



**DOWNING PLACE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE**

PLACE MATTERS



**ISSUE 59
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Cover photograph by Jess Uden

FROM THE MINISTER

Looking back, I suspect that one of the things I believe about preaching was instilled when I was far too young to realise what I was absorbing.

Throughout my time as a choirboy at the Parish Church of a small Surrey village, the Vicar used frequently to start his sermon by saying ‘The other day, when I was at the Spar shop, I met X, and we got talking.’ It may have been Miss Hedges, the Matron of the local orphanage, one of whose charges was amongst my best pals at Primary School, and the first Afro-Caribbean person I knew. Or it could have been Mrs Alexander from the estate of local authority homes, Mrs Noble, the retired Naval commander’s wife, or Mr Burgeon, the local farmer, who specialised in potatoes. The interlocutor could also have been one of the Boy Scouts of whose troop the Vicar was a beloved and inspirational leader. They (I was never a sprout) thought his double decker bus was especially cool, parked as it was on the Vicarage drive ready to take them to their annual summer camp. A Magdalen man (BA 1941), and slightly esoteric, this Vicar, Mr East, was nevertheless all things to all people. And those conversations informed his sermons with anecdotes about what was shaping people’s lives. So it was that he didn’t preach ‘at’ us but ‘into’ our situations. (*NB All names have been changed*).

In truth, you would legitimately wonder whether I heard anything when he preached, because we choirboys were allowed to read books during the sermon ... unless it was a visiting preacher. Mind you, if the guest speaker was so good that they were invited back, then we could return to our novels! My schoolboy favourite was Anthony Buckeridge’s *Jennings*. But multi-tasking was obviously possible because time and again I was aware how Mr East’s encounters with village worthies informed his perspective on the Bible passages for that day.

Preaching today is no less challenging than it was then. Nor is there any less imperative to ensure that it is relevant to people’s lives, addressing both the challenges and troubles we face and our need for the ‘good news’ of God’s grace to offer us hope. That is why I have come to treasure the 1999 book about preaching by Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon*. Professor Wilson suggests a shape for the sermon that I have found to be a reliable blueprint. Whilst their order can vary, he urges that there should be ‘four pages’, each one a tool both for teaching (he says, ‘we should never assume our listeners know the text’) and for preaching. They are:

- first, an exploration of the world's troubles as described in the Bible passage,
- compared, secondly, with some aspect of trouble in today's world;
- thirdly, a reflection upon how the Scripture describes God's grace as a response to the trouble,
- and then, the fourth page proposes that good news as a word of grace for today's world.

With such a quartet one can ensure that the vicissitudes of our daily life, or of our problematic world, are seen to have echoes in Scripture. Similarly, in the way the Bible's wisdom and poetry, history and doctrine offer theological insights to its immediate audience, so we today might hear a message to caress or cajole us, to inform or inspire us. Instinctively, Mr East 'got' the four pages of the sermon. Encounters in the Spar shop opened to him the pages about the world's realities, just as Scripture opened the ones about God's grace.

For today's preacher, I believe the apologetic task remains of especial importance. I don't mean 'apologetic' in the secular sense of saying sorry (though The Church surely has things for which to be penitent), but rather as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines apologetics: 'the intellectual defence of the truth of the Christian religion'. We are The Church in an era of evangelical atheism, of renewed interfaith dialogue, of a refocused interface of science and religion, and of religion in conversation with many another philosophy. Moreover, The Church's profile in society has so evolved that it can no longer be taken for granted that our voice in political debate will automatically be heard, less still respected. Yet, all these things so influentially shape the debate in the public square that, in order to give that 'intellectual defence', preachers need to be as astute regarding the 'pages' about the world as they are regarding the Biblical ones. Some of that wisdom is still to be found in the Spar shop, whilst there is as real a need as ever there has been for preachers to be familiar with the newspapers, the internet, and the library.

For Downing Place Church, over any given period sermons need to reflect upon matters as intimate as parenting and dying, human identity and personal decisions. In the same way, all of us need stimuli for our thinking about topics as ever-present as believing, questioning, and doubting, and as ubiquitous as justice, equity, and peace. We still need to be reassured that God loves us, most wondrously as we see it in the living and dying and rising of Jesus Christ, whose saving work we ponder through Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

Simultaneously, there are more Downing Place-specific matters that might be helped by the ‘four pages’ treatment:

- how we each share our resources of time, talent, and treasure in order to continue building upon what Emmanuel and St Columba’s Churches have bequeathed to us;
- discerning what it is God calls us to be as a Church in the centre of this globally significant city, which is nevertheless the United Kingdom’s most unequal; and,
- embracing changes that are inevitable whilst also being a precious sign of new life.

Even as Jennings and Darbishire distracted me, Mr East’s preaching was sowing the first seeds of my faith in Jesus Christ. It was also modelling how to preach, an art that I continue to learn, grateful for every revelation outside the supermarket and inside the Bible.

