



**DOWNING PLACE  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE**

# **PLACE MATTERS**



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*Cover photograph taken by Jess Uden*

## FROM THE MINISTER

Father Sebastian Morrell, the Principal of a fictional East Anglian theological college, is not very impressed with the essay submitted by Raphael, amongst the more precocious of St Anselm College's students. The Principal observes: 'Evelyn Waugh wrote in one of his travel books that he saw theology as the science of simplification whereby nebulous and elusive ideas are made intelligible and exact. Your essay is neither.' (P. D. James, *Death in Holy Orders* 2001) Quite apart from the acerbic tutorial put down, I suspect Evelyn Waugh, P. D. James and Fr Sebastian were onto something. The one from whom the college took its name used to define theology as 'faith seeking understanding'.

Very often hymns have the capacity to capture in poetic form those big ideas that are at the heart of the Christian narrative. How many people's understanding of Christmas is informed by their favourite carols? The story of hymns is a long one, but the twentieth century saw an explosion of such writing that provides a fine complement to the treasury of hymns it inherited from previous generations. The United Reformed Church had some particularly gifted exponents of the craft. I think of people like Fred Kaan, Brian Wren, and Basil Bridge. We also cherish some in this congregation, not least Ann Phillips. One could go on. For this item, though, I would like to focus upon Alan Gaunt, who died earlier in the summer, aged 87.

Alan was especially skilled at giving elegant and accessible expression to concepts that confound many of us. He was notably adept at musing upon the Trinity – the extraordinary notion that God is three in one and one in three. *Rejoice and Sing* has several examples, not least at number 33, *Eternal God, your love's tremendous story*. And here is another of Alan's Trinitarian hymns. It dates from 1997, and in a book of his texts he explains that 'this came from reading two lines in Vernon Watkins' poem, *Kestrel*:

*And still the inviolate wing and claw / / Hold chaos in the grip of grace.'*

Alan writes:

Holy Trinity of Love,  
perfect peace that has no end;  
you are our eternal hope:  
Maker, Guide and Human Friend.

2 Through earth's devastating storms,  
thunder-clouds that hide your face,  
still, Creator God, you hold  
chaos in the grip of grace.

3 Through earth's troubles and alarms,  
more than ocean's countless waves,  
Christ, command our fears, 'Be still';  
give the peace our spirit craves.

4 Holy Spirit, when life's storms  
overwhelm us, and we drown;  
lifted by your peace and power,  
we still tread the chaos down.

5 Holy, holy, holy God,  
pain and death, the throes of hell,  
cannot conquer! Even now,  
we believe, all shall be well.

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Thus Alan Gaunt makes ‘nebulous and elusive ideas ... intelligible and exact.’ Or does he? Does he want to? I don’t think he ever presumed to have given everything an indisputably clear, exact meaning. No, instead, as with many a Bible story, he offered texts that we could allow to hang in the air of our contemplation. Gradually, then, we might have some ‘aha’ moments as stillness and meditation slowly make it eloquent and helpful for us, as we forever journey on.

Once upon a time, on a Trinity Sunday, I heard the preacher say,

*‘this Trinity Sunday, I do not believe what I believed last Trinity Sunday,  
and next Trinity Sunday, I rather hope I will not quite believe what I do this Trinity Sunday.’*

I suspect that is what a lifetime of musing on God does; it allows God the space to grow within us, and never to leave us treading theological water. I dare to hope that Fr Sebastian would be content.

In conclusion, a prayer from another of Alan’s hymns:

*‘May love in us seek love and serve love’s purpose,  
till we ascend with Christ and find love whole.’*

*Nigel Uden  
September 2023*



## ELIZABETH THOMSON – A PROFILE

I was born just a month after the Second World War was declared, and grew up in a parish south of the river Dee, 15 miles west of Aberdeen. My parents came from further west; my father from a farm in Finzean; my mother from the blacksmith's house in Strachan. My brother, Michael, was born in 1946. I grew up on a farm: in the summer my father worked outdoors from dawn until near dusk – my mother did everything else! I was asleep when he left the house and again by the time he had finished work. My parents wakened me when my father returned in the evening, so that they could have time together with me. I felt safe and loved: my childhood was carefree, but I was given firm guidance about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour



*Aged about 11 with Michael, parents and grandparents*

Our home language was – and still is – called ‘Doric’.<sup>1</sup> We spoke it – except around the table at mealtimes! I attended the church in Durriss from childhood, as everyone did. It was (and is) Church of Scotland. I had learnt to play the piano from a young age, and before long I was having organ lessons from my piano teacher, who was at that time organist in one of the two churches in nearby Banchory. I played the organ at the church in Durriss while I was still at secondary school. From 1945 to 1952 I attended the local primary school. There were two classrooms with a glass partition between them, and 3 children in my class – myself, and two boys. The boys had not heard the ‘King’s English’ before

1. [Scotland’s little-known fourth "language" - BBC Travel](#)

school. The staff consisted of the headmaster – the ‘Dominie’ - and a ‘missy’ who was my teacher. During this time, as I gained skills that were helpful indoors or on the farm - from the minute I was able to do so, I milked one of the two cows. My mother and I collected eggs, and cleaned them before setting them in square 6x6 trays, each with three dozen eggs ready for collection.

In 1952, aged 12, I went to the secondary school at Banchory, 5 miles away. I developed a particular interest in natural history, and stayed on for Highers.<sup>2</sup> When I was 16, Billy Graham came to Banchory. He had a very different and arresting style of preaching, demanding more participation and emotion - and it wasn't even a Sunday!

Our family was unable to take a family holiday together because of the farm animals. The cows, cattle, sheep, pigs, ducks and hens meant that at least two competent people needed to be present on the farm. But on Sunday afternoons we sometimes visited friends and relatives, and when my parents got an Austin 7 car, we could picnic by a mountain stream or loch.



*Parents with their Austin 7 (and eggshed)*

When I was 18, I went to the University of Aberdeen to study botany. In Freshers' Week it became apparent there would be little time for clubs, as the timetable showed that each day was full with lectures and long lab sessions. In the summer vacations, at home, I set aside time to help with the cereal harvest. There was only a short window when the weather was right and the crop ripe. When some of the crop was lost because of wet conditions, the grains started to sprout, and it was no longer acceptable for cattle feed, oatmeal, or - in the case of barley - for whisky production.

In 1959, in the first term of my second year at Aberdeen, I spotted a chap from the Agricultural Botany class in the soil science lab. After the summer term we met again, and we talked as we climbed to the top of Lochnagar on Midsummer's eve to see the sunset, and the sunrise next morning. By cereal harvest time in 1961, my parents had met Alan, and they soon realised that he would be an asset - the strongest man in the field! Having sought, and been granted, my father's

2. Scottish Higher qualifications (known as Highers) are subject-based qualifications that

permission, Alan proposed and we became engaged to be married in June 1962. During one vacation, Alan had trained and passed exams to be a potato inspector. This involved visiting farms, and pointing out the diseased plants (rogues) that had to be removed.

