



DOWNING PLACE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE

PLACE MATTERS



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Cover Photograph - Courtyard Clematis 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've been wondering what the golden threads have been through all the years I have been serving the Church.

Of course, one gold thread has been the people. So many that were fine examples of dignified, noble, fruitful living. So many that modelled resilience when dealt one (or more) of life's bad hands. So many who were kind to us as a family. And so many in whose service to the Church I was grateful to be a partner, as we each pooled our various gifts to make a more complete offering to God and to the community.

There have also been the privileges – ‘more precious than gold, much fine gold’.¹ Comfortable homes provided by the Church, a reliable income, ensuring that we never had too little, and stimulating British communities in which to embody the Church's presence – urban sprawl, coastal resort, the Garden of England, and for nigh on fifteen years, a city of global significance, intellectual heft, and socio-economic breadth. The exposure to the World Church that ministry has given has also been enriching and life-shaping: Canada, Cuba, Germany, India, South Africa, the lands we call Holy, Ukraine, United States of America, and Zimbabwe.

But *the* golden thread is Jesus. It's all about Jesus, isn't it.

- The Jesus of which my mother sang to me as an infant sat on her knee while she played the piano: ‘Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so.’
- The Jesus of whom countless hymns and anthems taught me: ‘Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he.’
- The Jesus who came to meet me in innumerable saints I have met along the way: mewling newborn, beatific nurse, rugged champion for justice, fearless preacher, street dweller, hospice needer, devout atheist, pious priest.
- The Jesus who leaves me as awe struck as the poet who marvels, ‘Here is God, no monarch he, throned in easy state to reign; here is God, whose arms of love aching, spent, the world sustain.’²

¹ Psalm 19:10

² W. H. Vanstone, in his 1977 book *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, which ends with a poem from which this is a quote

Thinking over the last few weeks of what I might say about this Jesus, every time a point came to me, I jotted it down. When my notebook listed eighteen big ideas I realised this was going to be an entirely indigestible article. So, how could I sum up the One in whom we find both God's decision to come amongst us ('God's utterly unpredictable move', as one has put it)³ and God's offer to us, life in all its fullness?⁴

Ideas tumbled through my mind. Salvation, Mission, Eschatology, Trinity, Justice, Peace, Glory. And more. But no, they didn't seem right for a valedictory item about Jesus. I kept coming back to the basic truth: if you want to talk about Jesus, let Jesus talk about himself. Moreover, don't try to say something new. Say again what you have heard Jesus saying over all the years. And that is in the Fourth Gospel, chapter 14. 'Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life".'⁵

When Jesus says, 'I am the way', I discover that Jesus is the way to God. Yes, God is a mystery, bigger than the poor reach of my mind will ever fathom ... except that God is as God is in Jesus. If we have seen Jesus, we have, in Jesus' own words, 'seen the Father'.⁶ Jesus opens a window on God, that we might glimpse something of God's glory, get hints of God's holiness, find traces of God's transcendence. But there's more. Jesus is not the way to God by being merely a *window*. Jesus is also a *door*. We get to God via Jesus because Jesus is God coming to us, and as the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Jesus is thus the way into God so that we do not just see God but are in God, and God in us. 'Farther than the farthest star, yet closer than breathing.'⁷ Beyond us, yet in us.

When Jesus says, 'I am the truth', I am enabled to unearth what otherwise is entirely beyond me. In both the words and the ways of Jesus, the truth about God is spelled out.

- Jesus spells out that God is locked into an unbreakable covenant, whereby God is ours and we are God's.
- Jesus spells out that God is aware of our flaws and failings and judges them not vengefully but mercifully, with a divine desire for restoration of what is broken and reconciliation of what is estranged – new beginnings, as it were
- Jesus spells out that God is defined by *chesed*, steadfast loving kindness, and devoted to *shalom*, prosperity, wholeness, and peace.

³ Daniel Ruff SJ

⁴ John 10:10

⁵ John 14:6

⁶ John 14:9

⁷ Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Ultimately, then, Jesus spells out that God is love – not sentimental or saccharine love, but love which was at our beginning, love that is at every new beginning, and love that even at our end will be like a beginning.

And when Jesus says, ‘I am the life’, I find myself being offered a source of life from God.

For me, that prompts me to gratitude for this life, in which, for me ‘the boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places’.⁸ Sometimes, of course, life’s vicissitudes get in the way of all its delights. Few of us are exempt from that happening from time to time, and for some of us life is dominated by a great deal that is tough. In all of that, Jesus’ work is life-giving, as it alerts us to where we should direct the thanks, and to whom we can look for wisdom and encouragement, strength and hope. Yet not only for this life. The Bible’s Jesus is also about the life that isn’t defeated by our dying. None of us has died and been given experience of life afterwards. Our trust in what happens when we have turned that sharp corner really is a matter of faith. But we are invited to make it a matter of faith rooted in the Bible’s witness that death didn’t beat Jesus, and that Jesus shares that victory with us - ‘because I live, you too shall live.’⁹ What persuades me most about the time beyond the grave are two amazing Biblical images: the cross, on which God’s Love is subjected to the ultimate challenge, and the empty tomb, from which God’s Love explodes undefeated. That resurrected Love doesn’t describe details of life after death, and I can’t conceive of what could provide that detail. It does, though, depict the essential relationship that shapes what lies beyond the grave. And might that be what we really need to know - that those we have ‘loved and lost a while’, are forever loved by the One who made them, died for them, and lives for them? I realise we are all different, and that we each face death differently, but God’s reliably resurrected Love is enough for me to leave loved ones with God, trusting that they are safe, and to face my own mortality with a faith-enabled equilibrium.

Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.’ Yes, there are millions of words one could say about Jesus, and in the years I have been preaching, I have probably said too many. I am persuaded now, however that none were as useful as those nine.

As we all wonder what is to define our future, I am pretty certain that if those nine words were its substance, we’d be serving God’s mission, by saying to this world what it needs to hear as much today as it ever has. As David Bosch says in

⁸ Psalm 16:6

⁹ John 14:19

his 1992 book, *Transforming Mission*:

‘To participate in mission is
to participate in the movement of God’s love towards people
since God is a fountain of sending love.’

May it be so in the new chapter that beckons Downing Place Church, and as I pray to work out what the new chapter of my discipleship will look like.

Nigel Uden



HELEN BELL – A PROFILE

Childhood

I grew up in South Yorkshire with my parents and brother. When I was eleven, a friend invited me along to confirmation classes at our local parish church. I soon became Head Altar Server, a role which involves assisting the clergy during Holy Communion, preparing the altar, and overseeing and supporting a large group of other servers to carry out these duties. I would go to the early service each week, alone, usually the only young person there! My faith journey began then and, looking back, I think I have always known Christ with me.

As a teenager I went with my local youth group to Spring Harvest – an annual, evangelical, inter-denominational conference - where I had an experience which I can only describe as being filled by the Holy Spirit. This encounter strengthened me as a teenager and continues to sustain me 35 years on. My faith has always been an important part of who I am: where and how I express it has changed over the years.

Student Days

In 1992, I began a Psychology degree at the University of Birmingham. Whilst there I met my husband, Graham. He introduced me to Greenbelt Festival - a festival of arts, faith and justice that began in a field in England in the year I was born - 1974. Greenbelt has become a spiritual home for us and for our three children. It is a place we return to each August. A place that for me represents, hope, love and family.

Whilst studying for my degree I read Henri Nouwen’s book ‘The Road to Daybreak’ in which he describes leaving his privileged academic life to live alongside people with disabilities. Nouwen writes that “what really counts is a true relationship, a real friendship, a faithful presence”. I too was looking for

such a place to belong, and with the support of my local Birmingham church I spent six months in the **L'Arche community in Calgary, Canada. It is not too dramatic to say that my time there changed my life, and continues to do so. In particular, the real friendship I found in a person with Down's syndrome altered me: I was seen and I was loved.**

On returning to the UK, I gained further Psychology experience before being accepted on to the Clinical Psychology Doctorate in Birmingham at the age of 23. Three years passed and I enjoyed my time working in varied clinical placements across The Black Country – the county of **Graham's birthplace. When I graduated, I moved to Cambridge to be with Graham, who had already moved here to start work at one of Cambridge's many technology consulting firms. And in 2003 we got married.**



Me with our three children in August 2011 at Greenbelt Festival.

Working Life

In the next few years, I worked as a Clinical Psychologist in a range of settings – Child and Adolescent Mental Health services; Paediatrics, Learning Disabilities; Infant Mental Health; Social Care. Our first child was born in 2006 and our other two children came along in 2008 and 2010. It was a busy and happy time filled with bringing up our family and work. With the arrival of Revd Andy Chrich we enjoyed worshipping as part of our local church in Trumpington.

In 2017 I was delighted to accept a three-year post as **'Church and Community Family Outreach Worker' in Trumpington. Andy developed this role in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council in recognition of Trumpington being an area of significant growth - having changed over the past decade from a small village on the edge of Cambridge to a large community with many young families. Taking up this post enabled me to bring together my clinical experience and Christian faith in a role that was designed to reach out into this changing community.**

Whilst working in this innovative role, I was introduced to the writings of Father Richard Rohr, Franciscan Priest and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Rohr's book, **'Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer'** changed me. Like Nouwen's book that I had read over 20 years before, it is Rohr's conviction that it is relationship, and only relationship, that leads to belonging and faith. I was delighted to meet Father

Richard while attending The Universal Christ conference in March 2019 in New Mexico.

During this time, I started a Doctorate in Practical Theology in Cambridge. This course gave me a framework to explore where God was already at work in the people and places I was walking alongside. My work at this time coincided with the start of the pandemic. People spoke about the pandemic as being an in-between time; suspended between a time we had left



Me meeting Richard Rohr face-to-face!

behind, and a time yet to come. I too experienced the sense of being in a liminal space; a feeling of being at the edges. Yet I came to realise that for me **this wasn't to be a temporary space to which I would move on from, but rather** a place that I am called to inhabit. An in-between space full of uncertainty and possibility, being alongside people at the margins.

Present Moment

As my three-year post came to an end, I was fortunate enough to secure grant funding from Cambridgeshire County Council to enable me to continue the work I had begun and to do this as part of the charity Connected Lives <https://www.connectedlives.org.uk/cambridgeshire-hub>. Over the past four and a half years I have developed groups and projects with the aim of helping people find connection – connection to themselves, to their families, to their community, and perhaps to something greater than themselves that we might call God.

A central part of this work is facilitating Circle of Security Parenting groups [Homepage - Circle of Security International](#) - an 8-week course for parents and carers. What excites me about this course is the way it can transform relationships *between* parents/carers and children (and other relationships). Revd Samuel Wells writes that the word '*with*' is the 'most important word in theology.' Wells suggests that God so desired to be in relationship with humanity that the second part of the Trinity was made flesh in Jesus. God *with* us. He asserts that the task of theology is to put that '*with*' into words; and I see that this is my task, too.

