



**DOWNING PLACE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE**

PLACE MATTERS



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Cover image: Dichroic glass installation in the Downing Place courtyard

Photograph by Jess Uden

Read more about the project on page 16

FROM THE MINISTER

The last month of my sabbatical was planned as a journey around the parts of eastern Germany that were important in the life of J. S. Bach. And that is what it was. But it was also rather more. In several places, I found that the chapels and courts where he worked were complemented with sites of World War II significance. I think it has enhanced more than I can say how I approach November's season of Remembrance, and not least our commemoration of those robbed of life in war and in all that surrounds it, yesterday and today.

Eisenach, where Bach was born in 1685, is equally key to the study of Martin Luther (1483-1546), who richly shaped the theology that Bach interpreted musically. Two hundred years apart, they attended the same school, and a cock-stride from the museum celebrating Bach is the Lutherhaus, where the pioneering reformer is celebrated. There one can view an exhibition about how Luther's complicated approach to people of Jewish faith influenced the antisemitic principles at the core of Hitler's National Socialism. It's a sobering exploration of how some Protestant Christians sought to accommodate themselves to the Nazis through the 1920s and 30s by ridding the Christian faith of references to Jesus' background as a Jew.

In Berlin, alongside visiting the Museum of Musical Instruments and attending concerts at the Philharmonie, I spent many hours at the Führerbunker. This museum is on the site of the subterranean complex where Hitler spent his final days, and described by the London Times as 'the world's largest permanent exhibition on Hitler and the Third Reich'. It narrates the grim truth of the man and the movement he inspired until, with his lover Eva Braun, he died there by suicide in April 1945. My tour took two days; somehow I felt constrained to linger rather than pass by.

On a visit to Weimar, where Bach worked from 1708-17, I also grew in my appreciation of Schiller and Goethe, to whom a few generations later it was also home. A five-mile bus ride away, I went to Buchenwald, the concentration camp that was established in 1937. There, more than fifty thousand internees perished, and a quarter of a million were held in appalling circumstances. One of those who died was Pfarrer Paul Schneider, a Protestant Pastor who refused to recant his anti-Nazi critique, even when the Confessing Church had lost the power of its voice. In the memorial to him, on the wall of his solitary confinement cell, the text says it all: 'So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.' II Corinthians 5.20

In Eisenach, Berlin, and Weimer I was deeply affected by the stark dichotomy. On some days there was an almost irreconcilable contrast between the music I cherish and the war that shaped the world into which I was born a decade after it ended. W. G. Sebald (1944-2001) was a German writer, who became a respected academic at the University of East Anglia. Renowned for his novels looking back on the events immediately before his birth, he can seem to be depicting events of ‘utmost horror and disaster, sometimes dwelling on pain and death with a fascination and regularity verging on schadenfreude’, as one reviewer has it. (Stephen Mitchelmore) Reflecting upon post-war Germany, Sebald ponders its remarkable capacity to rebuild for the future, after so much that wrecked its past. He wonders whether the way we cope with the past is by limiting our focus upon it: ‘looking back, we look away’.

The current news from Israel and Palestine has a ghastly impact locally, and alarming implications globally. What is happening there is beyond our ken. We probably think it is unacceptable, unjustifiable, and unbearable, even though demonstrably the protagonists have persuaded themselves it is their only option. Outraged by the images and incensed by the actions, looking away is so tempting. Maybe we turn to Bach – *Erbarme dich, mein Gott*, have mercy, my God. Moreover, the modern world exposes us to such horrors in a way that was impossible before the internet, with the instant and constant communication it enables. Feeling over exposed, we look away.

But ... there’s that word again; there’s always a ‘but’ ... dare we look away? I recall the way that John Stainer, a later composer than Bach, portrays the scene at the cross. In *The Crucifixion*, he has Jesus borrow from the Lamentations of Jeremiah: ‘Is it nothing to you?’ (1.12) Originally, they are words of lament over the state of Jerusalem, and somehow seem so apposite at the moment. Of course, it *is* something to us. Watching what is happening in Re’im, Gaza and so many other places means a great deal to us. Indeed, that is precisely why we find ourselves looking away, because its effect is so profound. Then we go back to Calvary, and not only hear Stainer’s Jesus cry out, ‘Is it nothing to you?’, but also ‘Behold, your mother.’ Even as the crucified Christ is seen with outstretched arms embracing a wounded world, so he is heard sending us into it to care for all those affected by the suffering.

Looking away may be inevitable, but let it be momentary, a way of being strengthened to respond to what we behold. So it is that I find myself wanting to do three things:

First, to pray – in the quietness of my own privacy, but also together, and there will be opportunity for that from 12 Noon until 7pm on Thursday 2nd November in the Church. Prayer changes things because it changes the one who prays.

Secondly, to give, so that all the efforts to help people suffering can be funded. Look for the ways to do that which suit your situation. There will be some through Downing Place Church.

And thirdly, to re-double our commitment to a lifestyle of peace-making. Ultimately, it is not enough to *love* peace, nor to *long* for it, not even to *pray* for it. Jesus's counter-cultural Sermon on the Mount honours those who *make* peace. Few of us will have direct influence upon what is happening in the Middle East, but even in our homes, workplaces, shops, and faith communities, we can be determined makers of peace. We can resist the urge to revenge, to over-reaction, to self-righteousness, and thereby be making peace rather than marring it.

Yes, we may have to look away in order to catch our breath, but let it not be our defining response to what we see. After all, when God looked at the world and saw that its goodness was damaged, God came in Jesus – ‘the gift of God’s very self to the world’, forever to be known as the Prince of Peace. May something of the image of that God be found in us, People of Peace, ‘ambassadors for Christ.’

Nigel Uden



Revd Nigel Uden with Vijay Bob Komanapalli, who will preach for us on Sunday 5 November.

Photograph by Stillvision Photography

PRAYER IN A TIME OF CONFLICT

The Gaza–Israel conflict has been ongoing for nearly two decades. On 7th October 2023, as we were preparing this issue of *Place Matters*, Palestinian militant groups launched a coordinated offensive on Israel, with rockets launched from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. Hundreds of Israelis were killed. Israel has responded with airstrikes, resulting in many deaths. A huge humanitarian crisis is developing in the Gaza Strip.

The situation in the Middle East is volatile and fast-moving. Any evaluative commentary in a periodical such as *Place Matters* would be out of date by the time it was published.

In his contribution to this issue, our Minister writes that he finds himself wanting to respond to such events in three ways: by prayer, by giving, and by peace-making. Please turn back and see what he has written.

At [Prayers In A Time of Conflict - United Reformed Church](#), the URC offers three prayers for public or private use following the outbreak of hostilities in Israel and Palestine. The second of these prayers follows now, and concludes this item.

Why the hell can't you stop this, Lord?

Why the hell can't you stop this, Lord?

Why can't You protect the women and children?

They will suffer the most: hiding in cellars and safe rooms.

Children too afraid to go out to play or attend school.

Wives and lovers scared to death about those taken hostage.

Women crying in dark and fear whilst the men plan to wage war and seek revenge!

Why the hell can't you stop this, Lord?

Those kids won't grow up to trust and make peace.

Israeli kids will be taught to fear their neighbours and look at the sky with trepidation;

Palestinian children will suffer in yet more blockades, further economic punishment,

new life-limiting travel restrictions, additional educational restrictions.

Children from all sides learning to hate and wage war!

Why the hell can't you stop this, Lord?

Hundreds have been killed, thousands wounded,

hostages taken, people afraid to leave their homes for fear of fighting.

