



March – April  
2016

# outlook

Newsletter of **Highgate United Reformed Church**

## From addiction to reconciliation

**T**he *Big Issue* often includes articles about its sellers. I was inspired by the story of Larry Knowles in a recent edition. Larry was an RAF technician who was involved in organising aircraft crash recovery. Dealing with the victims of crashes affected him badly, and he developed post-traumatic stress disorder and began drinking heavily. Upon leaving the RAF he became an alcoholic, his marriage broke-up, and he became homeless. Eventually he started selling *The Big Issue*, he was found a small flat to live in, and with help from a local church he was able to furnish it. He started attending the church, but he was still drinking. One day, in desperation, Larry got down on his knees and pleaded with God to help him to be rid of his terrible affliction. As soon as he had done so he felt a weight lift from his shoulders. Since then he has not touched alcohol, and he attributes his recovery to his Christian belief. What happened to Larry? I think God helped Larry to live no longer for himself but to live for Christ.

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*From the Minister continued*

The Apostle Paul writes:

The love of Christ compels us to reach this conclusion: One died for all, therefore all died. He died for all so that those who live may no longer live for themselves but live for him who died and was raised to life for them.

*(2 Corinthians 5:14-15)*

The 'One' referred to is Jesus Christ. As an expression of his love, Jesus Christ died for *all*. Not 'all those who believe' or 'all the saints' or 'all the deserving' but *all*, without exception.

Paul believes that Christ's death 'for all' has a purpose: *reorientation*. "He died for all so that those who live may no longer live for themselves but live for him who died and was raised to life for them." Christ lived and died and was resurrected in order that we would no longer live a life turned-in-on-ourselves but live for Christ. Christ is the man-for-others who reorients us to God, to our neighbour in need, and to all that is good and life-giving.

We are reorientated for the purpose of *reconciliation*. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, no longer reckoning people's wrongdoing against them, and has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). By means of Christ's death, in a way that is as mysterious as it is universally momentous, God has transformed the vicious cycle of accusation and enmity caused by human wrongdoing by forgiving and bringing together. This is the supreme expression of God's grace. Yet grace is a gift that needs to be asked for and received with empty hands.

Larry Knowles had to let go of the vodka bottle before he could receive God's gift of liberation. That letting-go was his act of repentance. God honoured this act not only by liberating him from his addiction but also by reconciling him in ways he could not have foreseen; for Larry's story has a postscript. At church he met a woman called Carol who became a great support to Larry and "saw something in me that I didn't see". 18 months ago they married.

**Julian Templeton**

# Report on Church Meeting

## 28 February 2016

### **Minister's conclusion of ministry**

Julian confirmed that his final Sunday as Minister of Highgate United Reformed Church would be 10th July 2016. He explained that his decision to resign his ministry at Highgate would allow him to focus his attention on completing a part-time course of study while continuing half-time as Minister of St John's Church New Barnet. As Minister of St John's he would be part of the North Local Area Group, which currently includes Highgate United Reformed Church. He hoped his decision would provide clarity for HURC if it decided to seek a full time Minister.

### **Recommendation from the Elders' Meeting and Future Ministry Working Group:**

Julian noted that in the past 30 years Robert Courtney's ministry had been scoped at 75% whilst his had been scoped at 50%. Whilst God had brought some new, including younger, people to HURC, there had not been sustained growth in our membership. He argued that HURC's responsibility to God was to put the income that it has been blessed with to good use.

A full and frank discussion exploring what would be involved in Highgate paying for a full-time minister directly from HURC funds. This person would not be a stipendiary from the URC but likely from a denomination with a similar background who would follow URC patterns. Likely candidates will be invited to preach so the congregation could consider how appropriate they might be. Revd Roger Orme was willing to continue as Associate Minister in the interim. HURC was also fortunate in having two retired ministers. Meanwhile, an opportunity arises for some members of the congregation to get involved more actively in the life of the church.

A question was asked about the accommodation and funding for the post-holder. Robert Gorrie commented that the quantity of funds available meant that an attractive offer could be made to a potential minister for a certain period of time. He also stated that HURC would still wish to show willing to participate in the wider life of the URC and

would expect to contribute to the URC Mission and Ministry Fund at a reasonable level.

A Search Committee for the new minister would need to be found. Robert Gorrie explained that in setting this up, it was important to have a representative cross-section of the congregation whilst keeping the committee to a manageable number. It was proposed that the Search Committee would comprise: Robert Gorrie (chair), Patricia Judd (minute secretary), Stephen Evans, Beth Chaudhary, Christa Keeler, Helen Roe, Pamela Furse, Rowena Courtney, and Roger Orme. During the period of the search every second meeting of the Elders would focus solely on this issue, to which Robert Courtney, Roger Scopes and John Thompson would also be invited.