Nigel Uden



ABOUT RITUALS

In the previous edition of *Place Matters*, Jane Bower wrote about some ‘small rituals’ that she observed, to mark Advent and Lent. One, for example, involved reading one of the 24 chapters of Luke’s gospel each day, beginning on December 1st. This led to a discussion in which Jane and I wondered about other ‘rituals’ in our lives, and in the lives of others. The word ‘ritual’ has specific connotations in religious practice, but it can just mean the repetition of some habitual action – and how that helps (or perhaps hinders) our faith, or a relationship, some kind of expertise, or our wellbeing.

At the conclusion of Jane’s article, I wrote: “*Editor*: If you’re willing to share some practice, some ritual, some ‘habit’ that has enabled you to mark, or observe, some season of the Christian year, or some particular life-episode, please get in touch with Jane or Tim. We might be able to compile something for a future *Place Matters* issue – anonymous, if you wish”.

It was very good, then, to receive an email from Hazel Sanderson. You’ll see what she wrote below. And then, only 2 or 3 days later – an unexpected coincidence. The Sunday morning Radio 4 schedule includes a ten-minute item just before the nine o’clock news - *A Point of View* – in which someone reflects and comments on something, sometimes topical, that interests them. On 4th February 2024 it was Sara Wheeler, an English travel author and biographer. Her topic: ‘On Ritual: Sara Wheeler ponders the value of ritual and its role in

improving character and society”.

I was transfixed as I listened! – mainly because I had been wondering whether or not to wait for any more responses to our call to readers to share some ritual in their own lives. I will just mention a few of the things that Sara Wheeler spoke about – you can hear her broadcast on BBC Sounds at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001vsqm> She suggested that the recent pandemic lockdown saw the introduction of certain ritual practices to everyday behaviour, such as the wearing of masks, one-way pavements, hand washing and staying two metres apart. Some of her friends had told her that they hold on to some of these covid rituals, because they find them comforting. Perhaps it relieves them of the burden of decision-making - some, at least - as they go about their day-to-day lives. She observed that ritual helps a community to cohere, and the origins of ritual lie far back in human experience. 300,000 years ago peoples in southern Africa used natural colourants to make objects red in order to invest them with significance. Some 500 years BCE the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, proposed that ritual improves character, to the benefit of society as a whole. To quote Wheeler, “The hirsute sage personally loved a good ritual - he famously fiddled about moving his mat so it was exactly straight before he crossed his legs and sat down on it”. She spoke about one of her earliest experiences of ritual in a Bristol brownie pack, sitting cross-legged like Confucius in a circle in a Nissan Hut, going through a series of chants and hand signals under the wing of ‘Brown Owl’.

So, at last, we come back to Hazel, who wrote: “My go-to at Lent, and often in Advent, is the story of Christ as told through art. I choose one painting per day, and study it by looking at it, and/or reading about it. I like the visual impact that art gives and find different artists’ take on any particular subject very varied and helpful (or not) . One can always learn something new by really looking. When I have time, I will write down a list of my favourite art works and create a schedule, but usually I’m guided by a word or phrase I’ve read or heard during the day, and then I go looking. I don’t always manage every day, but I try. I tend to use a mixture of images on the internet or in books. My usuals include a website www.artuk.org - and these books:

Tim Marlow (2003) *Easter in Art*. Five Arts.

Gabriele Finaldi et al. (2000). *The image of Christ*. National Gallery.

Rebecca Hind (2012). *The faces of God: 1000 images in art*. Carlton.

Neil McGregor & Erika Langmuir (2000). *Seeing Salvation: Images of Christ in Art*. Yale University Press.

Thank you, Hazel. *Place Matters* would welcome any further rituals that readers have to offer.

ZOE BENNETT - A PROFILE

My association with Emmanuel and St Columba's churches goes back many years, mainly through my friendships with colleagues and students in the Cambridge Theological Federation. In the 1990s my daughters Naomi and Abi attended the Emmanuel youth group, YPSEG, introduced by Chris and Mary Wright's daughter, Julia. But it is only since the YouTube services in lockdown that I have become a regular 'attender', and only since November 2022 that I have been a member. I suppose I was a kind of Downing Place 'lockdown baby'; I remember people talking on the Zoom coffee about 'when we go back to church' and I was thinking that for me it wouldn't be going back but coming regularly for the first time.



With St Columba's and the Downing Place site I have an even longer and rather different association, dating from the early 1970s, and repeated in the 1990s, when I was a member of the Cambridge University ballroom dancing society which met in the large hall. I have done ballroom dancing since I was a small child, starting, as was common in the north east of England in the 1950s, when I was about six years old - at Mrs Capps' dancing academy in Newtown Aycliffe, Co. Durham.

I was brought up in a non-church-going family. My mother was an English teacher, my father worked in what is now known as HR, initially for Bakelite Limited (remember Bakelite?) My mother's side of the family from Newcastle included a line of strong left-wing socialists; my father's from Manchester included an artist - many of his watercolours hang on our family's walls. Here is one looking towards Sandsend from Whitby, which I include not only to honour my grandfather but because Whitby was the place of our family holidays every year till I was eighteen.