At the end of one Circle of Security Parenting group, some parents asked if I would help them find ways to continue to connect to each other and to support other families in the local community. Out of this request began a stay-

and-play group called HonC! (Hands on the Circle). Over the past seven years this group has grown from four families to reaching around 40 families per week. HonC! has become a place where many people find belonging, support and connection.

In 2019 I began a project delivering Welcome Baby boxes to families with a new baby. Becoming a parent can be an isolating as well as joyful time. Feelings of isolation were exacerbated by the pandemic and parents had few opportunities to show off their child and to delight with others following their arrival. I am grateful to the ‘Knit One, Give One’ group at Downing Place URC, who continue to provide blankets for the baby boxes – a gift that is treasured by the whole family.

I have come to notice that the rhythm of my life involves both action and contemplation (as in the title of Rohr’s centre in New Mexico.) In being in relationship with families and communities I seek to offer both these opportunities. Time to be active and a time to slow down. Outofthebox storytelling has become an important tool to help groups *be-with* themselves and others in a reflective space. I use this storytelling at the Trumpington Meadows Community Hub and as part of ‘Body Mind Connection’ sessions. Body Mind Connection aims to connect our mind through story, with what is happening in our body through yoga/pilates and relaxation.

Home at Downing Place

When I began working with Andy in Trumpington in 2017, he suggested that I



Delivering the 150th welcome baby box!



Sharing an OutoftheBox story at Trumpington Meadows Community

meet Helen Christy, who was at that time working in a community worker role in the city. Since 2018, Helen and I have met regularly with a third person to consider where we might find God in our work and in our lives. Getting to know Helen over the years and discovering where our paths continue to cross has been significant, and is a central strand that led me to Downing Place.

I am grateful to Downing Place Church that my work at Connected Lives is supported. And like my experience of living at L'Arche, I have found somewhere that I belong. I am seen and I am loved.

In October 2023 I was delighted to become a member of Downing Place Church and in April 2025 I accepted the invitation to become an Elder. I am looking forward to discovering more about what it means to find true relationship, real friendships, and faithful presence as I continue to journey along the way.

Editor: readers might like to look back at Jane Bower's article 'So glad I went' in the June 2023 issue of *Place Matters*, in which Jane recalls a recent Open Table social meeting at which Helen Bell led the main activity. "She cleared a table space and began to quietly unpack a variety of intriguing bags and unusual boxes ...".

PS ON PEMBROKE COLLEGE

Further to the interesting description of the Pembroke revisions to the old Emmanuel building in the May Place Matters, people may be interested that the Master of Pembroke College, Lord Chris Smith (a former Labour MP and Minister) has recently



edited a book called *Pembroke College, Cambridge - The Buildings and Gardens*. It is a coffee-table book with many photographs of the College, including the new parts made possible by the acquisition of the Emmanuel building. The book is available from Waterstones at £35, or (currently) from Amazon at 25% off.

Robert Smith

AN INSIGHT INTO OUR RECENT JUNIOR CHURCH SESSIONS



On Easter Sunday we rolled away the stone in our Easter Garden for all the congregation to see. Later in the courtyard garden where we heard how Mary had travelled to the tomb where Jesus was laid, and found the stone rolled away.

We sang (to the tune of 'Row, row, row your boat')

*Roll, roll, roll the stone
The stone has rolled away
It's Easter! Jesus is alive.
Hip, hip, hip burray!*

Then we hunted for egg shaped 'stones' in the garden. We found that by scratching away the surface of them we could transform them; from a dark colour to a bright celebratory rainbow of colours. Some went back to Germany with our visitors. (Sarah Quirin and her husband Tony and children, members of the church in Saarland, Germany, where Annemarie Rossel (nee Pachel) is minister. Annemarie was on placement with Downing Place Church in 2019-2020.)

The following Sunday, the children were introduced to a new fruit; physalis.

Before even touching the fruit, we explored how much evidence we would need before tasting it.

Some wanted to peel away the leaves and have a good look, others explored to see if there was a promising smell. One child needed no more evidence, and ate it declaring that it was delicious.

Faced with an eyewitness recommendation, most of the children were sufficiently convinced to have a try. Most liked it, although a few were unconvinced. This led us to talk about Thomas, who having missed the first appearance of Jesus to the other disciples, following His resurrection, found it hard to believe. However, after Jesus appeared a second time, in a locked room, Thomas believed. As we created a picture of Jesus and the disciples, we discussed how we could be convinced to believe in Jesus from the evidence of the lives of other believers, our family, or just by trying the Christian life.



On 4 May, we spent time together reminiscing about some of the good things that the children had been involved in at church over recent years and recalled



some memorable times spent with Nigel. We then shared the story of Saul's experience on the road to Damascus and subsequent conversion to being a supporter of Jesus. Paul, as he came to be known, learned to see things from a new, brighter perspective and his change of mind led to him persuade many more people to follow Jesus. We enjoyed making colourful spinners and watching the patterns change as the wheels spun round. Sometimes it can be good to change how we view things!



In the middle of May, we read the story of Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) from the book of Acts. We were inspired by her life of helping others and how her kindness significantly impacted her community. When Peter prayed over Tabitha, she was brought back to life, leading many in her community to become Christians. Tabitha exemplified living life to the fullest and helping others do the same.