Political leaders will seek to maximise their importance,
using dreadful words and tools to legitimise their views,
whilst the world looks on wringing its hands!

Why the hell can't you stop this, Lord?
You're Almighty aren't You?
Jew, Christian, Muslim – all agree on that don't we?
You've the power so use it!
Show some of that glory we say You have!
Don't you care for the women and the children, Lord?

Has the Cross taught you nothing, my child?
Might is found in weakness, power in humility, glory at the tip.
I weep with the women and the children;
I rage at the violence and hatred;
I curse the hypocrisy.
I've been to Hell remember, but it's up to you to stop it.



Image: Mohammed Ibrahim/Unsplash

**MEMORIES OF KEITH RIGLIN,
MINISTER OF ST COLUMBA'S AND FULBOURN 1997-2008**



Bishop Keith's consecration as Bishop of Argyll & The Isles In St John's Cathedral, Oban

Photograph: Tom Campbell

It was with profound shock and sadness that we recently learned of the death of Keith Riglin. For one so full of life, this news was hard to take in.

Keith's influence was wide, from the West Indies to the South of England and the Scottish Highlands, with some denominational diversity along the way. Throughout, he was dedicated to reforming worship, being faithful to the Word of God across changes in culture and time. Keith's many accomplishments have been reported elsewhere, so here, I aim to speak a little of what he meant to some of us at St Columba's.

St Columba's was an inclusive church when I joined in the early 1990s, but it was Keith who brought inclusion, particularly matters of human sexuality, into open discussion, and it was part of his legacy that we joined the Inclusive Church network. Keith encouraged music, enjoying working with Ian de Massini and involving Cambridge Voices in our worship. In his time here, we appointed Giles Waller as lay worker, started the Gibson Lunch Club and also changed from a management committee to the group structure.

Keith loved church and delighted in being there. The dignity of worship was integral to his ministry, yet in the minutes before entering the sanctuary, he often

enjoyed a giggle in the vestry. When he came to 'preach with a view' at St Columba's, he was reported to have quoted the Wizard of Oz to Ailsa Buchanan when waiting to emerge from behind the curtain. He also loved a giggle with the children, and children's addresses featured the emergence of a range of characters and props from under the lectern, from Rev Timms from Postman Pat, the occasional appearance of a Dr Who character, and items borrowed from Elaine Barker, including an England flag, an elastic band ball and a dressing gown.

Keith spoke very easily about matters of faith to the children through those humorous and relatable children's addresses, to strangers on a train who challenged him because he wore his ministerial collar, and to bible study groups where he explored and explained passages with seeming ease, provoking thought and new understanding.

Keith's casual approach to deadlines and the formality of rules could at times be frustrating. Elaine remembers Keith's habit of arranging a get together or meeting followed by lunch in the Gibson Hall without asking if anyone was booked in. It wasn't unusual for someone to knock on her door

to say they couldn't have their dance/yoga/exercise class as there were a lot of Ministers having their lunch in there! He always looked so surprised when Elaine responded that they had to either move or join in with the class, but he knew she would always find them a space somewhere else in the building.

Elaine also recounts turning the TV on one morning whilst having a morning coffee, and being surprised at what she thought was a disaster movie on. She was trying to work out what was happening when Keith screeched into the yard and knocked at the door asking if he could come in. They stood in the living room together in complete silence and watched 9/11 unfold. Keith had been listening to the reports on the radio on the way into church in disbelief and that's how he and Elaine ended up sharing one of the most shocking events in history together as they watched it happen on TV.

Nicholas Morgan recalled an incident when Bill Tripp visited the manse to repair a leaking garden tap. Without an appropriate washer to hand, Bill proposed to use a 'traditional' method of wrapping the leaking joint with string and applying lard as a temporary seal. To the request for string, Keith was happy to acquiesce



but on asking for lard, Bill received the reply,

“Well I have some low fat vegetable spread, would that do?”

“No minister, that certainly would not do ...”

Several of our members, recently on visits to Oban, received a warm welcome from Keith. Helen and Colin Christy met him in great spirits, clad in purple, in a coffee shop. Ailsa remarked how overjoyed he was at the beauty and location of where he was now living, sadly only for a short time. He talked about how he loved us all and how his time with us had been a very happy time in his life. He took Ailsa to the Chapel he had created in his house - with beautiful prayer desks, subdued lighting, candles and a cross. It was just two weeks later that he died.

A complex character, Keith meant different things to each of us. I will miss this intelligent, funny and high energy person. May he rest in peace.

Yvonne Norgett

with thanks to all contributors.



On 1 October, Mike Thornton of Stillvision Photography came to take photographs during Morning Worship. You will see some of the photographs that he took on this occasion and others, in this edition of Place Matters, and over the coming months.

CHRISTINE CLARKE – A PROFILE

I was born in St Andrews, as was my mother before me, and grew up with my parents and younger sister in a house which my mother's family had built in 1840. My grandmother, and then my uncle and aunt, lived next door. There was a connecting gate between the gardens through which we often went to visit them as they had a TV long before my parents did. Our house filled up in the summer when my cousins and their mother came to stay for the whole of the summer holidays. I remember long sun-filled days (it hardly ever seemed to rain) spent at the beach having picnics, learning to swim in the cold water and leading the beach donkeys and ponies or, as we grew older, swimming in the tidal outdoor pool. In August there was always great excitement with the arrival of the Lammas Market which set up funfair rides in two of the main streets in the town, pitches being auctioned off early on the first morning by the local auctioneer. My uncle used to win coconuts rifle shooting for us, and then drilled holes in the coconuts so that we could drink the milk.

I was brought up in the Church of Scotland and, for many years, my father was an Elder and a member of the Kirk Session in the Parish Church of Holy Trinity in St Andrews.

I attended St Katharine's and St Leonard's Schools before graduating from St Andrews University with an MA in French and Spanish. During the long vacations of my final two years, I worked as an au pair for a family in Santander, in Northern Spain. Eventually I lost touch with them, but 30 years later I managed to re-connect with them through the magic of a Google search, and I have subsequently been to visit them several times. They do not speak English, so that is my incentive to continue with Spanish lessons to this day.

After graduating I moved to Glasgow to complete a postgraduate diploma at Strathclyde University before moving to Edinburgh, where I was accepted for a postgraduate training scheme with The Royal Bank of Scotland. I was the first female graduate they had employed, and for some reason they thought that I was a totally different species from the male graduates they had employed previously. After years of distance learning in my "free time" while working for them 5 days a week, I became a member of the Institute of Bankers in Scotland. On moving to one of their London branches I was left to find my own accommodation as they only had a list of digs for male employees moving from Scotland. I like to think that I helped to pave the way for other women who would follow me. One case in point being that, while working in the Law Department, I was passed over for a place on their cricket team until I complained. I had played cricket at school and so it transpired that I became the first and only woman in

Head Office to take part in an inter-departmental cricket match. I had two spells working in London branches of the bank, and while there I attended Pont Street Church of Scotland: I played tennis and did Scottish Country Dancing with members of the congregation.

It was on a sailing holiday in Ibiza that I was to meet my future husband, John, in 1970. We married in St Andrews University Chapel in 1972 and I resigned from The Royal Bank to move to Cambridge, where John was working for The Ministry of Agriculture Plant Breeding Research Institute at Anstey Hall. I became a member of St Columba's in 1972. My father, who worked in the University of St Andrews as the Quaestor and Factor (Finance Officer), had known Ronald Speirs when he was Chaplain at the University, so St Columba's became the obvious choice of church for me to join. I knew nobody in Cambridge so Tuesday Club meetings, plus tennis and badminton clubs, were a useful tool to enable me to integrate into the town life.

