



**DOWNING PLACE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE**

PLACE MATTERS



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*Cover photograph: the Easter garden created by our Junior Church at Easter 2024.
Photograph by Jess Uden.*

*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 justice was a building block of my life - justice that sought to embody fairness.

I was brought up as the middle one of three children. Our parents treated us with a fairness that let neither accomplishment nor bad behaviour go unnoticed. It was also a fairness that declined to send me to a specialist music school because they could not afford that privilege for my brother and sister, so they would not discriminate in favour of just one of their equally loved tribe.

The rhythm of that home was also shaped by the annual cycle of Christian Aid's justice-pursuing events. That significant charity had been formed in the decade before I was born, and was already galvanising the churches' commitment that all might know 'life before death'. There was Carol Singing around the village in December, and in May everything that marked Christian Aid Week: house to house collection, a church service, coffee mornings, hunger lunches, fund raising flower festivals, and so on.

My mother was also a stalwart of the village committee that focussed upon under privileged people in other parts of the world – Brockham Overseas Aid Committee (BOAC – so easily confused with a domestic airline of the times). So it was that I grew up knowing about children's homes in exotically named states of India as sari wearing matrons came to tea, and about hospitals in remote parts of Africa as air mail letters arrived, with the bonus of another stamp for my philately collection. Imagine the impact thirty years later of going to that very hospital when taking my parents on holiday to Kwa Zulu Natal.

In short, the just treatment of all people because they are made in the image of God as much as I am, has always been a given. I have never questioned it.

Each of the churches in which I have served has tried to find ways to give practical effect to a similar commitment to justice:

- in an affluent part of Cheshire, there was a self-help coffee shop and counselling service for executives made redundant in the 1980s double dip recession;
- in a white suburb of Johannesburg, cheek by jowl with Soweto, members ran a soup kitchen for economic immigrants to South Africa;
- in St Annes on the Sea, an ecumenical group developed a drop-in centre, **with food, clothing and solidarity, for people who'd come to nearby Blackpool** believing its streets were paved with gold only to find that once the *Illuminations* were over each Autumn, that whole stretch of coast would

be better named Homelessness on Sea;

- and there are many aspirations to securing justice for others that characterise Downing Place Church.

If I am honest, most of these things are about an understanding of justice that is less about fairness, and more about mercy. I don't mean that fairness doesn't matter. I want that for us all. But my sense is that fairness is a head thing, leading to a careful examination of history and background, data and circumstances. Mercy, on the other hand, is a heart thing. Moved by the hand life has dealt to others, one feels arrested by an almost visceral impulse that what is wrong needs to be put right. Logic plays a part, but it isn't everything. Fairness is involved, but it's not the bottom line. Precedent cannot be ignored, but nor can it alone determine mercy.

When I say that mercy is a heart thing, I do not mean that it's all to do with the do-gooder's sentimentality ... though I am not totally negative about sentiment. May God forbid that we lose its capacity to stir us to nobler things. But mercy is what Jesus models; God's only begotten reveals it to be a defining quality of God. What else was going on when Jesus said to that criminal beside him on Calvary, 'today you will be with me in Paradise'? That's not fairness, but mercy. It's not about a chilling analysis of income and expenditure and finding that he's in the red, so he'll be written off. It's not about an elephantine memory that will never forget past flaws or failings and holds them against him for all eternity. It's about the 'love of God [being] broader than the measures of our mind; and the heart of the Eternal [being] most wonderfully kind', as F. W. Faber has us sing.

Might it be that mercy is what needs to have a defining place in the mix of what we bring to the world's justice-deprived situations? Yes, we need justice rooted in competence, commitment and compassion, but also that openness to offering the heartfelt mercy that we need ourselves. After all, none of us is exempt from what can go hideously wrong in life. If it's where we live, anyone of us could find ourselves caught up in a Californian fire, a Polynesian island's coastal erosion, or a New Year's Day flash flood in Stockport. Only life's circumstances prevent any one of us being a Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh, a victim of the conflict that Hamas and the Israeli Government perpetuate, or a UK pensioner forced to choose between heating or eating. If we are, we do not just need to be treated with what other people's heads inspire, but with what their heart stirs, too.

Moreover, let's not give into the neat alliterative allure of language like 'the last, the least, and the lost'. No-one is dignified by such a label. They are you and me, but in different and unenviable circumstances, needing a mercy-motivated justice.

This Good Friday, we again recall Jesus on the cross, there offering mercy – and

not only to the thief beside him. Three days' later, on Easter Day, we will celebrate the victory of that mercy. Like a resuscitated body and an empty tomb, it defies logic, challenging the little grey cells. But as we accept that logic alone has not put right the ills of the world, so do we not do well to give mercy a chance? Moreover, if I am honest, it's mercy I too need as I anticipate retirement and review the last four decades; it's mercy we all need as we trek towards the sharp corner we call death. And it's what this principal season of the Church's year helps us rediscover is alive and well. Hallelujah indeed!

Nigel Uden



DOWNING PLACE CHURCH PSALM

On Sunday 16th March, during the All-Ages Service, we explored the old 'exquisite corpse' idea, whereby three different people decorated a human image – one colouring the head, another the torso, and a third the legs. Bizarre figures emerged because none of the colourists could see what the ones before them had done.

The 'exquisite corpse' methodology can also be used for words, including poems. It's a bit like Consequences, where a group of people author a story, each line penned by one who does not know what the foregoing said. The day we coloured the human images, we also thought about those poems called Psalms. We remembered how their writers express so many different thoughts and feelings to God, and about God. Worshippers were then invited to jot onto a card a phrase expressing what they would like to say if writing a Psalm. Taking the seventy plus phrases we received, a sort of exquisite corpse psalm was created. No phrase was written knowing what the previous or following ones would be. What emerged was neither more nor less than what the congregation wanted and needed to say to God in that moment.

The Downing Place Church Psalm is below.

Thanks God. Steadfast.

Thank you for everything. Sustain us.

Thank you for helping us. Help us to do your will.

Help us to bring peace to a world that feels broken. Peace.

Please lead me always. Lord you are my guiding light.

I'm sorry. Unfair judgement. Knit us together in love.

Listen, listen, and show compassion.

God is a bright light showing us the way.
The cross at the centre of all we love and say and do.

Here, I am in a good place. Melt the hearts of privileged Christians.
O Lord, lead me, for my bones are vexed.

We have the building blocks, nuts and bolts – help us with vision.
Praise God for challenge, diversity, inclusivity.

Praise God for music.

God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble.

Give thanks.

Your grace, blessing and bountiful goodness is more than I could ever have imagined.

Bringer of hope and love in deeply troubled times.

Draw near and keep us safe. Lead us along right paths. My light and my hope.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Grant the world justice and peace. Celebrate the joy and comfort of fellowship.

Lord, you are totally awesome! The Lord is my trusty support.

Till time shall be no more. Gather your people, O gracious God, from all the ends of the earth.

Praise God for our daily bread. Love, and peace.

In the Lord, no-one is a stranger.

Praise God for the Holy Spirit.

Thank you, God for always being there, listening, guiding, forgiving and loving.

God, please stop people from fighting.

Lament for war, thanks for blessings.