We connected this story to the theme of Christian Aid Week, reflecting on how God desires for everyone to live life to the full. We discussed the challenges some people face in achieving a fulfilled life, such as dealing with tough circumstances or adversity, like trying to

make a living from the land amidst climate change and urbanisation. We considered what helps us live life to the full - family, friends, food, a safe home, and the knowledge that God loves us. This reminded us of our role in helping others experience the fullness of life, just as Tabitha did. We finished the session by creating art to remind us how fortunate we are to have many blessings in our lives, thanks to God's love.

The following week, we followed Nigel's introduction to the Nicene Creed in Sharing Together, by exploring if it was possible to find six statements that everyone in the room could agree on. Understandably it wasn't too easy, but we got there - more or less. Then we created a picture of a church with the excerpts from the Creed on the open doors.

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.



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MONTHLY SPECIAL CAUSE FOR JUNE



Supporting people to rebuild their lives after disaster or conflict

Every family deserves a place to call home after disaster.

Right now, around 120 million people are displaced across the world. Shelterbox work with disaster-affected communities to provide the [emergency shelter](#), essential items and training needed to support people in the long process of rebuilding their lives.

Every [disaster](#) is different, so they have a flexible approach. They listen and learn from the communities they work with to make sure we provide the right support.

They often go further, working hard to reach communities who are overlooked by others.

Before a disaster happens, they make sure they are ready to help. They store aid in strategic locations around the world so they can get it to the families who need it as quickly as possible.

They work with trusted local partners and they have a network of incredible **volunteers who are ready to help at a moment's notice.**

Our teams can travel by foot, boat, helicopter or tuk-tuk to get to the families who need your support – whatever it takes to get to the people who need us.

Find out more about Shelterbox's work here <https://shelterbox.org/>

WAYS OF GIVING TO OUR SPECIAL CAUSE

- Monthly Retiring Collection on Sunday 15 June (cash, cheque or card)
- Cash/cheques can be left any Sunday in a clearly marked envelope
- 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 monthly Special Cause for April was the Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign . We sent a total of £1,957.74 to them as follows:

Lunchtime Concerts	£953.32
Retiring Collection	£607.00
Other Donations	£ 60.00
Gift Aid	£237.42
DPURC Mission Fund	£100.00

Members will also be pleased to know that our annual York Street - now Downing Place URC Mission Fund - donations to good causes have been made, as follows

The following donations have been made:

Cambridge Street Pastors	£1,000 (and read their update on p.20)
Cambridge City Foodbank	£1,000
Cambridge Churches Homeless Project	£1,000
Connected Lives	£1,000
The Bible Society	£1,000
Romsey Mill	£1,000
Jirroff	£ 500

The donation of £500 to Bridgerton Memorial Church in Soweto will be made once we have established the best route for sending the donation to them.

Overleaf you will find some of the messages which have started to come in as the donations are received.

Ann Auger



Mrs A Auger
4 Downing Place
Cambridge
CB2 3EL

8 May 2025

Dear Mrs Auger

Thank you so much for your kind gift of £1,000.00 from Downing Place United Reformed Church.

Your passion for spreading the word of God is helping change lives for good. This is the impact your donation can have:

- The Bible is distributed free or at affordable prices to those in need
- Scriptures are translated to reach more people in a language they can fully understand
- Resources are provided in England and Wales that change the conversation about the Bible in wider culture and encourage Bible-inspired change in society

The story of fruit grower Han Xiaoling is an amazing example of how access to the Bible is transforming lives worldwide. Xiaoling could barely read when she attended Bible-based literacy classes supported by Bible Society in rural China. Within six months she could read Bible verses. She's now filled with passion to share God's word. 'I want people to know that all we have comes from God and that they should trust him,' she said. Already Xiaoling's family, her husband's family and three of her friends have come to faith.

Your kindness and generosity is making a huge difference to so many people's lives. On behalf of all those who will benefit from your gift – thank you.

Many blessings,

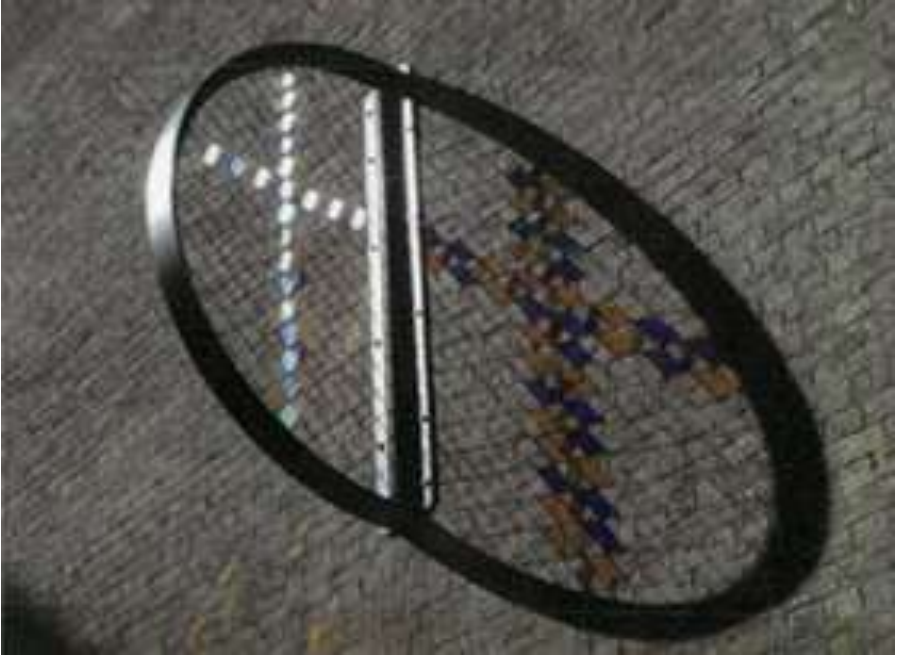
Head of Supporter Services

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people. Gold

Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westley, Swindon SN1 7DG, UK | T: +44(0)1793 418222 | biblesociety.org.uk
We rely on the prayers, donations and legacies of our supporters. If you want to know more about how your data is processed, your rights or change how you receive news on our mission, see our Privacy Policy on our website, or call Freephone 0800 178 4921 | Registered charity 232758

HUB ART

Some of you may have noticed some rather striking art in the window of the 'Place de Musiciens' in the Hub. Regular concert audience member Ian Taylor was inspired by our beautiful dichroic glass installation to create a drawing based on this photograph.