I worked part-time in the Abbeyfield Society office until our daughter, Helen, was born in 1975. Our son, Duncan, was born 20 months later, and I was a stay-at-home Mum until they were both settled at primary school. Both Helen and Duncan were christened at St Columba's and attended Junior Church for some years.



Our young family

Probably my most interesting job followed, working in Community Education administration at Chesterton Community College. I worked mornings and evenings during term time, which suited admirably while our children were young. No two days were ever alike (a bit like Downing Place Hub) and I had the opportunity to meet a large number of different people from all walks of life.

John took early retirement just as Helen and Duncan started on their university education at Oxford (Biochemistry) and Sheffield (Theoretical Physics) respectively, so it was time for me to find a better paid job. On graduation Helen followed in my father's footsteps and trained as a Chartered Accountant, working in London. Duncan followed his childhood dream, served in the RAF for 16 years, and for over 20 years has flown as a Search and Rescue helicopter pilot, currently in NW Wales.



Christine and family by the pier at St Andrews

For 12 years I worked as Company Secretary for a Scientific Publishing Company until all the office staff were made redundant totally unexpectedly one day. Aged 57 I realised it would be difficult to find alternative employment. I had always wanted to have my own business, so I used my basic redundancy money to train as a hypnotherapist. I pursued this fascinating and humbling job for about five years until the economic downturn meant people were unwilling or unable to meet my fees; but during that time I learned so much about human nature, and

how resilient people can be in the face of all sorts of difficulties. Also, it helped me to recover from the anger, stress and hurt occasioned by the unfair treatment by my one-time employers. During client sessions I think that I must have relaxed as much as they did - I was totally unaware of police cars and fire engines racing past the house with klaxons blaring.

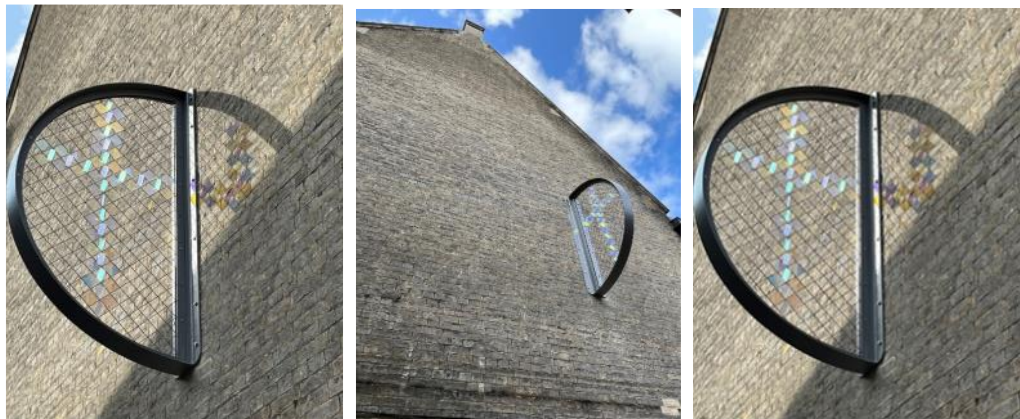
Retirement brought the opportunity to join the University of the Third Age in Cambridge, to go for long dog walks with like-minded friends, and to travel abroad on even more 'holidays of a lifetime' than we had done already, including trips to The Falkland Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Peru and Namibia. John and I were keen walkers and most of our holidays involved hill walking wherever possible. We now have four young grandsons, and we look forward to our trips to see them whenever possible. My visits to Scotland are fewer now that my sister has died, but I have recently discovered, via Ancestry DNA, that I have some distant relatives on my father's side living in Blairgowrie, so my link with my Scottish roots has not totally disappeared despite my living south of the Border for over 50 years. I intend to follow up on those when the opportunity for another trip to Scotland presents itself.



Celebrating our 50th Wedding Anniversary on Iona in April 2022

DICHROIC D-SIGNS: BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR ...

Margaret Reynolds



Our new dichroic glass sign in the Hub entrance courtyard

For the redevelopment of the Downing Place site, the item “Signs” was listed on our Building Group agendas right from the early meetings in 2018.

How could we attract attention from the many passers-by, bus passengers, event-attenders? What could be striking way to celebrate who we were and welcome people in off the street?

Archangel, our chosen architects, showed two signs on their drawings early on, one on Downing Street and one in Downing Place, each sign indicating a way in. I offered to look into the practicalities: signwork artists, materials, successful examples. We wanted to consider cloth banners, but we were told that the City Planning Conservation officers ‘banned’ banners - on the grounds that they would soon look tatty. We decided we didn’t have the time to argue.

So, if not banners, then surely large metal permanent banners at right angles to the building would be approved - these would stay intact, bright and clean. BUT NO: the wind pressure on a lightweight piece of metal (1-metre-by-2 metres) is significant. Wind force is even more dangerous for a site on a built-up street, both because the wind is channelled and therefore stronger, and if a sign becomes detached it could very well hurt someone.

Meanwhile, a sub-group consisting of myself, Jane Bower and Lynette Williamson had found a sign artist we could agree on: Chris Wood, with a studio in Mildenhall. Examples of her work could be seen on King’s Hedges Road (Future Business Centre)



*Façade installation by Chris Wood
Light, Future Business Centre,
Cambridge*

The three of us visited Chris's Studio in January 2020. We also heard that an anonymous donor was offering to pay half the cost of the signs.

In Chris Wood we discovered an artist who catches light and bounces it around - her signatory material is dichroic glass. This bends light into rainbow colours and works with the movement of the sun to beam it around a space. Typically she creates light sculptures for highly glazed lobbies and entrances to corporate buildings, INSIDE.

We started flipping through ideas of what limitations there would be OUTSIDE, at the mercy of the weather, with people below. Chris was completely open to the challenges of our situation: the movement of the sun during the day, wind gusts and

traffic headlights at night - all could illuminate dichroic glass and beam reflections around. She explained that if we wanted the sign perpendicular to the wall for visibility, we needed to reduce the surface area that the wind could push around. Her suggestion was a D shape; of course we approved: "D" for Downing Place! She then suggested a material that the wind could blow THROUGH. She experimented with various sizes of mesh and fixed inside dichroic glass squares that would flicker with air movement. Together we decided to accentuate the D shape with linear LED strip lighting at night. Chris wondered if a cross might be enough to signal our church presence, without using words.

As Chris required, we had the structural engineers (Andrew Firebrace Partnership) rework the design for safety, since the whole point was to suspend the signs over busy streets. Their factor-of-safety doubled its weight.

The architects, Archangel, also liked these ideas, and planning permission was received for one D sign each on the Downing Street and Downing Place facades.

Chris had fabricators she often worked with, Echo Fabrications, in Fulbourn – the signs were commissioned and construction was completed by January 2022. Building Group visited the Echo site later and was really pleased with the finished signs. Progress at last!

However, in June 2022 our contractors, Coulson Building Group, reported problems actually installing the signs. Pedestrian, cycle and vehicle traffic on

Downing Street is considerable – all of these would have to continue, with protective hoardings built, so the sign could be put in place. Or, we were told, we would have to CLOSE THE STREET at 11 pm and pay overtime to the installing workers – cost of installation? £14,000, plus overheads, plus VAT - and that was just for the Downing Street sign.

We almost gave up.

