



**DOWNING PLACE  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE**

# **PLACE MATTERS**



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## CONTACT DETAILS – DOWNING PLACE URC

Address: Downing Place United Reformed Church  
Downing Place  
Cambridge  
CB2 3EL

Telephone: 01223 756635

Website: [www.downingplaceurc.org](http://www.downingplaceurc.org)

Minister: The Revd. Nigel Uden  
[nigel.uden@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:nigel.uden@downingplaceurc.org)  
07394 330003

Pioneer Minister: The Revd. Dr Alex Clare-Young  
[alex@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:alex@downingplaceurc.org)  
07544 858918

**Children's Ministry Team Co-ordinator:**  
Elza de Bruin Lara  
[children@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:children@downingplaceurc.org)

Open Table Co-ordinator:  
Alison Binney  
[opentable@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:opentable@downingplaceurc.org)

Facilities Officer and Caretaker Elaine Barker  
(Elaine's rest day is Tuesday)  
[elaine@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:elaine@downingplaceurc.org)  
01223 756635  
07354 517346

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

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

Marketing and  
Communications  
Officer                      Jess Uden  
[jess@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:jess@downingplaceurc.org)  
01223 756635  
07731 883697

Church Secretary:        Pippa Jones  
[secretary@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:secretary@downingplaceurc.org)

**Clerk to the Elders' Meeting**

Augur Pearce  
[clerk@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:clerk@downingplaceurc.org)

Treasurer:                William McVey  
[treasurer@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:treasurer@downingplaceurc.org)

Safeguarding:            Carys Lee  
[safeguarding@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:safeguarding@downingplaceurc.org)  
c/o 01223 756635

Hospital and Hospice Visitor:  
The Revd. Deborah McVey  
[hospitalvisitor@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:hospitalvisitor@downingplaceurc.org)

Directors of Music:      Mark Dawes  
[mark@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:mark@downingplaceurc.org)

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

Audio-visuals:            [av@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:av@downingplaceurc.org)

*Cover photo: flowers at the wedding of Hazel Sanderson and David Whitmore at Downing Place in September. Flowers by Rosemary Johnston, photograph by David Flynn*

*Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Elders and Members of Downing Place United Reformed Church*

## FROM THE MINISTER

Looking back, I realise that a sense of vocation has lingered in the inner recesses of my mind for a very long time. At school, an entirely unexceptional boys' secondary modern, various people mentioned ministry to me, sowing seeds of what I came to understand as 'call'. The French mistress, in a moment of frustration that I was talking on the back row, propelled the blackboard rubber towards me with the cry, 'Tais-toi, Uden! Why you don't you just take yourself off to Church?!' The Religious Studies master, a sombre and rotund gentleman we knew as 'Buddha,' more insightfully urged me to take seriously the possibility of a life in The Church. People at the Church I attended told me they 'coveted' me for ministry. They all got me thinking, though not very comfortably for wearing my spiritual heart on my sleeve was not especially appealing, so nor was ministry.

The years since Miss Page hurled the blackboard rubber have been fascinating. A degree, which was not part of our family's culture; ordination, and service to churches in Cheshire, Johannesburg, and Lancashire, then in the Southeast of England, and finally, since 2010, in Cambridgeshire.

Half a century and more on, questions about vocation still inhabit those inner recesses. What will it mean to be 'a person in Christ' once that is not lived-out in quite the way it has been since I was ordained? One's identity as 'the minister' will morph into something else, and maybe it is neither possible nor prudent to attempt second guessing what will characterise the next season of my Christian life. I'll probably be found talking on the back row of the Church Meeting!

Soon, Downing Place Church will move out of its first chapter, when life was characterised by the melding of two congregations, and the inhabiting of a re-developed building. What is its vocation for chapter two, and what part will each of you play then? The tasks in chapter one were relatively obvious: learn how to live together and discover what makes the most of the premises. For the ensuing years, each person is invited to explore their own life to see how they can contribute to Downing Place Church thriving as a community, being a blessing to the wider community, and thereby serving God's purposes.

There are some specific up front roles that we need to fill. These include *Eldership*, for which nominations will shortly be sought. That is a key aspect of any United Reformed Church, and as much as ever during a period of ministerial vacancy. We also seek a *Convenor* for the Property Management Group, and a *Safeguarding Co-ordinator*. Might one of those enable you to take your place in the jigsaw that is Downing Place Church? Please do give it careful consideration.

Maybe, before we think about what we are going to do, there is an earlier, more reflective step for some of us to consider. Like many of my colleagues, I was ordained in the early Autumn, having been granted a leaving certificate from Manchester's Congregational College in the Summer. So it is that each year about this time, I review the promises I made that day, and ponder my vocation in the present tense; what does it mean and imply *now*? I recall the questions ordinands are asked, about understanding Jesus as 'the gift of God's very self to the world', and about believing the church to be 'the people, gathered by God's love to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God through Jesus Christ'. To this day, those are core concepts that shape and energise me.

Regular readers will not be surprised to discover that the Ordination Service hymns were and are important to me. On each anniversary I return to them. For any who want to look them up, the numbers are from *Rejoice & Sing*. They were

1. *Christ is made the sure foundation* (559) – the rock upon which a disciple's life is built.
2. *It is a thing most wonderful* (503) – God's saving love, whose Son died 'to save a child like me'.
3. *O thou who camest from above* (433) – praying for the Holy Spirit, that executive element of the Godhead here and now.
4. *The Church of Christ in every age* (636) – mindful that we have 'no mission but to serve'.
5. *Thine be the glory* (247) – the Christian life is *solī Deo gloria*, for the glory of God alone.

Are there hymns that sum up your faith and thinking?

Lastly, during my ordination anniversary review I pray. This year, one of the worship resources I used was Harry Emerson Fosdick's *The Meaning of Prayer*. From his New Jersey desk a century ago, I heard a reminder that prayer is our appropriating of the truth that we are God's children, each stirred to our own response with St Paul: 'Abba. Father'. Through prayer, he suggests, one is drawn into a connection with Christ that both assures us God cares about us and reminds us that God calls us to lives in which we follow Jesus' words and ways. That's what a Christian disciple is, and that's what we do – we follow Jesus's words and ways. That is an inspiring point, as I wonder about my evolving vocation. Perhaps it is something we could all take seriously. After all, my vocation is evolving no more than yours are.

In a real sense, the way that Downing Place Church capitalises upon its first chapter involves its careful discernment of what it is to be and to do in the second. That is unavoidably about our prudently stewarding the resources we

have (people, plant and pounds), and, as we peer into the future, it's also about each of us following Jesus's words and way in the new phase that beckons us as authentically as we have striven to do up to now. God's call to us is not a one-off for yesterday. It's for today, and for tomorrow, too.

Sometimes I still sense Miss Page's blackboard rubber approaching, as if to remind me of those first stirrings of call. Just as I am finding my vocation is still evolving, taking me where I have never been before, so may yours, too.

Soli Deo gloria.

*Nigel Uden*



## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Hazel Sanderson and David Whitmore on their recent marriage, which took place in Downing Place on 21 September - we wish them every happiness!



Congratulations also to David Thompson on October 14th to mark 25 years since his Ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the URC.

## **‘TWO INTO ONE WILL GO’ : AN INVITATION**

A date for your diary - November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2024 12.30/45pm for an hour,  
in the church

Zoë Bennett writes:

**‘Two into one will go’ is a reflective project about the formation of Downing Place United Reformed Church – you might like to look back at my the article in the April 2024 *Place Matters*. It’s about drawing out and writing up the experiences, and above all the learnings, both of those most closely involved in the coming together of Emmanuel and St Columba’s congregations, and also of a wide variety of voices from the congregation – former members of both Emmanuel and St Columba’s and also of those of us who have had the experience of joining Downing Place URC more recently.**

The interviews for this project are now complete – enormous thanks to all those who gave time and thought to being interviewed and to all who offered encouragement and support. On Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>, as soon as is convenient after the service, I am hoping to gather a group of anyone interested, both of those who were interviewed and of those who weren’t but would like to contribute at this point, to spend an hour together discussing some of the key issues which have come out. This will help shape the final account which I will be writing for the church website, to be completed by Christmas.