Hallelujah.

Guide us, Lord, where ever we are.

God is love, help more people to find this for themselves.

God, thanks for being colourful like confetti – refreshing like juice.

Sorry! Keep us dear Lord, close to you in times of change.

Hold us in your everlasting arms.

Lord, I love you! Lord, we praise you for wonders natural and manmade.

The night sky with stars, planets, satellites and planes.

The spring sunshine, leaves and buds emerging and warmth for being outside.

Walking, running and jumping.

For the miracles of community and communication.

Lord, we pray to you for good fortune but sometimes we have floods and hurricanes.

Lord, help us to have faith in your goodness and to keep digging deep to find our own goodness.

Warm thanks to everyone who took part – with images or words. And special thanks to David Whitmore, who so skilfully typed up what was on the cards, so that the entire Psalm could be seen on the screen before the end of the service.

Nigel Uden



ELIZABETH WHITEHORN – A PROFILE

I was born and brought up in Edinburgh, the eldest of five children. Our father was a civil servant and our mother was a primary school teacher before they married. We lived on the east side of Edinburgh and all five of us went to the local schools. Our secondary school was the largest in Scotland at the time I was there, with 2,000 pupils. Life in those days revolved around our local church (Church of Scotland): Sunday School etc, Brownies/Cubs, Guides/Scouts and various social activities such as an annual show, a garden fete and a ceilidh.



Five on holiday in N-W Scotland

At school I joined the Scripture Union (SU) group and started attending girls' camps. Thus I discovered the value of daily Bible reading and came to realise that being a Christian was a whole-life commitment, not just going to church on Sunday.

I studied French and Latin at Aberdeen University, a four-year course plus a year as an English language assistant in a secondary school in France. After teacher training in Aberdeen, I taught French and Latin, first in the Scottish Borders then in Aberdeenshire. I continued to be involved in SU school groups and girls' camps during these years.

In late 1984 I joined the Education Department at '121', the Church of Scotland offices in Edinburgh. My role included writing materials for Sunday School and Bible Class, running training events and supporting the Presbytery Advisers for children's work. This was an enormous change from school teaching, learning to work with adults rather than children and teenagers and to write and proof-read material for publication. The job also necessitated much driving to different parts of Scotland and weekend working.

In January 1988 I joined the National Christian Education Council (NCEC), based in Surrey. NCEC was founded as the Sunday School Union in 1803, adding National in 1921; in 1966 it changed its name again to NCEC. Older readers may remember the Bible stamps and the annual Scripture Exam. My role at first was very similar to what I had been doing in Scotland, with one significant difference: NCEC was an ecumenical organisation, working with different Christian denominations at local, regional and national levels.



Promoting NCEC publications at a Christian Resources Exhibition

I had the privilege of being very involved in the writing and production of *Kaleidoscope*, a major training programme for people working with children in church, written by a group representing the major denominations in Britain and Ireland. I was joint editor with a colleague from the Methodist Church and NCEC published the material in 1993.

In 1994 NCEC relocated to Birmingham. As time went on we developed our **training to offer ‘training the trainer’ programmes. Thus we worked with a wider spectrum of people over longer periods of time, giving individuals more scope for personal development than the one-off, ‘hit and run’ events we had run previously.**

By the year 2000 I was doing less training and more publishing work, including proof-reading the Bible reading notes NCEC published under the imprint of the International Bible Reading Association (IBRA). When NCEC amalgamated with the Christian Education Movement (CEM, which focused on RE – Religious Education - **in schools**) **to become simply ‘Christian Education’, I also had to proof-read RE materials.** At that time CEM was led by Stephen Orchard, so he was my boss until he became Principal of Westminster College here in Cambridge.

In the meantime, I had become very involved in my local URC. The ministers were John and Joan Johansen-Berg who had founded the Community for Reconciliation and also ran a Christian conference centre called Barnes Close, just outside Birmingham. I used to attend conferences there from time to time and also helped out as a volunteer occasionally, as did other church members. Also attending events was a certain John Whitehorn, who then lived in London. Some years went by but eventually John and I realised that in spite of our **age difference we could be more than ‘just good friends’ and we got married in July 2002.** Naturally our reception was held at Barnes Close! Thus I gained an amazing **step-family: John’s three living children (including Helen Christy), their spouses, plus nine grandchildren.** More recently four great-grandchildren have **been born, of whom John met three. John’s first wife, also called Elizabeth, died in 1975; it is her name which appears on the Missionary Board in the Gibson Hall.**

John joined me in Birmingham and I changed to working part-time. In March 2006 we moved to **John’s flat in Cambridge, within walking distance of St Columba’s URC, where John’s family connection dated back to 1938.** John introduced me to the delights of the University of the Third Age (U3A) and the Botanic Garden, as well as Eskdale in the Lake District, his favourite holiday destination. He was a keen singer in choirs so together we joined Choir 2000, based in Histon. John died in March 2022, so my life has changed again. Since

then the friendships and fellowship I have found at Downing Place have become all the more important to me.



Wedding reception, July 2002

Looking back, I see that through all the changes, ups and downs of life my faith has been challenged, strengthened and developed by personal Bible reading plus involvement in church. As we enter another period of change in Downing Place, I hope and pray that we will emerge stronger and better equipped to be the body of Christ.



Elizabeth (centre) with Joan Laidlaw (left - and see p.12!) and Christine Russell (right).

REVD ERNEST MARVIN – A BLUE PLAQUE IN BRISTOL

Early in March we received an email from former Downing Place member Joan Laidlaw. Helen Christy reminds us that Joan had been a member at St Columba's, latterly Downing Place, since 1961, and was church secretary for 10 years from 2005 to 2015. Joan recently moved to Bristol to be closer to her daughter. She was an enthusiastic participant in church activities, and sang in the choir for many years. She is a voracious reader and many of us enjoy her witty repartee, dry sense of humour, inquiring mind and friendship.



Joan (front row, far right) in the Downing Place Choir at our Dedication Service in 2021

From Joan Laidlaw in Bristol:

‘Just thought some members may be interested to see this blue plaque that was very recently put up to commemorate Ernest Marvin in north Bristol. **It’s at St James in Lockleaze, which was Ernest’s first charge, and** particularly mentions his passion play. St James now seems to be a popular neighbourhood hub. It was nice to arrive in Bristol and find that there was a lovely memorial to our old minister. Joanna took me there today, for the photos below, in the warm spring sunshine. I have been to Redland Park URC several times where the minister is Dougie Burnett, who himself trained at Westminster College, and was mentored by Ernest! And **remembered me! With much love to you all, Joan’**

Ernest Marvin was minister of St Columba's Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, from 1982 to 1996. For the benefit of those of us who didn't know Ernest, we asked Pamela Cressey to tell us about him.



I first met Ernest in Oxford, at St. Columba's Presbyterian Church, while he was a student at St John's College. Later he was an ordinand at Westminster College here in Cambridge. Ernest's first ministry was to the new estate of Lockleaze in Bristol. He set to work to provide a place for local young people, including rock musicians, in a youth club – provided they came to the Sunday evening service! With a local actor this led to the production of the pioneering rock musical “A Man Dies “ which, although somewhat controversial, was highly acclaimed, and performed at the Royal Albert Hall in 1964. In 1982, following ministry at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Sheffield, Ernest was called by the congregation of St. Columba's Presbyterian Church, Cambridge. St. Andrew's members were sorry to lose him, but it was our gain.