I acquired my love of cold water swimming, a love which has been revived since the Jesus Green Lido has been opening all year, on the Yorkshire coast.

Although I have lived in Cambridge longer than anywhere else - from 1971-4 as a student at Girton College, and again from 1985 onwards - and despite my formative teenage/secondary school years having been spent in Birmingham, I

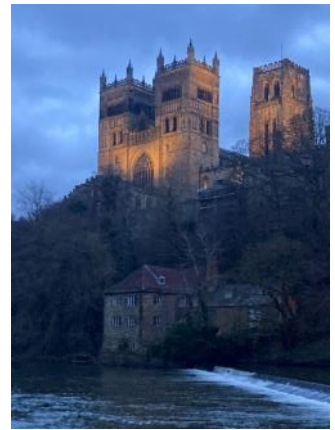
think of myself as a northerner by birth, family connections, and first love. The photo at the head of this profile was taken last year at Ashness Bridge in the Lake District, where I have loved to walk and swim and just be, all my life. Of my three daughters, two were at Durham and one at Newcastle during their university years.

So mountains, lakes, moors and seas are home. Cambridge and the Fens, their rivers and the Norfolk coast are a second, adoptive home. They too are much loved; I have walked Cambridge to Hunstanton along the river (NOT all in one day!), Hunstanton to Cromer along the coast path, Norwich to Great Yarmouth along the Yare.

So much for geographical journeying. My faith journey has been rather different from the journeys of many of you who have written these profiles over the last few months (all of which I have hugely enjoyed reading – thank you). At around the age of fifteen I felt I wanted to attend church, which I had never done before. I suppose I never had doubted I was Christian. I knew quite a bit from Scripture lessons at school, and billboards outside churches and Christmas carols. The latter were particularly influential on my understanding of the faith, as I guess was CS Lewis through the Narnia chronicles. For me it was about imagination as much as about understanding.

At this time a Roman Catholic friend visited from Germany. I went with her to the local church and once she had explained I couldn't go up for communion until I became a Catholic (let alone till I was baptised) I decided to become a Catholic. But my mother had strong views on that, so I tried the local Baptist church – but the sermons were unendurably long and I didn't know anybody. So the Church of England at the top of the road it was – no objections from my Mum, shorter sermons, and a thriving youth group. I was baptised and confirmed and became a member of the Church of England. There I remained (for many years serving as a Lay Reader) until about eight years ago when I became increasingly convinced, for many reasons, that I could no longer with integrity remain a member of the CofE.

As a member of staff in the Cambridge Theological Federation I was embedded in an ecumenical Christian community and so could compensate for some while for not being part of a specific local church community. When I retired I was invited to be a Fellow at Wesley House, which has been a great



*Durham Cathedral from
Prebend's Bridge - early
morning walk, January
2024.*

privilege and which gave me a worshipping and working community to be part of. And then we get to where I started this profile – with Downing Place, and the YouTube services during lockdown. I have been drawn to many aspects of the Downing Place Christian community – but perhaps the most important have been the warm and sustained welcome by so many people, and the values to which the church community is committed.

I have, as many do, wrestled with changes and developments in my faith as I have grown older. Much of my research in practical theology has drawn on the work of John Ruskin, the Victorian art and social critic. It has involved research and reflection on his engagement of the Bible in social critique, and on his commitment to the importance of seeing things well. But Ruskin has also been to me a companion along the road – a man in whom early certainties of faith wrestled with the doubts and realities of his time. His refusal on the one hand to compromise his integrity, or on the other to run away and throw everything overboard, has been an inspiration and consolation to me. Here is a photo of Brantwood, his house on Coniston Water in the Lake District (plug to anyone who has never yet visited it ...!)



I have been retired since 2018. My professional working life didn't start until I was nearly forty; before that I was mainly bringing up my daughters and working alongside my husband who was an Anglican priest - at Warwick University in the Chaplaincy and in a parish in Bedford. My working life in the paid professional sense really began in 1990 when, after doing an MPhil in Modern Theology, I was appointed to a post as a tutor in Christian Doctrine at Westcott House in the Cambridge Theological Federation. I later added Adult Theological Education to my brief, and, as a development of these alongside my interest in Feminist Theology, in 2000 I became employed by Anglia Ruskin University to run their MA in Pastoral Theology and later developed the Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology. I was still effectively working in and for the Cambridge

Theological Federation – and one of the joys of Downing Place is renewing friendships with former students and colleagues.

I had an unconventional academic career. For several reasons, I didn't do a PhD earlier in life when opportunities arose, but by the time I was running an international doctoral programme and supervising students to successful completion of their doctorates, my employers (Anglia Ruskin University) both put pressure me, and also provided the means for me, to achieve a PhD through Published Work. It was a deeply creative experience to reflect critically back over ten years of research and work. The ARU doctoral robes in my graduation photos from 2013 remind me of the joys and the tensions of inhabiting Cambridge as an alumna of both the old and the new universities. I am deeply proud of my association with both.