However, seeing the D signs at the fabricators' convinced us it was better to erect the signs somewhere on the Downing Place site, than to persist in allocating huge amounts to raise them above the busy public pavement. We rethought yet again: in the Hub Entrance courtyard there is a lot of sun on the south wall of the church that could play on the sundial D shape in the course of the day. If we at least erected one sign at this entrance many could see and enjoy it, even if they had already found their way in.

So on 4 October, 5 years after our first sign discussions, one of Chris Wood's arresting dichroic D's has gone up and shining. Chris is delighted; her response: "That's great news, I was beginning to think this was never going to happen, so well done you!. It looks great, I hope you are pleased with it. I'd love to come and see it at some point."

The hope is that if people enjoy the beauty of this D sign, they will then feel it is worth installing our second sign as planned over the Downing Place Welcome entrance.

What do you think?



The Welcome Area

Photograph by Stillvision Photography

HARVEST FESTIVAL AT ELY CATHEDRAL

Shirley O’Riordan, a Downing Place friend, visited Ely Cathedral for their Harvest Festival recently and thought members might enjoy some of the photographs she took.



A stunning display representing local farming, seasonal vegetables and flowers



Local bakeries created traditional loaves representing the harvest



Traditional crafts, spinning wool in medieval dress



Displays created by the Flower Guild on the theme of Creation, and particularly about Water.

THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP



Recently we have been joining Fulbourn URC for the Word, a Bible Study led by Nigel Uden on the third Tuesday afternoon of every month at 2.30pm. We have been made to feel so welcome with hospitality of tea and coffee and biscuits as well as including our usual hymns in the programme starting with “Let there be love shared among us” (MP411), and finishing with “ May God’s Blessings surround you each day” (MP 460). When we first came together in July we looked at the book of Titus and found it to be very helpful and relevant for today with its encouragement to be ready to do good in every way.

We have now started on the Gospel of Mark and we are really looking forward to discussing it in depth, as it is considered to be the first of the four gospels to be written. We have been encouraged to read the book “Mark’s Jesus” by John Proctor in addition to the Bible. According to John Proctor, working with Mark’s gospel “is like getting to know an honest and interesting friend”. Mark’s Gospel also links with the Old Testament by referring to Isaiah’s message of hope and homecoming. “ How wonderful it is to see a messenger coming across the mountains, bringing good news the news of peace” (Isaiah 52, v7). Now more than ever we really need good news, especially as we are all so saddened by the conflict between Israel and Palestine, Russia and Ukraine and in Sudan.

These meetings with Fulbourn give us a chance to get to know members from Fulbourn URC so we are very grateful for this opportunity. We also would be very pleased if anyone would like to join us, either at our meetings at Fulbourn or at St Athanasios Hall.

Penny Milsom

DOWNING PLACE SPECIAL CAUSE FOR NOVEMBER 2023 CENTRE 33



Like many Cambridge residents, I am reasonably confident about getting from home to wherever and then back again, but sometimes the city's A to Z maps have to be consulted. For Centre 33, the guidance on its web-site mentions the blue door in Clarendon Street (number 33!), where advice for young people has been offered for 40 plus years on a drop-in basis.

This support is free and confidential, and often covers complex needs, including caring responsibilities, isolation, mental/sexual health, and support with food, together with advice on housing, money, jobs and benefits. From this base, other centres have been opened in Ely, Huntingdon, Peterborough and Wisbech, all of whose staff and volunteers have been trained and DBS checked.

“We are here to listen and to help ... the right help at the right time can prevent problems escalating”.

None of us in Downing Place, and beyond our doors, can be unaware of the many stresses and worries to which young people have been exposed during and following the Covid pandemic. This month's Special Cause is for Centre 33, a member of BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), for which an offering will be taken on Sunday 19th November. Alternatively, you may donate directly, at <https://centre33.org.uk/> and read much more about the valuable work being done. You might even check out that blue door.



Margaret Thompson

LAST MONTH'S SPECIAL CAUSE



September's Special Cause, for Shelterbox, the disaster relief charity, raised £2,324.89. The Lunchtime Concerts raised £1,042.80; the Retiring Collection plus other donations totalled £537.11; £394.98 was reclaimed in Gift Aid and our York Street Fund provided a further £350.

Thank you all so much for your generosity.

A MESSAGE FROM MULTAN WOMEN'S HOSPITAL, PAKISTAN OUR SPECIAL CAUSE FOR AUGUST

Dear Sister Ann,

Greetings in the highly exalted name of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ!

I am writing this email on behalf of Women's Christian Hospital, Multan Pakistan, management & staff to extend our deepest appreciation and many thanks to you & your Church family for your generous gift for the ministry of our Lord through WCH. We praise & thank God for your Church family's love & concern regarding this ministry. It is our sincere prayer that God Almighty will continue to bless & use you all for His honor & glory. Please also extend our Love & kind regards to each member of your Church family.

Blessings always,

Peter Massey

Assistant Director/Administrator

POETRY AT DOWNING PLACE, No. 6 – TIM ROWLAND

Editor: This series on Downing Place Poets began in December 2022, with two of Ruth Conolly's poems from her collection The Bright Land. Since then, poems from Downing Place poets have graced four more issues of Place Matters. Meanwhile I have been waiting in the wings: I very much hope to continue the series in 2024 – please see my endnote - but in the meantime, it's my turn, by default.

Although my 'day jobs' have been in mathematics and mathematics education, I have always enjoyed words. I like writing: selecting words and working on sentence structure. For most of my adult life that writing has been prose, for exposition or publication, but in my teens and early twenties I sometimes 'took refuge' in poetry – as if I were making an entry in a diary of some event that I knew that I'd want to remember. My first poem was inspired by music, and a certain Cambridge college chapel ... please read on.

KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

I first heard King's College choir on a visit to Cambridge when I was about 16. I cycled from East London on my own, stayed at the YHA in Tenison Road, and went to evensong at King's. As chance had it, the day was Ash Wednesday, so at the evensong service I heard the Allegri Miserere. I was utterly ravished by the sound, the sights, the smell of it all. I must have written this on a subsequent visit, perhaps two years later. The reference to the Reubens painting, and its antechapel location, would probably date it.

Soft strains of soothing song shake the saintly shapes
That gaze upon the quad beneath.

I enter.

'Tis dimly lit, faint-hearted candles entrusted
With a mighty task, and do not fail.

I tread with reverent step towards the distant altar,
Stopping to join the Magi in adoration.

My pew is humble, yet boldly carved.

A prayerbook from a bygone age before me.

We wait in expectation, some kneel

To share the scene with unseen worshippers.

We stand.

The choir creeps forth

A rustling hush penetrates the brain in preparation.

Then - the choir sings

I shiver, I tremble with emotion as discord is resolved.

Reaching the air again as dusk begins to gather

I pace towards the solemn river.

The grass is light and fresh, and the

Distant chatter of excited voices may be heard.

I stand on the bridge and gaze at the silent waters as they

Slide away, gracefully

Sometimes bearing a wooden punt on broad shoulders.

The lavish chapel looms through the lucent air

Its presence becoming louder and louder.



King's College Chapel, with poppies, June 2020

Photograph by Ann Auger

Last April, Ann Phillips was the third Downing Place poet in this series. When I visited her at Cambridge Manor Care Home, three weeks before she died. I read – with her agreement - the poem that now follows. I had written it many years ago, but Ann must have been only the third person that I'd shared it with. It's thirteen lines long, in four stanzas, and she rewarded me with a smile at the end of each of them.