Ernest came from Scotland, the son of a minister. He was a very good pastor to all ages, and a good preacher. His children's addresses were usually stories about his encounters in shops or the street, leading to a Christian message, which the adults enjoyed and remembered as well as the children! Marjorie and Frank Barker – Elaine's parents-in-law – who lived on-site, supported him with his frequent last-minute needs before services, and his widowed mother was a formidable critic of his sermons from her front seat in church. His ministry was enhanced by several visits to churches in South Korea and the USA. Ernest retired to Cheltenham in 1996, and died there in 2015.

It is fitting that his talents are recognised with the blue plaque at Lockleaze Church, Bristol: it was erected in November 2024.

REJOICE AND SING LIVE

The United Reformed Church (URC) is holding a hymn-filled service on 3 May to celebrate 35 years of its hymn book, *Rejoice and Sing*.

Following on from the 50th anniversary service in April 2023, where 1,200 people gathered to celebrate the first 50 years of the URC, hundreds of people will gather at the Methodist Central Hall, Coventry, on May 3 to sing lots of hymns and to listen to those who helped create the hymn book in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sing a new hymn by Dominic Grant, with contributions from David Thompson, Stephen Orchard, Anne Sardeson, Roo Stewart, David Williams, David Jenkins, Brenda Stephenson and more.



There will also be a special contribution from one of the URC's best known hymn writers, Brian Wren. A panel discussion, chaired by the Editor of the URC's magazine, *Reform*, Stephen Tomkins, will also be part of the service.

A scratch choir, headed up by Roo Stewart, will also be created on the day, which includes an exhibition and the chance for lunch or a tea or coffee from the café at the venue.

The hymns will be accompanied by the hall's organ, piano and the event worship band, led by David Williams.

To reserve your free tickets, visit bit.ly/reform-live, scan the QR code or call 020 7691 9865. This is also the website to get directions to Methodist Central Hall, Coventry.

Tell us what your favourite hymn is, and why, is by emailing reform@urc.org.uk, or by commenting on the posts about the event on the URC's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/TheUnitedReformedChurch>.

(Editorial Note - David Thompson was convenor of the Rejoice and Sing Editorial Committee, and author of the 4-page Preface.)

ALEX CLARE YOUNG – thank you, and God Speed



After three years of Pioneer ministry out of Downing Place Church, within the URC's Special Category Ministry scheme, the time has come for Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young to move on. Alex is now Campaigns and Church Engagement Officer at the Joint Public Issues Team, based in Methodist Church House in London, and working with the Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed churches on issues of social justice and politics.

At a farewell supper held at Downing Place on March 16th, before an Open Table Communion service, five people gave thanks, on everyone's behalf, for Alex's service to us and the community around us, in their time with us. With their permission, we share their tributes here, as we wish Alex and Jo 'God Speed' in their new endeavours.

Stephen Thornton: Convenor, Special Category Ministry Local Steering Group

I have a confession to make and now is as good a time as any to make it. As the convenor of Alex's steering group, I have done precious little steering. This is mainly because, as those of you here who know Alex well, they don't need steering and indeed they would rightly complain if someone like me were to begin telling them how to go about pioneering. As a remarkably self-assured, highly educated and talented polymath, they are the kind of person who excels in all they do in life. (Need I remind you all that, during the time Alex has been with us, they have been awarded a PhD and have had a book published). And that is despite the very many health issues they have had to face, especially in the last 12 months. So, the time has come for us to part company and for Alex to go

on to bigger, broader and better things, a challenge I have every confidence they will surmount.

Alex leaves a potent legacy, especially the birthing of Solidarity Hub, a way of conducting church that, for me at least, is novel, refreshing and bearing fruit of a different kind. This Church will do all it can to see Solidarity Hub survive and thrive.

Alex, you have taught me a great deal: about being non-binary, about wider trans issues, and about living with neurodiversity.

And, Alex, I know that, in future every time I hear the haunting sound of a clarsach, or Scottish Harp for the uninitiated, I will be forever reminded of listening to you play here in the sanctuary. A truly heavenly sound.

So, thank you Alex and all the very best to you and Jo as you move to the next phase of your lives together.

Revd Lythan Nevard, Moderator of the United Reformed Church Eastern Synod

Being a Pioneer Minister is a bit like the grit in the oyster that makes the pearl. It **agitates, challenges and encourages until a pearl is created.** That isn't always a comfortable place to be, but I think a Pioneer Minister always has to be on the edge in many ways. Alex has shown grit in being willing to inhabit that place and with the challenges that life has given them. But Alex is also a pearl in the way they are in relationship with others. When Alex has helped me to think about various things this is always done with care and compassion as well as challenge which I am thankful for. Alex has helped to produce pearls in their ministry here at Downing Place, especially those we have heard about already. Treasures that will last beyond their ministry. And I know that there are more pearls to come in the ministry that Alex is about to begin. Thank you, Alex.

Sonya Sireau, on behalf of the Solidarity Hub

Thank you for everything you have done in setting up Solidarity Hub. We are really going to miss you. What you have built here with Solidarity Hub has been such a gift. I hope it encourages you to know that it will continue to thrive and keep on evolving!

You have truly blessed us by enabling and encouraging community. You have embodied and modelled practical, applied faith, practising the gospel where it shines brightest—at the margins and in the in-between spaces.

Your leadership has helped us to see and practise solidarity. We all need solidarity - the power of standing together and journeying alongside one another. Rejoicing

together when someone rejoices, and weeping with those who weep.

You have a unique gift for identifying people's dreams, visions, and passions, and helping us move towards them. Your gifting will be missed, but it will leave a lasting impact. I wish you all the best in your new job. I'm sure you're going to be amazing.

Thank you for being an awesome human Alex! May I say a blessing?

What I mean by 'god'

is bread for everyone

is shared rage at cruelty

is attention where it is needed

is grief held in community

is blooming uninhibited

is water flowing freely

is children at ease

is mystery and magic

is how trustworthy the rising

collective and determined

powered by love

rooted in truth

sharing in risk

Alison Binney, Open Table Coordinator

When I think about Alex's contribution to Open Table Cambridge, three particular services come to mind. The first was possibly Alex's first service with us, in the summer of 2022, when, for the first time, we worshipped outside in the courtyard garden on a beautiful summer's evening. It was typical of Alex's role as Pioneer Minister to help us to think beyond the walls of the church, taking us outside to remember that faith is not confined to a building, but lives and breathes in the world around us.

During that service, Alex played the harp with such exquisite soul and skill, the music drifting into the evening air, and I really had a sense of Alex adding a unique and meditative dimension to our worship. Alex's music has given us space to pause, to breathe, and to listen for the still, small voice of God.