This meeting will be held in the church, and will last for one hour. There is no need to say in advance if you are coming – all welcome on the day. The meeting will be recorded, audio only. The recording will be kept for less than a week (to give me time to listen over and not to have to take too many notes during the meeting itself) but the recording will then be deleted. It will not be used for any other purpose. In the written account no names will be mentioned from this meeting, and no actual words people said at it will be quoted unless I have explicitly asked permission from you and received it. The purpose of the meeting is to enlarge and make more fruitful my reflection and the shaping of the account. I hope it will also be enjoyable and helpful to talk together about things which matter to us.

First I will offer an interim account of the main issues which will be going into the final write-up. I am hoping for comments on these, by way of affirming or indeed questioning their importance, and perhaps by way of adding reflections. Then I am suggesting in advance two key issues, both of which have arisen directly in the interviews, which it seems to me we can helpfully talk about in this context, to enable me to enhance and widen my understanding as I write up the interviews.

## 1. **Being ‘family’ ?**

‘Family’ is a word which has been used in the interviews by members of both former congregations and also by those new to Downing Place. Many people do experience Downing Place Church in ways which are like a family to them. And building a sense of family is important to many. There are practical issues about how we do that; we can spend so much time and energy doing the business/the busy-ness of the church. But there are also deeper issues. As people have talked with appreciation and indeed some wistfulness about what it meant to be family in Emmanuel and in St Columba’s, it has struck me forcibly that the kind of ‘family’ people were, what people mean by being ‘family’, can differ greatly.

*Questions you might like to consider before the meeting:*

- *Does the image of family mean anything to you as a description of what we are in Downing Place or what we would like to be?*
- *If so, what do you feel makes a good ‘church family’?*
- *If not, what words or images would you prefer?*

## 2. Listening to each other

The process of doing the interviews has revealed how helpful it is when people are able to listen to each other, to begin to understand WHY people feel differently from us, to hear where people are coming from, what they **are wanting to offer, or perhaps where they are hurting.** But this isn’t straightforward. For example, some people are more reserved about sharing feelings, and some people are less confident to speak out in meetings. Different kinds of groups and situations suit different people.

*Questions you might like to consider before the meeting:*

- *How has listening to the voices of others been part of the coming together process for us? What have we learned about this – its difficulties and its joys?*
- *What times and situations enable good listening to each other in our life together at Downing Place?*

I look forward to seeing you there!– Zoë





## ASSISTED DYING – A DISCUSSION

First, by way of introduction: in his 2024 Easter Day sermon, Nigel Uden compared the brevity of St Mark’s 200-word account of the resurrection with the – at that time – extensive news coverage of ‘assisted dying’. This had been provoked by a *Times* newspaper article by Esther Rantzen in which she had reflected on her mortality, revealing soon afterwards that she had joined the *Dignitas* assisted dying clinic in Switzerland.

Nigel proposed that the media coverage, and the Scottish Parliament’s imminent consideration of assisted dying, were “probably a sign to The Church that we need to be ready to speak into that debate as it gains the momentum”. I was wondering how *Place Matters* might assist our preparation to contribute to the debate, and pleased to include an article by Stephen Thornton in the June 2024 issue. You can revisit that article at [June-2024-Place-Matters-public-version.pdf \(downingplaceurc.org\)](https://downingplaceurc.org/June-2024-Place-Matters-public-version.pdf)

A BBC1 documentary “Better off Dead?” broadcast in May, fronted by actor and disability rights activist Liz Carr, prompted Stephen “to write with my own reflections on the issue of whether or not assisted dying (or assisted suicide, as Carr prefers to call it) should be made legal ... All parties [in the documentary] seemed to be in agreement that this matter was less about simply alleviating intolerable suffering than about an exercise of autonomy or control”. Stephen’s article concluded with an invitation to readers from the Editor. “*Place Matters* readers will have a variety of insights and views about assisted dying, and it would be helpful to know about them. If you’re willing to share your own thoughts and/or experiences, please send them to me ... Perhaps then I’ll be able to compile an article following on from Stephen’s, in the form of a discussion about this topical, but difficult issue”.

I was pleased to receive a few responses to this invitation. I will now be sharing, with the authors’ permission, extracts from the texts that they sent to me, reassembled to form – or so I hope – a helpful provocation for reflection and, perhaps, further discussion.

One respondent very helpfully set the scene, as follows.

The question of ‘Medically Assisted Dying’ (as its advocates prefer to call it) has moved up the political agenda since Stephen Thornton’s article in *Place Matters* for June. Lord Falconer, a Labour peer and former Lord Chancellor, introduced a Private Member’s Bill in the House of Lords which received a First Reading on 26 July, and the Government has promised MPs a free vote when it comes to the Commons, probably in November. It was last debated

in the Lords in 2021, and the debate on Lady Meacher's bill is easily accessible online and still worth reading. After reading Stephen's article I wrote to an old friend of mine in Toronto to find out what the Canadian churches' reactions had been. [Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) has been legal in Canada since June 2016] His daughter has taken a particular interest in this topic, and she replied with details of the reactions from the various churches. An amendment to MAID law in 2020 effectively made it possible for disabled people, as well as those who were terminally ill, to apply. The Catholic and Anglican Churches decided against permitting the change. The United Church of Canada has advised its congregations that the criterion of foreseeable death should be maintained, that mental illness should not be a reason for assisted death, that advance directives should not be permitted, and that for mature minors (under-18s) any decisions be made on a case-by-case basis. The Canadian Council of Churches adopted a Consensus Statement advocating universal access to Palliative Care in 2016. A decision on the eligibility of those suffering from mental illness has now been postponed to 2027.

All this indicates that the Archbishop of Canterbury was right to warn in 2021 of the danger of unintended consequences, which make the task of deciding in advance what people are being safeguarded from more difficult; as well as the point made by more than one medically qualified peer that doctors are not very good at predicting the likelihood of death.

Another wrote:

Thank you for including Stephen Thornton's contribution to *Place Matters*. I strongly agree with Stephen. I'm reminded of the rhyme to guide doctors: "Thou shall not kill; but need not strive officiously to keep alive." I take that to mean that assisting people to die is wrong but that one shouldn't interfere too much with the natural process of dying, although obviously pain relief is allowed where possible.

My own curiosity led me to the source of that guidance – Arthur Hugh Clough, a Victorian, English poet, educationalist, and assistant to Florence Nightingale. His sister, Anne, was the founding Principal of Newnham College. The couplet on **murder appears in Clough's poem 'The Latest Decalogue'** - a satirical take on the Ten Commandments.

One of the first respondents generously shared experiences within their own family, writing to me as follows:

I understand the general arguments on each side of this question but I think there needs also to be some attention paid to the question of the quality of life

and the palliative care that can be given to those who are approaching death. This is a much wider issue than the simple yes/no issue of so-called 'assisted dying' and affects far greater numbers.

When my father was diagnosed with esophageal cancer he was able to be taken in to a Macmillan's hospice where the friendly, caring atmosphere and palliative care increasing according to need made his death a gentle one. However only between 4% and 5% of deaths occur in a hospice compared with the 43% who die in hospital and the more than 50% who die either at home or in a care home. (Figures from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Dec. 2023 ).

My mother went into a care home and then into hospital after a series of strokes which gradually destroyed both physical and mental capacity. Towards the end, when I visited her, I was told I had to wait for a length of time during which I could hear, in the next room, the sound of crying and moaning and what I can only call the impatient, bullying tone of a carer or nurse. Finally my mother was brought into the room to sit in a chair staring at nothing until I left. I was relieved when, after another stroke, she went into a coma. At that time we did not question the care that would be given by staff or regime but since more recent scandals I have regretted that I did not look more closely at how my mother was being treated in her extremely vulnerable state.

I believe that the kind and quality of the care and treatment available to the terminally ill is quite as important as the issue of assisted dying for a relatively small number.

**The next contributor views the 'dilemma' from a somewhat different perspective.**

President Lyndon Johnson once attracted criticism for his reference to an 'acceptable level of casualties' in Vietnam. Margaret Thatcher is said to have used similar language regarding her intervention in the Falklands. The language may have been insensitive, but there is a genuine point there. If a war itself is truly justified, it must be waged despite the fact that it will create casualties. The goal is to minimise the casualties; though one also recognises that if they exceed a certain figure, that evil may outdo the evil the war seeks to address.