LOVE STRAYED IN

This is about an episode that didn't make a lot of sense, but it happened anyway. I was 20, Tracy 17 perhaps. Her parents ran a sweet shop on Leyton High Road. We had little in common, yet briefly - so briefly - I found myself drawn to her. The date on the poem – 15th February - just might be significant. All these years later, I still like the first stanza, and the notion of love 'straying' in, as if by accident.

Love strayed in the other night
When eyes met oft, and smiles were warm.
Small feet and denim jeans were sweet
I thought.

We danced, hands small and warm
Were lost in mine, but not dissolved.

So passed two hours
The heart so high, the parting swift
'Ere coach to pumpkin turned.

The night was dreamless
No image drawn
And love strayed out
As broke the dawn.

WAITING IN THE WINGS

And finally, something that I wrote relatively recently, although it connects to my having been in the cast of several plays, in my teens and twenties especially. I dream every night, even now, and the poem records a recurrent dream, or dreams. It's prose-poetry, and it's allegorical. In the last few years I've sometimes deliberately positioned myself 'waiting in the wings' as I decide to undertake things that I think might go wrong ... The Stratford Bard got there first, of course.

All the world's a stage – and ...
I am standing in the wings, ready
to make my entrance
I see a few actors and some faces in the audience
I'm waiting for my cue, but -
I'd like to say that I've forgotten my lines, but
I'm not sure that I ever knew them.

A few years later, again
I am standing in the wings
Ready to make my entrance
I see a few actors and some faces in the audience
I'm waiting for my cue, but -
I have no idea what the play is, or my role in it.

Life's like that you know -
All the world's a stage.

A PostScript from the Editor

Six Downing Place poets so far, then. That prompts me to repeat what I wrote in the May 2023 issue – are there any more? If any other *Place Matters* reader has two or three poems that they would be willing to share in a future issue of our magazine, please let me know – see the back cover for contact details. Thank you.

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

Back from summer and settled into the new academic year, we have made a small change in our Junior Church set-up with the younger group. The age range of our children is quite large, and we realized that it had become difficult to fulfill the needs of all children. We now start and finish together, and the older children who are in KS2 (age 7-11) at school, will now go out to the Hub if possible, to have a further conversation related to the Bible passage of that Sunday. In this article we would like to share with you an impression of our activities using this new set-up.

On 17 September, we explored aspects of Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant, focusing our session on the words 'Thank you, Sorry, Please and Forgive'. We began by singing 'Thank you Lord for this new day' adding our own suggestions of things we were thankful for. We then considered times when we might do things that perhaps would not please God, demonstrating this by drawing on wipe clean boards and erasing anything we had drawn that we were not happy with, likening this to saying sorry to God from our hearts and being forgiven. Sometimes it is easy to say sorry but not truly mean it and we used the British Sign Language action for 'sorry' to demonstrate doing something from the heart. We separated into two small groups to talk about the Bible story. The younger ones discussed the actions and feelings of the three characters at different points in the story, while the older children thought more about how it feels to be forgiven and to forgive. Our craft activity was to decorate a teaspoon (tsp) which we could use as a visual aid when praying to God, reminding us to say thank you, sorry and please. The older children linked this to the word trespasses and the line in the Lord's Prayer about asking God for forgiveness and to help us forgive others who hurt us. We concluded our session with a 'teaspoon' prayer

The following week we started our session with some singing, accompanied at the piano by Ailsa. We started learning a new song 'from my knees to my toes' with many actions, which we now can add to our repertoire. We then had a little treat: skittles. First only the younger children got a few skittles, which made them happy but it didn't feel fair to the others. Then the others got more skittles, which made some of the children who got less a bit sad. We then made sure that everyone got the same amount, but it started us off talking about fairness and that life is not always fair, and that it is better to focus on what we have than on what others have. We then watched a short film about the parable of the workers in the vineyard, and realised that God is actually very generous. He gives us much

more than what we deserve! Whilst the older children went to the Hub to think about this a bit more, the younger ones started to fill a plastic cross with sand in various colours. We could take this home as a reminder about God's generosity.



On 1 October, our theme was 'changing our minds'. We began by playing a game where the children were asked to do the opposite of what they had been told to do as an introduction to our Bible story of the Parable of the Two Sons (Matthew 21: 23-32). We then sang a song about Zacchaeus, the cheating tax collector, who saw the error of his ways after talking to Jesus. That prompted us to think of situations where we might not have done the right thing. After watching the short video adaptation of the parable by children's writer Nick Butterworth, we broke into two groups to recap on the Bible story and discuss the behaviour of the two sons. The older children considered the question of when it is appropriate to change our minds about something we have said or done. We all made simple 'tents' recording good intentions inside them for the coming week. We concluded that what we do is more important than what we say and that changing our minds is what Jesus would want us to do when we get things wrong.



The second Sunday in October, we welcomed Hannah Schmidt to our Junior Church, which had 9 children whose ages ranged from 1 to 9 years. Everybody had a picture of a treasure chest and told each other about their most treasured possession. We looked at a picture of a vineyard and discussed together what God has given us. We told the sad story of how the tenants treated the vineyard owner's land. We thought of our responsibility to look after the things God has given us. The children decorated their treasure chests with their favourite possession.

Elza de Bruin, Lorraine Thornton and Daphne Thomas, with thanks to all the leaders and helpers for their contributions.

GOD CONFOUNDS OUR EXPECTATIONS

Deborah McVey writes -

When we bear one another's burdens we fulfil the law of Christ (Galatians 6.2), those laws of love and compassion and tender concern. So I thank you for the ways in which friends in Downing Place and wider have shown all these Christ-like qualities to me since I broke my arm in late August. Many know the story but it bears retelling as an encouragement to us all when we pray.

Falls are usually unexpected, and it was early evening on a Friday at the end of August when I tripped over in the garden, carrying something which obscured my view of the ground. Paramedics and an A&E department under immense pressure attended to me over the next ten hours, and a multi-break of my humerus was found. A heavy arm brace was fitted, I've worn it continually since, then a clinic visit one week later suggested surgery would be the best course of action. I agreed to take part in a trial and was randomised to surgery rather than arm brace, this HUSH (humeral shaft fracture study) trial is to determine which method of treatment of this kind of fracture has the best outcomes. I was glad to help with this trial especially when my surgeon said surgery would actually be his preferred course of treatment since my bones are getting on in years and may not mend easily.

Then followed the most frustrating weeks of waiting for surgery, with a fair amount of pain and very little sleep as I have to sleep sitting up, not easy. Although I was waiting for surgery, the backlog and strikes meant it was postponed three times over the next five weeks. Then unexpectedly I was called in for an X-ray, and lo and behold, with my own eyes I witnessed the new picture of my arm which showed the bone all joined up beautifully. Six weeks before there had been a visible gap between the two halves! We were amazed! As was my surgeon who was clear that now no surgery was needed.

All our prayers had been for the surgery to happen but God works in mysterious ways, so in the wonder of our body's natural healing, my humerus had healed itself. I was concerned that I would not be able to be part of the HUSH trial, but was assured that I would still be useful!!

Thank you all for your prayers for William and me over this time, which certainly included some tough days. We pray for one another in faith, but it is always God who answers prayers, somehow and often in unexpected ways. As Patrick Watt of Christian Aid said in his sermon, "*God confounds our expectations.*" That struck home.