The second service I want to recall took place here, in the Gibson Hall, with Alex once again being creative about what, where and how worship might be. Alex led



us in a story-telling activity with sand and figures of birds and animals, helping us to reflect on our Open Table journey so far, and to consider what God might be calling us to do and to be in the future. Later in that service, instead of our usual communion, Alex led us in the sharing of an array of food and drink, innovatively inviting us to **reflect on God's abundant love and the riches that we share with one another.**

And finally, I know that many of us particularly appreciated the December service that Alex led, which incorporated modern perspectives on the stories of key figures in the nativity, and which skilfully wove together in the prayer threads from previous Open Table services. It was such a thoughtful, challenging and refreshing experience for all of us who were there.



'Out of the box' storytelling

Image by Jane Bower



Open Table Carol Service

Alex, we are so grateful for the time you have spent with us, for the creativity you have brought, and for the ways you have encouraged us to experience worship with fresh eyes. While we are sad to see you go, we send you forward with our thanks, our prayers, and our very best wishes for whatever lies ahead.

Nigel Uden: Minister, Downing Place URC

I have seven words by way of tribute to Alex.

One-off –

there are not two Alexs

Eclectic –

there's much to Alex:

they have an academic's mind,

they are a musician's musician,

theirs is a pastor's heart,

they have a wheelchair user's resilience

Educated

they combine intelligence and learning,

theological acuity, and a word smith's creativity

Initiator

they help us listen for what is needed today,

and take initiatives to pursue it.

Radical

they make suggestions that

challenge and change us to the roots

Persistent

ministry is not for the faint-hearted,

less still pioneering's cutting-edge commitments –

they need dogged persistence

New normality –

Alex's legacy will be

radical inclusion as the new normality to which we as Downing Place Church
aspire

OEEIRPN – or PIONEER

Alex, thank and God bless you.

You did not come alone.

Jo and you are a couple, a team, a blessing

‘for the whole is greater than the sum of its parts’.

Our heartfelt thanks to you, too, Jo.



Easter sale in aid of
Sallymay School, Sierra Leone
& The Children of Ukraine Foundation

Handmade items and bric-a-brac.

Wednesday 16th & Thursday 17th April
Downing Place Church Hub, 10.30am - 2pm



AN INSIGHT INTO OUR RECENT JUNIOR CHURCH SESSIONS

As February drew to a close, we made cards for those in need of a little encouragement. We were inspired by the first psalm one week, and by Jesus' call to be 'generous' to everyone in many ways, the next. The latter was our last Sunday with Daphne helping in Junior Church. We thanked her for all she has done over the many years she has been part of the Junior Church team, and the children checked that she would 'still come to church on Sundays'!

It was lovely to see so many children on Sunday 2nd March, when we began to explore the transfiguration of Moses when he met with God on Mount Sinai. We talked about how the people we meet can often make such an impression upon us that they 'rub off on us' and we become more like them. This was demonstrated by Moses' glowing face as he came down from the mountain. We compared this to the disciples wanting to 'follow in Jesus' footsteps' when he called them to be 'fishers of people'. We marched around the room singing 'We are Marching in the Light of God' before working on our activity of decorating double-sided masks. They represented the radiance of Moses' face when he had spoken with God, and the veiled face that he presented to the people after he had told them what God wanted them to do. The older group talked about how spending time with God will help us to 'glow' and show God's goodness to others. During our discussion we put some beads in the sunlight, whilst others were kept in a thick brown envelope. The ones in the sunlight turned out to glow in the dark when we took them into a dark storage room, and we used them to make bracelets.

The following week we explored the story in which Jesus spent time in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights. To reflect on the challenge of resisting temptation, we played a lively game of Sleeping Lions, discovering just how tricky it can be to stay still and say "no!" when tempted to move. We also practised spelling the word 'temptation', and got creative when



Card making

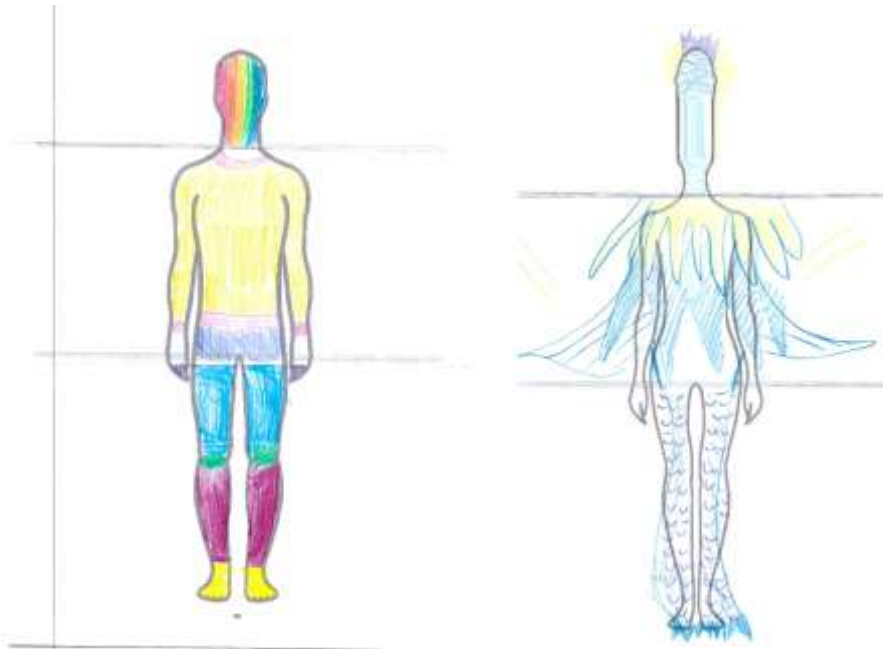


Masks!

making story wheels, retelling the tale of Jesus in the wilderness. We gratefully received snowdrop bulbs from David Tatem to plant at home, symbolising how **Lent isn't just about giving something up; it can also be an opportunity to try something new, like gardening.** These bulbs, much like new habits or practices, will take time to grow, with their beauty only emerging next January.

In our service for all ages, on 16th March, we had fun creating collaborative drawings (*cadavres exquis*), with members of the congregation taking turns drawing on a sheet of paper, folding it to conceal their contribution, and then passing it on. The resulting creatures were sights to behold! We also worked together to write the Downing Place Psalm (read more about this on page 6) and gave thanks to God for the birth of the youngest member of Junior Church, who was born just a few days before - later we found out that she was watching the service on Sunday with her Mum via the livestream.

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.



Les cadavres exquis

EASTERN SYNOD MEETING 8th MARCH 2025

The Eastern Province of the United Reformed Church met in Synod at Plume Avenue URC, Colchester on Saturday 8th March 2025 at 10.30 am.

The Meeting was duly constituted by the Synod Moderator Revd Lythan Nevard, **the focus of the day's agenda being 'Evangelism'**. **Opening worship was led by** members of Plume Avenue Church and their newly inducted minister Revd Andrew Mudharara.

The Moderator welcomed New Members, including newly inducted ministers, accredited lay preachers, commissioned local leaders and Mission Partnerships. Thanks were expressed to Janet Bottoms, who is stepping down as an accredited **lay preacher of many years' standing**. **Revd Nigel Uden's retirement at the end of July** was noted. Linton and Haverhill are forming a Mission Partnership.

Minutes of the meeting held at Witham last October were approved and matters arising taken.