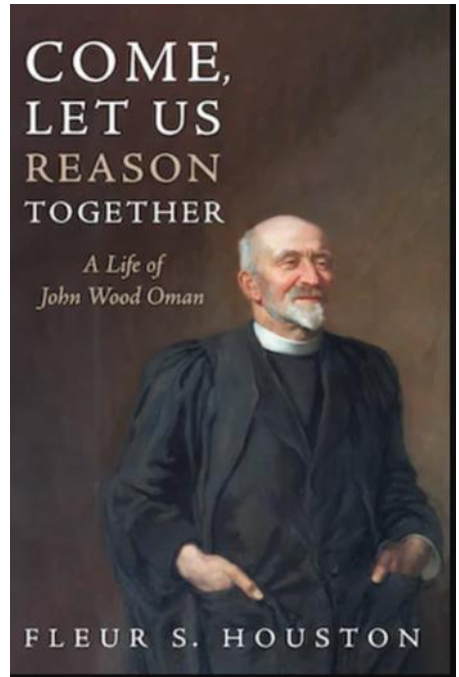
The heart of my vocation is teaching. This scroll with its beautiful calligraphy, was given to me by one of my Professional Doctorate students in Hong Kong when I retired. Its words - the teacher's way spreading limitless like the spring breeze bringing rain - sum up well my aspirations as a teacher. For me teaching has been in both church and academy, but also in family. During lockdown when I was enlisted to help with online teaching for my grandchildren I learned fast that teaching small children is infinitely more demanding, and takes much more preparation, than teaching adults!



I have left this very important thing about me till last – I am the grandmother of six glorious grandchildren, two girls and four boys, currently aged between thirteen and three years old. In retirement I have been able to spend much more time with them, and also with other friends and family, which is a gift and a delight. And of course I have my new journey with you all at Downing Place. I recently came across something a colleague wrote to me at my retirement: 'Zoë, retirement is when you finally stop doing whatever the boss tells you to do and you start doing what your heart tells you to do'. Joining Downing Place has been part of that for me.

FLEUR HOUSTON: A LIFE OF JOHN WOOD OMAN

The Editor writes: Fleur Houston will be known to many *Place Matters* readers, but let me begin with a brief introduction. Fleur and Walter Houston came to Cambridge in 1979, when Walter became Director of Old Testament studies at Westminster College. They soon became members at Emmanuel, and Fleur was an Elder and Church Meeting secretary before she trained for the ministry at Westminster from 1989 to 1992. For her internship year, Fleur was placed at St. Columba's, under Ernest Marvin, after which she went to her first pastorate at St Andrew's in Sheffield, and Walter moved to a post in Biblical Studies at Northern College. Fleur was Moderator's chaplain 1996-97, during David Thompson's term as URC Moderator.



Nine years after its publication, Fleur's 2015 Taylor & Francis book *You Shall Love the Stranger as Yourself* remains acutely topical, bringing a Biblical perspective to the complex political, legal, and humanitarian challenges raised by asylum-seekers and refugees.

A new book by Fleur has just been published. In an email she wrote "The pandemic lockdowns enabled me to concentrate on writing and the book is now published as a Pickwick imprint of Wipf and Stock ... Throughout this process I have very much appreciated the friendly interest and support of friends from Downing Place and Westminster College and would like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to you all".

The book is titled *Come, Let Us Reason Together: A Life of John Wood Oman*. Born in 1860, Oman was Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics at Westminster College from 1907 to 1922, before serving as the college's principal until his retirement in 1935.

When I asked Fleur if she would introduce her book to *Place Matters* readers, she kindly replied:

I hope first of all that this book will offer Downing Place a fresh glimpse of its inheritance. For 32 years, John Oman and his family worshipped regularly at St Columba's Church – and some will remember personally his eldest daughter, Ia Ballard. Oman had many friends there and at Emmanuel too - he maintained regular contact with W. B. Selbie long after he had left the pulpit of Emmanuel for Mansfield College, Oxford. And I hope also that it might offer the URC as a whole some additional insight into the richness of our historical and theological heritage. Finding material was not always straightforward, partly because his personal papers were allegedly destroyed on his death, and I have relished small moments of triumph as I delved into archives large and small, in this country and further afield. But I have always been aware that any attempt at writing Oman's biography for its own sake would be insufficient. His life experiences fed into and enriched his thought. The thinking of this distinguished philosopher-theologian is firmly rooted in human experience. That's one reason why it is still relevant to us today. My final hope is that you will enjoy reading this book as much as I enjoyed writing it!

The publisher's website includes tributes from reviewers – including this one:

Fleur Houston is the biographer John Oman has been waiting for. From his Orcadian childhood to his glory days as a distinguished philosopher of religion in Cambridge, her beautifully written and meticulously researched scholarship illumines his work as minister, church leader, and professor. She casts new and significant light on Oman whom we see anew as one of the most original and creative Christian thinkers of the first half of the twentieth century. (David Cornick, Robinson College, University of Cambridge).

