

Nov – Dec
2017

St John's Record

United Reformed Church

Somerset & Mowbray Roads, New Barnet, Herts, EN5 1RH

From the Minister

Blind Light and Spiritual Light

Out of such cloud and mist
what Christ may come,
blurring the clear and simple lines
of our settled scheme of things;
calling on faith and hope and trust
daring to danger, trial and risk.
Out of this cloud and mist
come, Christ, however you will come.

Mist was an essential part of an installation called Blind Light created by the artist Antony Gormley (pictured overleaf). Laura and I experienced it at the Hayward Gallery. A free standing room with glass walls and an entrance/exit was filled with thick water vapour illuminated by bright light. We entered the room and discovered that amidst the thick illuminated vapour we could see very little and had to feel our way round. From out of the mist hands and faces of other people suddenly emerged in front of us. Walking around was an act of faith, and not a very comfortable one!

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Website: www.stjohnsnewbarnet.org.uk **Record Editor:** Laura Templeton, laura@templeton.me.uk
Minister: Julian Templeton, Tel: 020 8441 0499. Email: juliantempleton@btinternet.com
Secretary: Tony Alderman, Tel: 020 8441 4807. Email: aldermantony@aol.com
Administrator: Alison Cousins, Tel: 07816 115 817. Email: acousins.sjnb@hotmail.co.uk





The verse quoted on the previous page by the New Zealand hymnwriter Colin Gibson uses the imagery of 'cloud and mist' as the conditions through which Christ is revealed. In evoking cloud as a medium of revelation, Gibson is in good company. Mount Sinai is shrouded in cloud and smoke when Moses receives the Law from God. A cloud descends on Peter, James and John when Jesus transfigured before them on a mountain. Jesus is said to ascend into the clouds in order to take his place with God in heaven. In these examples cloud is the medium through which divine revelation disturbs and transforms the 'settled scheme of things'.

Being settled is one luxury St John's Church has had to forego temporarily while the extension work to our Sanctuary is completed. Since we have been worshipping in the Large Hall, I've been very impressed that our Sunday worship attendances have held up. The smaller space has meant that we've had to sit closer to one another, and sometimes next to people we may never have sat next to before. As a result, I think the quality of fellowship has been more evident. The singing in worship has also been better, perhaps because we have been able to hear one another more easily.

I hope we will retain and build on this adaptability, better singing/hearing and more evident fellowship when we return upstairs to the extended Sanctuary at the beginning of December. To this end, I appeal

for patience and for feedback while we try out various seating formations to find out what works best for worship. We may also experiment with various table and chair formations and locations for post-worship fellowship over tea and coffee. The new tea point and accessible toilet will provide us with all or most of the facilities we need on the same level, making the whole light-filled space much more inclusive, and, when required, self-contained.

We tend to forget that the first Christians worshipped and enjoyed fellowship in domestic homes; purpose-built places of worship came later. I expect, therefore, that in such domestic settings worship flowed naturally into fellowship over food and drink, and probably in the same space.

My vision for the Sanctuary, with its freed-up space and accessible facilities, is a welcoming and suitable place for all, of whatever age or condition. Central to this vision is the good news that Jesus Christ reconciles all, of whatever age or condition. Jesus as God-with-us has the power to bless and transform all aspects of life because he is Lord of all. If this is true then does it challenge us to allow a more porous boundary between what we regard as 'church' and 'community'? Ought we to invite visitors from the wider community to share with us the light and truths by which they live? In turn, ought we to share with them the help we have received from him who is the spiritual Light of the World? "Come, Christ, however you will come."

Julian Templeton

Operatic Decorator Saves the Day at Maldon URC

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The Rev. Mark Ambrose with John Pierce

A music-loving decorator saved the day by stepping in to sing in a concert after the pianist on the bill pulled out. John Pierce, 34, a trained tenor, was working at Maldon United Reformed Church, Essex, when he mentioned his love of music to the organiser of the lunchtime concert. Minutes later, the pianist who was meant to be playing cancelled. Pierce agreed to go on instead, and sang a string of opera classics, still dressed in paint-flecked overalls. "It is the first time we have had a complete standing ovation," said the Rev. Mark Ambrose.

(Reproduced from the 'It wasn't all bad' section of The Week, 28 October)

Food Glorious Food and Shared Lunches

We always have a good spread at Shared Lunches and we always have more than enough but I would like to have your thoughts and ideas on future menus.

