday 11 June, 10:00am - 3:00pm | Masterclass in Creativity: The Beautiful Mess Live
Join Eric for the first-ever live version of his online series – The Beautiful Mess:
Masterclass in Composition and Creativity. Designed for composers, innovators and performers, the session will explore the creative process from spark to flame.
Anna and The Chapel Choir of Pembroke College will join Eric for this session.

Venue: Pembroke College Auditorium, 71 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RJ United Kingdom

For tickets visit shop.ericwhitacre.com/tickets

JUSTICE, COURTESY AND LOVE: LOOKING BACK WITH GRATITUDE AND LOOKING FORWARD IN HOPE

A Theological Symposium in Memory of Kenneth Cracknell (1935-2022)

Kenneth Cracknell was an inter faith pioneer. As the first Inter Faith Secretary for the British Council of Churches (1978-1987) he led the way in fostering good relations between the churches and people of other faiths at a crucial time.

The inter faith work Kenneth pioneered continues through the work of many different organisations, churches, and other faith groups.

Speakers

- Dr Clare Amos Former Director of Inter Faith Relations at the WCC
- Revd Dr Wesley Ariarajah Former Deputy General Secretary of the
- Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal Church of Sanctuary
- Revd Peter Colwell Deputy General Secretary, CTBI
- Dr Shaunka Rishi Das Director, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies
- Dr Elizabeth Harris Honorary Senior Research Fellow, The Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion, University of Birmingham
- Revd Dr Peniel Rajkumar Theologian and Director for Global Mission, USPG



This symposium is an opportunity to reflect upon Kenneth's legacy and to look ahead to the challenges facing inter faith work in the 21st century.



III 15 June 2023



11.00 - 15.00

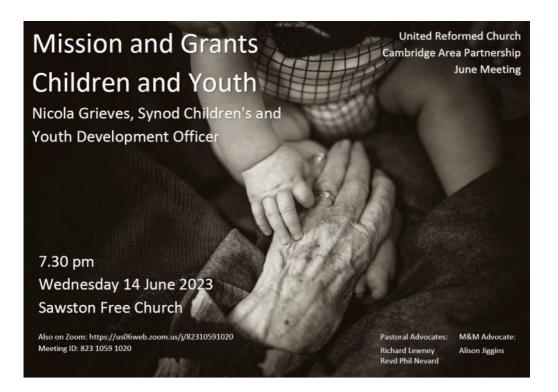


Wesley Centre Jesus Lane Cambridge, CB5 8BJ









SAVE THE DATE: ALEX'S GRADUATION LECTURE AND CELEBRATION

I have decided not to attend the graduation ceremony for my PhD, as I was a distant learner and don't know many people in Birmingham, where my degree is from. As such, plans have been afoot to arrange an alternative event at Downing Place! On the 30th of September, at 5pm, I will give a talk on a topic related to my PhD followed by a Q&A and a celebration tea (with cake, of course!). We hope that this will also be a valuable opportunity for members to hear more about theology by and related to trans and non-binary people. Please do save the date, with invitations and more information to follow.

Alex Clare-Young

JUNE DIARY

JOINE DIVIN							
	Date	Name	Time	Location			
Thu	01-Jun-23	Solidarity Hub - Craft and Chat	10:00am	The Hub			
Thu	01-Jun-23	Midweek Worship led by Dr Alan Rickard	11:00am	Church			
Thu	01-Jun-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub			
Sun	04-Jun-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church			
Sun	04-Jun-23	Trinity Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden and Revd Dr John Bradbury	11:00am	Church			
Sun	04-Jun-23	Open Table Social Gathering	7:00pm	The Hub			
Tue	06-Jun-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church			
Wed	07-Jun-23	Lunchtime Concert - Yoon Seok Shin (piano)	1:00pm	Church			
Thu	08-Jun-23	Solidarity Hub - Craft and Chat	10:00am	The Hub			
Thu	08-Jun-23	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church			
Thu	08-Jun-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub			
Sat	10-Jun-23	Open Table National Gathering	All Day	Downing Pace URC			
Sun	11-Jun-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church			
Sun	11-Jun-23	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Liz Caswell	11:00am	Church			
Sun	11-Jun-23	Solidarity Hub - Talk: Christian CND	2:00pm	The Hub			
Mon	12-Jun-23	Officers' Meeting	10:00am				
Mon	12-Jun-23	DEADLINE for signing up for the Gibson Lunch on 15 June					
Tue	13-Jun-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church			

