



Sept – Oct  
2015

# outlook

Newsletter of **Highgate United Reformed Church**



**Congratulations to Kathryn Gourlay and  
Stephen Evans, married in the Pond Square Chapel on  
1st August 2015**

Pond Square Chapel,  
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# Prayer as Sunbathing

Those of you came to the Church Garden Party at the Manse will know that, by pure happenstance, we chose the warmest and sunniest day in what was otherwise a rather cloudy and damp August! Perhaps it was this unexpectedly warm weather that brought so many of you out to enjoy the sun and the company. It was interesting to watch the effect of the sunshine on various people. Some revelled in its heat and light; others sought refuge from it under the shade of the apple tree and elsewhere!

Recently on the 'Thought for the Day' slot on Radio 4, Giles Fraser referred to Rowan Williams's idea that prayer is like sunbathing. The point of sunbathing is to expose your skin to the sun's rays. In order to do this, you have to take off your clothing. In other words, if you are to get the benefit of the sun's heat and light, you need to expose your body to it. Once you've exposed your body, that's all there is to it. You're not going to get a better tan by screwing up your eyes and concentrating. You give it time, and that's it.

In similar way, prayer is not so much about how we affect God, but about how God affects us. It's not, for instance, just another way of imposing our will on the world. The Lord's Prayer says: "Thy will be done" not 'my will be done'. Prayer is not a matter of presenting God with a shopping list of my demands; prayer is a matter of exposing my needs and demands to the light of God's truth. The real discipline of prayer, like the whole challenge of the sunbathing metaphor, is how long can we sit exposed to the truth, to the light? Unfortunately, for most of us, the answer to that is probably: not very long at all. While the truth may set us free, the truth can also be profoundly disconcerting.

The truth is often disconcerting and disturbing before it is liberating. For example, once one has accepted that a medical condition is not going to get 'better'; one can then set about deciding how to live with the condition. Or once one has accepted that the hundreds of thousands of African migrants to Europe are not going to be deterred by razor wire; one can begin to plan a constructive pan-European response. Neither of these examples are 'solutions' in any straightforward sense; rather, they are examples of how prayerful exposure to truth can, with time, bring acceptance and a constructive response.

**Julian Templeton**

# My church in Slovakia

**M**y home church is in the village of Ochodnica, population 2000, and is surrounded by mountains and forests. In the 15th century the only church was 5 miles away and still remains in its renovated and extended form after fire in 1904. In the 16th century our settlement became officially known as Ochodnica and the villagers used the small chapel of St Martin, not far from the current site of our church.

During the later part of 18th century in reign of Emperor Josef II Habsburg of Austro Hungarian Empire, the majority of monasteries were closed down and churches built instead – serving every settlement larger than 100 residents. Ours, built in 1789, was part of the major growth of 1189 Roman Catholic parishes. It was small wooden with a simple interior and funded by local people plus 170 golden coins from religious subsidies. The locals built small rectory building for our first vicar who provided Sunday mass and blessing as well as pastoral care to the residents including teaching of catechism, and meeting with young people in houses (modern day home groups). Christianity played a strong part in people's identity, and nearly all the villagers were Catholic. The church building it was extended and rebuilt in 1795. Our community was growing and by this time had 1414 residents, many marriages, births and deaths were being recorded in the parish register including one that I wasn't aware of till recently, the death of one of my ancestors: Zuzana Olejkova at the ripe old age of 106 years.



In 1831 faith was tested when over 100 people died with cholera, and in 1845 another 37 children died of measles. This continuity in infectious disease called for an emergency burial site that was donated by our family, named the Cross at the Olejko. The Church St Martin was completely rebuilt in 1872 near its original location - this time more spacious

and in stone. It was blessed in Autumn 1872 and in 1873 our church members purchased its new organ. Further donations ensured that Church became fully furnished with a new altar and statues of saints. This wasn't to last. The First World War demanded not only men, but material from our church, including flutes from the organ and three church bells.

