

Jan-Feb
2023

St John's
United Reformed Church

Record

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

A new year message

IN OUR MEMORIAL SERVICE last November to remember those associated with our church who have died, we sang the hymn 'Abide with me'. In the second verse come the memorable lines:-

*Change & decay in all around I see:
O Thou, who changest not,
abide with me!*

Henry Francis Lyte was vicar of the fishing port of Brixham in Devon, he wrote a number of hymns, of which 'Abide with me' is perhaps the most celebrated. He wrote it shortly after his last sermon, knowing that his own death at the premature age of fifty-four was imminent, having been diagnosed with tuberculosis.



Henry Francis Lyte
by Stephen Catterson Smith
chalk, circa 1835
National Portrait Gallery 3803

Change & decay in all around I see.
Do I see change and decay all around me?

In Europe there is a brutal war being fought in Ukraine; some estimates put the casualty rate in that conflict at around 200,000 already. Sadly this is only one conflict among many around the world. Of course we have not started to talk about the world economic crises, the ever growing refugee crisis, or the world environmental

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Trusting God by:

Walking the way of Jesus
Putting faith into practice
Valuing all people equally

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crisis which, if governments around the world do not act quickly and together - following on from the inconclusive COP27 meeting in Egypt - will soon exacerbate the problems of droughts and heat waves being experienced by poorer countries, and which could lead to further instability and possible conflict in the future.

Yes, it could be very easy to get pessimistic about what lies ahead. But remember the other line from the hymn I quoted, *O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!*

Every Sunday when we hold a service or when we hold a meeting do we not pray to our Lord to abide with us; we ask him to be that light of hope and forgiveness guiding us in this very dark world. We ask that those who lead us both nationally and internationally will find better ways to solve the problems that beset us. We ask that the church throughout the world will be strengthened so it can help to show the way of peace and justice.

In this country the Christian Church faces many challenges: Britain has become a more secular society and we know that the community around us is also changing as we welcome new cultures - some with different faiths - into the areas where we live. Even when those around us do not attend a place of worship or profess a faith I am sure that all people have an inner need for some sort of spiritual support at different times in their lives. I feel that we in the church can be open to be alongside those who are looking for spiritual and sometimes practical support where needed.

The United Reformed Church was formed in the hope of greater unity among Christian denominations; in celebrating its 50th anniversary we acknowledge there is now much greater co-operation between our churches. May I remind you that next April, we celebrate St. John's 60th anniversary - there is a date for the 2023 diary! Our church is at a point of change in the new year, when we go forward together without a minister for some time to come. We ask for God's strength, so that our church will continue to offer regular worship and fulfil his work in this community at a time when there is real need.

Julian and Laura are also at a point of change as Julian takes on a new role within the Thames North Synod. I hope you will all join me in wishing them both good health, peace and happiness in their future life together.

So we say at this moment, may our Lord be with us and bless us all as we face new challenges.

David Paul

- from his devotions given at the Elders' meeting in December



URC 50th anniversary service – new date announced

We're delighted to announce that the new date is **Saturday 15 April 2023**. We hope that many members and friends of the URC will be able to join us at Methodist Central Hall for our delayed anniversary celebrations.

Tickets

If you have a ticket and are able to come to the event on April 15, please do nothing – your ticket is still valid. Please bring it/them on the day. If you would like more tickets, please visit <https://bit.ly/urc50> and amend your order.

If you are no longer able to attend, please visit <https://bit.ly/urc50> and select Cancel Order. This will free up your tickets for others. Or email 50@urc.org.uk and we can cancel the order for you.

A Few Important Thank You's!