The following proposal was then put to the meeting. "The Church believes that we should seek full time Ministerial Leadership locally paid and we appoint a Search Committee with the brief of bringing to a future Church Meeting a recommended candidate for the position."

**The recommendation was carried unanimously.**

### **Recommendation from the Elders' Meeting:**

"Pond Square Chapel reaffirms its commitment to participating, supporting and working within the existing and emerging URC structures in so far as they do not inhibit or restrict the mandate of Church Meeting to put in place full-time Ministerial leadership."

**The recommendation was carried unanimously.**

### **Discernment of new Elders list and letter**

Julian explained that once he and Laura left in July there would only be 3 serving Elders and Roger Orme as Associate Minister. Many church members were "time poor" but he hoped that some would be willing to consider serving as Elders. A letter was being sent to all active members and adherents of HURC. All members and adherents would be asked to express nominations for Elders – should any of those who receive sufficient support not yet be formal church members, Julian would approach them if they would first become a member, with a view to standing for nomination as an elder in due course.

## Advertisement of Children's and Families' Worker contract

The church continued to be grateful to Stephen Rainford for his work as Children's Leader. His move to Northamptonshire meant he had less midweek time available to devote to HURC. A new contract had been advertised on free websites but had only produced 2 (internal) applications. It had been agreed to extend the deadline to 18 March and to advertise the contract on a paid Christian employment website.

# Revised Common Lectionary

20 March **Palm:** Luke 19:28-40; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

**Passion:** Luke 22:14 – 23:56; Philippians 2:5-11; Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16

25 March **Good Friday:** John 18:1 – 19:42; Hebrews 10:16-25; Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12; Psalm 22

27 March **Easter Day:** Luke 24:1-12; Acts 10:34-43; Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

3 April **Easter 2:** John 20:19-31; Acts 5:27-32; Revelation 1:4-8; Psalm 118:14-29 or 150

10 April **Easter 3:** John 21:1-19; Acts 9:1-6 (7-20); Revelation 5:11-14; Psalm 30

17 April **Easter 4:** John 10:22-30; Acts 9:36-43; Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 23

24 April **Easter 5:** John 13:31-35; Acts 11:1-18; Revelation 21:1-6; Psalm 148

1 May **Easter 6:** John 14:23-29; Acts 16:9-15; Revelation 21:10, 22 – 22:5; Psalm 67

8 May **1st after Ascension:** Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23; Psalm 47:4-6; Psalm 126

## Of Mice and Men

A minister went into his local pet shop to ask for some help. "I need some mice, some silverfish, and as many clothes moths as you can find." The pet shop owner was startled. "We can probably get these for you but it might take some time. Mind if I ask why you are placing such an unusual order. The minister replied: "It's simple. I've accepted a call to another church and the church council told me to leave the parsonage the way I found it."

## Advance Notice

### Visit by Moderator of General Assembly, 29 May

Please note in your calendar that the Moderator of the General Assembly, John Ellis, will lead us in worship on Sunday 29 May, and Julian will baptise Evelyn Fox. Representatives from other URC's in our area will be invited to attend.

# ..... Diary Dates ..... .....

## March

Sunday 13 10:30 am **Lent 5**, Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton, with Kidz Klub 'Elijah's Prayer'  
6:00 pm United Worship for the Passion, Leader: Peter Vannozzi;  
Preacher: Fr Patrick Fitzgerald, St Augustine's Church,  
Archway Road, N6 5BH

Wed 16 7:45 pm Home Group, Psalm 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG,

Friday 18 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation for Lent, 'Spirituality'

Sunday 20 10:30 am **Palm Sunday** Worship led by Roger Orme,  
with Kidz Klub 'Prayer Stations'

Monday 21 2:00 pm Open Door Gathering, Pond Square Chapel

Tuesday 22 7:45 pm Elders' Meeting, 1 Brookfield Park

Wed 23 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG

Friday 25 9:30 am **Good Friday** Churches Together in Highgate  
Procession of Witness, starting at All Saints'  
Church, Talbot Road, N6 4QH

10:30 am Cross Buns and drinks followed by 11:15  
short All Age Service, Pond Square Chapel,  
led by Julian Templeton



Sunday 27 10:30 am **Easter Day** All Age Worship with the Lord's Supper  
led by Julian Templeton followed by a Real  
Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Bring-and-Share Feast



## April

Sunday 3 10:30 am Worship led by Geoffrey Roper, with Kidz Klub

Wed 6 10:30 am Children's Holiday Club in Hall

7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG

Friday 8 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation

Sun 10 10:30 am Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton,  
with Kidz Klub