Then there was a glorious moment recently when we brought Molly to church. We were sitting in the Courtyard during coffee and Nigel came to sit with us. In our conversation he remarked how marvellous it was that Mother Nature had healed my arm. Molly responded very swiftly, “I think you mean God.” A lovely moment followed when of course we all agreed this was One and the Same. I then concluded in fun “Well, it comes to something when one of our oldest members puts the minister right!” You can imagine how Nigel chuckled ! Thanks be to God for the fun and the love we share in our ever increasing church family.



Deborah with friends after worship during Dedication Weekend, November 2021

Photograph by Stillvision Photography

TREES - A PERSONAL REFLECTION

by Ann Auger

As a lifelong lover of autumn, with its crisp days and bright colours, I have my favourite trees – the ones which can be relied on to put on their best display at this time of year. Of two sycamores near our house, one is far more stunning than the other – starting with a flush of crimson across the green, and erupting into a copper glory which seems to last and last. Whatever our favourite season, it is likely that trees are part of the reason for feeling drawn to that time of year – from the excitement of the first sighting of a tightly furled green bud in March, to showers of blossom in May; full-leafed majesty in high summer through the fruitfulness and glories of autumn; to the Christmas trees without which it would simply not be Christmas!



My favourite sycamore near our home

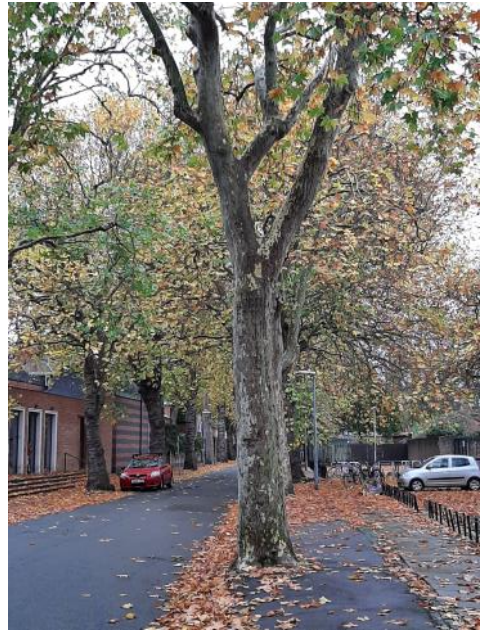
Of all objects in the natural world, trees are arguably the most interwoven with our language and consequently our thought. Trees are a rich source of metaphor, enabling us to articulate complex ideas in a few words – we might research our family trees, or have a very deep affiliation to the place where we consider our roots to be. Moving away from our roots, we could go out on a limb and branch out into new places and activities. We may plant a seed of thought in another’s mind, which might blossom into something great.

‘There’s Crow Tree!’ said my husband, when I visited his place of work over the summer. A tree beloved by the local corvid community, if you look closely you could see black shapes dotted around the branches. Trees offer a habitat

and a home to many species, and how universal is the need to have a space to call your own? How many individuals – avian, insect, animal.... call a particular tree ‘home’?

Trees can anchor you to a particular place. In the city centre, I am deeply attached to the enormous horse-chestnut tree outside King’s College Chapel. Standing like a guardian, it has watched many generations of students hurtling down King’s Parade, late for lectures, and it has outlived even the most venerable of college fellows. Perhaps their longevity is why we plant so many of them – how many trees have been planted by visiting dignitaries, to commemorate an event or the opening of a new building? A new tree is a sign of hope and growth, a provision for future generations who will sit under its branches when the planter is long gone.

My favourite street in Cambridge has always been Sidgwick Avenue, the leafiest of Cambridge streets, which I walked almost daily as an undergraduate, on my way to the Sidgwick Site for supervisions. Recalling those cherished memories of student autumns, I sometimes go for a lunchtime walk there, scuffing through the piles of copper leaves and enjoying the relative peace of a road off the main tourist track. It has become increasingly hazardous as the numerous tree roots have broached the path and created steep hummocks. So trees also *disrupt* our lives, because nature is at heart messy – I trip over a tree root which has been hidden by the fallen leaves, and my car windscreen is sticky with sap in spring from the aforementioned sycamores near our home.



Sidgwick Avenue in autumn

Much space was given recently to the felling of the famous tree at Sycamore Gap on Hadrian’s Wall. Some were puzzled at the amount of attention a single tree was receiving. I feel a deep sense of connectedness to the area - the first house I lived in was built on top of where the Wall ran, and a mile further west my grandmother lived near the first sizeable stretch of extant wall at Heddon-on-the-Wall. I walked on the Wall many times holding my grandmother’s hand – much like the photograph on the cover of Ann Phillips’ book!

The stretch of Wall near Sycamore Gap is steeper, precipitous, challenging. When I walked that section, many years later, I was stunned and moved by the tree which suddenly appeared below me as I came over the top of the wall. We almost never physically see a tree from above unless it's through the window of an aircraft. This was much more immediate – no glass window – and intense. I was there – really there.

As I carefully descended the steep Wall and approached the tree, it felt like an act of pilgrimage. The site had a very distinctive atmosphere – a sense that you had stepped outside time, a sense of connection with the past, a sense of the presence of all those who visited that place and left there the imprint of their love. The tree, a living entity, stood as a witness and a sentinel, guarding that precious spot.

So I feel the destruction of this tree on a very personal and profound level, but I also know the tree is not dead, that nature resists human attempts to eradicate it, that there will be healing for the site and for those who grieve for it.

This brings me to my final tree - the Tree of Life in Revelation 22:2, whose 'leaves are for the healing of the nations'. This final scriptural tree provides a counterbalance to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 2, as a symbol of hope for a troubled world. With the floods and earthquakes, war and persecution of the past weeks and months, we are overwhelmed in the face of such widespread loss of life and displacement. Our prayers feel like a tiny drop in a desolate ocean. But the great arc of scripture, from the rebellion of Genesis 2 which brought death and destruction, to the healing, light and life of Revelation 22, gives hope of healing and redemption.

Jesus, may we ever be
rooted, grafted, built in thee.

(Bread of Heaven, Josiah Conder, Rejoice & Sing 442)

(all photos taken by me, from a camera roll full of tree photographs!)



*The Sycamore Gap tree viewed from the top
of Hadrian's Wall in winter*

EASTERN SYNOD MEETING 14TH OCTOBER 2023

Penny Flynn reports:



The URC Eastern Synod meeting on 14th October 2023 took place at Castle Hill URC, Ipswich.

Much of Synod's uplifting gathering was focussed on partnership and whole-life discipleship. Revd Jo Clare-Young, settling into her role as Mission and Training Officer, was first to speak. Looking to Moses, Jesus and the early church as seen in Acts chapter 6, as examples of some who worked in partnership with others, she asked how Eastern Synod members might begin the process of Mission Partnership, as agreed at the previous gathering. Jo encouraged whole life discipleship as the way forward, to ensure individuals are prepared for team-work. She referred to the URC's Stepwise Groups, which has a first Synod-wide short course running from 2nd November, and a 'Leading your churches to grow' course, helping to plan for growth, which would be led next year by Jo and Nicola Grieves (Children's and Youth Development Officer). There was a booklet for all elders entitled 'Explore', more of which the church will hear once the elders have explored its contents together.

Two visitors from East Midlands Synod enthused about Mission Partnership, with one telling us how it was working in his area and grouping of churches. Their minister is a 21st century practitioner, walking alongside the churches, in which much hard work is paying off, bringing them together in unexpected beneficial ways as a priesthood of all believers with real connections being made.