We spent the first day of 2023, appreciating Julian's final service as our Minister here at St John's and also expressing our thankfulness for his whole ministry, supported throughout by Laura. However, there are several other matters worthy of our thanks that need recording:

- Firstly, we are so very grateful to Richard and Janet Harvey for being willing to take on the responsibility of producing this Church Record magazine. We never even arrived at the point of saying, 'Who is going to take on the magazine?', they simply stepped forward and volunteered, so thank you Richard and Janet! Please support them all you can with your contributions, as this is a key way of keeping you and our wider church community, informed about all we do at St John's.
- Thank you again to everyone who helped with Julian & Laura's Farewell Gathering to make it such a memorable occasion and very special thanks to all of you who contributed to their Farewell Gift. Your great generosity helped to raise a total of £1,666 which Julian gratefully acknowledged by email, along with the album of messages and photos.
- Thank you to everyone who supported our various Christmas Appeals: the collections taken at our Candlelit Carol service and Christmas Day service raised £648.80, which will be shared between the Together in Barnet Night Shelter and the London Churches Refugee Fund. This figure includes a donation from the True Life Church, who use our large hall for their services on Sunday afternoons. Our Christmas Card which we signed to send Christmas greetings, instead of sending cards, raised £138.70 for CRISIS.

Finally, as we enter this new phase of our church life, may I ask for your patience and understanding as we seek God's guidance for the way forward. Please feel free to speak to myself or your Elder should you have any questions or if you have any updates on pastoral matters.

Alison Bond

Stamps and Inkjet recycling



Stamps: If you have received letters with stamps attached over Christmas and New Year, please continue to pass any used stamps to me, or put them in my pigeonhole, or in the collection box downstairs. The stamps are forwarded to The Leprosy Mission in Peterborough, the international Christian development organization that diagnoses, treats and offers specialist care to leprosy patients. Their aim is to transform and empower the lives of people affected by leprosy.

Recycled inkjets: Please continue to pass these to me, or put them in my pigeonhole, or in the collection box by our main front door, or in the box downstairs. All money raised from recycling inkjets via The Recycling Factory and/or Recycle 4 Charity, is passed directly to the RSPB.

The money raised by St John's and the Barnet and Potters Bar RSPB Group in 2022 for the RSPB for the recycled inkjets, as follows:-

In 2022 - £98.60

Total raised to date - £200.95

Thank you so much once again for your support.

Malcolm Bond

We know St John's members take recycling seriously, and it's always good to know where we can donate items so that they can be reused in some way, as with the stamps and inkjet cartridges - thank you Malcolm! If you have a use for something we could pass on to you, please let us know and we'll put the details in the Church Record.

For example, Pauline Wishart knits for various charities and would be delighted to receive unwanted balls of wool. Any other suggestions?

Fellowship Christmas Concert

– ‘*Messiah*’ with carols

ON FRIDAY 16TH DECEMBER, despite the arctic conditions with snow and ice outside on the roads and pavements, we were proud to present a Christmas Concert with the Fleet Singers who sang the first part of Handel's *Messiah* interspersed with Christmas carols.



The Fleet Singers are a community choir based in Hampstead, ably conducted by Phil Wilcox, who appears regularly as a conductor, concert soloist, opera singer and professional chorister throughout the UK. He directs a number of choirs and is the Learning and Participation Manager for Leeds Lieder, graduate of Leeds College of Music and a licentiate of Royal Academy of Music. Their accompanist is Philip Godfrey - a freelance musician - but they were accompanied on the organ of St John's Church by Mark Denza, who studied organ, singing and conducting at the London College of Music.

Phil Wilcox also proved himself to have a fine bass voice in the solos from *Messiah* and Emily Burdett a sweet soprano voice in her solos. Simon Ashmead - a graduate of Hull University and currently in his first year of MMus vocal studies - was a fine tenor, coming in at short notice because Richard Robbins, who was due to sing, had come down with 'flu the day before the concert.

The choruses and solos from *Messiah* would have been familiar to many and had us humming or singing in our heads: 'And the glory of the Lord', 'For unto us a child is born' and 'He shall feed his flock' among others. People commented on how well the carols, which were interspersed with the movements from *Messiah*, had been chosen. The programme notes were impressive; the concert itself was tuneful, enjoyable, seasonal, quickly moving and well blended together. It was followed by refreshments and drinks in the large hall below. There were ninety in the audience, thirty in the choir including conductor, organist and accompanist, nine on Zoom and about fifty who had paid for their tickets but were unable to come, mainly because of the state of the roads.

However, those who came appreciated the effort and the music and after expenses had been taken out £884 was made and split between Fleet Singers and Fellowship - who have donated their half to St John's. Thank you everyone who helped and supported our concert in any way. That includes Ron, committee, helpers with moving furniture and in the kitchen/drinks. It was a wonderful success.