# ••••• Diary Dates •••••

- Sun 10 5:30 pm United Worship, 'Discipleship', Leader: Fr Patrick Fitzgerald;  
Preacher Rev Bryce Wandrey, St Joseph's Church, Highgate  
Hill, N19 5NE
- Wed 13 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Friday 15 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation
- Sunday 17 10:30 am Worship led by Susan Chinn & Peter Horton, with Kidz Klub
- Monday 18 2:00 pm Open Door Gathering, Pond Square Chapel
- Wed 20 7:45 pm Lent Home Group, Psalm 100, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Thursday 21 8:15 pm Management Committee
- Friday 22 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation
- Sunday 24 10:30 am Worship featuring hymns of William Cowper led by Julian  
Templeton
- 10:30 am Fun Sunday in Hall
- Wed 27 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Friday 29 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation

## May

- Sunday 1 10:30 am Worship led by Alan Argent, with Kidz Klub
- Monday 2 Deadline for submissions to next Outlook
- Wed 4 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Friday 6 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation
- Sunday 8 10:30 am Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton,  
with Kidz Klub

- 5:30 pm United Evening Worship,  
'Ascension', Leader: Julian  
Templeton; Preacher: Rev'd  
Robert Willoughby,  
Pond Square Chapel



# Christian Churches in Cuba After The Revolution

I attended the Women's Day of Prayer service at our church last Friday, March 5th, partly because the country to which the service was dedicated this year is Cuba, a country I happen to know very well. The experience took me back to when I worked as an academic, first at Westfield College and subsequently more briefly at Queen Mary, and used to visit, Cuba for research purposes. I travelled there a total of 12 or 13 times during the 1980s and 1990s, including a period of three months in 1987 which was particularly illuminating: I think we all benefit from spending time in a country whose political and social organisation differs from our own.

My first visit, in 1982, was remarkable if only because it coincided with the Falklands conflict and to complicate matters I am Anglo-Argentine. I discovered then the political sophistication and the niceness of the average Cuban since all they did was laugh and, when I wouldn't answer pointed questions, said: "En boca cerrada no entran moscas" which means "Flies can't get through pursed lips." If you consider the crude xenophobia to be found among some here (think about the response to the sinking of the Belgrano), it's hardly surprising that I fell in love with Cubans and their fantastically beautiful island and made up my mind to return for longer once I could obtain sabbatical leave.

At the time, I was in membership of Friends (Quakers) and so it was they whom I got to know best, but in 1987 I stayed at a Methodist Centre in Havana and so attended some of their services. I particularly enjoyed singing "villancicos" (the Spanish term for carols) with some of their number. In addition, a Presbyterian minister, Adolfo Ham, became a close and valued friend of mine.

At the time of the Revolution most of the Catholic priests left with the exodus of the wealthy and the professional classes. This is because the Catholic Church at the time was not associated with the rural areas and their poor. On the other hand, the strength of the Quakers lay in provincial towns in the east of the island and I paid several visits to the small town of Banes in the province of Holguin. Christians were not persecuted in Cuba

after the Revolution, – had that been so, it's unlikely that two Popes would have visited the Island in recent times. However, a minister or priest could only draw the basic wage and Christians were also banned from posts in certain ministries such as that of Foreign Affairs. A child might also be the butt of jokes at school. What was sad, though, was to see the fine Quaker school in Banes all shuttered up and I recall a Communist saying to me that the Quaker schools had offered a very fine education.

Unlike European Friends, Cuban Quakers are not silent. They are constituted like a Church and have ministers who lead services for their congregations. They are the descendants of converts made by missionaries sent from the USA. Unfortunately, I haven't visited Cuba since 1999 and am now out of touch with Christians on the island. Of course, all Christians there benefitted from the Church/State rapprochement which followed shortly after the break-up of the USSR. The funds they have received from their sister churches in capitalist countries have helped them to renovate neglected buildings and to foster personal contacts.

During the Women's World Day of Prayer service dedicated to Cuba, what I missed was the presence of actual Cubans to bring to life their particular Christian testimony. Cubans, particularly the older ones and those about to retire, should be in our thoughts and prayers now because they face a period of transformative change. This will be welcomed by many but could have harsh consequences for the older and more vulnerable sectors of their population.