The meeting then received several presentations on the theme of Evangelism, **commencing with a video entitled 'Leading your Church into Growth'**, introduced by Revd Ashley Evans. A two-day course on this is to be held later in the year, with grants available from Synod for those wishing to attend. 'Faith Stories' were then recounted by Revd Chris Hemshall (Linton) and Revd Jo Clare-Young, highlighting the acronym PIP: prayer, intention, practice. Revd Phil Nevard commended the 'Time for God' scheme to Synod, showing a brief introductory video. He then introduced a further presentation on "Faithfulness on the Frontline", with additional contributions from Revd Adam Earle and Revd Nicola Grieves.

Faith in Action Awards were given out by Jo and Nicola to church representatives and the morning session concluded after notices at 1.00 pm.

The meeting resumed at 2.00 pm with a series of updates followed by reports. Nicola updated on Youth and Children and Jo on Mission and Training opportunities, including lay presidency training.

The Synod Clerk's report then followed. Five resolutions were passed:

- an amendment to the fields of responsibility of the Resources Committee;
- creation of the Investment Task Group and the M&M Task Group;
- appointments to various Synod posts, with many remaining vacant;
- confirmation of members of the Synod Trust; and
- nomination of Revd Neil Thorogood for Moderator of General Assembly 2026-7.

Dave Coaker continued his report on the ongoing vacancy of Treasurer, on staff changes, including Nicola's retirement, the proposed creation of a three-person Mission Team; and the offering by Synod Trust to act as employer for lay workers based in local churches.

Anne Sardeson presented the Pastoral Committee report. This included new Mission Partnerships and changes to pastorates. Thetford URC held their closing service in November. Ministerial changes; a new Synod Ecumenical post; and supporting churches in vacancies, including Interim Moderators and Pastoral Consultants, were reported on.

Two further resolutions were carried, namely:

- to give thanks for the journey and witness of Love's Farm Church, St Neots, from a mission project to instructing the Clerk to prepare a resolution to General Assembly to receive LFC (an LEP) as a local church of the URC; and
- to adopt the Mission Partnership Call Guidelines. This document is available on the Synod website.

The Moderator spoke on behalf of the Mission and Discipleship Committee, overseeing Grant Applications, Faith in Action Awards, Children and Young People, and an award from the Discipleship Development Fund to provide copies of a booklet entitled 'Language, Gender and God' to be available to all serving elders in Synod.

Finally, Faith Paulding reported on behalf of the Resources Committee, during which two resolutions were passed:

- to receive the Synod Administration Fund and Church Life and Mission Fund reports; and
- to agree to contribute £125,000 to the Legacies of Slavery Fund.

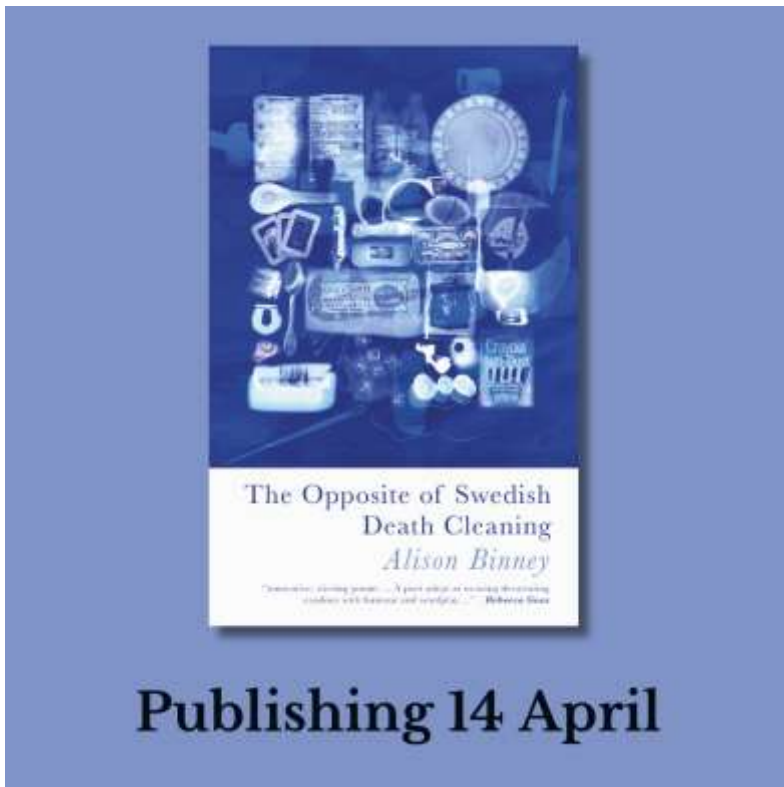
The meeting was brought to a close with an act of worship led by the Moderator, with the day's proceedings over by 4.00 pm.

The next meeting of Eastern Synod will be held at Christ Church URC, Chelmsford on 11th October 2025, with the theme 'Inclusion and Diversity'.

Alan Rickard, Downing Place URC Synod Representative

A NEW BOOK OF POETRY BY ALISON BINNEY -

The Opposite of Swedish Death Cleaning



Alison writes

In July 2022, a few months after my Dad had been admitted to a care home, my brother and I embarked on the process of sorting and clearing his house. That first day, I opened the garage door to find a huge mound of boxes, paint pots, rolls of carpet and garden furniture.

Over a tea break, as pure procrastination, I searched online for ‘advice for clearing a family home’, and that’s where I first came across the concept of ‘Swedish death cleaning’.

Margareta Magnusson’s book *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning* had been an international bestseller just five years previously, but it was only too clear that the concept of *döstädning* – of de-cluttering one’s own life in late middle age – had completely passed my Dad by. During those first hours of endlessly ripping and

folding every cardboard box that had entered his house over the previous twenty years, I fantasised about that woman in Stockholm, Margareta Magnusson, **returning to her father's home to sort his affairs, only to find an almost empty house, full of light and the scent of lemons.** How I envied her! A poem about my imaginary Swedish counterpart began to form in my head.

But it took many months to write, and during that time, as I sorted and cleared **my Dad's house, room by room, my feelings about this imaginary Swedish woman, whose father had scrupulously death-cleaned, completely changed.**

And so the poem became completely different from how it had started. I realised **that what I was doing was the opposite of Swedish death cleaning: I'm not Swedish, I was the one doing the death-cleaning on behalf of my father, who didn't even know it was happening, and the whole process felt very far from clean.**

But I wouldn't have had it any other way. It was difficult, physically and emotionally demanding work, but it was also deeply healing. I wouldn't have missed those experiences of being reunited with childhood games, cassette recordings of family holidays, and 1970s picnicware for the world. And I felt closer to both my parents – one having died twenty years previously, the other in the depths of dementia – than I had for a long time.

The Opposite of Swedish Death Cleaning became the title for my debut full poetry collection, which is forthcoming from Seren Books on 14th April. Some of the poems in the collection arose directly from the experiences of sorting and clearing our family home, and of caring for my father as his dementia progressed. But the collection also contains poems about teaching, walking and wildlife.

Here's an extract from the publisher's blurb:

This collection is rich with plants, trees and birds, as well as household objects, but what binds the poems together is a sense of human connection. So, a shed becomes a metaphor for a father's struggles with dementia; an aloe vera plant conveys the interconnectedness of a school community; a romantic relationship is kindled over chocolate mousse.