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Wed	14-Jun-23	Lunchtime Concert - Alison Daniels (mezzo-soprano) & Edmund Aldhouse (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	14-Jun-23	Area Partnership Meeting (see p.34)	7:30pm	Sawston Free Church
Wed	14-Jun-23	Elders' Meeting	7:30pm	Emmanuel Room
Wed	14-Jun-23	DEADLINE for submitting items for Place Matters		
Thu	15-Jun-23	Solidarity Hub - Craft and Chat	10:00am	The Hub
Thu	15-Jun-23	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	15-Jun-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	15-Jun-23	Midweek Worship led by the Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young	6:00pm	St Columba's Chapel
Fri	16-Jun -23	Lectio Divina (see p.9)	8.30am	Zoom
Sat	17-Jun-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	18-Jun-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	
Sun	18-Jun-23	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden, followed by a Retiring Collection for Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum	11:00am	Church
Sun	18-Jun-23	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Church
Mon	19-Jun-23	Transition Cambridge	8:00pm	The Hub
Tue	20-Jun-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	21-Jun-23	Lunchtime Concert - Zacharias Brandman (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	21-Jun-23	Evangelism and Service Group Meeting	7:30pm	McLean Room

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Thu	22-Jun-23	Solidarity Hub - Craft and Chat	10:00am	The Hub
Thu	22-Jun-23	Midweek Worship with Communion led by the Revd Dr David Cornick	1:00pm	Church
Thu	22-Jun-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	22-Jun-23	World Church & Public Issues Group Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Fri	23-Jun-23	Lectio Divina	8.30am	Zoom
Sun	25-Jun-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	25-Jun-23	Sunday Worship led by Richard Lewney	11:00am	Church
Sun	25-Jun-23	Solidarity Scripture Meal (Pursuing Pride)	7:00pm	Gibson Hall
Mon	26-Jun-23	Officers' Meeting	10:00am	
Tue	27-Jun-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	28-Jun-23	No Lunchtime Concert		
Thu	29-Jun-23	Solidarity Hub - Craft and Chat	10:00am	The Hub
Thu	29-Jun-23	Midweek Worship led by the Revd Deborah McVey	11:00am	Church
Thu	29-Jun-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Fri	23-Jun-23	Lectio Divina	8.30am	Zoom
Fri	30-Jun-23	General Assembly starts		Swanwick
Sat	01-Jul-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	02-Jul-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	02-Jul-23	Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Professor David Thompson	11:00am	Church
Sun	02-Jul-23	Open Table Social Gathering	7:00pm	The Hub

MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

4 June Liz Caswell Bassingbourn

Penny Flynn Sawston

11 June Chris Baker Fenstanton

Alex Clare-Young St Catharine's College (evensong)

David Cornick Melbourn

Maureen Kendall Castle Street Methodist (pm)
Janet Tollington Abbey Lane, Saffron Walden

Nigel Uden Fulbourn (am)

Bishop's Stortford (pm)

18 June Deborah McVey Fulbourn

Janet Tollington Stetchworth & Cheveley

25 June Chris Baker Haddenham Methodist

Liz Caswell Stetchworth & Cheveley

Penny Flynn Buntingford

Simone Maghenzani St Cuthbert's, Kildale (N.Yorks)

Deborah McVey St Luke's Cambridge

John Proctor Abbey Lane, Saffron Walden

Janet Tollington Stansted

Nigel Uden Dorking URC

(Nigel's 'home' church!)

29 June Liz Caswell St James', Lode

(midweek Communion)

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!

7 June Yoon Seok Shin (piano)

14 June Alison Daniels (mezzo-soprano) &

Edmund Aldhouse (piano)

21 June Zacharias Brandman (piano)

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

LECTIONARY FOR JUNE 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.

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

11 June Trinity 1 Hosea 5:15-6:6 Psalm 50:7-15 Romans 4:13-25 Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

18 June Trinity 2 Exodus 19:2-8a Psalm 100 Romans 5:1-8 Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)

25 June Trinity 3 Jeremiah 20:7-13 Psalm 69:7-10, (11-15), 16-18 Romans 6:1b-11 Matthew 10:24-39

2 July Trinity 4 Jeremiah 28:5-9 Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 Romans 6:12-23 Matthew 10:40-42





From the Baroque (see Minister's letter) to the ultra-modern -Owen Saxton plays the Hauptwerk Digital Organ during Dedication Weekend, November 2021

Image by Mike Thornton, https://www.stillvision.co.uk/

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Tim Rowland

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

WEB EDITOR: Jess Uden

Please send all items to be included in the July/August edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of **Wednesday 14 June**.

The July/August edition will be available from **Sunday 25 June**.