Following our last lunch, despite asking that everyone took home any of the food that was not eaten, I took home and threw away 2.5 food buckets of waste. As a country we throw away 4.2 million tonnes of food a year. We should be ashamed especially as a nation so many are obese.

Why did we throw away so much food? Was it because there was too much or was it because there was too much of the same type (there was a huge number of shop bought quiches) or was it lack of effort on our part? It certainly was not a healthy lunch with lots of sausage rolls, pastry

and sausages.

I also threw away two items that were past their "sell by date". At home I would not have worried about this if I knew, perhaps, that I had only that morning removed them from the freezer but we could not take the chance of serving them at church.

Please may I have your ideas? May I have your suggestions for healthier food that will get eaten? I know time to prepare food is a consideration but if it was prepared just the day before, we could reheat dishes in the oven.

Thank you for giving this your consideration!

Marion Hopwood

Christmas Stamps

This is my annual reminder that I look forward to receiving your used UK and foreign postage stamps, both the special Christmas issues and others, at a time when we all receive more post. These are sold in aid of two charities, the RSPB and Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. As the pigeonholes

are not currently accessible, if I am not around the stamps can be put in the box in the entrance hall normally used for redundant spectacles, which you will recall are recycled for another charity, Vision Aid Overseas. Thank you in anticipation.

Hugh Martin.

Calendar

November 2017

	Saturday 4th	6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. John's)
	Sunday 5th	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast
		10:00am	Informal Prayer in Memorial Room
		10:30am	Elders' Meeting
		11:00 am	Worship with the Lord's Supper Led by Julian Templeton, Large Hall
	Wednesday 8th	4:00 pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
		8:00pm	Junior Church Leaders' Meeting 37 Greenhill Park
	Friday 10th	4:00pm	Messy Church, Large Hall
	Saturday 11th	10:00am	Community Garden Session
		6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. John's)
	Sunday 12th	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast
		10:45 am	Remembrance Sunday Led by Julian Templeton, Large Hall
		12:30pm	Church Meeting
	Wed 15th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
		8:00pm	Fellowship - Round the world in 2 years in the '60s by Ken Sutherland-Thomas
	Thursday 16th	10:00am	Pastoral Team Meeting, Memorial Room
		7:00pm	Local Area Group Meeting, Union Church Totteridge (7:00 for 7:30)
	Saturday 18th	10:30am	Pre-Christmas Coffee Morning, Large Hall
		6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. Peter's)
	Sunday 19th	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast
		11:00am	Worship-Led by Andrew and Valerie Mills, Large Hall
	Tuesday 21st	8:00pm	Elders' Meeting, Vestry
	Wed 22nd	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
	Friday 24th	2:30pm	Short & Simple Worship led by Julian Templeton, Memorial Room
	Saturday 25th	6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. Peter's)
	Sunday 26th	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast
		11:00am	Worship - Led by Julian Templeton, Large Hall
		3:00pm	Causeway, Small Hall
	Tuesday 28th	8:00pm	Prayer & Discussion Group at 37 Greenhill Park
		8:00pm	Justice and Peace Group
	Wed 29th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
		8:30pm	Men's Group - at The Railway Bell, New Barnet

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER

Calendar

December 2017

DECEMBER	Saturday 2nd	6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. John's)	DECEMBER
	Sunday 3rd	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast	
		10:00am	Informal Prayer in Memorial Room	
		10:30am	Elders' Meeting	
		11:00am	Advent 1 Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton, including Dedication of new Facilities in Re-opened Church	
	Wednesday 6th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	Saturday 9th	6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. John's)	
	Sunday 10th	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast	
		11:00am	Advent 2 Worship and Gift Service – Led by Tony Alderman	
	Tuesday 12th	8:00pm	Elders' Meeting	
	Wednesday 13th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	Saturday 16th	6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. John's)	
	Sunday 17th	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast	
		11:00am	Advent 3 Worship – Led by Tony Alderman	
		4:30pm	CAROL SERVICE – All Visitors Welcome.	
	Monday 18th	8:30pm	Men's Group –at the Ye Olde Mitre Inn, High Barnet	
	Wednesday 20th	6:30pm	St. John's Fellowship AGM and Dinner	
	Sunday 24th	11:00am	Advent 4 Worship – Led by Tony Alderman	
	11:30pm	CHRISTMAS EVE - Service led by Allan Down		
Monday 25th	10:30am	CHRISTMAS DAY - All Age Carol Service led by Alison Bond		
Saturday 30th	6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. John's)		
Sunday 31st	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast		
	11:00am	Worship Led by Tony Alderman		
JAN	Friday 5th		Copy Deadline for next edition of Church Record	JAN
	Saturday 6th	6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. John's)	
	Sunday 7th	7:00am	Night Shelter - Breakfast	
		10:00am	Informal Prayer in Memorial Room	
		10:30am	Elders' Meeting	
		11:00am	Worship + Holy Communion led by Andrew Summers, Helen Snider and Tony Alderman	
	Wednesday 10th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	Saturday 13th	6:00pm	Night Shelter (St. John's) & Breakfast	
	Sunday 14th	10:00am	Singing Practice	
		11:00am	Worship – Led by Julian Templeton	