After the war during the birth of Czechoslovakia and fall of Monarchy, our country experienced uprising and looting. Common people were protesting against those in power and many died as a result. Recorded in our Parish Chronicles is that over 20 residents looted buildings that stored food and wine. Drunk, they broke into the vicarage, took all the funds, some documents and locked the vicar in the cellar and sentenced him to death. Fortunately he escaped. The news reached the near town and few soldiers were sent to restore order. Around 100 people were hiding in the surrounding mountains, the leader was found in his house – drunk, later sentenced to death. The vicar was very much involved in a local cooperative scheme.

After such turbulent times the church was restored as people donated money for new church bells, organ restoration and new frescos. The cooperative organisations that were set up earlier, continued and people organised social gatherings, theatre performances and a choir. In 1935 church acquired a larger organ which still functions today.

The Second World War brought German troops into the village, all was smooth and apart from food and shelter, there was not much demand made on the villagers.

The war ended and Communism began – officially in 1948. People soon learned that those not with the Party would be persecuted. Church leaders were watched and monitored and Jozef Holly the Dean unfortunately was one of them. His sermons advised people to be tolerant and not to see planks in their neighbour's eye, but to deal with their own first – a message that did not go well with the communist party.

During his morning prayers, he heard gunshots, fell to the ground and laid low till it stopped. After this incident, a new vicar arrived and



new practices were set in place by local party promoters. This included a ban on teachers attending mass; a ban on organ study; and obstructions for students applying to study theology. Schools were monitored, and regulations were brought in to restrict religious education for children. An atmosphere of fear and mistrust settled in.

Times were difficult for next 40 years, and many were imprisoned due to disagreement with the regime. Remarkably Church has survived and after the fall of communism in 1989, is gradually regaining its vital position in people's lives and culture in my country. Many religious festivals were reinstated and are now openly celebrated.

I grew up mostly during the dark times of communist regime, and it was my grandparents and our vicar in Sunday School that instilled in me a simple faith in God, which I am very grateful for because it prompted me never to give up, but to search for more.

References: Historical informations from: Journey to the Source by Miroslav Lyko. Images from: [www.ochodnica.sk](http://www.ochodnica.sk)

**Iveta Olejkova**

# Baptism of Nina Chaudhary



Nina, second daughter of Raj and Beth, was baptised on 12 July 2015

# ••••• **Diary Dates** •••••

## **September**

- Sunday 13    10:30 am    Worship with Holy Communion led by Rev'd Julian Templeton and Kidz Klub followed by **Church Meeting**
- Wed 16        7:45 pm    Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Thursday 17    9:30 am    Making Melodies Children's Music Group
- Friday 18      12:30 pm    Meditation
- Sunday 20      10:30 am    Worship led by Rev'd Jon Dean, with Kidz Klub
- Monday 21      2:00 pm    Open Door Gathering
- Wed 23        7:45 pm    Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Thursday 24    9:30 am    Making Melodies Children's Music Group
- Friday 25      12:30 pm    Meditation
- Sunday 27      10:30 am    Worship led by Rev'd Donald Macarthur  
                    10:30 am    Fun Sunday for children and parents
- Wed 30        7:45 pm    Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG

## **October**

- Thursday 1     9:30 am    Making Melodies Children's Music Group  
                    8:15 pm    Management Committee
- Friday 2        12:30 pm    Meditation
- Sunday 4       10:30 am    Worship led by Andrew Mills, with Kidz Klub
- Monday 5       2:00 pm    Open Door Gathering, Trees, 2-4 Broadlands Road, N6 4AN
- Wed 7           7:45 pm    Home Group, "Our Father", 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Thursday 8     9:30 am    Making Melodies Children's Music Group  
                    8:00 pm    Elders' Meeting
- Friday 9        12:30 pm    Meditation
- Sunday 11      10:30 am    **Harvest Festival** worship with Holy Communion led by Rev'd Julian Templeton
- Wed 14         7:45 pm    Home Group, "Hallowed be your name", 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Thursday 15    9:30 am    Making Melodies Children's Music Group