Upon graduation in summer 1962, I moved to a room in a house near Aberdeen College of Education, where I was studying for a teacher education diploma, specialising in botany. As a qualified teacher, I gained a post at Aberdeen High School for Girls<sup>3</sup> - a state school, with 99 female staff – just a few years later, the film *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* looked rather familiar to me!

Alan graduated in June 1963 - his course was 5 years as he had to spend a year on a farm. He began a PhD on grass breeding, and we married the year before his graduation, in 1965. He then applied for a job, a post in the Ministry of Overseas Development and was called for interview in Cambridge. Unfortunately the MOD funding was withdrawn, but the director of the Plant Breeding Institute<sup>4</sup> (PBI) was on the interview panel. There was a post coming up for a grass breeder at the PBI – and Alan was duly appointed.

Coming to Cambridge was a total culture shock - especially the market, with strange vegetables never seen in NE Scotland. Saint Columba's, and minister came into the picture soon after our arrival. We had rented a flat in Highworth Avenue – and the landlady, Mrs Dobson, was a member of St Columba's. In 1967 we bought a house in Carisbrooke Road, on the then-new McManus estate, on the west side of Histon Road, and our daughter, Bridget, was born in April 1969. I had come to know Margaret McLeod, who lived very near. At that time her husband, Alan, was Principal of Westminster College. We joined a young couples group at St Columba's, and met David and Daphne Thomas.

By then I was teaching part time at 'the tech', because my knowledge of genetics was up-to-date. Anglia Ruskin University now occupies that site. After the tech I taught Physics part time at Coleridge Boys' School - I had done Higher physics at school and I loved it. It made so much sense and you could work it out.

Our second daughter, Lindsey, was born in February 1971, and on April 1st we moved to Coton, the day before Bridget's third birthday. Alan's father was very ill by this time, and at holiday times we went to Scotland to see our parents. Alan was an only child, and in time Ronald Spiers helped us to find his mother accommodation in sheltered housing in Cambridge, in Sturton Street.

In 1976 I returned to full-time work, at the Further Education Centre in Young Street. Some of the students were resitting school exams, some on day release

3. Now the [Harlaw Academy - Wikipedia](#)

4. [Plant Breeding Institute - Wikipedia](#)



from work, some were apprentices. I taught O level Biology, AO Human Biology, and later had input in B'Tech courses in Social Care. Many years later I taught arithmetic to women who were returning to education, and around 1980 I had a year's sabbatical at Homerton College, on a course developing secondary mathematics teaching (Tim Rowland taught the geometry!). I have strong recollections of the Principal, Alison Shrubsole – a member of Emmanuel URC.

The Plant Breeding Institute was sold to Unilever in 1987, and later sold on to Monsanto. Alan retired then, on a Unilever pension. In retirement, he was an enthusiastic U3A member: it was like a second education! He enjoyed listening to all kinds of music, and we went for several walking holidays abroad. But later Alan developed dementia. He was very aware of his condition, and would explain it to others. He died in February 2021, at Bramley Court care home in Histon.

Bridget is living in Switzerland, and Lindsey in Australia. My brother, Michael, lives in York. Our father died in 2000, in Cambridge, and our mother 5 years later, in a care home.

In conclusion: the exercise of organising some autobiographical facts in order to compile this Profile has been nostalgic, and it has brought into sharper focus the question "What and where is home?". There are very many possible answers: it is more than the house and its people; it includes the people and landscape in each of the locations I have lived. The first was the country parish in North East Scotland, where the Doctor, the Dominie and the Minister were held in reverence, whilst everyone else - including my close relatives - was known to each other, and my perception of it was that we were all looking out for each other. In Coton, and in Downing Place, the people are much more diverse, but the same sense of safety prevails.

There is a children's song that I now hear in my head: "One more step along the world I go ... and it's from the old I travel to the new; Keep me travelling along with you". My journey began with one Sunday service with Sunday school, two communions per year, monthly meetings of the women's Guild and a weekly 'Girls' Guildry' meeting taken by the minister's wife. With support from parents, husband and daughters, it has taken me to Coton, and to Downing Place, to the inspiring, compassionate care given by ministers, elders and pastoral visitors. I feel at home: this is my Place.



*Elizabeth & Alan*

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

We would like to share with you what the younger Junior Church group has been reflecting on doing recently.

Towards the end of the academic year, the children spent two mornings with Jane Bower, to explore a different way of communicating. They had a great time exploring the idea – and you can read Jane’s account of the “overlooked language” elsewhere in this edition of *Place Matters*. We are looking forward to picking this up again with Jane later in the year, to contribute to Sharing Together time in worship.

The first Sunday of July, we had a lovely picnic with the children and their parents in Liz Barrow’s garden. The weather was nice and the children had a great time in the swimming pool. And before going home, we were all treated with home-made strawberry ice cream!

On 9th July we explored the passage from Matthew 11:25-30, where Jesus tells his followers that all who are tired of carrying heavy loads should come to him and find rest, and that their burdens will be eased. We started the session by carrying as many heavy stones as we could around the room. We then watched a video of the story of Jesus healing the paralysed man whose worried friends had carried him to Jesus and lowered him through the roof, because they believed that Jesus could heal him and ease his heavy load. Our craft activity was to decorate stones with our names and place them in a small basket together with a collection of light objects including feathers, pompoms and maize shapes. We came together and felt the weight of our baskets before removing the stones and putting them beside the cross, noticing how much lighter they had become. Jesus taught that our worries can be like carrying a heavy load but sharing them with Him can make them easier to bear.

The following week we listened to a story that Jesus told, about a farmer who wanted to grow seeds. The seeds fell on different types of soil, which we had on a tray in front of us: a hard path, rocky soil, soil with a lot of thorny plants, and good soil. We discussed whether or not the seeds would grow. We realised that this was not just a story, it was a parable, a story with an important meaning. The story was about how we listened to God’s words and good news to us. Whilst the older children reflected on things that do help you to grow in faith, the younger children started to make some edible soil.

On 23rd July, we considered the parable of the wheat and the weeds. While discussing the parable, we used crepe paper to make grains and joined these

together around a wooden skewer to make a head of wheat, or perhaps it looked more like barley. The group also enjoyed a maze whereby they found the route to the wheat, while avoiding the weeds.



Although most of our regular children were on holiday at the end of July, with the two children present we watched a video of someone telling the story of the parable of the treasure chest and of the beautiful pearl. We heard that those things were considered so precious that these people sold everything they had to buy this most important thing. We then reflected on the 'kingdom of God' and how precious that is. Whilst decorating a small wooden treasure chest, the children wrote their important things like 'peace' and 'Bible' and 'God' on little gems to put in their treasure box.