I find myself taking a similar approach to the question of assisted dying raised by Stephen in the June edition: and to other questions too. We cannot board planes with a drink in case somebody's bottle turns out to contain liquid explosive. We have lost much of the easy friendship I knew between the generations in my youth, because of the danger that a very few people will abuse it. We have surrounded our banking with bureaucratic safeguards to

make money laundering more complicated. We have, on the other hand, allowed the proliferation of motor cars despite a child being killed every 17 hours on British roads.

Of course making suicide easier, by liberating those who facilitate it from the threat of prosecution, would put some vulnerable sufferers at risk of pressure from the unscrupulous. Society has a responsibility to those people, and can rightly use the law to protect them. But it also has a responsibility to those who, in full control of their mental faculties but feeling their own suffering to be intolerable, seek an end which is beyond their reach because the current law punishes anyone who helps them. I wonder whether it is really beyond us to strike a different balance.

We come now to the writing of a moral philosopher, Dr. Soran Reader, lately Reader in Philosophy at Durham University. In 2009, she had been diagnosed with a brain tumour and was advised to have a biopsy. However given the location of the tumour, the biopsy alone might have killed her or left her severely brain damaged. In the event, a different course of action was followed, but at the time she thought she was due for the operation she wrote a passionate article in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* arguing for the right to make a living will: I regret that space considerations impose limits on what I can include here.

Last month I was told I had a brain tumour - a low-grade glioma in my median temporal lobe, to be precise. It is in what the neurosurgeon called "a very eloquent" part of my brain - the part responsible for speech, sensation, thought, memory. It is very mixed up with the surrounding tissue, so surgical removal is not an option.

As this edition of the *Times Higher Education* went to press, I was on my way to have a biopsy, due on 7 January. It carries a real risk of serious complications. I might die. I might suffer brain damage. I might lose large parts of my **capacities to think, express myself and remember ... To face this surgery, I** have to think the real but unbelievable possibility that when I come round, I may be unable to think, remember or speak.

In all that mind-blowing horror, though, the possibility that really threatens to break me is that I may be unable to remember my children. I have already had a glimpse of life without those memories. During recent seizures, I lost my memories of when my daughters were born. The loss of mere dates may seem trivial, but the abyss it has opened to thought is terrifying, a glimpse of my life without my connections and my history.

I am certain that I do not want to live on if that happens. I am terrified by the spectre of loss of self. But I am out of my mind with anger that my own

country does not allow me to protect myself and my family from this horror safely. I am anguished at the thought that my children, on top of their grief at the loss of their mother, may have to cope with me as someone else, someone lost in the world or in a vegetative state (Reader, 2009).

Soran Reader died three years later, in September 2012, at home with her family, here in Cambridge. I am grateful to her brother for sharing her story with me.

Finally, then, I come to another carefully-considered contribution. Once again, I have abridged the original text in places.

I am extremely grateful to the Editor of *Place Matters* for opening a debate around assisted dying, and Stephen Thornton for having started the conversation. Now that Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Jersey have begun to discuss or legislate on the issue, it is pivotal that we reflect together. Many outsiders will probably expect to know what Christians think about this – but is that true?

A new piece of legislation regarding assisted dying would be a significant societal change, like those we have witnessed in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Canada. Those in favour of introducing such legislation often explain that assisted dying is about individual autonomy: my body, my life, my decisions in my hours of suffering. Those against might instead imply that assisted dying can turn into some sort of legalised homicide: for them, asking a doctor to **terminate someone's life goes against the medical vocation to save lives.** Stephen's concern in this magazine is more nuanced: what about the 'slippery slope' that we have seen in places like Canada? What about those who are not really 'autonomous' in taking their decisions? What about family pressures? What about mental health, or minors? Indeed, these are my greatest practical concerns too: with time, whatever rule we put in place might become less tight.

But, as we are after all a church, I would like to wrestle with two different ideas: 'is life a gift of God?' and 'You shall not murder'. I find these two points, often presented by Christians in this debate, to be not entirely helpful. First, life as a gift. Looking at my newborn daughter in the last few months I have really been struck by how much this is true. What a gift! But gifting implies giving to someone else a responsibility. If I donate something to you, it is now yours: use it well. Life is ours to administer, as we see fit, in gratitude to God and ultimately to his glory.

**Secondly, on murder.** I don't think that asking a doctor to help a patient to end their own life equates to murder – it is a requested act of mercy, a terrible duty for sure, an unsolvable contradiction, perhaps, that we must accept and

not force, as part of living in a world where grief is real. In extreme circumstances, it could be done responsibly.

So, where do I stand? As a Christian, I would like to approach this from a different angle, that of compassion. Compassion for someone who suffers. Compassion for someone who says: 'I can do no more'. Who am I to judge your suffering? Who am I to declare: 'because of my doctrine, your calvary has to continue'? I firmly believe in God's grace and mercy, shown to us in Jesus Christ. I rest in the thought that anyone who goes to the Lord and says: 'I can do no more' (of which there are several biblical examples), surely will be met by God's forgiveness, mercy, and love.

As a Christian, I would favour a new law on assisted dying. As with many ethical matters (abortion, divorce, etc.) good legislation enables management of the scope and limitations to a practice. I hope a new law will be stringent (on patient residency requirements, number of medical opinions needed, age of the patient, mental health, etc.). But the more I think about this, the more I think of Jesus saying: 'I have not come to judge the world' (John 12:47). A good starting point for the Church, I feel, when we talk about the suffering of others.

I leave it there, for now, with sincere thanks to Stephen Thornton for initiating this discussion, and with gratitude to those who responded to my invitation to respond back in June. To return to where we began – **Nigel's Easter sermon** – may this discussion assist our preparation to be ready to speak into that debate, as the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill progresses through the UK Parliament. Towards the end of September 2024, Nigel met with Roo Stewart, the Head of Public Issues at Church House, to explore further. Roo will consult with URC and ecumenical colleagues and report back in a month or so



## ANTHEA HAYWARD – **talking to my journal ...**

Editor: earlier this year, over coffee in the Hub, Anthea told me that she had **something that she'd written a while ago, and asked me about submitting it for *Place Matters***. Not long afterwards she left a hand-written script at the church office, and the next time we met she explained how it came about. So here it is.

Anthea explains:

When I was a teenager I kept a journal. As I wrote, it was as though I was **speaking to it. Here's something that I wrote on the top of a hill not far from my home in Woburn Park in Bedfordshire. We had moved there from Letchworth when I was 13. I must have been 18 or 19 when I wrote this. It captures an overwhelming sense of "God's" love for everyone and everything everywhere.**

**I stood still in ...**

Time

Stood still around me

Though in the background silent footsteps

Beat out the unfettered rhythm of eternity

Stretching to eternity.

A moment motionless – suspended – full of the

Certainty that all is certain –

**The certainty that this is "....."**

The rest swirls away – futile below

An experience outside experience

A universe in and around the other.

Death could come but I would not feel it.

Time sighs and seeks to move on.

I, filled with compassion

Turn to suffer with humanity.

On another occasion, I captured another experience at that High Place. I was talking (to my journal) about this Infinite Being.

What a fantastic feeling of wellness and harmony – freedom and peace with nature and that special something above the world. The feeling the world is knowledgeable, understanding – warm – strengthgiving and smiling. On top of a hill in the wind – all masks dissolve and I am naked. My personality has broken free and is part of that supreme being. I am in harmony with everything – what is I? Riding through a wood – the trees and everything are sensitive to my feelings – yet a great strength of their own. I dissolve yet in so doing become this greater being.

Suffering – why is there suffering?

I cannot see the world becoming ideal but when I am at my happiest, I am apart from all of this. But that is what I want – least of all to withdraw into a God created protective shell – sensitive only inside this – unaware or not acknowledging the suffering around us. To dwell on thoughts of a dismal nature is depressing – though – **equally so is to think always of “sickness”** suffocating – I want to be away. I want to write a beautiful book – full of pure thoughts – hope, peace, and God-given strength – an aid to others – a projection of myself, a release of the powers within. I would love to take **hold of someone’s hand now and comfort them in their distress and suffering** – a prayer for all those lying there – with others or alone.