Revd Alex Jacob was welcomed back to Eastern Synod after a period away on other missional-related work. Alex was inducted during the closing communion service to the post of Synod Transitional Minister; his role will be to work with groups of churches, one group at a time, to help them find their way forward as Mission Partnerships. As Alex was the tutor of my Training for Learning and Serving foundation course local group, I was especially pleased to see him again.

Jubilee Ministers were celebrated, some in person and others in their absence or on the live-stream, including Revd Elizabeth Caswell, for her 50 years in

ministry. Congratulations, Liz, and the Moderator's thanks for 50 years of faithful service.

Another friend of our church, Revd Peter Ball, was attending his last Synod before retirement, but there was a sense that Peter would remain within the Synod beyond the end of the year.

The work of the Pioneer church developing in Northstowe sounds exciting, and now there is an opportunity to bid for land on which to create an ecumenical, interfaith and multi-use building on a plot in a favourable position. Synod heard from the C of E minister to the town, Revd Dr Beth Cope, as well as from Revd Dr Janet Tollington who is involved in the preparations for the bid. The resolution, 'Synod affirms the Trust decision to support the Northstowe Church Network bid for Section 106 land for faith and community use' was passed, and money from Synod resources was available to support the bid.

As always, other reports were received and resolutions passed, but there was not much need for discussion or questions as everything was well prepared and clear cut. And also, as always, there were many vacant opportunities to be involved in the work of the Synod, for which people were sought.

Further information can be obtained from the Minister or Penny Flynn, your Synod Representative.



Minister and Elders preside over the consecration of the elements during Communion at Downing Place.

Photograph by Stillvision Photography



Visit from Christian Aid's CEO

On Sunday 15th October we were delighted to welcome Patrick Watt, the CEO of Christian Aid, to Downing Place. Patrick is the Head of Christian Aid in England, and travels all over the world to further the work of our local partnerships and set up new ones.

Patrick talked to us, and to the children, about the work of Christian Aid throughout the world. We also heard about Commitment for Life, our Special Cause for October, and its relationship to Christian Aid - about three quarters of the funds raised by Commitment for Life go to Christian Aid, most of the rest to Global Justice Now. Patrick stayed with us for coffee and lunch, and was able to meet Christian Aid supporters from Downing Place and from other Cambridge churches. After lunch he said more about his work and his experience in the voluntary sector, and then answered our questions.

Many thanks to all those who came, and provided such a generous lunch, which we all enjoyed.

Christmas Appeal

This year's Christmas Appeal supports women in Kurigram in Bangladesh, a country which we in Downing Place have chosen to support through Commitment for Life.



Photo credit Fabeha Monir/Christian Aid

Christian Aid writes:

In Bangladesh, an extraordinary group of gifted women artisans and entrepreneurs are embracing new technology, to revive ancient art forms, craft beautiful beadwork, or make colourful clothing, to sell online.

Life is challenging in Kurigram, Northern Bangladesh – one of the most disaster-prone areas of the country. The climate crisis hits people hard. And for women, opportunities are even more limited, with societal norms to marry young, and little scope for study or future work.

Girls as young as 13 are preparing for marriage, but thanks to Christian Aid, some young women have been able to develop their skills.

Kakoli Khatun, 21, is studying for a degree at college. At the same time, she's running a successful business after receiving training and start-up funding support from Christian Aid and our partners, Aid Comilla.

***“I didn't have any dreams a few years ago. I didn't have any money to do anything. To do something, I had to ask for money from my brothers and father... I explained to my parents that I don't want to marry, let me grow up. I want to study now. I am in the first year of my degree course” -
Kakoli***

This Christmas, you could help young women like Kakoli launch a business online and earn her own independent living.

Make Saturday 9th December your looking forward to Christmas day!

Downing Place Christmas Fair in the morning, carol singing for Christian Aid in the afternoon.

After last year's successful carol singing session in the Grand Arcade, the Christian Aid committee are again looking for singers, players, and general helpers to raise funds for the Christmas Appeal. This is also a way to remind people that we are still around and active, now that the house to house collection is reduced, and the street collection no longer happens.

It was good last year to see the support we had from shoppers. Many of course averted their eyes, but many others said how much they appreciated what we were doing. And it is enjoyable once you get started. So do think if you can spare some time to stand with us – and sing with us – on **Saturday 9th December, 2 till 4 in the afternoon.**

Please let me know if you would like to help.

Sheila Porrer

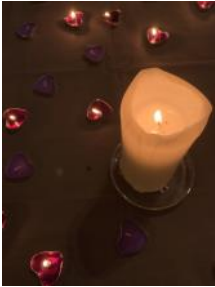
PRAYER VIGIL

*Thursday 2nd November
from 12 noon to 7pm.*

In church - Prayer vigil for the current Israel - Palestine conflict.

A time of prayer and reflection, with words, music and silence.

Come for as long or as brief a time as you wish.



SPECIAL PREACHER

Sunday 5 November at 11am

Vijay Bob Komanapalli (see p.6)

Vijay has worshipped at Downing Place over the past couple of months, and will be known to Sunday and Thursday worshippers.

On 5 November he will be talking about his ministry as village Evangelist in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Worship on Remembrance Sunday will start at **10:50am**, to ensure we can observe the 2 minutes' silence at 11am

NEWCOMERS LUNCH

Sunday 5 November from 1pm

The Pastoral Care Group will be hosting a Newcomers' lunch after worship on November 5th.

If you started attending DP in the last 12 months, do come along. No need to sign up, but perhaps you could let Pippa Jones or Hazel Sanderson know please. If you forget to do this, just come along..

It will be a light lunch of vegetable soup, bread (gluten-free available) and cheese.

Members who would like to come would also be very welcome.

MORNING GET-TOGETHER

Monday 6 November 10.30-12.30

A friendly social gathering with refreshments in the home of Pamela Cressey, 147 Thornton Road, Girton.

Lifts can be arranged – please contact Liz Barrow,



HOUSE GROUPS FOR ADVENT - 'WATCHING AND WAITING'

29 November, 6 December, 13 December

Both in person and via Zoom

Plans are in progress for three sessions looking at paintings, accompanied by thoughts and meditations to accompany them.

Week 1: The angels, the Visitation

Week 2: The animals, Adam & Eve

Week 3: The midwife and the Roman Empire

There may be two daytime groups, because of hosts' space, one on a Wednesday afternoon, and possibly an evening group on Zoom, also Wednesday.

Please watch the Weekly Notices for further arrangements.

Penny Flynn, House Group coordinator

OPEN FORUM

Saturday 20 January 2024 10.30-12.00

There will be an Open Forum in the Church involving members, adherents and staff to discuss the use of the Hub.

"What is our vision for the future of the Hub? Do we want to increase the times when it is open?"

Please do come if you can to contribute your thoughts and ideas.

Coffee will be available from 10am.



MEMBERS' NEWS

Congratulations to Janey and Mark Reacher and Colin and Helen Christy who have been celebrating the birth of a grandchild in recent days.

GIBSON CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Monday 4 December 12.30pm

Cambridge Regional College, King's
Hedges Road

See Elaine for the menu and to make a booking.