On 6th August we had an enjoyable session looking at the story of the feeding of the 5000, from Matthew 14:13-21. Despite the lack of 'picnic' weather in the previous week, the two children in the younger group talked about what they liked to eat on a picnic, and they unpacked a lunch box to discover 5 bread rolls, some butter, and a jar of strawberry jam. They guessed that our activity would be making some jam sandwiches! First, we watched a short video to recap the story and then we talked about the important things that had happened in it. Jesus had wanted to talk to the people despite mourning the loss of his cousin John the Baptist and recognised that the hungry crowd needed food. He had then performed a miracle, providing food for all, by

using a picnic lunch that a child had offered to share. Although the reading from Matthew had not mentioned a child, we had learned in church that John's version of the story did, and that no matter our age we must all offer what we have, to share with others in need. We then made our sandwiches for the congregation to enjoy over coffee, before helping to decorate biscuits to share, helped by the Junior Church Youth group!



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



## **THE OVERLOOKED LANGUAGE**

If you wanted to tell me about something, how would you do it? Yes – you'd probably talk. Or yes, you could phone, or text, or email, or write about it.

What if you couldn't talk? Or write? What if you weren't able to use words? Yes, you could draw what had happened, or paint it, or use other materials. But what if you had no materials?

As I posed these questions to Junior Church members, they gradually moved towards the answer I sought – that they could tell me about something using only themselves. When asked what part of us shows our feelings the most, they agreed it was the face. So we began by exploring hypothetical situations in which the face would assume a certain expression which communicates feelings – loneliness, amusement, surprise.

I pushed further. What if your face was hidden? How would you communicate then? They agreed the next best thing was hands. We explored gestures, and acted stories using only our hands as characters. We then explored putting over a story with the feet – walking on damp sand, deep porridge, an ice rink...and soon we were, as one four year old memorably said to me in a school years ago, ‘pretending all over’.

We each chose three ordinary movements we had already made that day, the tinier the better – such as opening a door, turning on a tap, brushing our teeth. Gradually we enlarged them, until they were huge and expressive, and carried them round the room, weaving in and out of each other, repeating the movements in a rhythm to music, filling the Gibson Hall with sweeping shapes and different speeds and levels, our own interpretation of everyday actions.



When I asked what we’d been doing, they said ‘moving’. I asked them if there was a word for moving like that, telling a story with our bodies. At the time, they could not think of one.

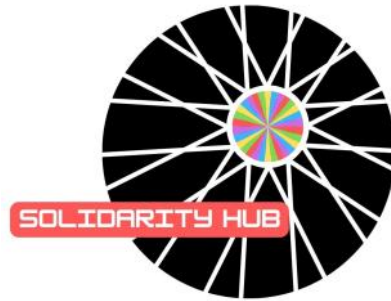
In this way, as I did for thirty years in hundreds of primary schools, I introduced the concept of dance, letting them discover it rather than telling them to do it. Dance is a language we speak with our bodies, whether our bodies work well or are limited, whether we share a spoken tongue or not, whether we are accompanied by music or silence. Dance is a natural human instinct. Babies dance. Cave people danced. And as dance is a language, anything expressed in words can be expressed in dance.

To be honest, I have always been wary of what is known as ‘Christian dance’. For me it calls to mind, rightly or wrongly, cringey images of wholesome and well-meaning adults wreathed in smiles, holding their arms aloft to the heavens. I’m sure I would be shouted down by many Christian dance groups, but no matter how inaccurate that perception, the image prevails. I’d like to dispel this, for myself and others.

It is a privilege to be invited to carry out this work in Junior Church. I will be developing our ideas over several Sunday sessions, and in November we hope to show you something of what we have built as part of a service which Nigel will conduct. We hope you will receive it open-mindedly, and that it will enhance our worship.

*Jane Bower*

# CAMBRIDGE SOLIDARITY HUB



*Alex Clare-Young writes:*

Over the Summer, Cambridge Solidarity Hub have been tightening up our branding and plan, and we now have a new Mission Statement and a plan for the year, including several regular events. **You might want to look back at this issue** of *Place Matters* for the days and times of Cambridge Solidarity Hub events.

## **Mission Statement**

Cambridge Solidarity Hub aims to reduce loneliness, increase social cohesion, work for social and eco justice, and develop authentic spirituality by creating expansive spaces that are relevant, safe, accessible and have the potential to influence change. At the heart of the Hub is a collective of dreamers and doers who gather to create new spaces for social and eco justice.

You are more than welcome in Cambridge Solidarity Hub, whatever your identity, experiences, or beliefs. Several of our founding members are LGBTQ+, neurodivergent, and/or disabled and we have struggled to find safe enough spaces in Cambridge. As such, we are passionate about working together to ensure that we are creating safer, braver, accessible, welcoming and affirming spaces for all; and particularly for those who experience discrimination and marginalisation in daily life.

## **Events**

All Solidarity Hub events are at the Hub which can be accessed through the double gates on Downing Place unless otherwise noted.

## **Solidarity Groups**

We host social/discussion/action groups every Sunday evening as follows. All of these groups are open to all and include snacky food. There is an option to bring additional food to eat or share if you would like to. Some people attend one particular group, others attend all of them, others still attend a couple of evenings each year, there is no pressure to attend regularly.

### **1st Sunday, 7.30-9pm: LGBTQ+ Social**

On the first Sunday of every month we co-facilitate an LGBTQ+ social. This varies but includes gaming, talks, workshops, film nights, book discussions, sharing food and conversation, walks and trips out. It is an opportunity to meet other LGBTQ+ people in Cambridge in a safe and relaxed social environment. Some, but not all, people visit local pubs or bars together following the social.

### **2nd Sunday, 7.30-9pm: Solidarity Social Action Group**

On the second Sunday of every month we facilitate a social action group. This is a space where we can talk about the issues that matter to us and those we care about and plan how to act for change. Sometimes this includes letter writing, craftivism, or other co-ordinated actions. We sometimes invite an external speaker, facilitator or organizer on a particular topic. Those who attend this group are welcome to participate as little or as much as they choose – there is no pressure to engage in any form of direct action or campaigning, though there is often the opportunity to do so.

### **3rd Sunday: 6.30pm-7pm: Solidarity Social Drop In**

On the third Sunday of every month we are around from 6.30-7pm for anyone who would like to drop in for a quick catch up.

### **4th Sunday: 7.30-9pm: Solidarity Scripture**

On the fourth Sunday of every month we facilitate Solidarity Scripture. Whilst many Solidarity Hub attendees do not hold/are not exploring a faith, some do/are, and this group is an opportunity to talk about scripture and topics that feel relevant. In 2023-2024 this will include topics like body neutrality, interfaith, land justice, and food.