Book Details:

Fleur Houston

Come, Let Us Reason Together: A Life of [John Wood Oman](#)

Pickwick Publications

[Come, Let Us Reason Together- Wipf and Stock Publishers](#)

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

In this article we would like to share with you an impression of the activities we have been doing together with our younger children.

On January 21st, we thought about the story of Jonah in separate groups. Some of us drew wonderful pictures of Jonah in the whale and the city of Nineveh. We all discussed things we did not always want to do and how we respond on these occasions.

The last Sunday of January we thought about how we might tell what comes from God and what does not. We started with the game ‘Simon says...’, and realised that we had to listen very carefully. We then had people saying two things that they could potentially have done and we had to guess which one was right. Sometimes it was easy to guess the true one, but not always. Sometimes we only knew it because we knew the other person well. To know what comes from God, we realised that we could read the Bible and for example read what the disciples thought about Jesus, as they knew him very well. And what Jesus said about God, as He is God’s son. We then decorated some paper cups and put a string between them. We tested them by talking to each other through the cups, and it really worked: we could hear each other very loudly!



On the first Sunday in February, when we arrived in our room, we found it had lots of stars. We found as many as we could. Then discovered there were some very high up. We remembered the star the wise men followed to find Jesus. Then we heard about how, years before Jesus was born, God’s people were very sad and downhearted. They had not lived in God’s way and things had gone terribly wrong. Isaiah reminded them to look at the stars. God knew them all. God knew all of the people too and never forgot anyone. Trust in God and it will feel like

you can fly with eagle's wings. (Isaiah 40). We had a bird's eye view of countries we knew. God strengthens everyone. We were very happy to learn about the birth of Anna and cannot wait to see her in church. We made a card for Anna, Simone and Joan.



On 11th Feb, in junior church, we considered the account of the transfiguration which had been read in church and the appearance in that story of several Old Testament characters, Moses and Elijah. We then went on to read the story of Elijah handing over to the younger Elisha, and Elijah's dramatic whirlwind ascent into heaven on a flaming chariot. The children created flames from coloured paper, which they stuck onto a chariot template as we discussed the role of prophets and how we can pass on stories of God's power and show his love in our lives.



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

DOWNING PLACE URC SPECIAL CAUSE FOR MARCH 2024
SALLYMAY INTERNATIONAL PRESCHOOL, SIERRA LEONE

SALLYMAY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



New Low-cost Housing, Site 1.Kissy Mess Mess, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Email: sallymayinternational2016@gmail.com

Tel: +232 33677062/+232 78897062/+232 75443202/+447961764098

Downing Place is pleased to support the Sallymay International Preschool as our March Special Cause, and we look forward to welcoming Marian, their founder, at our All Age Worship on Sunday 17 March, and hearing more about the school and its work.

The Sallymay International Preparatory School in Sierra Leone was founded in 2016 by Marian Koroma. Starting with a small group of two to six year olds in a church room, the number rapidly grew and it now has six classrooms. twelve staff and over 120 children. The school wants to create a sense of community involvement in the school and empower the local community to support the future education of their local children. As their founder says, “We are a Christian school, we believe in the Christian ethos” - the school motto is ‘Strengthened through Christ’ .

The school aims to offer places to up to 1000 students of nursery, primary and secondary school age. Parents, teachers and children will be brought together in community, teaching children the basics of life in an inclusive and safe environment, where they will grow to be independent, responsible individuals. The school aspires to challenge corruption, bribery, ruthlessness and hatred by training the next generation in Christian values, leadership, resilience and interpersonal skills.

Current challenges include lack of basic furniture, lack of access to teaching and leaning materials and the payment of staff salaries.

Donations should be made to Downing Place for this Special Cause - please make BACS payments to CAF Bank, account name Downing Place URC; sort code 40-52-40 and account number 00029711, with reference Special Cause; or make cheques payable to Downing Place URC and write 'Special Cause' on the back. Cash donations can be placed in the offertory in an envelope marked 'Special Cause'. There will be a retiring collection on Sunday 17 March.

PREVIOUS SPECIAL CAUSES AND OTHER DONATIONS

Commitment
for **Life**

In appreciation of

Downing Place URC, Cambridge

for the generous donation of £10,239.04
towards

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Commitment for Life is the global justice programme of the United Reformed Church
working in partnership with Christian Aid and Global Justice Now.

Signed: 

Date: 23.11.2024



www.urc.org.uk/cfl

CITY TO SEA

Our January Special Cause, City to Sea, received
£1,900 from Downing Place.

The donation was made up as follows:

£1,098.54 Wednesday lunchtime concerts

£484.69 Retiring Collection

£63.75 Sundry donations and Gift Aid

£253.02 York Street contribution

Thank to all who contributed for their generosity!