If you would like to pre-order a copy of *The Opposite of Swedish Death Cleaning*, you can do so via the Seren Books website using this link:

<https://www.serenbooks.com/book/the-opposite-of-swedish-death-cleaning/>

I'll be having a launch for the book on the evening Friday 16th May in the Gibson Hall at Downing Place, and I would like to extend a warm invitation to any Downing Place folk who wish to attend. There will be drinks and cake from 7pm, and I'll give a reading of some poems from the collection at 7.30pm, followed by more drinks and cake.

The opposite of Swedish death cleaning

Lately, I conjure a woman in Stockholm
opening her father's front door into laminate light,
the scent of lemons. Crossing the hall to his study,
she finds the folder marked *Död* in an otherwise
empty desk, and heads for the kitchen - one chair,
one mug, one teaspoon, one coffee filter left.

I want an antonym for *döstädning*, these days,
for we are not Swedish, and this is messy,
you in the home, not yet dead, me frisking
your house for Ladybird books and egg cups,
stamp albums, paperweights and pebbles,
for fifty nubs of Imperial Leather soap.

My Swedish double rinses her father's mug,
leaves it to drain while she makes a few calls,
then slips it into her bag. Perhaps it will hold
her toothbrush. Perhaps, on the train home,
a line from a bedtime poem will hum
for a moment, then mumble itself to sleep.



NICAEA AT 1700

Many readers may recall hearing it said in January, at the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, that 2025 is the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. You might wonder: So what? The editor asked me to answer.

The first Roman Emperor who became a Christian was Constantine in 312 AD. More precisely, he decided that the Christian God had given him the military victory, which confirmed his position as Emperor. It is also often said (wrongly) that Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Empire. The so-called 'Edict of Milan' of 313 made it lawful to become a Christian; some indeed have described it as an edict of toleration. Only in the reign of Theodosius I (379-395) was there any sense that Christianity was the official religion, in the sense that the imperial government outlawed other expressions of religious faith.

Constantine's own beliefs are uncertain. He saw no contradiction between Christianity and his own faith in the unconquered Sun, though he put the Christian Chi-Rho symbol on his coins from 315. The term 'sun of righteousness' in Malachi 4:2 was taken as a reference to Christ, and Christians

welcomed the identification of Sunday with the day of resurrection and its ceasing to be a work day. December 25th, the birthday of the Sun God, was taken as the Nativity of Jesus from the early fourth century. Constantine himself was only baptized at the end of his life in 337, as was then not uncommon.



Chi-Ro symbol seen on a coin

He was clear that as Emperor he had certain duties to the Church, chief of which was to ensure its unity. He therefore summoned a council of bishops to meet at Nicaea, a few miles from Nicomedia, where he was able to use an imperial residence while it met. 220 bishops attended, from a wider area than any previous regional council, which is why it was called the first ecumenical council.

In opening the Council, Constantine gave the bishops three particular tasks: to agree the date of Easter; to agree on the nature of Christ; and to resolve a schism in the Church of Alexandria. In none of these was it completely successful, but its greatest success was agreeing a form of words on the nature of Christ, supported by 218 bishops

The writing of a statement of belief (a creed) for the whole Church was new; it remained controversial for centuries. The ecumenically agreed modern English translation is no 760 in *Rejoice and Sing*. The second section on Jesus Christ is the **longest, the crucial words being '(Christ) ... the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father ... begotten not made, of one Being with the Father'**. The last phrase (*homoousion* in Greek) may have been inserted by Constantine himself.

The schism at Alexandria was settled, but the date of Easter, although agreed temporarily, cropped up again later. There are currently attempts to have another try at that since the date is the same in East and West this year.

The Council remains important because it represents an agreement, that in Jesus Christ we see God acting as a human being, identifying God's own self with humanity.

David M. Thompson

MONTHLY SPECIAL CAUSE FOR APRIL



CRRC is a registered charity for the purpose of supporting the resettlement of refugees in the Cambridge area. We are a volunteer-run group of Cambridgeshire residents which was formed in 2015 at the height of the current migrant crisis, when the media was filled with images of the misery of the camps and the tragedy of failed attempts to reach them. We wanted to help by welcoming refugees into our community. Originally focussed on fundraising and lobbying local government, we became a registered charity in 2017.

We provide a wide range of practical support to resettled refugee families and work closely with the Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councils and other local stakeholders. We advocate on behalf of our beneficiaries for assistance with housing, healthcare and education. This means:

- sourcing items of furniture and household equipment according to identified needs
- offering laptops and phones for educational and administrative purposes
- offering bicycles to enable travel to jobs or schools
- helping new families to settle in by tidying gardens and equipping homes
- chaperoning service-users at medical appointments and offering a doula service for expectant mothers
- providing one-to-one help with homework for school-age children
- running English for Speakers of Other Languages classes with childcare for the benefit of mothers with young children
- organising programmes of outings and activities during the school holidays
- partnering with individuals and groups able to assist with translation and educational opportunities
- getting the families together twice a term for a social event where they can meet each other and our volunteers
- arranging counselling and advice for service-users
- offering hardship grants to families in distress
- assistance with the cost of driving lessons and dentistry
- giving talks and presentations about refugee issues, particularly at local schools.

WAYS OF GIVING TO OUR SPECIAL CAUSE

- Monthly Retiring Collection on Easter Day, Sunday 20 April (cash, cheque or card)
- Monday and Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts (cash or card)
- Direct to the church bank account (reference SPECIAL CAUSE)
- Via our website - the **'Donate'** button is on the homepage under the large photo of the congregation. Select Special Donations as the fund
- In many cases, by direct donation to the charity via their own website

PREVIOUS SPECIAL CAUSES AND DONATIONS



Our February Special Cause was Camfed, supporting education for girls in rural Africa. The total sent was £1,800, as follows:

Lunchtime Concerts	£926.66
Retiring Collection	£706.17
York Street Contribution	£103.41
Gift Aid & Other Donations	£63.76

Camfed write:

Dear Ann,

I am getting in touch on behalf of CAMFED to send our sincerest thanks to Downing Place URC for your recent donation and for showing your commitment to girls' education.

Your support for girls across sub-Saharan Africa helps to ensure that even the most marginalised girls are seen, heard, and supported through school to achieve their full potential. With education, they go on to have productive livelihoods and through their own means, support more girls to go to school. That is the **amazing multiplier effect you unleash when you invest in girls' education.** That is how, together, supported by donations like yours, we are breaking the cycle of poverty for thousands of girls and families.

I wanted to share that your donation could support girls through their secondary school education - 2700 School Days. By supporting CAMFED, you are investing in the next generation of [Game Changers](#).



“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans, 15:13)

The Unstoppable Power of Hope

This year, the year of Christian Aid’s 80th birthday, the theme for Christian Aid Week is **Hope**. In a world of climate change, conflict and hunger, where governments cut back on international aid, Christian Aid offers hope. Working, as always, with local partners to provide the kind of support most needed in each community, it seeks to bring hope for a better future.