## **Solidarity Prayers**

We facilitate access to justice-centred, progressive times of reflection and prayer for those exploring faith and/or spirituality. This is a short, simple time of

reflection and prayer rooted in words, music, and silence. You will not be asked to turn and speak to the person next to you at any time. All silences will be less than 1 minute in length.

These times of prayer are on 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th Sundays from 6.30-7pm.

## **Solidarity Doubling**

Every Monday 4-6pm and Thursday 2-4pm at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87230814508?pwd=L3A2dWZhMFBGRzhma1EwNlVZK3o1UT09>

Meeting ID: 872 3081 4508

Passcode: 741093

Solidarity Doubling is a space to support each other doing whatever work/chores/creating you always want to do, but always put off. No task is too little! We follow a simple schedule for these sessions, and you can join in or drop off whenever you like and from wherever you are.

## **Social Action Drop-Ins**

Every Wednesday evening at 7-9pm we host drop-in space for people who wish to campaign for change, including groups and individuals. On 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, from 7.30, Cambridge Land Justice are a part of this space. On 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, from 7pm, Acorn, The Community Union are a part of this space.

## **Forest Gatherings**

On the 4th Saturday of each month from 4-5.30pm we host a Forest Gathering in Trumpington Meadows for those who are exploring spirituality. We meet in the forest school clearing just down the path from the Byron's Pool NCP car park. This gathering includes food, stories, and activities for all ages.

All are more than welcome to be a part of these conversations. Please bring your thoughts, your questions and, as much as you would like to and can, yourselves to our conversations, so that we might discuss together with openness and with care. We will be using safer space guidelines created by the Iona Community, as well as having more than one facilitator for each session, to ensure that everyone can feel safe to share as much or as little as they would like to.



## INTRODUCING HANNAH SCHMIDT

*Editor: Hannah Schmidt will soon be with us at Downing Place, coming as a Time for God volunteer. She sent the introduction below to Alex Clare-Young, a member of her steering/support group.*

Hello everybody, I'm Hannah, from Germany. Starting in September I will have the great opportunity to be a Time for God volunteer for one year in your community.

Let me introduce myself to you: I'm twenty years old, and I've just passed my Abitur-Exams, which are similar to the British A Levels. So I've finished school - lucky me :)

A year ago I asked myself what I should do after leaving school. I realized that finding an answer was very difficult. But I did know that I want to try something different and new. In Germany there's an idiom saying "to look over the rim of a plate" which I think means the same as saying "to think outside the box".

That was the moment when I got the idea of going abroad and doing a year of volunteer work. My hometown church community is in a small village in the very north of Germany, directly on the North Sea. Here I live with my family, my parents and my two younger siblings. Although St. Peter-Ording is a quite small town, it's very popular for holiday-makers because of the broad beach where you can swim, ride on horses, kite or surf. That's why my church community makes many offers for tourists - for example, there's the possibility of being baptized directly at the sea.

In my spare time I like going for a run along the dyke, or playing tennis with my friends.

I'm really looking forward to getting to know your community and meeting you all.



*Hannah near her home*

*Hannah*

## EAT IN THE ORGAN LOFT, SLEEP IN THE GALLERY....

Ever since we met, Alan and I have delighted in self-catering in quirky or historic buildings, but until recently we have never managed to stay in a church. This changed in June, when a particular place I had had my eye on for a long time was available for three days when we were too.

The Old Chapel Annexe in Nayland was a Congregational church, and after 1972 a URC, which was in use from 1864 until 1985.

Opening the large wooden door and stepping inside instantly took me back to entering my childhood church of Headingley Hill in Leeds. Same dark stained wood, arched doorways, brass fittings, trefoil window design and stout ceiling beams – but every home comfort tastefully provided, including the whole silent, airy sanctuary with grand piano as your lounge, the organ loft as your dining room, and the gallery as your bedroom, overlooking the calm space below. There is even the ‘loo in a pew’ - our favourite of the three lavatories available.



*Standing at the entrance*



*‘Loo in a pew’*



*The original interior*

Maggie, who lives in the converted cellar below, attended the church, and when it closed was so distressed at the thought of never being in it again that she looked into ways that she might live there. She is full of the history of the place, as are the bookshelves, the contents of which captivated us for our entire stay. There are minutes of the church meetings and events ('the Revd Williams now produced a glass vessel...which was deposited in a cavity in the brickwork, after which Mr. Prentice proceeded to lay the stone') posters of social occasions ('Floral Bazaar, 1934 – attractions include a Silver Tree and Miss Dorothy Walker, child impersonator') and a list of all the ministers who served there ('In 1912 Mr. Sawdy celebrated his 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary as pastor of the church, when he was presented with a purse of gold and a handsomely bound pocket Bible, suitably inscribed'). The same surnames occur and reoccur as families remained in the village – and who could blame them, as Nayland is exquisite, full of stunning preserved cottages of the past, a stream and, when we were there, hundreds of hollyhocks growing wild at the road edges.

Finding further books of early village photographs, we made it our aim to stand in the exact spots where the Victorian photographers had stood. We became steeped in the life of the village as it had been, and returning to the chapel, sat in the garden area, which contains the graves of the very people we had been reading about. We raised our glasses to them in affection and gratitude for all they had done.

Waking to the morning light through the stained glass windows, we imagined all those who had stood to sing hymns in the space, and all the life stories the building had witnessed. As we left, I turned the large iron key in the lock, and felt a unity with all the people who had done so for the last 160 years.



Search **The Old Chapel Annexe** to book online through various outlets.

*Jane Bower*

## PARTNERSHIP RECALLED: ALFRED RADELOFF

14 October 1933-23 July 2023

Alfred was born in the German city of Dessau, becoming pastor in 1966 of the St Johannes and St Marien churches there - they united after St Johannes was destroyed by British bombing, as his wife Inge informed the congregation when she was a guest, unusually, at Emmanuel's Tri-centenary celebrations in June 1987. Travel out of East Germany was difficult, even though churches in West Germany were able to reach across the Iron Curtain to provide financial assistance. Since Emmanuel had had a partnership link with the Stiftskirche, Landau from the early eighties, this was extended to form a trio of congregations. Individuals, including Mary Wright's father, John Green, (and a minister of the URC), were able to obtain visas for visits to the East, and were warmly welcomed. After the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, evidence for surveillance by the Ministry for State Security (the Stasi) emerged. The verdict suggested that John had not been regarded as too dangerous! Choir exchanges and other visits became much more straightforward later. Derek Wales recalls an occasion when he preached, with Alfred translating, and Alfred's comment later that what Derek had said was very difficult for him to translate on the spot. Contacts have been maintained by individuals across the years – it was David Flynn who passed through the news of Alfred's death.