After school I went to Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Aylesbury, about 20 miles from home, to train to be nurse. I did pre-nursing for 18 months in the spinal injuries section, before starting State Registered Nurse training. But I decided not to complete the training - I wanted instead to be an air hostess! I went to Paris in order to learn French, because nursing experience and a foreign language would look good on my air hostess application. I sang in a choir at an English-speaking church while I was there - **St Michael’s as I recall. I met a lot of** students there and decided, after 6 months, to return to England, to get more O levels and A levels in Bedford, to apply for a degree in English and not be an air hostess.

On the boat train back from Paris my coat slipped off my knee. A Cambridge undergraduate on the train picked it up. We talked, and he suggested that I study for those exams in Cambridge, not Bedford! So I came to Cambridge ... I joined the Cambridge International Club, which shared an entrance with St Columba’s URC. I went to a slideshow there and sat behind an undergraduate; we started talking. Some time later he suggested that we go to the Isle of Iona! We hitchhiked in a lorry. The driver asked if we were going to Gretna Green. We weren’t, but I don’t think he was convinced!

We took a ferry to Iona and stayed in a cottage. We went to a service in the Abbey. The bread left over was blessed and given to the doves that came sweeping down! – and they were blessed too. I think that the minister was from Cambridge.

On Iona, I walked on my own to the top of a(nother) hill; a sheepdog rushed up to me, paused and ran back down without barking. The experience of the island was so amazing - no cars, a quiet space. After spending three days there – and several years after ‘talking’ to my journal – I wrote this.



On Iona

The stone plunging deep into the Earth

Centuries have touched this place.

Over there, the internal dialogue between rocks and sea.

Equipoised

Then the sea more stone and the stone more sea.

Overhead, the doves descending in front of the abbey

Soften the earth.

They, too, are ancient.

The shrine of Saint Columba

Where one enters to feel his presence, alone.

Iona,

A world within a world within a world.

Later, I was glad the sea was not too rough so that the ferry was able to return us, because I had to get back to take those exams. Back in Cambridge, even the small red and white squares on a tablecloth in a café seemed so disruptive after Iona!

*Anthea Hayward*



## AN INSIGHT INTO OUR RECENT JUNIOR CHURCH SESSIONS

On 18th August our session was based on 1 Kings 3, the part of the story where Solomon has a dream in which God says "ask for anything you want me to give you". Solomon asks for a discerning heart to govern and to distinguish between right and wrong. We took turns to be the governed, sitting down in a lowly throng, welcoming the king/queen with bells, as they made a grand entrance and sat on their throne. Everyone had turns in making wishes for what they might want God to give them as king/queen and we spent some time thinking about what Solomon had asked for.

The following week three of the younger members of the junior church met together to enjoy a session of songs and activities to celebrate the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant into the completed new Temple in Jerusalem. King Solomon had wanted a permanent 'house' for God where the people could come to visit and worship. We talked about Solomon being a wise king and enjoyed Ailsa accompanying us to sing 'The Wise Man Built his House upon the Rock'. We talked about coming to church and how we loved our beautiful Downing Place building. We then visited the courtyard garden to talk about how God was with us in all sorts of places and not just in church. The children continued the session by building special 'houses' for God using Duplo bricks or looking at pictures of other places where they might want to be with God, who is with us wherever we go.

On the first day of September we learnt the meaning of the word 'epistle' and found one addressed to Downing Place Junior Church. This letter, based on James 1, had some useful tips about how to live as a Christian. We then took a few key words and wrote them on a paper template, which when assembled, became a helicopter. We found a high location above the hub and had fun launching the helicopters. The youngest junior church member watched on.

We marked the beginning of the new school and Junior Church year in a service for all ages on Sunday 8th September. As we listened to the story we find at the beginning of the Bible, the children put together a mural depicting the seven days of creation, including a mass of sparkling stars, animals, leaves and flowers - and also zzzzs to remind us of when God rested on the seventh day. Each of the children received a gift of a book, and the work of the Junior Church leaders and helpers was dedicated.

Call you roll your tongue or lick your nose? Some of us can! On the third Sunday of September we sat in front of big speech bubbles and thought about things that might be said at different times. What might be helpful? What might not? Some



*Creation Mural*

of us explored the extensive metaphors in James 3, trying to put toothpaste back into a tube to demonstrate how impossible it is to take back unkind words that have been spoken. Others shared a story where a problem needed to be solved. We added speech bubbles to our figures, writing what they might say to help. Watch what you say!



*15 September*

*Elza de Bruin, Lorraine Thornton and Jess Uden, with thanks to all the leaders and helpers for their contributions to the work of Junior Church.*

## CHURCH FINANCES

*This is the second in a series of regular items in Place Matters on the topic of finance, intended to keep members informed. In this month's article Colin Christy addresses some considerations in the preparation of the Downing Place URC budget for 2025.*

At the Church Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024, an outline finance plan for 2025 was presented. It assumes a planned income of £482,000 and planned expenditure of £590,000. We now have a month to consider such a plan before the Church Meeting votes to adopt it.

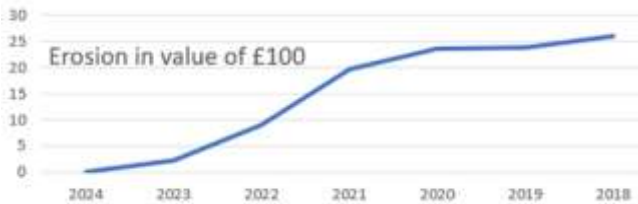
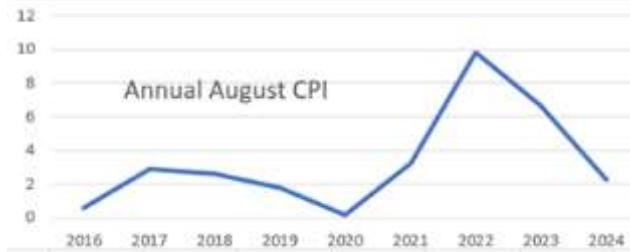
This note explains the actions implicit in the numbers, and expands certain points made in the church meeting. Our treasurer, William McVey, and I believe we have responded to, or accommodated, all comments received from members. If this has not been the case, please accept our sincere apologies and **DO raise any questions with us. The ultimate goal is to put Downing Place URC's income and expenditure onto an even keel that is sustainable for the medium term.** The proposed budget is but one step towards this.

If the proposed budget is accepted by the Church Meeting **NOT ONLY** is work still required on an ongoing basis to ensure that resources at the disposal of Downing Place URC are used effectively and efficiently, **BUT ALSO** that members seek to discern an appropriate level of mission and activity.

Therefore; **NOT ONLY** is further work underway to consider an effective staffing level (which will take time) **BUT ALSO**, without in any way wishing to discount suggestions made so far, the level of the cash deficit requires members **to consider at a more "strategic" level the activities undertaken. These two issues are inextricably linked because activities involve staff, which involves cost.**

The 2025 plan is necessarily a holding position, giving time to assess the hoped-for higher levels of income from personal giving and hall hiring, before considering further options.

1 Personal giving The 2025 plan assumes a 20% increase. This has been set in the light of recent inflation levels. The figures below show annual CPI (Consumer Price Index) inflation from Aug 2016 to Aug 2024 and how much the value of £100 has fallen since 2018. So if someone gave £100 in 2018 they would need to give £125 in 2024 to achieve the same effect; and £100 in 2021 is equivalent to £119 today. Finally, although one-off giving is very welcome, regular giving is more valuable for assessing what is sustainable for the medium term.



2 Hire of halls Income from the halls in 2025 is anticipated to be £87,000, a £20,000 increase over 2024. The anticipated increase comes from the Group Therapy Centre £5000; donation income of approximately £5000 from the weekly concerts; and £10,000 will be generated from hire of other rooms. Therefore the 2025 plan will require a focus on term hires rather than *ad hoc* use (room rates are either charged on a room-size rate for longer-term dedicated use, or a more expensive hourly rate for *ad hoc* use). So the rooms on the mezzanine floor will need to be hired out rather than provided free of charge to Cambridge4Ukraine, and the Pioneer Minister.