# Organ Recital

**O**n Saturday 10 October at 7.30pm, Robert Manning is giving an organ recital at Crown Court Church of Scotland, Russell Street, Covent Garden, WC2B 5EZ. As well as a Bach Trio, he is playing music by our friends Brian Collins and Peter Monk: three hymn-tune preludes written by Brian especially for services at Highgate URC, and Peter's 'Uffculme Suite', a collection of eight descriptive pieces relating to the village of Uffculme, mid-Devon, with which Robert has a family connection. The suite will be receiving its first complete London performance. This promises to be a fascinating evening! The recital will last for just over an hour; admission is free, with a retiring collection!

## Church Garden

**W**e have been blessed with a beautiful front garden that is a great asset and advert for our church. Lately however, it's beginning to look a bit untidy and unloved. Pam and Patricia do great job, as I'm sure others do, picking up weeds and litter. We will get in professionals to advise and continue to plant new things at the right time. Meanwhile, is there is anyone who would like to join others on a Saturday morning for a few hours to prune and tidy things up? Please talk to Pam Furse if you do.

## Teas & Coffees

**M**ost of us enjoy having a chat and refreshments after the service but forget to volunteer to serve it. Can everyone please see if they could sign up to help at least once, then they'll see it's very easy and can be fun!

**From  
Su Chinn**

The blog for Kathy Thiesson, mentioned in my service on 3rd August is [www.goinpeacenottopieces.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.goinpeacenottopieces.blogspot.co.uk). This is a series of reports on her work in a camp in Iraqi Kurdistan. She has been going there as a volunteer, but after 3 or four years has decided to stop.

# PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

In July newspapers reported Lord Weidenfeld's project of rescuing up to 2,000 Christian families from Syria and Iraq and resettling them elsewhere. It was the generosity of British Christians who saved him, a penniless Jewish child from the Nazis in Austria, which inspired Lord Weidenfeld to found a rescue mission to save Christians from death at the hand of brutal Islamic State. In 1938 he arrived on a Kindertransport train, almost penniless; members of the Plymouth Brethren took him in, fed and clothed him. "I had a debt to repay," said Lord Weidenfeld. "It applies to so many of the young people who were on the Kindertransports. It was Quakers and other Christian denominations who brought those children to England. It was a very high-minded operation and we Jews should also be thankful and do something for the endangered Christians." His project faces criticism that it does not include Muslims, and has led to claims of discrimination; some countries, including USA, have refused to take part in the scheme.

Druze, the Yazidi sect, Alawites, Shia Muslims, Christians are among the religious groups who have been enslaved, murdered, had their property seized by ISIS, subjected to a religious tax, or expelled from their land. Once there were 1.1 million Christians in Syria, but it is estimated that by now more than 700,000 have fled the terror. In Iraq the Christian population has fallen from 1.4 million to probably 260,000. Lord Weidenfeld said that he had been appalled by the violence which he considers crueller than the Nazis; he believes that "ISIS is unprecedented in its primitive savagery – when it comes to the pure lust for horror and sadism, they are unprecedented". Barnabas Fund is also raising funds for Weidenfeld's Operation Safe Havens, and recently helped the movement of some Syrians refugees via Lebanon to Poland.

It is disappointing that the US government refuses to take specifically Christian refugees: a US State Department issued a letter saying "There is no way that Christians will be supported because of their religious affiliation".

In north east Nigeria Boko Haram continues its six-year fight to create an Islamic caliphate, pledging allegiance to ISIS and releasing a beheading video. Christian churches and schools have been destroyed, Christian

people murdered or kidnapped; there have been mass killings and suicide bombings during Boko Haram's conquest of swathes of the country, and Muslims and Muslim villages have been destroyed. It is estimated that in six years at least 13,000 people have been killed and 1.5 million displaced.

At the end of July London's Evening Standard ran three long articles on the trauma and misery of unaccompanied refugee children. Thousands arrive in Italy from Africa – usually their parents and brothers had been killed – but in Italy they are easy prey for people smugglers, drug dealers and the Mafia. Save the Children has an enormous task.