Ian writes to accompany his drawing and photograph:

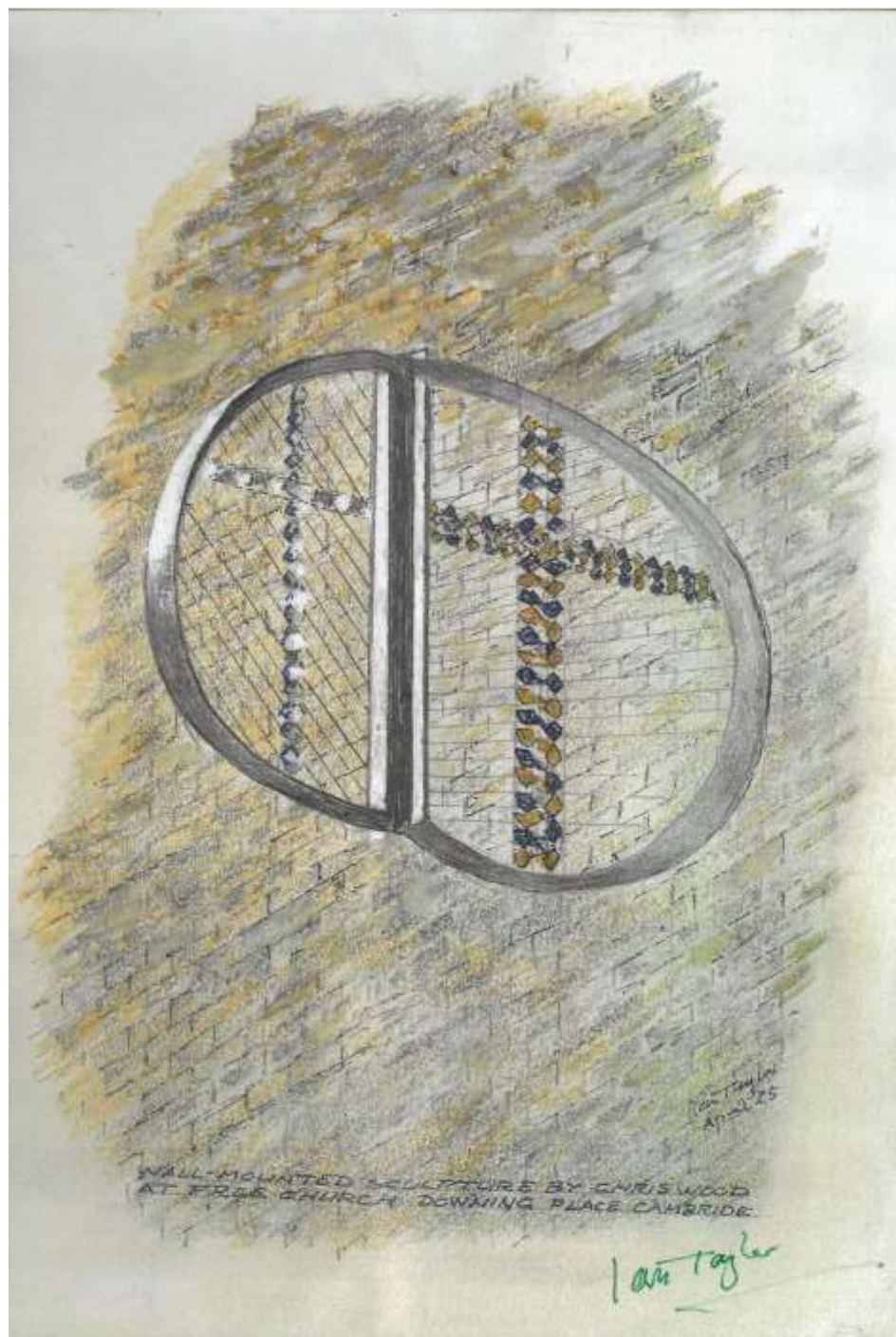
'Chris Wood - Artist - Born 1954 - Newcastle

Explored the power of light in sculptures made for optically coated glass called 'dichroic' which produce animated patterns in response to the environment

Dichroic - having two colours

Animated - to bring to life'

Ann writes - Despite the precise meaning of the word 'dichroic', I can see more than two colours in the photograph and in real life! As the sun climbs higher in the sky and the light show changes, may this beautiful art continue to inspire and enrich all who visit.



Helen Bell writes

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of the generous donation received from Downing Place URC to Connected Lives.

We are very appreciative of the donation in enabling us to continue to support many families in our community.

(read more about Helen and her work with Connected Lives on pp 7-11)

The Easter Knit One Give One Sale raised £200 which was divided between the Sallymay International Pre-school and War Child, supporting children in Ukraine.