For a perspective: currently, hall income is £2000 less than the joint hall income from Emmanuel and St Columba's halls prior to joining together. In the first six months of 2024 the Sanctuary and Gibson Hall generated most income (£27,000, which is 96% of the total) with an average weekly chargeable usage of 11 hours and 14 hours per week respectively. A 'maximum' hall income could be assessed at £110,000, being utilisation of the Sanctuary and Gibson Hall at 16 hours and 20 hours per week at *ad hoc* hire rates, plus £25,000 from term hires for rooms 3, 4, 5 and 6, plus two rooms in the Group Therapy Centre area and £5,000 from weekly concerts.

3 Other improvements There has been much comment on hospitality, facilitating giving by cards, heat and light costs, and general administration expenditure. Improvements have been anticipated in all these areas - members may notice changes that have already taken place, and should expect further changes in 2025.

4 Mission The 2025 plan provides for £110,000 that could be described as mission (£36,000 for the URC Ministry and Mission; £8,000 Hub hospitality; £33,000 free use of rooms; £11,000 from York Street funds; £22,000 donated to Commitment for Life and other Special Causes), excluding heating or staff costs. This is a decrease from 2024 due to changes anticipated concerning Cambridge4Ukraine and the Group Therapy Centre.

5 General reserves versus designated and restricted reserves The 2025 plan utilises designated and restricted reserves and ensures a positive movement to general reserves as shown here:

CHURCH MEETING RESERVES	2025 Total	Restricted Total	Development	Castle End	Other	Designated Total	John Hall	E & S	York St	Other	General Total
SURPLUS / DEFICIT	[308,408]	[90,829]	(54,190)	[36,639]	-	[81,658]	[12,492]	(57,967)	[11,000]	-	63,881
Opening reserves	1,472,429	399,816	237,316	151,017	11,483	806,858	180,652	570,211	33,537	22,438	265,775
Reserves Dec 2025	1,364,021	308,987	183,126	114,378	11,483	725,379	168,160	512,244	22,537	22,438	329,656

6 Depreciation This is a basic concept in accounting but is relatively new to Downing Place. The depreciation cost of £57,000 represents the use of the organ and furniture. These items were bought and paid for in 2021 but instead of being set against income as a cost in that year, they were included as an asset in the balance sheet. Depreciation provides for the cost of those assets to be set against income over 5-10 years. The profile is below. Please note that in 2031 depreciation will not exist as a cost. Note further that depreciation, unlike most other costs, does not result in a cash outflow. The cash was spent in 2021. This is the reason why an excess of expenditure over income of £57,000 can be considered acceptable as a ‘cash break even’ position.



7 Further considerations not included in the 2025 plan In December 2024 the reserve level at Downing Place will be increased by £350,704 of investments on the advice of Synod. Please note that this does not in any way affect the proposed 2025 planned income and expenditure. It is purely a correction to the balance sheet, and the income arising from these investments is already included in DP’s figures. Having said that, it does support a breathing space whilst improvements in personal giving and hall income can be assessed.

# MONTHLY SPECIAL CAUSE FOR OCTOBER

## COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

Commitment  
for Life

Commitment for Life is the URC's global justice programme, with a brief to support prayer, advocacy and action for the most vulnerable people in the world. It works through Christian Aid ([www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)) and Global Justice Now ([www.globaljustice.org.uk](http://www.globaljustice.org.uk)), supporting activities focused on three particular parts of the world, among which Downing Place has chosen to focus on Bangladesh. You will find a recent report from that country below. (The others are Israel & the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Zimbabwe.)

We are invited to support the programme in various ways, including prayer for Bangladesh and arguing in support of global justice wherever we can. As part of our support we are encouraged to consider committing as much as 1% of our income to the programme, showing the government there is some public support for raising our overseas aid budget to that level. 75% of the funds raised go to Christian Aid, 5% to Global Justice Now, with the remainder used for publicity, education, grants within the UK, and administration.



Our service on 6<sup>th</sup> October will feature the programme, and there will be an opportunity afterwards to hear more over a frugal lunch – see the separate notice about this on p.45.

More information is available at <https://urc.org.uk/cfl>, but you may also like to look at <https://downingplaceurc.org/commitment-for-life>, where you can use a 'Donate' button to set up regular donations to the appeal or make a one-off payment (remembering to Gift Aid your contribution either way!). There will also be a retiring collection in our usual form at the service on 20<sup>th</sup> October.

If you want to give a cash donation, Gift Aid envelopes will be available in the Welcome Area of the church before services, and you are encouraged to use them wherever possible if you are a UK tax payer, to maximise your gift. There are also a few copies of this year's CfL magazine (also available at [https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Jxxxxxx-Commitment-for-Life-Magazine-AW\\_web.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Jxxxxxx-Commitment-for-Life-Magazine-AW_web.pdf)) – and some rather nice pencils and post-it bookmarks to keep the programme in your mind over the rest of the year.

*Owen Saxton*

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Committed to supporting our global partners **BANGLADESH**

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Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. Over half of all girls are married before turning 18. 22% are married before the age of 15. Child marriage normally spells the end of a girl's education as she takes on the domestic duties of a wife and mother.

But we are making a difference. Morsheda Khatun was married as a child. She had to drop out of school because her widowed mother was unable to support her education. "Girls getting married at an early age is common here. Some are 13, 14 or 15 years old and it harms girls a lot. They can't continue to study. It's a huge loss," she said. However, with support from our local Christian Aid partner, Morsheda has embraced new opportunities.

Morsheda now runs an online clothing business from home. She has also resumed her education and has already completed her Intermediate exam, equivalent to GCSE in the UK or Junior Cert in Ireland. We are confident she will go far!



*Image: Christian Aid, Used with permission*



In other news from Bangladesh via ‘Moving Stories’, the country has experienced unprecedented levels of student protest, possibly the worst in living memory. Over 100 people have died.



*Photo credit: Al Jazeera*

What started as peaceful protests on university campuses transformed into nationwide unrest. The government imposed a massive communications blackout, shutting down the internet and phone services.

University students were protesting a quota system for government jobs. A third of public sector jobs are reserved for the relatives of veterans from the war for independence in 1971. Students have argued that the system is discriminatory. Most people in the country agree.

It is vital that our partners can continue their work in support of some of the poorest people in Bangladesh. Please pray for the country and for our partners. For more information on these protests, see this Al Jazeera article

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/21/bangladesh-court-scrap-some-job-quotas-that-caused-deadly-unrest-reports>

You are making a difference through your support for Commitment for Life. Thank you.

## A Prayer

We choose a world of justice,

where resources are not hoarded, but equally distributed; in which we work for a world made fit for future generations, caring for one another in peace.

We choose, we choose God, for God is justice.

We choose a world of peace, in which people no longer destroy one another, and all are respected for their uniqueness.

We choose, we choose God, for God is peace.

We choose a world of love, in which God's love for all is known, where each person is accepted and celebrated, through whom God's purpose for the world is fully revealed.

We choose, we choose God, for God is love.

We choose a world of joy, where the joy of God in all creation is fêted, where the goodness within all is gladly known. Where we join creation's song of praise.

We choose. We choose God

Amen.

Gaza: What can I do?

Events in Gaza are deeply distressing. It is difficult know how to respond. The URC has a small team that works to highlight issues in Palestine. The URC Sabeel-Kairos Action Group can suggest useful resources for helpful actions.

You can link up with them at

sabeelkairos.urc@gmail.com.

You can also support the Commitment for Life Gaza appeal here. The funds will go to helping people in Gaza obtain food and water.

**Downing Place sent £500 from our York Street fund to the URC's Gaza appeal in April - read the URC's response opposite.**





Commitment  
for **Life**

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Mr W McVey  
Zero  
2a Rathmore Road  
CAMBRIDGE  
CB1 7AD

August 2024

Dear William

Gaza Crisis Appeal Donation 2024

We are most grateful for the generous donation of £500.00 received in April from Downing Place URC, Cambridge for the Gaza Crisis Appeal organised by *Commitment for Life*. Your continued generosity towards our support for the work that Christian Aid does is very much appreciated.