Please pray and think hard of all these suffering people – of all ages.

**Marion Uglow**



## Home Group

Wednesdays 7:45 pm, from 16 September onwards

14 Southwood Park, Southwood Lawn Road

The Christian Life through the Lens of the Lord's Prayer

7 Oct "Our Father"

14 Oct "Hallowed be your name"

21 Oct "Your kingdom come"

Every Wednesday the Home Group continues its lectionary-based bible study, prayer, and fellowship, led by Roger Orme. On the three Wednesdays indicated above, Julian Templeton will lead a discussion on what the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer mean for the Christian life. Drawing upon the thought of John Calvin, Karl Barth, Rowan Williams, and others, we will think about how calling upon God as our heavenly Father, hallowing God's name, and praying for the coming of God's kingdom generates a distinctive attitude to life. No advance reading is required; material will be provided on the day. If you would like to come to any of these sessions but require transport, please telephone 079 6695 6160 or email [rogerorme12@gmail.com](mailto:rogerorme12@gmail.com)

# Revised Common Lectionary

- 6 Sept** Mark 7:24-37; James 2:1-17; Psalm 125; Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23
- 13 Sept** Mark 8:27-38; James 3:1-12; Ps. 116:1-9 or Ps. 19; Isaiah 50:4-9a or Proverbs 1:1-20
- 20 Sept** Mark 9:30-37; James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a; Ps 54 or Ps 1; Jer. 11:18-20 or Prov. 31:10-31
- 27 Sept** Mark 9:38-50; James 5:13-20; Ps. 19:7-14 or Ps. 124; Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 or Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22
- 4 Oct** Mark 10:2-16; Heb. 1:1-4; 2:5-12; Ps. 26 or Ps. 8; Job 1:1, 2:1-10 or Gen. 2:18-24
- 11 Oct** Mark 10:17-31; Heb. 4:12-16; Ps. 22:1-15 or Ps. 90:12-17; Job 23:1-9, 16-17 or Amos 5:6-7, 10-15
- 18 Oct** Mark 10:35-45; Heb. 5:1-10; Ps. 104:1-9, 24, 35c or Ps. 91:9-16; Job 38:1-7 (34-41) or Isaiah 53:4-12;
- 25 Oct** Mark 10:46-52; Heb. 7:23-28; Ps. 34:1-8 or Ps. 126; Job 42:1-6, 10-17 or Jer. 31:7-9
- 1 Nov** (All Saints) John 11:32-44; Revelation 21:1-6a; Psalm 24; Isaiah 25:6-9
- 8 Nov** Mk 12:38-44; Heb. 9:24-28; Ps. 127 or Ps. 146; Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17 or 1 Kg. 17:8-16

## Poem by Su Chinn

My mother lives in another country  
but appears, shawl-wrapped, to greet a visitor.  
I hand her flowers. I show her pictures of children  
and grandchildren  
and she looks away.  
I don 't know that baby, she says, firmly.  
You are in great danger, she leans forward,  
now don't you say a word.  
Someone brings tea.  
We sip our tea slowly.  
My daughter lives in London, she confides.  
I am your daughter! I smile.  
I know, she nods, where have you been so long?  
I reach for her hands that are my hands.  
They are petals.  
Terrible, terrible  
she whispers.

# HURC Kidz!

Our Theme during September  
is all about Jesus

- 6th Jesus the Healer
- 13th Jesus our Friend
- 20th Jesus the  
Miracle Maker



Congratulations to Stephen Rainford, our  
Children's Leader, and Helen, married at  
Forty Hall, Enfield, on 10th July 2015.

## Making Melodies

Making Melodies is a  
Christian-based creative  
music group for pre-  
school children (ages 0-5)  
and parents/carers using  
percussion instruments,  
singing, games and bible  
stories.

Every Thursday (apart from  
school holidays) 9:30am till  
10:15am, with refreshments  
served from 9:15 am.