£18 per person for three courses and coffee



CAMBRIDGE
VOICES

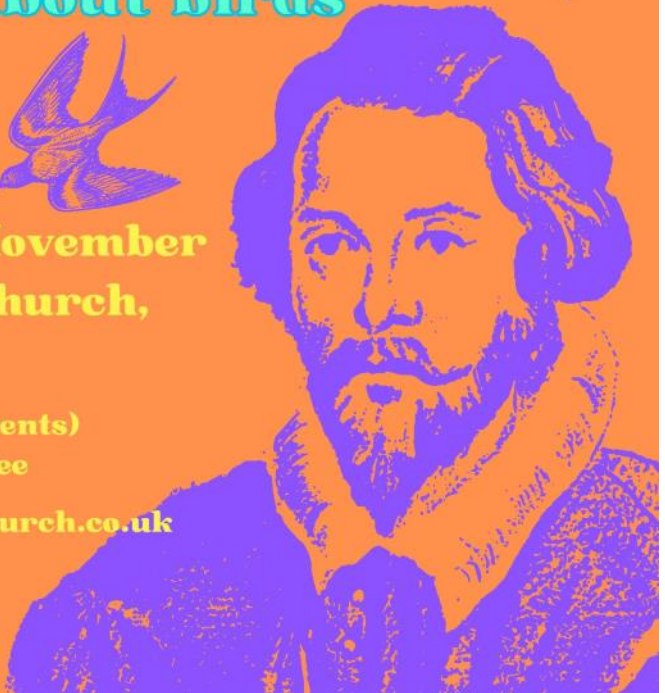
BYRD SONGS

Music by Byrd
and songs
about birds

1.15pm, 5th November
All Saints' Church,
Jesus Lane

Tickets £6 (£5 students)
Ages 16 & under free

www.thepaintedchurch.co.uk



Sing for Joy!

Revd Nigel Uden and Organist Ian de Massini
invite you to attend a celebration of hymns and associated organ music

Everyone will be invited to sing six of their favourite hymns, interleaved with Nigel Uden's reflections upon the lives of the poets, weaved together with Chorale Preludes upon each of the hymns, including music by Johann Sebastian Bach, Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Carlos Simon, and Egil Hovland, together with a specially commissioned composition for the concert, played on the church's world-leading Digital Organ by Ian de Massini

4.00pm - 5.00pm, Saturday 11th November (Remembrance Day)
Downing Place United Reformed Church, Cambridge

Free admission



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!

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1 November | Titika Maragoula (soprano) & Richard Carr (piano) |
| 8 November | Tim Palmer (tenor) & Hugh Taylor (piano) |
| 15 November | Yohei Nakajima (viola) & Miho Sanou-Nguyen (piano) |
| 22 November | Holly Cook & Janna Hunecke (flutes),
Jingle Gawley (piano) |
| 29 November | Zacharias Brandman (piano) |

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



SAVE THE DATE

**DOWNING PLACE URC
CHRISTMAS FAIR**

Saturday 9 December

10.30am - 3pm



NOVEMBER DIARY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Wed	01-Nov-23	Lunchtime Concert - Titika Maragoula (soprano) & Richard Carr (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	01-Nov-23	Solidarity Hub Social Action Drop In	7:30pm	The Hub
Thu	02-Nov-23	Midweek Worship led by Penny Flynn	11:00am	Church
Thu	02-Nov-23	Prayer Vigil for Israel & Palestine (see p.38)	12:00 - 7pm	Church
Thu	02-Nov-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	04-Nov-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	05-Nov-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	05-Nov-23	Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden Preacher: Vijay Bob Komanapalli (see pp 6 & 38)	11:00am	Church
Sun	05-Nov-23	Newcomers' Lunch (see p.38)	1pm	The Hub & Gibson Hall
Sun	05-Nov-23	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	05-Nov-23	Open Table/Solidarity Social	7:30pm	The Hub
Mon	06-Nov-23	Officers' Meeting	10:15am	Minister's room
Mon	06-Nov-23	Morning Get-Together (see p.38)	10.30am	Pamela Cressey's home
Tue	07-Nov-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	08-Nov-23	Lunchtime Concert - Tim Palmer (tenor) & Hugh Taylor (piano)	1:00pm	Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Thu	09-Nov-23	Prayer Meeting	10:15am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	09-Nov-23	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Thu	09-Nov-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	09-Nov-23	World Church & Public Issues Group Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Fri	10-Nov-23	Pioneer Minister Steering Group	3:00pm	Rooms 1 & 2
Sat	11-Nov-23	Sing for Joy (see p. 41)	4:00pm	Church
Sat	11-Nov-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	12-Nov-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	12-Nov-23	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Professor David Thompson	10:50am	Church
Sun	12-Nov-23	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	12-Nov-23	Solidarity Social Action Group	7:30pm	The Hub
Mon	13-Nov-23	DEADLINE for signing up for the Gibson Lunch		
Mon	13-Nov-23	Finance Committee Meeting	7:00pm	Emmanuel Room
Tue	14-Nov-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	15-Nov-23	DEADLINE for submitting items for Place Matters		
Wed	15-Nov-23	Lunchtime Concert - Yohei Nakajima (viola) & Miho Sanou-Nguyen (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	15-Nov-23	Solidarity Hub Social Action Drop In	7:30pm	The Hub
Thu	16-Nov-23	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Thu	16-Nov-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	16-Nov-23	Midweek Worship led by Simone Maghenzani	6:00pm	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	16-Nov-23	Elders' Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Sat	18-Nov-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	19-Nov-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	19-Nov-23	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden followed by a Retiring Collection for Centre 33	11:00am	Church
Sun	19-Nov-23	Solidarity Social Drop In	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	19-Nov-23	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Church
Tue	21-Nov-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	22-Nov-23	Lunchtime Concert - Holly Cook & Janna Hunecke (flutes), Jingle Gawley (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	23-Nov-23	Midweek Worship with Communion led by the Revd John Proctor	1:00pm	Church
Thu	23-Nov-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	25-Nov-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sat	25-Nov-23	Solidarity Hub Forest Gathering	4:00pm	Trumpington Meadows
Sun	26-Nov-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	26-Nov-23	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	26-Nov-23	Church Meeting	12:30pm	Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	26-Nov-23	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	26-Nov-23	Solidarity Scripture	7:30pm	The Hub
Tue	28-Nov-23	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St. Athanasios Church
Wed	29-Nov-23	Lunchtime Concert - Zacharias Brandman (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	30-Nov-23	Midweek Worship led by Dr Alan Rickard	11:00am	Church
Thu	30-Nov-23	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	02-Dec-23	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	03-Dec-23	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	03-Dec-23	Advent Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	03-Dec-23	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	03-Dec-23	Open Table/Solidarity Social	7:30pm	The Hub

MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

5 November	Chris Baker Penny Flynn Janet Tollington	Haddenham Methodist Fowlmere Melbourn
12 November	Simone Maghenzani John Proctor Nigel Uden	St Neots URC (am) Girton Chapel (pm) Reigate Park URC Fulbourn
19 November	Janet Bottoms Janet Tollington	Fulbourn Whiting Street, Bury St Edmunds
26 November	Chris Baker David Cornick Janet Tollington	Trinity, Burwell Bury St Edmunds Buntingford

LECTIONARY FOR NOVEMBER

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.

5 November (4th before Advent)

Micah 3:5-12

Psalm 43

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

Matthew 23:1-12

12 November (3rd before Advent)

Wisdom 6:12-16 or Amos 5:18-24

Wisdom 6:17-20 or Psalm 70

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

19 November (2nd before Advent)

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

26 November (Christ the King: Sunday before Advent)

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Psalm 95:1-7a

Ephesians 1:15-23

Matthew 25:31-46

3 December (Advent Sunday)

Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-37





Ready for Communion at Downing Place, Sunday 1 October 2023

Photograph by Stillvision Photography

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 December/January edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of **Wednesday 15 November**.

The December/January edition will be available from **Sunday 26 November**.