Verity Smith

## Persecuted Christians

**A**s I write this in late February there is sadly little good news to report. In January newspapers related how Isis militants had reduced the oldest monastery in Iraq to a field of grey-white dust. Saint Elijah's monastery was founded in 590 AD on a hilltop above the city of Mosul in northern Iraq. It is one of more than 100 religious and culturally important ancient sites destroyed by Isis which claims that they are heretical or idolatrous. Iraqi Christian clerics were horrified; Rev Paul Habib who lives in exile in Iraqi Kurdistan said: "Our Christian history in Mosul is being barbarically levelled. We see it as an attempt to expel us from Iraq."

United Nations reported that about 3,500 people, mostly women and children, are believed to be held as slaves in Iraq by Isis militants. The women and children are mostly from the ancient Yazidi religious minority, they endure brutal sex enslavement and rape, even children as young as 12. But those lucky enough to escape told of anonymous Iraqis and Syrians and Kurds who took pity on them and helped them to flee.

The campaign against Christians is geographically broad as well as vile and ferocious. Mob attacks against Christians in Pakistan are too frequent; they include such atrocities as the lynching of a married Christian couple near Lahore; they were beaten to death and their bodies baked in a kiln, because of a rumour that they had desecrated the Koran. Brunei has a new penal code threatening anyone publicly celebrating Christmas. China has demolished churches and dismantled outdoor crosses.

An Austrian friend sent me information about a Christian church in Bursa, west Turkey, used by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christians – government authorities removed and outlawed the congregation.

We must not forget the cruel Boko Haram terrorists in north east Nigeria; the local population is partly Christian, and Muslim. Boko Haram destroy schools for girls and capture women and girls.

And let us not forget the Jews of France who now experience a nasty rise in anti-Semitism; many flee to England and the Liberal Jewish synagogue in St John's Wood now employs a French-speaking rabbi.

In January in Marrakesh in Morocco there was a meeting of Muslim scholars from 120 countries, joined by Christian leaders from Iraq and other countries where Christians face persecution. They published a strong demand that Christians and other minorities should be free to worship in Muslim countries, denouncing extremism and intolerance. The scholars based their demand on the Medina charter of 1,400 years ago which guaranteed the religious liberty of all.

In Abu Dhabi, Jamal al-Suwaidi, director of the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research sternly criticised the way political religious groups practised absolute dictatorship, their political behaviour taking "an overpowering totalitarian nature, based on rejecting, excluding or killing the others, no matter who they are".

Please think and pray hard for Barnabas, and for all refugees whose families, homes and lives have been destroyed.

**Marion Uglow**

# WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

## Thank you

The Women's World Day of Prayer from the Christian women of Cuba was a great success! Thanks to all who supported it by coming, by helping, by participating. Those who would have loved to come but couldn't, thank you, because I know you were thinking and wishing us well.

I was quite concerned about how to organize it with half an hour break between the Lent Christian Meditation and the start of the Cuban service. My husband offered to help decorate the Chapel in Cuban colours, plants, and pictures. We arrived at 10 am to arrange carpets and chairs for 50 people, but found the sanctuary already beautifully arranged with chairs for 80 people! Guess who the angel was? Patricia – you could have heard a big rock fall off my heart. Cuban cakes and biscuits arrived, banners, flags, trestle tables, communion table, lemonade (a Cuban tradition), 50+ white paper flowers for the visitors and service booklets.

Julian set up the computer and projector to show Cuban pictures on the theme: "Receive children, receive me." Nava spoke the accompanying words and invited the congregation in reflection. Three Channing girls and Sophie Wells as a young Cuban woman were shining stars in the service.

Geoffrey Rendell accompanied us on piano and organ. Many songs completely new to us, so Geoffrey alerted us to what we needed to look for, as rhythmically they were quite syncopated. Fortunately, there were some experienced voices in the congregation including a cantor from St Anne's.

Several men attended the service. How brave of them (tongue-in-cheek)! People don't know that the WWDP services are for all: men, women, and children. It's just that women of a country, this year of Cuba, prepare the service, but all are welcome to attend.

After the service everybody enjoyed tea and Cuban cakes lovingly served by the usual church team. Next year's WWDP service will come from the Philippines. Another Highgate church will host it.



**Christa Keeler**

# Holy Week & Easter Day



## Palm Sunday 20 March

**10.30 am**

Worship led by Roger Orme, with Kidz Klub 'Prayer Stations'

## Good Friday, 25 March

**9:30 am**

Churches Together in Highgate Procession of Witness, starting at All Saints' Church, Talbot Road, N6 4QH

**10:30 am**

Hot Cross Buns and drinks followed by

**11:15 am**

short All Age Service, Pond Square Chapel, led by Julian Templeton

## Easter Day, 27 March

**10.30 am**

Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton followed by Real Easter Egg Hunt & Bring & Share Easter Feast

**Real Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Feast**



Bring & Share Lunch  
All Welcome