HOLY WEEK AT DOWNING PLACE

Holy Week begins on Monday 25th March 2024

For the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday of Holy Week, we will again offer recorded services on the Downing Place Church YouTube channel. They will be available for the previous evening, and can be accessed at any time to suit the viewer's own timetable.

To mark the 300th anniversary of its composition, and the premier in St Nicholas' Church, Leipzig in April 1724, these services will be inspired by the chorales in the St John Passion, BWV 245 of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

Other Holy Week Services will include

Palm Sunday 24th March

11.00am Reading of the Passion Narrative

Maundy Thursday 28th March

11.00am Holy Communion at Downing Place URC

7.30pm Holy Communion with Tenebrae at Fulbourn URC

A joint service shared between Downing Place and Fulbourn URCS

Good Friday 29th March

10.15am Free Churches' United Service at Downing Place Church
Preacher: The Revd Rose Westwood of Wesley Methodist Church

11.30am Ecumenical Act of Witness in the Market Square

2.00pm At the Foot of the Cross – Fulbourn URC

Holy Saturday 30th March

4pm *Cambridge Voices* present Music for Holy Week

Easter Day, 31st March

11.00am Holy Communion

HOUSE GROUPS/BIBLE STUDY GROUPS FOR LENT

Continuing throughout Lent and finishing in the week before Holy Week, groups will follow extracts from Mark's Gospel.

Mondays 2-3.30pm at the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn, led by Janet Bottoms

Tuesdays 7.30-9.00pm on Zoom, led by David and Margaret Thompson

Thursday 10.30-12 noon at the home of Freda Bradbury, led by Rosemary Johnston



LECTIO DIVINA



Another opportunity to join in the online **Zoom Lectio Divina** throughout Lent 2024.

These will be held **every Friday until the 22nd March** at the usual time of **8.30 to 9.30am**. The fourfold process of reading, listening and responding to the scripture passage is followed by a resting phase, each phase has about five minutes of muted stillness between. This takes about 40 minutes after which one can leave. Most stay for the remaining 20 minutes which is filled with sharing and reflecting together on what God has given us during the time together. It is a very safe and creative process and certainly feels to be a wonderful way of building up the body of Christ. If you would like to try even just one Friday please make contact with Deborah McVey C.410332 or deborahmcv@aol.com. William will send the Zoom link out the day before.



PRAYER AFTER WORSHIP

After much preparation, we are hoping to offer Prayer after Worship from Easter Sunday, 31st March. It will be held in the St Columba's Chapel and will take place immediately after Worship. If you would like prayer for yourself, or for another, please come there, where 2 people will be available to pray with or for you. If someone is already being ministered to, please wait in the Emmanuel Room until they come out.

THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP

Since last November, the CHR Tuesday Fellowship has continued to meet every week. Most of the meetings have been held at St Athanasios Hall, although we have been able to meet in different locations. We have a number of people who attend regularly, but others sadly are unable to attend because of health and mobility issues. We try to keep in touch with them by making sure they have the newsletter every month. We have continued to join with members of Fulbourn URC for the “Word Together”, which is held every third Tuesday of the month. Although for some of us this has been a welcome opportunity to study the Bible with friends from Fulbourn URC, there have been some members who prefer to attend the Tuesday Fellowship when it is based at St Athanasios. We have also had the added difficulty since last summer as we are now restricted to two car parking spaces in the car park as the Greek Orthodox Church has hired out the car park to employees working at the old buildings of the Swiss Laundry. We have tried to overcome the difficulties caused by restrictions on our car parking by obtaining visitor’s permits.

However, despite the difficulties, we have continued to enjoy interesting talks. One of our members spoke about his experiences working on the Railways which was most stimulating. We were also so pleased to fill six shoe boxes both for families and older people in Eastern Europe which includes Ukraine, and which is organised by the charity Link to Hope. In early December we had our annual Christmas Dinner at Scotsdale, Horningsea. We had a lovely carol service which was led by Nigel Uden and was very well attended. We were delighted to donate to the Fulbourn URC charities which were Romsey Mill and East Anglian Children’s Hospice. In the New Year we had the joy of seeing the Capriole Dancers perform for us. They wore their medieval costumes and their dances were set to medieval music. We also had the pleasure of a very inspiring talk in January by Margaret Cooper, who talked about the journeys and bridges which we come across in our life’s journey. We have had a bring and buy sale and we were so pleased to take the remaining items from the sale to the EACH Charity shop and Emmaus. Those of us who have been able to attend the “Word together” at Fulbourn have found studying the Gospel of St Mark both thought provoking and inspiring. We were encouraged to think about what it really means in practice to take up the Cross and follow Jesus.

Finally we would be delighted if anyone would like to join us either occasionally or more regularly. We plan to have a varied programme of talks, services, Bible studies and outings, in addition to the “Word Together” which is held every third Tuesday of the month. Please contact me or Wendy Roe if you would like to come and join us.