The focus for 2025 is on Guatemala. The 2025 Christian Aid Week Appeal will feature two strong women – Amelia and Aurelia from the Alta Verapaz region, who are both working with local partner Congcoop to learn new farming methods to grow crops which will survive the hot dry conditions. Bringing hope to their communities.



Amelia by the shrinking river



Aurelia in her local church

The **Changemakers’ Conference** on March 8th introduced us to Christian Aid’s Programme Officer for Guatemala, Gerardo Calderón Tobar, and Donaldo Anibal Rax, from Congcoop, and they both spoke of difficult conditions in Guatemala, where 55% of the population live in poverty and 50% of children are malnourished.

The Conference is available to watch on YouTube – search for “Christian Aid Changemakers Conference 2025” and you can choose which sections to watch.

The section on Humanitarian Aid provides an impressive list of places where Christian Aid is active – Sudan and South Sudan, Gaza, Syria, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Bangladesh and the DRC, among others. Well worth watching, to see the great variety of programmes which are going on. One, in Kenya, has set up beehives and markets the honey – King Charles accepted a jar as a gift when he hosted a reception for the charity sector at Buckingham Palace recently.

Dates to remember:

Saturday 12th April, 10 a.m. **Zoom meeting** for Christian Aid supporters in Cambridge. You are welcome to join us to learn what is going on in Cambridge, offer your own ideas and see how you can help to raise funds. Please contact me, Sheila Porrer (sheila.porrer@virginmedia.com) and I can let you have the link when it is available.

Sunday May 11th – Sunday May 18th – **Christian Aid Week.**

Wednesday May 14th, 1 p.m. – **Special Christian Aid Lunchtime Concert** – “The Art of Hope” by Jane Bower, Alan Revill and Simeon Walker (see poster below).

Sunday May 18th, 2.30 p.m. – **Christian Aid Eightieth Birthday Service** in Great St. Mary’s with **Rowan Williams** as preacher. All welcome.

Saturday July 26th – Christian Aid **Thank you party**, 3 till 5 at St. Mark’s Church, Newnham.

THE ART OF HOPE
a Concert for Christian Aid Week
Jane Bower and Alan Revill (live illustrations and readings)
Simeon Walker (piano)



A journey of trust and hope through live on-screen art techniques, words and music, this concert explores what is possible with hope and belief.

Wednesday 14th May, 1 pm

DOWNING PLACE URC

THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO AND ALL THAT YOU GIVE

Your gift of £146,556.00 to the Ministry and Mission Fund in 2024 has helped the United Reformed Church in its service to God by paying ministers' stipends, providing training, and supporting mission and outreach. The financial gifts that you have made have provided the means for churches in their communities to worship God, serve others and nurture disciples.

Thank you ... you, your gifts and your benevolence are true blessings.



*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you
were called in one hope of your calling;
one Lord, one faith, one baptism.
Ephesians 4 vv 4-5*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lythan".

*Revd Lythan Nevard
Moderator (Eastern Synod)*





The United Reformed Church - Eastern Synod
36 Duxford Road, Whittlesford, Cambridge CB22 4ND
01223 830770

Moderator: Revd Lythan Nevard

Finance Officer: Faith Paulding
finance@urceastern.org.uk

March 2025

To: Church Secretaries

MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

Please find attached a 'Thank You' appreciation for your fellowship's gifts to the Ministry and Mission Fund in 2024. I would be grateful if you could display this in your church and include copies, as appropriate, in any newsletters and magazines etc. - either print or electronic.

Last year was somewhat of a challenge as the administration of contributions to denominational funding moved from the wonderful work that the M&M Advocates had undertaken since 2008 to the Synod Office. Any transition involves making some adjustments, but I am hopeful that the process this year will be much smoother than in 2024. Thank you for your church's patience and goodwill as we surfed the changeover.

When I first became involved with M&M back in 2007, initially as a District Treasurer and later as Synod M&M Advocate, M&M Fund contributions made up 86% of the denomination's unrestricted income. In that respect little has changed. In 2023 it amounted to 88%. However, it is a very different picture when the expenditure side of the equation is considered. In 2006 for every £1 that was given to the M&M Fund, 96p was used to pay stipends and all ministry related costs as well as train ministers, CRCWs and lay preachers. However, in 2023 the income was insufficient to even cover the salary costs of the 314 ordained ministers and CRCWs. We live in difficult times. The cost of living squeeze is felt at all levels and in all places.

With that in mind I am profoundly grateful for the continued generosity of the churches in the Eastern Synod who, together and with Synod support, gifted £1,915,802 to the M&M Fund last year.

Thank you for all that you do to help build the Kingdom here as in heaven.

With thanks and blessings,

Faith Paulding
Synod Finance Officer

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2025

Except where stated otherwise, all events are at Downing Place Church and led by Nigel Uden.

Palm Sunday 13th April 2025

11.00am Morning Worship led by Penny Flynn

Holy Week

A sequence of recorded services will be available on the church's YouTube channel, one for every day from Monday 14th to Saturday 19th April. Each one will be a reflection upon a Passiontide movement from Part 2 of Handel's *Messiah*.

Maundy Thursday 17th April

11.00am Holy Communion

7.30pm Holy Communion and Tenebrae at Fulbourn URC

Good Friday 18th April

10.00am Free Churches Joint Service at Downing Place URC

Preacher: The Revd Mark Burleigh, County Ecumenical Officer for Cambridgeshire

11.30am Ecumenical Act of Witness in the Market Square

2.00pm At the Foot of the Cross – a reflective hour at Fulbourn URC

Holy Saturday

4.00pm St Mark Passion by Charles Wood sung by *Cambridge Voices*
With audience participation

Easter Day 20th April

9.30am Holy Communion at Fulbourn URC

11.00am Holy Communion

7.30pm Open Table Easter Communion

HOUSE GROUPS FOR LENT CONCLUDE IN APRIL A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Gospel of John – a study in six parts, by Professor David Ford

5. Why John Now? The Church Now
6. Why John Now? The World Now

The weekly material can be found here:

<https://homegroups.org.uk/series/gospel-of-john-study-guide/>

Meetings will be held on Zoom on Thursday evenings, starting at 7.30pm: on April 3rd & 10th.

These will be led by Kurt Roeloffs - request the Zoom link from Kurt on : kurt.roeloffs@gmail.com

Also, a daytime group in the Hub on Tuesday afternoons from 2pm: April 1st and 8th. These will be guided by Penny Flynn. Just turn up.



Material can be printed and made available for those who need it.

See March's 'Place Matters' for full details.



ZOOM LECTIO DIVINA

4 & 11 April from 8.30 to 9.30 am.

Lent affords another opportunity to be part of the online zoom Lectio Divina experience. Several church members have now been part of the group for over **three years and are committed to each new series**. If you have wondered what it's all about, do make contact. We can put you in touch with someone who can help you understand why it's one valuable approach to reading scripture and dwelling within the chosen passage. We will use a mix of psalms and gospel from the Year C Lenten lectionary.

William will send a zoom link on the day before each Friday, simply let him know to send. Contact details: wmmcvey@aol.com or deborahmcv@aol.com or tel 01223 410 332

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS
MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS AT 1PM

Free Lunchtime Concerts with a retiring collection shared between Church funds and our monthly Special Cause. Booking is not necessary.