As I write we have so far been able to send £20,000 to Christian Aid. The situation on the ground in Gaza is still a very difficult one.

Our link persons at Christian Aid, wanted us to extend their thanks to all URC Congregations for the continued support and compassion for their partners and the communities they serve.

Christian Aid is proposing that this money be used towards some of the innovative work being done by partners in Gaza, as the one being developed by PARC. They've cleared land in the Middle Area of Gaza and are co-designing a fully accessible IDP camp to enable services for people with disabilities. Given the massive displacement and hugely increased number of people with amputations and other disabilities, this is truly an important piece of work.

Your contributions continue to make an enormous and practical difference to our partner communities. Your prayers, activism & generosity are a wonderful demonstration of 'life giving faith, defiant hope and generous love'.

With grateful thanks,

Suzanne Pearson  
Administrative Assistant

Administrative Assistant	Suzanne Pearson	020 7916 8638	<a href="mailto:suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk">suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.bit.ly/URCL">www.bit.ly/URCL</a>
Programme Officer	Kevin Snyman	020 7520 2726	<a href="mailto:kevin.snyman@urc.org.uk">kevin.snyman@urc.org.uk</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/commit4life">FB: @commit4life</a>

The United Reformed Church  
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

PREVIOUS SPECIAL CAUSE  
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN MYANMAR



We sent £2,492.40 to the URC Trust as our contribution towards their appeal for the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar, collected throughout August. The donations were as follows:

Retiring Collection	£568.97
Lunchtime Concerts	£1,185.62
Other Donations	£237.41
Gift Aid	£250.40
York Street	£250

*A Prayer from the URC Daily Devotions*

God, in whom all are united,  
Sometimes we feel so separate  
And separated.

**Life 'over there'**

Completely removed from the reality  
We know.

And yet, we are one Body,  
**Called to share each other's laughter,  
And feel each other's pain.**

Remind us

That the stories which no longer make it  
Into our newspapers

Are still the lives being lived

By real people -

With names and families,

And hopes and dreams.

Help us to care.

Move us to respond. Amen



When we look at the news, it is easy to feel despair. Dreadful conflict in Gaza, climate emergency in Zimbabwe, appalling violence in South Sudan. These are **just some of the world's worst disaster areas**. **But there is hope** – Christian Aid, along with other relief agencies, is working in all of these places, and many more, including Ukraine, bringing relief, supporting refugees, building up communities, teaching new farming methods.

### Gaza

Christian Aid are asking for our support and prayers for Gaza. Their partners on the ground are working in unimaginably hard conditions to bring medical relief and support community-led initiatives to provide food, shelter, sanitation and cash. Everything from building mobile bathrooms in shelters to working with local farmers to get fresh vegetables for families that have left their homes to escape airstrikes.



Visit the CA website [www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/gaza-appeal](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/gaza-appeal) to see more about Gaza, including a short video by an aid worker and to find details of how to donate to the Appeal.

### Zimbabwe

**Christian Aid's Harvest Appeal this year is for Zimbabwe.** Zimbabwe is one of the many countries of the global south where climate change is having a disastrous impact on agriculture.

Even experienced and resilient farmers, like Nyarai Zirugo (right), are finding they urgently need to learn new skills to prevent hunger and malnutrition. Like most people in the region, Nyarai and her family are farmers. They always made their living by farming and selling chickens, until the climate crisis began to threaten their harvests and their hope. Low rainfall meant that yields were barely enough to feed the family, while



hyperinflation undermined the value of the produce they could take to market. When the family tried planting small grains because of the climate change issues, the birds would destroy most of the crop.

Determined to provide for her family Nyarai pushed back against poverty, with the support of Christian Aid, she gained new knowledge and skills to secure her family's harvest and their hope. .

Nyarai took agriculture training with Christian Aid's local partner, *Bio-Innovation Zimbabwe*.

“One of the main things we got was improved knowledge”, said Nyarai. “We learnt how to put in place measures to prepare for unpredictable situations. We've seen our livelihoods, diet and farming methods improve greatly. We are better able to sustain ourselves even when droughts hit”.

More at [www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/harvest-appeal](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/harvest-appeal)

South Sudan

And looking ahead to December, the Christmas Appeal will be for South Sudan.

When every essential is unaffordable, the support programme Christian Aid delivers with our partners, *Smile Again Africa Development Organisation*, based in South Sudan, is a vital lifeline. For refugee Shede (below), it offers a rare chance to feed her youngest daughter, Saida, and granddaughter, Mariem, both aged six, a nutritious meal. No one chooses to be a refugee, but together, we can support families like Shede's to forge a new life while they wait for the end of war.



PS – I hope the carol singing in the Grand Arcade is in your diary. Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2 till 4. All welcome – to play, sing, or hold buckets. More in November's *Place Matters*.

For more details on anything about Christian Aid, please contact Sheila Porrer.

## THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP REPORT

Since the writing of the Annual Report for the Annual General Church Meeting in May 2024, the CHR Tuesday Fellowship has continued to meet weekly, including meeting at Fulbourn URC every third Tuesday of the month. While it **has been a blessing for those of us who attend the 'Word Together' with our friends from Fulbourn URC and also from other churches, we have been** conscious that some of our members have not been able to attend because of the change of venue. We are conscious as well that some of our members of the fellowship have not been able to attend at all because of health and mobility issues. We try to keep in touch with those of our membership who are unable to attend by the monthly newsletter which is produced by Wendy Roe for which we are so grateful, and also by phone calls and by visits. However we were very **pleased to welcome Dot, a friend of Cynthia's to the fellowship, and are also** pleased to welcome Laura from Naples who comes when she can when she is working in Cambridge as a carer.

During the summer months we have had some interesting and varied talks. In April we had the delight of having the Capriol Dancers perform for us. Our members Chris and Elin wear medieval costumes and facilitate the dances. Those of us who wish to are encouraged to join in the medieval dancers. In May Margaret Jude gave us a talk looking at paintings by Thomas Kinkade. In June Carole Scullion gave us a musical quiz in aid of Tearfund for which we were able to raise £32.70



We also had a very entertaining talk about the Fisherman's Mission from Andy Malcolm, who even sang us sea shanties as part of the talk. At the beginning of July we had a strawberry and cream tea in line with beginning of the tennis season. Maureen Kendall gave us an interesting talk about hymns. At the end of

July and throughout August we have been having garden parties in members' gardens. Fortunately the weather has been kind to us, except on one occasion in Pamela's garden it was too hot and we had to go inside. However we are very grateful to all our hosts, and it has been great pleasure to entertain the fellowship in our gardens. Now it is September we have been very happy to attend the 'Word Together'; we have decided to explore the origin of hymns which we have chosen.



During this time we have been able to donate to different charities, including £82.70 to the Tear Fund, £100 to Cambridge Aid and £50 to East Anglian Children's Hospice.

Finally we would be very pleased to welcome anyone who would like to join us, either at our meetings at Fulbourn URC or at St Athanasios Hall.

*Penny Milsom*





## SOCIAL EVENTS FOR THE DPURC FAMILY

A clip from a recent issue of *Reform* magazine caught my eye. It was from a church, reporting what an enriching experience a weekend away had proved for their congregation. My reading it coincided with a suggestion from a Downing Place member for a day trip to the seaside. Both of these got myself and three others thinking about church trips of our pasts - some less good than others, but mostly good - and how, with the massive undertaking of two churches joining, a major refurbishment and a pandemic, we have understandably lost much of the social side of church, a topic which has been brought up before. Weekends at Hengrave Hall, days at Houghton and Westminster were all cited, as were the annual Burns Supper at St. Columba's and the very popular meal and entertainment evenings Emmanuel used to hold. We wondered if it might be time to see if church members would welcome a return of 'together time', and if so, in what form. We reflected that, nowadays, we seem to meet largely to discuss business or church matters of some kind, and while this is important/essential, we would not want to lose the vital glue of sharing purely social time together.