Penny Milsom, February 2024



Cambridge
Action Group



Spring Supper and Talk

Why 'Any Dream Won't Do':
Joseph and the Amazing
Technicolour Dreamcoat
and its 'sensational'
interpretation of the
Genesis story

IN AID OF
BIBLE SOCIETY

Friday 15 March 2024 at 6.30 pm

Queen Edith Chapel, Wulfstan Way, Cambridge CB1 8QN

Guest speaker: Dr Alison Gray, Director of Studies; Tutor in Old Testament Language, Literature and Theology, Westminster College, Cambridge.

The talk will be live-streamed at 7.45 pm. No tickets required. Supper £7.00 cash on the door.

Please email penny.f.flynn@gmail.com to reserve a supper place or for the live-stream link.

Photo credit: Larisa Koshkina PIXABAY | biblesociety.org.uk | Registered charity 232759



Stainer's 'Crucifixion'

with audience participation

Cambridge Voices,
directed by Ian de Massini

Sunday 24th March
4.30pm - 5.30pm

Fulbourn United Reformed Church
Home End, Fulbourn CB21 5BS

Free
admission



THE PLANETS

by Gustav Holst

World Premiere of Holst's Planets suite
arranged for solo Organ by Ian de Massini

Wednesday 27th March

1.00pm - 2.00pm

Downing Place United Reformed Church

Free admission



Gesualdo: *Miserere*

Luython: *Lamentations*

Whitacre: *When David heard*

Mendelssohn: *Music for 8 voices*

4.00pm, Saturday March 30th

Downing Place United Reformed Church

- Free admission -

sung by

CAMBRIDGE VOICES

MARCH DIARY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sat	02-Mar-24	Nightlite	10:00pm - 4:00am	Emmanuel Room
<i>Sun</i>	<i>03-Mar-24</i>	<i>Cambridge Half-Marathon (see p.29)</i>		
Sun	03-Mar-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	03-Mar-24	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	03-Mar-24	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	03-Mar-24	Open Table/Solidarity Social	7:30pm	The Hub
Mon	04-Mar-24	Officers' Meeting	10:15am	Minister's Room
Mon	04-Mar-24	World Church & Public Issues Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Tue	05-Mar-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship: Bible Study led by Paul Nevitt	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	06-Mar-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Simon Carrey (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	07-Mar-24	Midweek Worship led by Penny Flynn	11:00am	Church
Thu	07-Mar-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Fri	08-Mar-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	09-Mar-24	Synod Day	All Day	Downing Place URC
Sun	10-Mar-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	10-Mar-24	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Dr Michael Wilson	11:00am	Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	10-Mar-24	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	10-Mar-24	Solidarity Social Action Group	7:30pm	The Hub
Tue	12-Mar-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship: Members' Own on the theme of Mothers	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Hall
Wed	13-Mar-24	Solidarity Hub Social Action Drop-In with Acorn, the Community Union	7:30pm	The Hub
Wed	13-Mar-24	Elders' Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Wed	13-Mar-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Cambridge Chamber Ensemble	1:00pm	Church
Thu	14-Mar-24	Prayer Meeting	10:15am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	14-Mar-24	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Thu	14-Mar-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	16-Mar-24	Nightlite	10:00pm	Emmanuel Room
Sun	17-Mar-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	17-Mar-24	All Age Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden <i>Followed by a Retiring Collection for the Sallymay International Preschool.</i>	11:00am	Church
Sun	17-Mar-24	Solidarity Social Drop In	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	17-Mar-24	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Church and Hub
Mon	18-Mar-24	DEADLINE for booking and paying for the Gibson Lunch		

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Tue	19-Mar-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship join Fulbourn URC for 'The Word Together'	2:30pm	Fulbourn URC
Wed	20-Mar-24	DEADLINE for submitting items for 'Place Matters'		
Wed	20-Mar-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Felicia Toni (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	20-Mar-24	Nightlite Training	6:30pm	Emmanuel Room
Thu	21-Mar-24	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	21-Mar-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	21-Mar-24	Midweek Worship led by the Revd Alex Clare-Young	6:00pm	St Columba's Chapel
Fri	22-Mar-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	23-Mar-24	Solidarity Hub Forest Gathering	4:00pm	Trumpington Meadows
Sun	24-Mar-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	24-Mar-24	Palm Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden <i>Palm Sunday</i> <i>With Reading of the Passion Narrative</i>	11:00am	Church
Sun	24-Mar-24	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	24-Mar-24	Solidarity Scripture	7:30pm	The Hub
Mon	25-Mar-24	<i>Holy Week Begins</i>		
Mon	25-Mar-24	A Holy Week Reflection will be available via our Youtube channel from the previous evening		
Mon	25-Mar-24	Officers' Meeting	10:15am	Minister's Room