Wednesday 2 April
The Ammenti Trio

Monday 7 April
Andrew Garrido (piano)

Wednesday 9 April
Merlin Shakaj (flute) & Jingle Gawley (piano)

Monday 14 April
Paul Harris (clarinet) & Flora Tzanetaki (piano)

Wednesday 16 April
Eduard Sanchez (flute)

Monday 21 April
EASTER MONDAY - NO CONCERT

Wednesday 23 April
Paula Muldoon (violin) & Jill Morton (piano)

Monday 28 April
Felicia Toni (piano)

Wednesday 30 April
Nigel Blomiley (cello) & Richard Shaw (piano)

Refreshments are available before and after each concert.

Full information about each concert including the programme is available on our website

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

APRIL DIARY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	30-Mar-25	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	30-Mar-25	Sunday Worship led by Dr Janet Bottoms	11:00am	Church
Sun	30-Mar-25	Solidarity Hub	7:00pm	tbc
Mon	31-Mar-25	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Tony Bridgewater (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Tue	01-Apr-25	Lent House Groups	2:00pm	Rooms 1 & 2
Tue	01-Apr-25	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	02-Apr-25	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - The Ammenti Trio	1:00pm	Church
Thu	03-Apr-25	Midweek Worship led by the Revd Professor David Thompson	11:00am	Church
Thu	03-Apr-25	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	03-Apr-25	Lent House Group	7:30pm	Zoom
Fri	04-Apr-25	Lectio Divina	8:30am	Zoom
Fri	04-Apr-25	Meditation Group	5:30pm	Emmanuel Room
Sat	05-Apr-25	Prayer Vigil	9:30am - 10:15am	Zoom
Sun	06-Apr-25	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	06-Apr-25	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion and the Induction of Elders led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	06-Apr-25	Open Table Social	7:00pm	Zoom
Mon	07-Apr-25	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Andrew Garrido (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Tue	08-Apr-25	Lent House Groups	2:00pm	Rooms 1 & 2

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Tue	08-Apr-25	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Tue	08-Apr-25	Worship, Discipleship & Spirituality Group Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Wed	09-Apr-25	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Merlin Shakaj (flute) & Jingle Gawley (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	09-Apr-25	Property Management Group	7:00pm	Zoom
Thu	10-Apr-25	Prayer Meeting	10:15am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	10-Apr-25	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Thu	10-Apr-25	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	10-Apr-25	Lent House Group	7:30pm	Zoom
Thu	10-Apr-25	Elders' Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Fri	11-Apr-25	Lectio Divina	8:30am	Zoom
Fri	11-Apr-25	Navigating Parkinson's (see p.42)	10:30am - 2.00pm	Church
Sun	13-Apr-25	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	13-Apr-25	Palm Sunday Worship led by Penny Flynn	11:00am	Church
Sun	13-Apr-25	Solidarity Hub	2:00pm	TBC
Mon	14-Apr-25	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Flora Tzanetaki (piano) and Paul Harris (clarinet)	1:00pm	Church
Mon	14-Apr-25	DEADLINE for signing up for the Gibson Lunch	4:00pm	
Tue	15-Apr-25	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Wed	16-Apr-25	Knit One Give One Sale	10:00am	The Hub
Wed	16-Apr-25	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Eduard Sanchez (flute)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	17-Apr-25	Knit One Give One Sale	10:00am	Hub
Thu	17-Apr-25	Maundy Thursday Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Thu	17-Apr-25	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	17-Apr-25	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Fri	18-Apr-25	Free Churches United Service Preacher: The Revd Mark Burleigh, County Ecumenical Officer for Cambridgeshire	10:00am	Church
Sat	19-Apr-25	Cambridge Voices present the St Mark Passion by Charles Wood	4:00pm	Church
Sun	20-Apr-25	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	20-Apr-25	Easter Sunday Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden followed by a retiring collection for our monthly Special Cause	11:00am	Church
Sun	20-Apr-25	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Church
Mon	21-Apr-25	Bank Holiday Monday - No Monday Lunchtime Concert		
Mon	21-Apr-25	DEADLINE for booking and paying for the Gibson Lunch	4:00pm	
Tue	22-Apr-25	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	23-Apr-25	DEADLINE for submitting items for 'Place Matters'		

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Wed	23-Apr-25	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Paula Muldoon (violin) & Jill Morton (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	24-Apr-25	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Dr Janet Tollington	11:00am	Church
Thu	24-Apr-25	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sun	27-Apr-25	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	27-Apr-25	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Dr Ian Randall	11:00am	Church
Sun	27-Apr-25	Solidarity Hub	7:00pm	tbc
Mon	28-Apr-25	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Felicia Toni (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Tue	29-Apr-25	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	30-Apr-25	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Nigel Blomiley (cello) & Richard Shaw (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	01-May-25	Midweek Worship led by Dr Simone Maghenzani	11:00am	Church
Thu	01-May-25	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	01-May-25	Cambridge Voices Open Rehearsal	7:00pm	Church
Fri	02-May-25	Meditation Group	5:30pm	Emmanuel Room
Sun	04-May-25	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	04-May-25	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	04-May-25	Open Table Social	7:00pm	Hub

MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

6 April	Chris Baker David Cornick Penny Flynn John Proctor David Tatem	Melbourn URC Clare Bassingbourn Stowmarket Regenboog (Rainbow), Arnhem
13 April	Liz Caswell Nigel Uden	Whiting Street, Bury St Edmunds Fulbourn URC
17 April	Liz Caswell Nigel Uden	St James' Lode Fulbourn URC
18 April	Nigel Uden	Fulbourn URC
20 April	Chris Baker Jo Clare-Young Penny Flynn David Tatem Nigel Uden	Wicken Methodist Jessopp Road, Norwich Buntingford Bassingbourn Fulbourn URC (9.30am)
27 April	Liz Caswell Penny Flynn	Fulbourn Melbourn

NOTICES

On Friday April 11th, from 10.30 until 14.00, there will be a "Navigating Parkinsons" event in Downing Place. This follows on from a very successful event last July, when a Navigating Dementia event was held in the church. Organisations linked to this condition will be there and people can come to ask questions, seek advice and help. We do need some volunteers to be a welcoming presence, help make and serve drinks throughout the day. If you are able to come and do this, please let Pippa Jones know. Thank you.

A heads up, that there is a repeat of the "Navigating Dementia" event on Tuesday May 20th from 10.30-14.00, so Pippa will be asking for help on that occasion in a few weeks.

LECTIONARY FOR APRIL

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 April (Lent 5)

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm 126

Philippians 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8

13 April (Palm Sunday)

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 19:28-40 or

Luke 22:14-23:56

20 April (Easter Day)

Acts 10:34-43 or

Isaiah 65:17-25

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Corinthians 15:19-26 or

Acts 10:34-43

John 20:1-18 or

Luke 24:1-12

27 April (Easter 2)

Acts 5:27-32

Psalm 18:14-29 or

Psalm 150

Revelation 1:4-8

John 20:19-31

4 May (Easter 3)

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)

Psalm 30

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-19



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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 May edition to both Tim and Ann by
the cut off date of Wednesday 23 April.

The May edition will be available from Sunday 4 May