Alfred had proved a key player in the events of 1989, known as *Die Wende*/ turning-point, for the fall of Communism in eastern Europe. He gave space at St Johannes, (rebuilt in 1955, and very spacious), as well as other churches in the area, having become District Superintendent, for groups to meet for peace services on a pattern already developed in Leipzig. Prayers for renewal featured every Friday evening from October. These then developed into rallies and marches of solidarity against what was regarded as state corruption. Alfred commented that churches were the only independent organisations within a state-controlled society, in his memoir of the "peaceful revolution" (2000), but goes on to mention a coming together of students, bus drivers (who passed on invitations to passengers to attend), and anyone prepared to risk identification by informers in the crowds. In the event, the city authorities engaged with the protesters, violence was avoided, and with the opening of the East German borders on 9 November, when the Wall was breached, the political situation changed dramatically.

During 1990 Alfred continued to be involved in local administrative decision-making of the new order, as the two Germanys prepared for unification; and he was given honorary citizenship of Dessau in recognition of the role he had

assumed and the contributions made. After retiring in 1996, he and Ingeborg moved to a German language ministry in downtown Washington DC. More recently home was in Göttingen, where Derek and Anne Wales visited them, and finally back to where everything began in Dessau. Fellow ministers in Saxony-Anhalt paid tribute, making reference to Psalm 121 and his family to Genesis 24:56.

*Margaret Thompson*



## A HAPPY WEDDING IN GERMANY

On 15<sup>th</sup> July, the Flynns and the Saxtons were able to join in celebrating the wedding of two former Time for God volunteers: Johann Friedrich Röpke and Julia Birke. Johann-Friedrich spent the year 2013-14 at Emmanuel, when Julia was a volunteer at St Andrew's Chesterton; ten years on, he is Cantor (Director of Music) at the Brüderkirche (Brothers' Church) in Altenburg (half an hour south of Leipzig, in Thuringia), while she is a school teacher there.



Altenburg is indeed a very old town, with lots of very impressive buildings, including a castle where Bach definitely *did* play the large organ still in the chapel, as well as a few blighted by the loss of ownership records under the 'two dictatorships' of the Nazis and the East German regime that followed. The Brüderkirche is an exceptionally fine protestant church built in 1905 on the site of a Franciscan monastery (from which it takes its name), overlooking the large town square. The wedding was a splendid occasion, conducted by a friend whose sermon spoke of marriages coming from grace and giving hope; a large choir and brass band supported the Sauer organ, and there was plenty of English music (Elgar, Vaughan Williams, CV Taylor, and a Rutter arrangement of Rinckart's Nun danket alle Gott).



The wedding was immediately followed by the traditional Coffee and Cakes in the church yard, supplemented by iced water given the 36°C temperature! Later, everyone gathered in the school garden, followed by a dinner reception in its large modern hall, at which family and friends entertained us with films and quizzes.



The English visitors (from St Andrew's as well as Emmanuel) were very generously looked after, at a BBQ the evening before the wedding as well as all the entertainment on the day. It was good to see Julia's brother Michael Birke (TfG 2017-18) again. The couple sat on our table at the reception, and Johann Friedrich left the communal breakfast the following morning to see us safely on to the train home. They spent five days in Cambridge immediately after the wedding(!) – Johann Friedrich playing our closing voluntary on 23<sup>rd</sup> July – before going on to a Cornwall honeymoon.

It was a very touching experience for us all. And as the cream on the top... we were able to spend a day in Leipzig on our way out, visiting Bach's church there, and met Eva Rother (TfG 2010-11) on the way back through Berlin.

*Owen Saxton*

## CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF THE NHS

*The Editor writes:* I have been one of the many, many people who have benefited from NHS health care throughout my life, and in the last few years in particular. Celebrations of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the NHS in July 1948 are taking place as we prepare this September edition of *Place Matters*. Subscribers to the [URC Daily Devotions](#) will have read tributes to the NHS in the reflections on the Bible passages in the first week of July. It's never too late to give thanks – so read on!

**URC Daily Devotions, Wednesday, 5 July 2023.** The Revd Jonnie Hill, East Cheshire & Derbyshire Borders Missional Partnership

St Mark 2:1-12: When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, 'Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and take your mat and walk"?' But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he said to the paralytic— 'I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.' And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'

### *Reflection*

In the summer of 2008, working for an NHS Primary Care Trust in Birmingham, I was planning an event to celebrate the NHS in its 60th year. Fast forward 15 years and my professional life looks quite different, but I remain convinced that the NHS is something worth celebrating and protecting.

In the reading, we hear of one of Jesus' many healings. It is not the man himself that has come to Jesus to be healed but rather he is carried by four very determined people. Undeterred by the crowds, they literally lift the roof to get their 'patient' to Jesus. These are the actions of people who care – they care what

happens to this paralysed man. They are seeking his good and healing where presumably he cannot.

Though not explicitly articulated in the values of the NHS, I believe the underlying value is love - the kind of love that is about the seeking and valuing of every human being's life, their health, wellbeing, and dignity. To me, love as expressed in a 'commitment to quality of care' is just like the actions of those who took the roof off the house and lowered the paralysed man so he could be healed by Jesus.

It's the kind of love that's about self-sacrifice – yes, NHS staff are paid to care, but I can tell you that for most, the job of caring is a vocational calling. The universal offer of health services, free at the point of need, is perhaps the closest this nation has ever gotten to 'loving' without condition, as God loves. I pray that we will each do all we can to preserve this clear foretaste of the Kingdom for the good of every human child of God.

### *Prayer*

God who loves without condition, help us to reflect your love, valuing all people as equal, seeing them as you see them, full of dignity and worth.

May we hold firmly to these values, striving always for systems that are fair. Bless the NHS, bless all who offer loving service, and bless all who will be cared for today. Amen.



## **Reform**

NEWS COMMENT INSPIRATION DEBATE

'Reform' is a magazine exploring theology, ethics, spirituality and Christian perspectives on social and current affairs, for those who enjoy reading out Christian ideas from a wide range of view points. Published by the URC, it features news, interviews, features, regular columns, reviews, letters and is read by all: Christians, people from other faiths, and those with none.

Reform is available digitally as well as in print, and subscriptions are currently available at a discounted price of £24.50 for print copies and £18 for a digital subscription.

Telephone 020 7520 2721 to set up your subscription or visit [www.reformsubs.co.uk](http://www.reformsubs.co.uk) (use the coupon code NEW at checkout to access the discount).



## AUTUMN HOUSE GROUP SERIES 2023

Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young introduces the 6-week series below.