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Tue	26-Mar-24	A Holy Week Reflection will be available via our Youtube channel from the previous evening		
Tue	26-Mar-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship: Easter Service	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Hall
Wed	27-Mar-24	A Holy Week Reflection will be available via our Youtube channel from the previous evening		
Wed	27-Mar-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Ian de Massini (organ) performs Holst's <i>The Planets</i> (see poster on p.23)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	28-Mar-24 <i>Maundy Thursday</i>	Maundy Thursday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Thu	28-Mar-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	28-Mar-24	Holy Communion with Tenebrae jointly with Fulbourn URC	7.30pm	Fulbourn URC
Fri	29-Mar-24 <i>Good Friday</i>	Free Churches' United Service Preacher: The Revd Rose Westwood of Wesley Methodist	10:15am	Church
Sat	30-Mar-24	Cambridge Voices present Music for Holy Week (see poster on p.24)	4:00pm	Church
Sat	30-Mar-24	Nightlite	10:00pm	Emmanuel Room
Sun	31-Mar-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	31-Mar-24 <i>Easter Day</i>	Easter Sunday Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	31-Mar-24	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Tue	02-Apr-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship (<i>theme tbc</i>)	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Hall

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Wed	03-Apr-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Irena Radic (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	04-Apr-24	Midweek Worship led by Dr Janet Bottoms	11:00am	Church
Thu	04-Apr-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	04-Apr-24	Pioneer Minister's Steering Group	2:30pm	Rooms 1 & 2
Fri	05-Apr-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	06-Apr-24	Nightlite	10:00pm	Emmanuel Room
Sun	07-Apr-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	07-Apr-24	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Dr Janet Tollington	11:00am	Church
Sun	07-Apr-24	Solidarity Prayers	6:30pm	The Hub
Sun	07-Apr-24	Open Table/Solidarity Social	7:30pm	The Hub

NEWS & NOTICES

Maundy Thursday evening service at Fulbourn at 7.30. If anyone is going to this service and could offer a lift, or would like to go but needs a lift, please let Elaine know and I will collate. Thank you, Pippa

The **Cambridge Half Marathon** takes place on Sunday 3 March. Click [here](#) for information about road closures on the day, and perhaps allow extra time to get to church!

MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

3 March	Liz Caswell Jo Clare-Young Penny Flynn Janet Tollington	Bassingbourn Buntingford (am) Great Chishill (pm) Melbourn Stetchworth & Cheveley
10 March	Chris Baker John Proctor Nigel Uden	Trinity, Burwell Saffron Walden Fulbourn
17 March	Liz Caswell Janet Tollington	Fulbourn Buntingford
24 March <i>(Palm Sunday)</i>	Liz Caswell David Cornick Penny Flynn David Thompson	Trinity, Burwell Melbourn Fulbourn St Luke's
28 March <i>(Maundy Thursday)</i>	Liz Caswell	St James', Lode
31 March <i>(Easter Day)</i>	Chris Baker Liz Caswell Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Melbourn Holy Trinity, Bottisham Bassingbourn Fulbourn (9.30am)

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 March	Simon Carrey (piano)
13 March	Cambridge Chamber Ensemble
20 March	Felicia Toni (piano)
27 March	Ian de Massini (organ) - see poster on p.23

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

LECTIONARY FOR MARCH

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 March (Lent 3)

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

10 March (Lent 4)

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107:1-3,17-22

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

17 March (Lent 5)

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16

Hebrews 5:5-10

John 12:20-33

24 March (Palm Sunday)

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 11:1-11

31 March (Easter Day)

Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalm 118:1-2,14-24

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43

John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8

7 April (Easter 2)

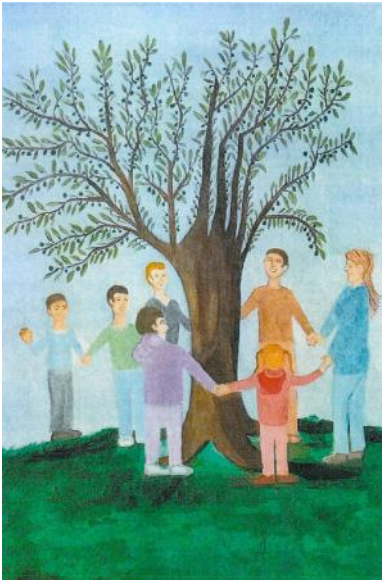
Acts 4:32-35

Psalm 133

1 John 1:1-2:2

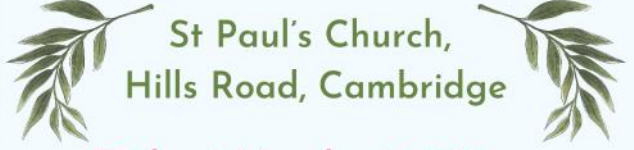
John 20:19-31





WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2024

'I beg you, bear with one another in love.'



St Paul's Church,
Hills Road, Cambridge

Friday 1 March at 10.30am

All are welcome!

Service written by the Women of Palestine
Refreshments available afterwards

www.wwdp.org.uk

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Tim Rowland

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

WEB EDITOR: Jess Uden

Please send all items to be included in the April edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of **Wednesday 20 March**.

The April edition will be available from **Sunday 30 March**.