SPRING NEWS FROM CAMBRIDGE STREET PASTORS AND NIGHTLITE



A message from Neat Pellatt, coordinator of Cambridge Street Pastors,

Thank you to our friends at Downing Place Church, we are immensely grateful for your support. With your help and adaptability (quick turnarounds on Saturday night / Sunday mornings) we have managed to open NightLife every Saturday night since December 2024. In that time there was just one week when we had a single guest, but she was grateful for our support. Most weeks we have many more.

Promotion – **We are keen to let young people from the City's Sixth Form and Regional Colleges** know that we are on hand on Saturday nights if they find themselves in a tricky situation. There are business cards and leaflets available in The Hub if you know any young people to pass them on to have in their wallet or purse.

Finally, we welcome people - friends, family, colleagues - to come along one Saturday night to observe, without any commitment to join, as it gives people an idea of how the City Centre operates at night. Although if you can give one Saturday night every 6 weeks we would be very happy to hear from you!

Thanks for all your support, please email director@cambridgestreetpastors.org.uk or visit our website www.cambridgestreetpastors.org.uk for further information.

THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP REPORT



Since the last report for Place Matters in March, the CHR Tuesday Fellowship has continued to meet weekly. We have been particularly conscious recently how fortunate we are that we can meet safely and in security, especially in view of all the conflicts in the world. However, despite this we have been able to enjoy an inspiring talk by Margaret Jude who brought her book of Christian poetry to the meeting in February. Her book is called “Flame of Faith” and is a beautiful selection of poetry covering a wide number of topics. Some of our members who are unable to come to our meetings because of mobility and health issues have really appreciated reading Margaret’s poetry. On March 11th, the Fellowship joined with members of the “Word Together” for a wonderful Lent course on the last words of Jesus on the Cross. Nigel Uden facilitated the course and it has been so meaningful to look closely at the last words, and more importantly it has generated amazing discussion among the members of both the Fellowship and members of Fulbourn URC. It was so fitting that we should have a service at the end of our course which was led by Nigel and which included Holy Communion. At this service we were able to raise £35 for the Earthquake Appeal which we added to the Fulbourn URC appeal.

For the last three meetings we had first a really enjoyable talk by one of our members, Tom Brown who talked to us about his experience sleeping out all night shortly after Easter in aid of the British Legion. He demonstrated how he had a tarpaulin to keep out the rain. He set it up in the hall so we should have an idea how he slept. He even



Tom in his sleeping bag!

got into his sleeping bag and I was able to take a couple of photos. Tom raised £270 for the British Legion. On April 29th, we had a lovely time at Coton Garden Centre. On our last meeting, Carole Scullion gave us a musical quiz when we had to guess the first line of the hymn from the letters of the CHR Tuesday Fellowship.



The group at Coton Garden Centre

Finally, we do not forget our members who are struggling at present. Two of our members are in Care Homes and two couples are housebound. We also bear in mind Wendy who is undergoing chemotherapy and valiantly continues to attend our meetings if she feels well enough. Our thoughts and Prayers are with her and with all the others who are having health issues at present.

Penny Milsom

A concert to mark Nigel's retirement given by Cambridge Voices, will take place on Saturday afternoon, July 19th at 4.00pm.

This will be in two parts of around 30 minutes each, with a short gap in the middle in which a representative from Turtle Dove will speak about their work.

The choir will sing music by Byrd and Franck's *Panis Angelicus* and other music about birds, including the Swan by Saint Saens for cello and piano.

Admission will be free with a retiring collection for Turtle Dove.

SUMMER HOUSEGROUPS

'My Favourite Things'

The idea of these four August 'relaxed' housegroups is to offer an informal opportunity for people to get to know one another better, in a gentle and enjoyable way - where we can talk as we choose to about things that matter to us, but no one feels obliged to share what isn't comfortable for them. Each week you are invited to bring along your favourite something - and if you'd like to share why you like it so much that will be great (but no obligation for everyone to talk!) The topics will be:

Week one: my favourite song or hymn

Week two: my favourite poem or Bible verse

Week three: my favourite photo or picture

Week four: my favourite food to have with tea or coffee - and we'll quite literally share these!



What you bring doesn't have to be explicitly to do with church - the important thing is that it is special for you for some reason.

The groups will be enabled by Zoe Bennett.

Venue: Downing Place church

Dates and times: Fridays August 8th 3-4.30pm; 15th, 22nd & 29th 2-3.30pm.

It might help to know who to expect, but please just some along on the day if you wish – any or all days, to suit.

Please ask Zoe or Penny if you need a lift. Children will also be welcome.

Penny Flynn, Housegroup coordinator

NIGEL'S RETIREMENT PARTY

12 JULY 2.30PM ONWARDS

As Nigel's retirement approaches, we need to have a list of those who will be coming to the event. Please sign up at the office by June 15th if you will be coming and indicate whether you will be staying for supper. Also, be aware that the final date for making donations towards gifts for Nigel will also be June 15th. There will be a book of messages/memories like the ones that were put together for Elaine and Alex, to which you are invited to contribute. A6 pieces of paper will be available from the office. It will be possible to leave these in the office until the beginning of July.



The afternoon will begin with a service at 2.30pm, followed by tea, cake and speeches at 4pm. Both will be in the church.

The second part begins after a short break, when folk will be milling around and catching up with old friends. The supper will be served in two sittings at 5.30pm and 6.00pm and this will be a hot vegetarian meal with gluten-free options, followed by various cakes, (to which you are invited to contribute). This will be eaten in the Gibson Hall and the Hub.