**The matter was brought to the Elders' meeting, and I suggested that we aim to form a Social Events group. I'm delighted to say that four other members have agreed to join the group. This gives us a team of five: Liz Barrow, Jane Bower, Alan Rickard, Tim Rowland and Stephen Thornton.**

The new group has discussed some ideas for the future, but we would really appreciate ideas from you! What would you like? What do you enjoy? Anything you miss from the past, or new ideas you'd like to try? Please let me know!

While we intend to start small, and we need to be realistic, we really need to know what social events our congregation would welcome. Singing evenings, word-game evenings (such as 'Just a Minute' or 'Whose Line is it Anyway?'), quizzes, ceilidhs, walks, visits, day trips, in-house productions and homespun concerts, themed evenings, meals, historical banquets, **illustrated talks...** all have been carried out successfully in the past!



Please get in touch – we look forward to your suggestions. And if you would also like to join the Social Events team, please contact me!

Thank you

*Jane Bower*

## LUNCHTIME CONCERTS MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS AT 1PM

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

Wednesday 2 October	Hazel Keelan (violin) Simon Kelly (clarinet) & John Richens (piano)
Monday 7 October	Alex Clare-Young (gaelic harp)
Wednesday 9 October	Jessica Lawrence-Hares (mezzo-soprano) & Olga Elbourn (piano)
Monday 14 October	Fiammetta Tarli & Ivo Varbanov (piano duo)
Wednesday 16 October	Zacharias Brandman (piano)
Monday 21 October	Eloise Kendall & Paulo Ghiglia (flutes) & Jingle Gawley (piano)
Wednesday 23 October	Timothy Peake (piano)
Monday 28 October	Brandon Roku Ali (piano)
Wednesday 30 October	Ian de Massini (organ)

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





## WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME CONCERT

at Downing Place United Reformed Church

Wednesday 30th October,

1.00 - 2:00pm

### **Orchestral Fireworks!**

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice,  
Dance of the Hours, & music by  
Offenbach, R. Strauss, & Mussorgsky.*

Ian de Massini (organ)



Free admission with retiring collection



## AUTUMN HOUSE GROUPS

### **“Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth”**

The Birth and Growth of the Early Church;

Discussion groups based on studies in the first fifteen chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles* with some passages from the Gospels and Paul’s letters.

Week 1 “Waiting on the Promise” Chapters 1 and 2

Week 2 “The Jerusalem church” Chapters. 3 – 7

Week 3 “Sowing the Word” Chapters 8 - 10

Week 4 “Get up and go” Chapters. 9, 11, 12

Week 5 “Set Apart for me” Chapters. 13, 14

Week 6 “Pillars of the Church” Chapters 12, 15

This course will explore how the first followers of Jesus emerged from the shock of his crucifixion to become the basis of a new community which would grow and spread with remarkable speed to create other new communities in his name. They would encounter opposition from without and disagreements within; physical dangers, imprisonment and persecution; and new questions requiring new ways of thinking. Through it all they felt themselves empowered and guided by the Spirit of Jesus to pursue the commission they had been given. “*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us*”.

Tuesdays 2.15pm at the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>,  
Nov 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mondays 7.30pm on Zoom, hosted by Tim Rowland Oct 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, Nov  
4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>.

Both will be led by Janet Bottoms.

Thursdays 2pm at the home of Freda Bradbury Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 7<sup>th</sup>,  
14<sup>th</sup>. Led by Penny Flynn

Please contact Janet for weekly material for Tuesday afternoons or Monday evening, and Penny for material for Thursday afternoons – or any other information. Printed copies will be available via the Office.

Please ask Tim for the Zoom link for Monday evenings.

You are welcome to attend any or all of the sessions, and to mix and match days/times for your convenience.

## LECTIO DIVINA FRIENDS

William and Deborah McVey are planning another series of online Zoom Lectio Divina for the 'Season of Creation'.

This will start on Friday 27th September for four weeks.

That is - Fridays the 27<sup>th</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> October.

From 8.30 to 9.30 am, we spend the first forty minutes meditating on a passage of scripture and responding to it briefly; then in the last twenty minutes we share more fully how this has 'spoken' to us today. If you prefer to simply sit and listen, that too is a way of sharing and gaining encouragement in faith.

The four mornings will focus on scriptures highlighting the season of the Spirit. Do indicate if this is something you would like to join in with.

If this way of prayer is something you have never tried, you are most welcome to join in any of the mornings to see if this is helpful. You will find a warm welcome from the ecumenical group of participants. *Please let Deborah know that you are interested in joining in for any one or all of this series of four meetings.*

At the appropriate time William will send the Zoom link - you may then contact him if you have any technical questions about this.

*Do make contact with Deborah if you want to ask more: [deborahmcv@aol.com](mailto:deborahmcv@aol.com) or by phone on either of the numbers below .....*





## Group Therapy Centre Cambridge Conference

12 October 2024 9.30am - 4.30pm

# UNHOUSED MINDS AND INHOSPITABLE ENVIRONMENTS

Exclusion, Migration, Trauma and Belonging



Speakers:

**Christopher Scanlon**  
and **John Adlam**

Respondent:

**Revd. Alex Clare-Young**

Venue:

**Downing Place URC,  
Cambridge CB2 3EL**



*At a time of cultural  
devastation, the reality a  
courageous person has to  
face up to is that one has to  
face up to reality in new ways*

<https://grouptherapycambridge.org.uk/courses/conference-2024/>

# Foundation Course in Group Analysis 2024-2025

## About Group Analysis

'Group Analysis' is a method developed for working therapeutically with people in groups. Dr. S.H. Foulkes, a psychoanalyst, applied psychodynamic theory together with elements of Gestalt Psychology and aspects of the sociology of Norbert Elias to the group setting. Together with his colleagues he then founded the Institute of Group Analysis in London, from where a number of courses have been set up in the UK and in many other countries.

## About the Course

The aim of the course is to enable students to experience what happens when people meet and work together in a group. You will learn about and experience group process and group dynamics through seminars, work reflection groups, and through being a member of an experiential group for the duration of the course. The rhythm of the course over 10 monthly Saturdays gives the opportunity to work intensively and brings to the foreground the importance of working with boundaries and separations. The Course offers a blended mix of online and in-person group experiences.

## The Theory Dan Neale - Member Institute Group Analysis

The seminars and workshops provide an introduction to the psychodynamic theory underlying Group Analysis and to "group specific" processes and concepts. We also explore further the practicalities of working with groups in various settings (NHS, Social Services, Schools, Private Practice, Counselling etc.)

Students will be invited to participate actively by presenting relevant papers. In other seminars students can, if they wish, present their own work situation and discuss issues and problems they experience there.

The Course Handbook will be provided as soon as the students have registered for the course.

## The Group Experience

Conducted by a Member of the Institute of Group Analysis

Although the 45 hours spent in an experiential group can only provide an introduction, it is also true that the participants discover quite a few things...

About themselves as they seek to relate to each other in the group on a strictly personal level.

About therapeutic groups: which experiences can be helpful and which might be potentially harmful.

About the skills of a group conductor: how to cope with the stress which working with therapeutic groups inevitably brings; how to facilitate communication and how to safeguard the boundaries etc.

About the limitations of group therapy: concerning one's own suitability and also its use for others.

About the space within groups to connect and experience others views, thoughts, processes around the course and learning about Group Analysis.

## Further Training

The completion of this course qualifies you to apply for the IGA Diploma Course in Groupwork Practice and associate membership of the Institute of Group Analysis.

The Group Therapy Centre is a Registered Charity in England (1136632)



Course Fee £1520

Payment options available. We are happy to discuss this with you.

**10% Discount to Charitable Organisations**  
**10% Discount for Early Bird applications (before 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024)**

(Please contact Course Convenor for details of bursaries available for students in need of financial support)

## COURSE ATTENDANCE

**Theory Seminars and Work Reflection:**  
(In Person) 13.00 – 16.30 on 10 Saturdays from Oct 2024- July 2025 (minimum 80% attendance required).