Alex writes: my book, *Transgender. Christian. Human.* shares some of my lived experiences and theological understandings so far; but it is also a workbook, helping churches to explore the topic of trans identities in a way that honours our shared faith. Each chapter of the book includes resources, prayers, questions and activities for groups to use. Earlier this year, the Evangelism and Service Group asked the Elders Meeting to consider the Student Christian Movement campaign *Honest Church*, which calls on churches to share their views about LGBTQ+ identities honestly and openly. However, at a recent Open Table social considering this, we realised that there is still more work to be done on our understandings, as a whole church, of trans identities. The Evangelism and Service Group, and our Elders, agreed that we should undertake this work.

In our upcoming Autumn House Group meetings, I hope to offer opportunities to learn and talk about trans identities, as we consider my book one section at a time – see below for details. The meetings will be held on Monday afternoons from 2pm-3.30pm at the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn, and also on Monday evenings from 7.30pm-9pm on Zoom. The meetings will be co-facilitated with at least one other person, to ensure that there is space for open and honest conversation.

2nd October: Beginnings, reading up to page 54. This session will also include an introductory understanding of trans identities.

9th October: Transforming, reading up to page 86.

16th October: Transformative, reading to the end.

We will then have a break for one week, followed by three further sessions, which won't be specific to the book.

30th October: Trans Theology and Biblical Studies: an opportunity to discuss biblical texts which are sometimes related to trans identities and to explore our own theological understandings around trans people.

6th November: Trans Women in the Church: an opportunity to meet a trans woman and to consider her story.

13th November: Pastoral Care for Trans People in the Church: an opportunity to engage with the work of Chrissie Chevasutt, a trans community worker working out of St. Columba's URC in Oxford, and to consider how we might offer a pastoral response to trans people.

All are more than welcome to be a part of these conversations. Please bring your thoughts, your questions and, as much as you would like to and can, yourselves to our conversations, so that we might discuss together with openness and with care. We will be using safer space guidelines created by the Iona Community, as well as having more than one facilitator for each session, to ensure that everyone can feel safe to share as much or as little as they would like to.

**\*\*ALSO – on page 33, see the Notice of a 30-minute talk to be given by Alex on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, to be followed by a reception – all are invited!**



## INTRODUCING KAMILAH JONES



Nigel Uden writes: From mid-September until early Summer, we will be joined for a few hours a week by Kamilah Jones, who is spending the academic year at Wesley House, the Methodist College on Jesus Lane. She is mid-way through a Master of Divinity programme at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia.

What a privilege to be welcoming Kamilah, as well as Hannah Schmidt, to walk with us through the coming months.

*Nigel*

And as we prepare to welcome Kamilah, here is some information about herself that she has sent us.

My name is Kamilah Aminah Jones, and I'm an MDiv Candidate at the Candler School of Theology, a graduate school at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. I'm a first generation Jamaican American woman born and raised in San Francisco, California. My maternal family immigrated from the beautiful island of Jamaica, and my paternal family migrated from the vibrant city of New Orleans. I've always embraced the richness of my cultural heritage and family history, which has significantly contributed to my ongoing faith journey. Faith, music, education, and service are some of our cherished family values.

I've been honored to serve within the mental health field as a psychotherapist and provide case management, crisis intervention, and supportive services as a licensed clinical social worker: I have a Ph.D. in Clinical Social Work. I've enjoyed research, teaching, advocacy, and providing clinical services. I have a great passion for promoting safety and well-being, advocating against interpersonal violence, and empowering others to their greatest potential.

My divine purpose is grounded in love, unity, and peace. I'm a life learner with endless curiosity as a truth seeker. I love and embrace the gift of diversity. I love the outdoors and spending time in nature - mountains, beaches, parks; I love all visual, performing, and expressive art forms. And I enjoy baking and cooking for family and friends.

I feel tremendously blessed to have the opportunity to be a Chaplain Intern through The Emory Office of Spiritual and Religious Life for the 2022-2023 academic year, and I look forward to meeting you and walking together on a sacred journey.

Kamilah

**Email:** [kamilah.jones@emory.edu](mailto:kamilah.jones@emory.edu)



## **THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF DOWNING PLACE URC**

On June 4th of this year, we marked the fifth anniversary of the uniting of Emmanuel and St Columba's URCs.

On that date in June 2018, after many hours talking, praying and discerning, we came together to become Downing Place URC. It was a very special time giving thanks to God for all His blessings and encouragement to us through this endeavour.

Of course we were so fortunate that we had John Bradbury and Nigel Uden as our ministers and they put in many extra hours in the months running up to the union to help us come to a point where we were ready to take that leap of faith; to grasp this Kairos moment.

On June 4th, John Bradbury, now the General Secretary of the URC, returned to preach.

In his sermon, John spoke of the extraordinary work that God is doing in this new church. He referred to the last 5 years, which have unfolded in ways we could not have envisaged with the pandemic and then the economic crisis brought on by the war in Ukraine. So well placed in the city centre, Downing Place is reaching out to those in need and with the work of our Pioneer Minister Alex, the growth of Open Table, the groups using our building to support vulnerable people in imaginative ways, members and friends contributing in so many ways and Nigel's work underpinning our life here, God continues to surprise and bless our newly-formed church.

*Pippa Jones*

## DOWNING PLACE SPECIAL CAUSE FOR SEPTEMBER 2023



Shelterbox is a disaster relief charity that strives to ensure that no family is left without shelter after a disaster. They aim to provide essential shelter and equipment to families who have lost everything, enabling them to begin, rebuilding their lives again.

With over 20 years experience, Shelterbox has built up the expertise to enable them to provide the most effective support quickly, often reaching places that others cannot. From Cameroon, to Syria, from Ukraine to the Philippines, they have provided over 2.5 million people with help. Their website records the moving stories of people they have helped – recovering from drought in the Horn of Africa, seeking safety from conflict in Ukraine, recovering from disastrous floods in Pakistan, recovering from the trauma of the Turkey earthquakes, and many other stories.

The contents of the Shelterboxes provided to families in need will vary according to the specific needs of the situation, but typically would include a tent, tarpaulins, cooking equipment, water treatment kit, water carriers, solar lights, thermal, blankets, mosquito nets, and essential tools. The total cost of this equipment is about £600. A Shelterbox is an emergency response, a tool, a practical solution and nothing less than a miracle in the midst of disaster. Our donations this month will help the organisation provide support to more families, and in these uncertain times, with climate change and conflicts still raging, our support for people who have lost everything is more valuable than ever.

The ShelterBox book club is also well worth exploring, with interesting and unusual books from around the world, such as Black Mamba Boy by the Somali-British author Nadifa Mohamed.

There will be a retiring collection on Sunday 17 September with an opportunity to donate using a card, and donations can also be made throughout the month (in Gift Aid Envelopes where possible).