The evening entertainment needs to begin in the church at 7.00pm promptly. It will last up to an hour, so that there is a time for Nigel to speak before guests head off to catch the last P&R buses.

I'm sure you will have read the piece about this in last month's Place Matters. Please consider how you can help with all the tasks that need to be undertaken throughout the day and in preparation in the morning. A few tasks can be done the afternoon/evening before, including furniture moving and some food preparation. More information can be found in May's Place Matters. Some jobs can be done sitting down, so please contact the appropriate person to let them know you'd like to help. In addition we will need around 6 people to make tea and coffee, and be stationed at 3 spots in the church to serve everyone as swiftly as possible.

- Welcome - Margaret Thompson
- Helping prepare the meal - Sheila Strachan and Liz Barrow
- Moving chairs and tables as necessary - David Thomas and David Bush
- Playing in the orchestra - Tanya Kundu
- Joining the choir - including coming to one of both of the rehearsals after the service on June 29th and July 5th. Pippa, Yvonne Norgett or Mark Dawes
- Helping prepare and serve tea/coffee at 4pm - Pippa.
- Clearing up - David Thomas and David Bush.

With thanks in anticipation,

Pippa

A MESSAGE FROM PAMELA CRESSEY

To the members of Junior Church and the leaders.
Thank you all so much for the lovely Easter bouquets you made for decorating the church, and then distributing to those of us in the congregation who are old or unwell. The crosses and messages are beautiful. How did you make the cross? I shall cherish mine. Again, thank you.

Love Pamela





The Social Events Team is organising the above event for all those who visit or attend Downing Place, and their friends – children welcome. With Nigel wielding his gavel and Mark pounding the ivories, we invite you to come along and help to create an authentic atmosphere of yesteryear!

Here's how:

SIGN UP Please sign up on the list in the office. There is a space to tick if you are able to help tidy up the sanctuary afterwards. (Our aim is to have no washing up.)

FOOD To make things as easy as possible, the food will be on a bring-and-share basis, buffet style. We ask that you bring a plateful of small finger food, such as sandwiches, tarts, pies, small buns, fancies or biscuits. If you would like some simple and genuine Victorian ideas, please ask Jane Bower, or search online, or refer to Mrs. Beeton. If you have a plate in keeping with the times, and can bring

your food on that, even better – **but don't worry if not!** Cold drinks will be provided (and possibly wine – watch this space).

CLOTHING You are welcome whatever you wear, but we are aiming for a Victorian 'feel' without any pressure to go to any trouble. Of course, if you own something really authentic - top hat, tail coat, bustle, enormous fancy hat – now is your chance to wear it, and Dickens characters and chimney sweeps welcome! But simple ideas might be:

Long/ish dress, or skirt and long-sleeved blouse, shawl, perhaps a brooch at the neck. Suit, shirt and tie/bow tie. Ideas for children: dresses, socks and shawls, mob caps/bonnets, knee-length shorts, or trousers tucked in to long socks, cap.

ENTERTAINMENT If you can provide a SHORT piece of suitably Victorian style entertainment, humorous or serious, please contact Jane Bower with your idea. Instruments, songs, readings, recitations, magic tricks, dance, jokes ...

Please help to make this social evening go with a ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay. Any queries, please contact me.

Thank you,

Jane Bower

HAZEL SANDERSON WRITES

Dear friends

I will to be taking part in the 'Star shine' night walk on Saturday 21st June to help raise money for the Arthur Rank Hospice charity. This is a yearly event, and I have walked for the last 3 years, one year with Alex Clare-Young and others from Solidarity Hub. Star Shine Night Walk is a special way to remember and celebrate the lives of loved ones. I will be taking part and walking the 5 mile route under the stars to help raise money for this amazing charity. Please sponsor me to motivate me along the walk and help someone living with a life limiting illness. Thank you.

Here's the link to my fundraising page:

<https://arhc.enthuse.com/pf/hazel-sanderson-889c3>

Hazel Sanderson

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.

Monday 2 June
Mifune Tsuji (violin) & Yukie Smith (piano)

Wednesday 4 June
Harriet Flather (clarinet) & Jennifer Walsh (piano)

Monday 9 June
Giuseppe Sortino (piano)

Wednesday 11 June
The Rockingham Duo

Monday 16 June
Veronica Henderson (cello) & Elizabeth Mucha (piano)

Wednesday 18 June
Jazz from Scotland

Monday 23 June
Ivan Hovorun (piano)

Wednesday 25 June
Osman Tack (piano) with dancers from A P Dance Collaborations

Monday 30 June
Galina Umanskaya (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/>

ALL AGE LUNCHTIME CONCERT

at Downing Place United Reformed Church

Sunday 15th June 2025,

12.45 - 1.15pm

Prokofiev: Peter & the Wolf



Ian de Massini (organ) &
Jane Bower (voice & live illustrations)