What has the Reformation ever done for us?!

Julian Templeton

Bibles, beer, sausages, and dance-bans: surveying the Reformation and its legacy



On the 18th of October I gave a presentation with the title above to the Fellowship. I won't attempt to précis an hour's talk followed by supplementary questions (!); but will pick out what I thought were some of the important points I tried to make.

The first question I asked is: *Which Reformation?* There were, and there still are, a number of Church-reforming movements. For example, iconoclasm—the removing or smashing of images—goes back at least to the 8th century in the Eastern Church. There were and are various Catholic reforming movements such as those put into effect by the Benedictine and Franciscan orders, and the Counter-Reformation. There were the 'proto-Protestant' reforms of Peter Waldo in Italy (from whom the Waldensian Church takes its name) and Jan Hus in Czech (as Filip Keller would remind us) in the 12th–15th centuries. The anniversary that we mark this year, represents what historians call the 'Magisterial Reformation', so called because the reforms were in large part made possible by the support of secular 'magistrates' (town councils who supported Zwingli and Calvin) and secular Princes (local rulers who supported Luther; national rulers such as Edward VI). But it is important to remember that simultaneously with the Magisterial Reformation there was also the so-called Radical Reformation. The latter was headed by, among others, the German preacher Thomas Müntzer, who fomented a religious armed rebellion against the wealthy and powerful; and at the other end of the scale there were pacifist radicals such as Menno Simons (from whom the Mennonites take their name) who headed 'Anabaptist' movements that recognised Believer's Baptism only and emphasised the role of faith and the movement of the Spirit.

What we now call the Magisterial Reformation is taken to have begun in late October 1517 when the Augustinian Friar and Lecturer in theology at the University of Wittenberg posted (by which I mean 'mailed') 95 Theses entitled *Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* to Albrecht, Archbishop of Mainz. Whether Luther or one of his followers also posted ('nailed') the 95 Theses to the Church door in Wittenberg is less clear. But what is undisputed is that the 95 Theses,

and soon after a series of Luther's other writings, were printed (print being the revolutionary technology of the day) and were distributed first in the German provinces and soon throughout Europe. More importantly, print was used to produce and distribute *Bibles in native languages*. Bible reading, and consequently *literacy*, and consequently the *education* of ordinary people is the still-evident legacy of the Reformation today. And if the Bible is in your own language, then, clearly, it makes sense for worship to be in your own language rather than in Latin.

The link of the Reformation with *beer* is a little tenuous. When the local water was not always safe to drink, brewing and wine-making provided a safe, and enjoyable, alternative. Monasteries often brewed their own beer, so when Luther converted his monastery to a domestic house for he and his new wife, Katherine von Bora (and subsequent children), they carried on brewing and drinking beer. Luther made an especially striking claim that linked beer with the Word of God: "I simply preached, and taught and wrote God's Word. And then when I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it. I did nothing. The Word did it all." To which one should add: 'The Word Luther arranged to be printed and distributed and read avidly throughout Europe!' The belief that God still *speaks to us through his Word*, and is still *active*, is a central Reformation insight.