[ShelterBox Emergency Disaster Relief](#)

[ShelterBox Book Club - No Ordinary Book Club - ShelterBox](#)

## RECENT DONATIONS

### Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum - June Special Cause

We sent £1,458.81 to Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum:

- £514.87 Concert Donations
- £347.18 Retiring Collection
- £25 other donations
- £221.76 Gift Aid
- £350 York Street Contribution



### The Amos Trust - July Special Cause

We sent £1,881.96 to the Amos Trust:

- £669.16 Concert Donations
- £492.75 Retiring Collection
- £63.66 Other Donations
- £306.39 Gift Aid
- £350 York Street Contribution



The Amos Trust have written

'We wanted to take a moment to thank you for your generous 1881.96 pound donation for our 2023 Water for Life appeal, which we have safely received. Donors like you ensure that we can carry on our important work alongside our international partners. Thank you for helping us make sure that 'Every Drop Counts'!

**Hope for Justice**, our Special Cause for November 2022, have been in touch recently with encouraging news

'For the first time ever, our work reached more than 200,000 people in a single year. Our teams have shared so many amazing stories of hope, freedom and restored lives of survivors of modern-day slavery all over the world. This is not something we could do alone. It is possible because you generously decided to make an impact through your giving and by taking such positive action. Please accept my sincere and heartfelt thanks on behalf of the whole team and, most importantly, from those you have helped who will never know your name nor have the opportunity to thank you directly for the great kindness and generosity you have shown.'

*Ann Auger*



## DATE FOR THE DIARY

Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup>

On Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup>, in the middle of Commitment for Life month, we welcome the **national CEO of Christian Aid in England, Patrick Watt**, to preach at our morning service in Downing Place. We much look forward to welcoming Patrick and hearing what he can tell us about the work of Christian Aid throughout the world.

Patrick will be joining us for an informal lunch in the Hub after the service and we hope many of you will be able to stay on. There will be a sign up sheet at reception later in September. Offers to help setting up and clearing away are welcome, as are suggestions of any food you might contribute.

This autumn Christian Aid are supporting the day of action on **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September** to “Make Polluters Pay” – a campaign by several charities to urge companies who are making huge profits from the exploitation of fossil fuels to pay up to mitigate the disastrous effects of climate change they are helping to cause.



There are details of what is planned on the [Christian Aid website](https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-change/make-polluters-pay-action-day) – if this link does not work here is the full URL: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-change/make-polluters-pay-action-day>.

Finally the Cambridge Christian Aid Committee have decided to repeat our successful carol singing in the Grand Arcade. This year's date will be the afternoon of **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December**. We were so grateful for the wonderful support we had from Downing Place people last year to help us raise nearly £400 from shoppers. So do put the date in the diary and try to squeeze it in to your Christmas preparations.

We all see the news – we know Christian Aid is needed now more than ever.

*Sheila Porrer*

## THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP

Since writing the last annual report for *Place Matters* in April 2023, the CHR Tuesday Fellowship has continued to meet weekly, mainly in the church hall at St Athanasios.

We have had some very interesting and inspiring speakers. Initially we were so

fortunate to have Augur Pearce talk to us

about the history of the Coronation service, which was most apt as it coincided with the actual Coronation of Charles III. It was very interesting to learn that royal coronations existed before Christianity, but after Christianity spread in 7<sup>th</sup> century Britain, kingship was a well-known institution. After the 1543 Act of Parliament, it was recognised that all English monarchs were called to be defenders of the faith, and also that they ruled “by the Grace of God”. According to Augur, no British king has not professed the Christian faith. Augur’s talk was so helpful for our understanding of the Coronation service and its traditions.



Shortly after May Day, we were considerably entertained by the Capriole Dancers, who taught us some beautiful medieval dances accompanied by beautiful music.

We have also had an arts and crafts session, a Beetle Drive and some of us have met at the Orchard Tea Gardens. We were delighted to have Nigel Uden conduct our Pentecostal Service. We had a poetry session led by Maureen Kendall, when members participated by bringing poems to the session. We also had a very moving talk on the Leprosy mission where we learned how leprosy affects so many people. We were so pleased that we could give the speaker, Daisy Mansfield, £30 from the collection at the meeting. We were delighted to have a garden party on June 20<sup>th</sup> at Pamela Cressey’s house. It also gave us a chance to visit members of the fellowship who no longer can worship with us, and take them goodies from the party. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, Paul Nevitt very kindly gave another Bible study and this time it was about the wonderful story from Acts 3 of the healing of the lame man by Peter and John.

At the beginning of July we had our own Wimbledon strawberry and cream tea. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, Richard Lewney gave us a talk about Palestine which he visited as part of the URC delegation in 2019. He included the history of the region, and we were so sad to learn of the problems in the area, and we were encouraged to hold up the area in prayer. The following week we were invited to join Fulbourn United Reformed Church in their study of the Word. We were made to feel so welcome. We all enjoyed studying Paul’s letter to Titus, led by Nigel Uden. Although we had not been present for the earlier chapters of Titus, we were able

to appreciate the importance of doing good works and avoiding petty arguments which is so relevant for today. Finally in July we had a session bringing our favourite Bible passages to the Fellowship.

For the month of September we are planning to meet outside in members' gardens, going to Horningsea Scotsdales, and to the Orchard Tea Rooms. Everyone is welcome to join us at the garden parties or at future meetings. Please contact me - we would be very pleased to have you join us either occasionally or more often.

*Penny Milsom, August 2023.*



## **THE BIBLE SOCIETY AUTUMN SUPPER**

Friday October 13th from 6.30pm

At Queen Edith's Chapel, Wulfstan Way  
(free easy parking!)

Speaker: Dr Onesimus Ngundu

### **'The Bible Society Collection in Cambridge: a Library, a Legacy, a Living Testimony'**

*from the University of Cambridge library website:*

The British and Foreign Bible Society (now "Bible Society") was founded in 1804 with the aim of supplying Bibles and New Testaments - Scriptures - without note or comment, on a world-wide basis, in a language people could understand and at a price they could afford. To achieve this it was soon realised that a collection of standard texts would be essential for reference, and a library was established. In its first year there were some 67 languages into which at least one book of the Bible had been translated; now around 200 years later there are over 2000, and translation work continues.

*from Tyndale House website*

Dr Ngundu is the Research Assistant responsible for the Bible Society's collection of books and papers, which has been housed at Cambridge University Library since 1985. It comprises more than 43,000 printed Bibles, and has primary resources for the study of Bible translation in more than 2,000 languages. "This unique collection is the legacy of mainly British missionaries overseas," he says. "Looking after it is not only a great responsibility but also a privilege."

More details to follow!