Free admission with retiring collection



JUNE DIARY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	01-Jun	Choir Rehearsal	10.00am	Church
Sun	01-Jun	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11.00am	Church
Sun	01-Jun	Open Table Social	7.00pm	Online - Zoom
Mon	02-Jun	Officers' Meeting	10.15am	Minister's Office
Mon	02-Jun	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Yukie Smith (piano) and Mifune Tsuji (violin)	1.00pm	Church
Tue	03-Jun	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2.30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	04-Jun	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Harriet Flather (clarinet) & Jennifer Walsh (piano)	1.00pm	Church
Thu	05-Jun	Midweek Worship led by Dr Janet Bottoms	11.00am	Church
Thu	05-Jun	Talk by Robert Colbert of the Alzheimer's Society followed by discussion.	12.15pm	Macallister Room, GTC
Thu	05-Jun	Knit One Give One	1.30pm	The Hub
Fri	06-Jun	Meditation Group	5.15pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	08-Jun	Choir Rehearsal	10.00am	Church
Sun	08-Jun	Pentecost Sunday Worship led by the Revd Deborah McVey	11.00am	Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	08-Jun	Solidarity Hub	2.00pm	TBC
Mon	09-Jun	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Giuseppe Sortino (piano)	1.00pm	Church
Tue	10-Jun	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2.30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Tue	10-Jun	Worship Group Meeting	7.30pm	Online
Wed	11-Jun	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - The Rockingham Duo	1.00pm	Church
Wed	11-Jun	Elders' Meeting	7.30pm	Emmanuel Room
Thu	12-Jun	Prayer Meeting	10.15am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	12-Jun	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11.00am	Church
Thu	12-Jun	Knit One Give One	1.30pm	The Hub
Fri	13-Jun	Victorian Evening (see. p.26)	6.30pm	Church
Sun	15-Jun	Choir Rehearsal	10.00am	Church
Sun	15-Jun	All Ages Worship on Trinity Sunday led by the Revd Nigel Uden followed by a retiring collection for our monthly Special Cause	11.00am	Church
Sun	15-Jun	All Age Lunchtime Concert with Ian de Massini & Jane Bower - Prokofiev's <i>Peter and the Wolf</i> (see p.29)	12.45pm	Church
Sun	15-Jun	Open Table Communion Service	7.00pm	Church &
Mon	16-Jun	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Veronica Henderson (cello) & Elizabeth Mucha (piano)	1.00pm	Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Mon	16-Jun	DEADLINE for booking and paying for the Gibson Lunch	4.00pm	
Tue	17-Jun	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2.30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	18-Jun	DEADLINE for submitting items for 'Place Matters'		
Wed	18-Jun	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Jazz from Scotland	1.00pm	Church
Thu	19-Jun	Prayer Vigil	8.00am - 2.00pm	Church
Thu	19-Jun	Midweek Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11.00am	Church
Thu	19-Jun	Gibson Lunch	12.30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	19-Jun	Knit One Give One	1.30pm	The Hub
Fri	20-Jun	Meditation Group	5.15pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	22-Jun	Choir Rehearsal	10.00am	Church
Sun	22-Jun	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden with baptism of Mabel Garner	11.00am	Church
Sun	22-Jun	Solidarity Hub	7.00pm	The Hub
Mon	23-Jun	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Ivan Hovorun (piano)	1.00pm	Church
Tue	24-Jun	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2.30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	25-Jun	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Osman Tack (piano) with dancers from A.P.Dance Collaborations	1.00pm	Church

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Thu	26-Jun	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Deborah McVey	11.00am	Church
Thu	26-Jun	Knit One Give One	1.30pm	The Hub
Sun	29-Jun	Choir Rehearsal	10.00am	Church
Sun	29-Jun	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Dr Peter McEnhill	11.00am	Church
Sun	29-Jun	Solidarity Hub	7.00pm	tbc
Mon	30-Jun	Officers' Meeting	10.15am	Minister's Office
Mon	30-Jun	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Galina Umanskaya (piano)	1.00pm	Church
Tue	01-Jul	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2.30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	02-Jul	NO WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME CONCERT		
Thu	03-Jul	Midweek Worship led by Jane Bower	11.00am	Emmanuel Room
Thu	03-Jul	Knit One Give One	1.30pm	The Hub
<i>Fri</i>	<i>04-Jul</i>	<i>URC General Assembly meets 4-7 July</i>		<i>The Hayes, Swanwick</i>
Fri	04-Jul	Meditation Group	5.15pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sun	06-Jul	Choir Rehearsal	10.00am	Church
Sun	06-Jul	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Professor David Thompson	11.00am	Church
Sun	06-Jul	Open Table Social	7.00pm	The Hub

MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

1 June	Chris Baker David Cornick David Tatem Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Stetchworth & Cheveley Bassingbourn Melbourn Stowmarket Pembroke College (pm)
8 June	Chris Baker Liz Caswell John Proctor Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Trinity, Burwell Sawston Saffron Walden Chappel (6.30pm) Fulbourn
15 June	Janet Tollington	Stetchworth & Cheveley
22 June	Liz Caswell David Thompson Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Fulbourn St Luke's LEP Clare Fulbourn (pm)
29 June	Chris Baker Janet Bottoms Liz Caswell Penny Flynn Janet Tollington Nigel Uden	Fenstanton Fulbourn Bassingbourn Sawston Stansted Dorking



LECTIONARY FOR JUNE

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.

1 June (Easter 7)

Acts 16:16-34

Psalm 97

Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

John 17:20-26

8 June (Pentecost)

Acts 2:1-21 or Genesis 11:1-9

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

Romans 8:14-17 or Acts 2:1-21

John 14:8-17, (25-27)

15 June (Trinity Sunday)

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Psalm 8

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

22 June (Trinity 1)

Isaiah 65:1-9

Psalm 22:19-28

Galatians 3:23-29

Luke 8:26-39

29 June (Trinity 2)

1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21

Psalm 16

Galatians 5:1, 13-25

Luke 9:51-62

6 July (Trinity 3)

Isaiah 66:10-14

Psalm 66:1-9

Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20



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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 July-August edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of Wednesday 18 June.

The July-August edition will be available from Sunday 29 June