2024: 5<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov, 7<sup>th</sup> Dec

2025: 4<sup>th</sup> Jan, 1<sup>st</sup> Feb, 8<sup>th</sup> Mar, 12<sup>th</sup> Apr,

10<sup>th</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> Jun, 5<sup>th</sup> Jul

**Experiential Groups:** (Online) Three terms of 10 weeks, weekday evenings. (Day of the week to be agreed)

Venue:

The Group Therapy Centre  
3 Downing Place  
Cambridge  
CB2 3EL

<https://grouptherapycambridge.org.uk>

Contact:

Dan Neale

Course Convenor

[dn203@hotmail.com](mailto:dn203@hotmail.com)

online prospectus:  
[www.igainalysis.org](http://www.igainalysis.org)





Cambridge  
Action Group



# Autumn Supper and Talk

'The Bible – how to enjoy  
reading it'

IN AID OF  
BIBLE SOCIETY

Friday 11th October 2024 at 6.30pm

Queen Edith Chapel, Wulfstan Way, Cambridge CB1 8QN

Guest speaker: Revd Jenny Pathmarajah, Methodist Minister for Castle Street and Histon Churches.

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

Please email [penny.flynn@gmail.com](mailto:penny.flynn@gmail.com) to reserve a supper place or for the live-stream link.

Photo credit: Valentin PIXABAY | [biblesociety.org.uk](http://biblesociety.org.uk) | Registered charity 232759



## SEPTEMBER DIARY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Tue	01-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup (see p.36)	2:15pm	At the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn
Tue	01-Oct-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	02-Oct-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Hazel Keelan (violin), John Richens (piano) & Simon Kelly (clarinet)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	03-Oct-24	Midweek Worship led by Jane Bower	11:00am	Church
Thu	03-Oct-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	03-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:00pm	At the home of Freda Bradbury
Fri	04-Oct-24	Lectio Divina (see p.37)	8:30am	Zoom
Fri	04-Oct-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	06-Oct-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	06-Oct-24	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden with members of our World Church group	11:00am	Church
Sun	06-Oct-24	Frugal Lunch (see p.45)	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Sun	06-Oct-24	Open Table/Solidarity Social	7:00pm	The Hub
Mon	07-Oct-24	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Alex Clare-Young (clarsach)	1:00pm	Church
Mon	07-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	7:30pm	Zoom
<i>Tue</i>	<i>08-Oct-24</i>	<i>Michaelmas Full Term begins</i>		

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Tue	08-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:15pm	At the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn
Tue	08-Oct-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	09-Oct-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Jessica Lawrence-Hares (soprano) & Olga Elbourn (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	09-Oct-24	Solidarity Hub - Acorn the Community Union	7:00pm	The Hub
Wed	09-Oct-24	Elders' Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Thu	10-Oct-24	<i>Nigel in South Africa until 30 October</i>		
Thu	10-Oct-24	Prayer Meeting	10:15am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	10-Oct-24	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Professor David Thompson	11:00am	Church
Thu	10-Oct-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	10-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:00pm	At the home of Freda Bradbury
Fri	11-Oct-24	Lectio Divina	8:30am	Zoom
Sat	12-Oct-24	Synod Meeting: Topic - Ecumenism	10:30am - 4:00pm	Witham URC
Sat	12-Oct-24	Group Therapy Centre Conference (see p.38)	9:30am - 4:30pm	Church
Sat	12-Oct-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	13-Oct-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	13-Oct-24	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Chris Baker	11:00am	Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	13-Oct-24	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Church and Hub
Mon	14-Oct-24	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Fiammetta Tarli & Ivo Varbanov (piano duo)	1:00pm	Church
Mon	14-Oct-24	DEADLINE for booking and paying for the Gibson Lunch	4:00pm	
Mon	14-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	7:30pm	Zoom
Tue	15-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:15pm	At the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn
Tue	15-Oct-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship join Fulbourn URC for 'The Word Together'	2:30pm	Fulbourn URC
Wed	16-Oct-24	DEADLINE for submitting items for November's 'Place Matters'		
Wed	16-Oct-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Zacharias Brandman (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	17-Oct-24	Midweek Worship led by the Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young	11:00am	Church
Thu	17-Oct-24	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	17-Oct-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	17-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:00pm	At the home of Freda Bradbury
Fri	18-Oct-24	Lectio Divina	8:30am	Zoom
Fri	18-Oct-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	19-Oct-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	20-Oct-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	20-Oct-24	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Norman Setchell followed by a Retiring Collection for Commitment for Life	11:00am	Church
Mon	21-Oct-24	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Jingle Gawley (piano), Eloise Kendall & Paulo Ghiglia (flutes)	1:00pm	Church
Mon	21-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	7:30pm	Zoom
Tue	22-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:15pm	At the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn
Tue	22-Oct-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	23-Oct-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Timothy Peake (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	24-Oct-24	Midweek Worship with Communion led by the Revd Dr David Cornick	1:00pm	Church
Thu	24-Oct-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	24-Oct-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:00pm	At the home of Freda Bradbury
Thu	24-Oct-24	Finance Committee Meeting	7:00pm	Room 4
Sat	26-Oct-24	Solidarity Hub Trumpington Gathering	4:00pm	Trumpington Pavilion
Sat	26-Oct-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	27-Oct-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	27-Oct-24	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Allen Morton	11:00am	Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	27-Oct-24	Solidarity Hub	7:00pm	The Hub
Mon	28-Oct-24	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Brandon Roku Ali (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Tue	29-Oct-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	30-Oct-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Ian de Massini (organ) (see p.35)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	31-Oct-24	Midweek Worship led by Dr Janet Bottoms	11:00am	Church
Thu	31-Oct-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Fri	01-Nov-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	02-Nov-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	03-Nov-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	03-Nov-24	Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	03-Nov-24	Meeting re Zoe's research (see p.7)	12:45pm	Church
Sun	03-Nov-24	Open Table/Solidarity Social	7:00pm	The Hub

## FRUGAL LUNCH

There will be a frugal lunch of soup, bread and cheese, following the service on 6<sup>th</sup> October in the Gibson Hall. You are invited to enjoy the lunch and give what you would have spent on your own lunch to support Commitment for Life, our Special Cause for October. Alex Cassidy, the regional Church Engagement and Funding Officer for Christian Aid, will join us and speak about the work supported by our donations

Can you help with the lunch? We need help to set up, serve the lunch, and clear up afterwards – there is a sign-up sheet in the office, or you can e-mail Sheila Strachan to offer help.

## MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

6 October	Chris Baker Jo Clare-Young David Cornick Deborah McVey Janet Tollington	Fenstanton St Neots Bassingbourn Trinity, Burwell Clare
13 October	Penny Flynn John Proctor Janet Tollington	Buntingford Hythe, Southampton (online) <b>St Andrew's Peterborough</b>
20 October	Liz Caswell Alex Clare Young Jo Clare-Young Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Fulbourn Pembroke College (evensong) Rayleigh Abbey Lane, Saffron Walden St Barnabas United Church, Florida, Roodeport, South Africa
27 October	Chris Baker Jo Clare-Young Simone Maghenzani  David Thompson Janet Tollington	St Ives Free Church <b>St John's Ipswich</b> Pellice Valley Waldensian Church (online) <b>St Luke's</b> Fulbourn (am)

*Note - David Thompson and Deborah McVey will be present at the service to mark the 150th anniversary of St Luke's LEP in Cambridge on the 20th October.*



## LECTIONARY FOR OCTOBER

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.

*6 October (Trinity 19)*

Job 1:1,2:1-10

Psalm 26

Hebrews 1:1-4;2:5-12

Mark 10:2-16

*13 October (Trinity 20)*

Job 23:1-9,16-17

Psalm 22:1-15

Hebrews 4:12-16

Mark 10:17-31

*20 October (Trinity 21)*

Job 38:1-7,(34-41)

Psalm 104:1-9,24,35c

Hebrews 5:1-10

Mark 10:35-45

*27 October (Last after Trinity)*

Job 42:1-6,10-17

Psalm 34:1-8,(19-22)

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 10:46-52

*3 November (4th before Advent)*

Ruth 1:1-18

Psalm 146

Hebrews 9:11-14

Mark 12:28-34



*Photograph by  
Stillvision Photography*



*Wedding cake by Liz Barrow, photograph by David Flynn*

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Tim Rowland

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

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

WEB EDITOR: Jess Uden

Please send all items to be included in the November edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of Wednesday 16 October.

The November edition will be available from Sunday 27 October