*Penny Flynn*



## A SEPTEMBER CELEBRATION



Earlier this year, Alex Clare-Young successfully completed their studies for a PhD in Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham. In the June 2023 issue of *Place Matters* readers may have seen advance notice of an event at Downing Place URC to celebrate the award.

Alex writes: as a prelude to our House Group Series this autumn (see page 25), there will be an opportunity to hear about some of the academic insights into trans identities and theology gained during my PhD. I have chosen not to attend my PhD graduation in Birmingham, but, rather, to celebrate with a lecture, Q+A and reception with you all and some invited guests! I hope many of you will be able to attend.

The title of my thesis, for those who would like to know what you will be letting yourselves in for, is: *Trans-formations: A grounded theology, rooted in the identities, experiences, and understandings of trans and non-binary Christians*. It is soon to be published as a book by SCM Press. The September celebration event will include a half hour lecture, followed by a Q&A, then by a reception, with cake, tea, coffee, and bubbly drinks available.

It is on the **30th of September at 5pm** - please save the date, with more details to follow.

# SINGERS WANTED

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UK's leading vocal  
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## VACANCIES IN ALTO, TENOR AND BASS

### About *Cambridge Voices*:

- *Cambridge Voices* is a 12-16 voice choir who rehearse and perform without a conductor.
- Directed by Ian de Massini, published composer and former King's College Choral Scholar.
- Based in Downing Place United Reformed Church in Cambridge city centre.
- Weekly rehearsals on Thursday evenings.
- Annual performances include Paris, Trinity College Chapel Cambridge, Swaffham Prior's unique *Advent by Candlelight* event in its two churches.
- No annual subscription costs.

### Who we are looking for:

- Singers who are happy singing one to a part, spatially distanced from other singers.
- Good sight reading is useful but not essential.
- Comfortable with ensemble singing without a conductor.



**Email:** [iandemassini@gmail.com](mailto:iandemassini@gmail.com)  
[www.cambridgevoices.org](http://www.cambridgevoices.org)

## SEPTEMBER DIARY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Fri	01-Sep-23	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	03-Sep-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	03-Sep-23	Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	03-Sep-23	Open Table Social Gathering	7:00pm	The Hub
Tue	05-Sep-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	06-Sep-23	Lunchtime Concert - Osman Tack (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	06-Sep-23	Solidarity Hub Social Action Drop In	7:30pm	The Hub
Thu	07-Sep-23	Midweek Worship led by Penny Flynn	11:00am	Church
Thu	07-Sep-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sun	10-Sep-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	10-Sep-23	All Age Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden followed by a Bring & Share lunch to welcome Hannah Schmidt	11:00am	Church
Sun	10-Sep-23	Solidarity Social Action Group	7:30pm	The Hub
Mon	11-Sep-23	WCPI Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Tue	12-Sep-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Tue	12-Sep-23	Elders Meeting	7:30pm	Rooms 1 & 2
Wed	13-Sep-23	<b>DEADLINE for submitting items for 'Place Matters'</b>		
Wed	13-Sep-23	Lunchtime Concert - Constance Chow (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	14-Sep-23	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Thu	14-Sep-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Fri	15-Sep-23	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	17-Sep-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	17-Sep-23	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden followed by a retiring collection for <i>Shelterbox</i> (see p.28)	11:00am	Church
Sun	17-Sep-23	Church Meeting	12:30pm	Church
Sun	17-Sep-23	Solidarity Social Drop In	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	17-Sep-23	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Church
Mon	18-Sep-23	DEADLINE for signing up for the Gibson Lunch		
Tue	19-Sep-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	20-Sep-23	Lunchtime Concert - John Cook (clarinet) & Peter Britton (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	20-Sep-23	Solidarity Hub Social Action Drop In	7:30pm	The Hub
Thu	21-Sep-23	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	21-Sep-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	21-Sep-23	Midweek Worship led by the Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young	6:00pm	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	21-Sep-23	Evangelism and Service Group Meeting	7:30pm	Emmanuel Room
Fri	22-Sep-23	Cambridge 4 Ukraine Fundraising Concert	18:45pm	Church
Sat	23-Sep-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	24-Sep-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	24-Sep-23	Harvest Festival Worship led by Penny Flynn	11:00am	Church
Sun	24-Sep-23	Solidarity Scripture	7:30pm	The Hub
Tue	26-Sep-23	Cherry Hinton Road Fellowship	2.30pm	St. Athanasios Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Wed	27-Sep-23	Lunchtime Concert - Phillip Leslie (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	27-Sep-23	Property Management Group Meeting	7:00pm	Zoom
Thu	28-Sep-23	Midweek Worship with Communion led by the Revd Liz Caswell	1:00pm	Church
Thu	28-Sep-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Fri	29-Sep-23	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	30-Sep-23	Alex's Graduation Event (see p.33)	4:30pm	Church and Hub
Sat	30-Sep-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	01-Oct-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	01-Oct-23	Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	01-Oct-23	Open Table Social Gathering	7:00pm	The Hub

## MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

3 September	Chris Baker Liz Caswell Simone Maghenzani David Tatem  Janet Tollington	Melbourn Holy Trinity, Bottisham Chieri, Italy (in person) De Regenboog, (The Rainbow ) Arnhem Clare
10 September	Liz Caswell Maureen Kendall John Proctor Janet Tollington	Whiting Street, Bury St Edmunds Castle Street Methodist (eve) Saffron Walden URC Buntingford
17 September	Janet Bottoms Liz Caswell Deborah McVey Janet Tollington	Melbourn St James, Lode St Luke's LEP, Cambridge St Neots
24 September	Liz Caswell David Cornick Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Stetchworth & Cheveley Melbourn St Luke's LEP, Cambridge Fulbourn URC (am & pam)

### 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!

6 September	Osman Tack (piano)
13 September	Constance Chow (piano)
20 September	John Cook (clarinet) & Peter Britton (piano)
27 September	Phillip Leslie (piano)

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

## LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER

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.

*3 September Trinity 13*

Jeremiah 15:15-21

Psalms 26:1-8

Romans 12:9-21

Matthew 16:21-28

*10 September Trinity 14*

Ezekiel 33:7-11

Psalms 119:33-40

Romans 13:8-14

Matthew 18:15-20

*17 September Trinity 15*

Genesis 50:15-21

Psalms 103:(1-7),8-13

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

*24 September Trinity 16, Harvest Festival*

Jonah 3:10-4:11

Psalms 145:1-8

Philippians 1:21-30

Matthew 20:1-16

*1 October (Trinity 17)*

Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32

Psalms 25:1-9

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32





*High Summer at Downing Place*

*Photograph by Jess Uden*

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Tim Rowland

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

WEB EDITOR: Jess Uden

Please send all items to be included in the October edition to both Tim and Ann  
by the cut off date of **Wednesday 13 September.**

The October edition will be available from **Sunday 1 October.**