When it comes to the link of the Reformation with *sausages*, we are on much firmer ground. In 1522 in Zürich some friends decided to defy the Church's Lenten fast by eating sausages. One Huldrych Zwingli was present at this momentous sausage-eating occasion, and although he himself did not indulge, he later defended the right of the sausage-eaters to defy the Church's Lenten discipline on the basis that this, like many other traditions, was not Scriptural. Zwingli was, like Luther, a linguist who did his own translation of the Bible into German. With the support of the Zurich City Council, Zwingli enacted thoroughgoing and far-reaching reforms, simplifying worship and opposing the practice of young Swiss men being recruited by foreign powers for mercenary military

service. Tragically, he himself was killed on the battlefield at Kappel when Protestant forces were far-outnumbered and routed by Catholic forces. He was succeeded by Heinrich Bullinger, a Reformed leader whose writings exercised significant influence in the English Reformation.

For the role of *dance-bans* we must repair to Geneva and to the singularly influential personality of John Calvin. Born in France and trained in the Law and largely self-taught in theology (in fact, he was never ordained), Calvin exercised a unique preaching and bible-interpreting ministry. A brilliant scholar, Calvin was the first Reformer (perhaps with the exception of Luther's right-hand-man, Melancthon) to systematise Protestant thought. His *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, revised a number of times in his lifetime, remains his most widely translated, distributed and read work. But in addition to these

there are his remarkably succinct Bible Commentaries, and thousands of sermons, most of which are yet to be translated into English. One quirk in Calvin's list of those activities prone to lead to lascivious behaviour, and thus to sin, was his utter opposition to dancing. I think we can safely surmise that Calvin would have had a fit of apoplexy had he witnessed Laura and I Ceilidh dancing in the Pond Square Chapel, Highgate! Calvin's main, but far from only, British influence was through his student, John Knox.

The Reformation has, I would argue, given us a mixed legacy. On the one hand it has, at its best, nurtured Christians who are literate, confident, comfortable with their sexuality, free, songful, and joyful. On the other hand it has bequeathed to us individualism, nationalism, fundamentalism and a tendency towards schism.

Julian Templeton

Tea Dance

On Saturday 28th October the St John's Fellowship held the fourth of its Tea Dances to raise funds for the improvements being made to the church. From slightly hesitant beginnings, the word is spreading locally about our tea dances, with numbers attending growing steadily. We attracted over forty-five visitors of various ages from all corners of Barnet, including the U3A, Barnet Seniors and many others who spotted our leaflets in supermarkets and libraries throughout the area.

The next tea dance will be held on Saturday 17th February 2018, starting at 2.30 in the large hall. So dust off your dancing shoes put your glad rags on and come and join the fun!



There's plenty time between the dances to enjoy an 'Afternoon Tea'. At an all-inclusive price of £5, this has to be the best deal in entertainment for miles!

Minister in New Zealand for Family Birthday and Christmas

In December Laura and I will travel to New Zealand to celebrate my mother's 80th birthday with family and friends. As we will have travelled all that way, we will celebrate Christmas and New Year there as well. I am grateful to the Elders, and to Tony Alderman in particular, for allowing me to take my holiday at such a busy time in the church's year. I know I can rely on you all to support them as they lead worship through Advent and Christmas. For me it will be a traditional Christmas Day: in the middle of summer, with a Christmas morning service at my home church in Riverton, followed by festivities with my NZ and UK families. Our son, Alec, will be looking after the Manse while we are away.

Julian Templeton



The township of Riverton with bay and estuary

Re-opening Service

First Sunday of Advent 3 December: 11:00 am

We will resume worship in our re-opened sanctuary and rededicate the building with its new facilities for the worship of God and the benefit of the wider community. Come and see for yourself the improvements and catch the vision for opening-up this wonderful space for church and community use. Please put this event in your calendar and invite family and friends.



Harvest Festival



Our thanksgiving to God for the Harvest on 8th October, had a local twist this year. We invited Wendy Alcock of Incredible Edible Barnet with whom St John's Church partnered to create our Community Garden. Julian interviewed Wendy during the service, and to conclude worship we went outside to the garden to sing "We plough the fields and scatter". This was followed by a delicious Harvest Lunch.

JOHN'S CHURCH COFFEE MORNING

You are invited to a Coffee Morning at St. John's Church Hall,
Mowbray Road, New Barnet

**Saturday 18th November
10.30 till 12 noon**

There will be no admission charge but a donation plate for the North London Hospice & church funds will be left by the entrance.

Table stalls around the hall will give the opportunity to purchase small gifts & cards to support both national & local charities.

Please tell your friends & come & support this fundraising event.