Marjorie O'Connor/editors

Julian and Laura: We'll miss you, farewell ...

FIRST SUNDAY OF 2023 – The day marked the last of Julian's ministry among us. We have been blessed by his preaching, leadership, encouragement, diplomacy, wise counsel plus his ability above all to listen to us individually and collectively over the past thirteen years.

After the New Year's Day Communion, the congregation broke up for tea, coffee and biscuits as happens every week after church. Swelling our number were friends from other churches and the wider community.



Then, like all good send offs, we adjourned downstairs to eat together. What a meal that was, thanks to Marion Hopwood and her "Masterchef" team. The best we can remember – lasagne, meat or veggie, and salad followed by an array of delicious puddings made by members of the congregation – washed down by Shloer and afterwards tea or coffee.



The dishes cleared away we remained seated to hear accolades to Julian. Rev'd Dominic Grant (one time St John's member and now minister at St Andrew's Chesterfield Road and Barnet Wood Street URC churches) thanked Julian for his loving and diligent stewardship as Convenor of our 'LAG', the URC's North London Local Area Group.

"WE RELEASE YOU WITH RELUCTANCE AND THANK YOU"

He had offered wise and careful chairing of gatherings, showing an ability of "dual focus" on both synod issues as well as an awareness of local ones. A diplomatic approach at all times. "We release you with reluctance and thank you," he said.





Representing neighbouring churches of other traditions, Rev'd Dr Alec Corio, the Rector of St Mary the Virgin, East Barnet spoke of how our churches had shared in Bible studies and services during Julian's incumbency and of the way in which a pioneering ministry on the North London Business Park has been considered and taken forward.

Julian's encouragement towards partnerships and involvement in "Community Outreach" activity was highlighted by Elder Andrew Summers: the Night Shelter on Saturday nights, when the church halls play host to the homeless (Julian was an early volunteer and team leader joining Lesley Calder and Sheila Gallagher from St Peters); the Church Fellowship talks and social interaction; Chipping Barnet Food Bank – over 10 years this initiative has supplemented diets of 26,000 in-need citizens: the "Incredible Edible" initiative to transform patches of earth around the church into a garden producing food for the local community as well as the Food Bank; the Barnet Green Christian group to promote practices to ease the existential threat of global warming with Tony Shepherd, Andrew Mills and others.

The mention of Karl Barth, the Swiss Calvinist theologian and subject of Julian's PhD research, raised a smile. "Church is where a word reverberates right into the world."

"YOU WERE ALWAYS ABLE TO PROVIDE AN ANSWER ..."

In addition, while St John's has been blessed by Julian's ministry, Church Secretary Alison Bond reminded everyone that Julian's beloved wife Laura also contributed greatly to the life of the church. "St John's benefited from your skills – a new logo, incorporating the design of the sanctuary, the Church Record brought into twenty-first century with a redesign, inspired editing and colour." Laura provided a welcome at the manse and its garden overlooking Greenhill Park for church services during the pandemic and the annual summer garden party. Finally, Laura stepped forward to become an elder at St John's. "Throughout it all you have supported Julian."

Alison also recalled Julian's pastoral care for those with real-time needs, his listening skills, teaching and elders' training, particularly in leading worship and writing sermons. Of his leadership of the URC course *What we believe about* ... she said, "You were always able to provide an answer to any question." She thanked him for the depth of content of his preaching and his approach to leadership, which held everyone together and guided us in the right direction, sometimes under very challenging circumstances. His approach was to gently nudge St John's forward, making it feel it was as a partnership, encouraging everyone's individual skills and talents. She concluded by saying: "You leave us well equipped, with faith strengthened to continue God's work. We will miss being in partnership with you."



As a token of gratitude of everyone at St John's, she presented them with an album of memories and photos and a monetary gift. Alison concluded by thanking Julian for his baritone voice which would be greatly missed and for introducing the congregation to many New Zealand hymns.

So as a final tribute, the singing group led a version of 'Our Life has its Seasons' with amended words to reflect their time at St John's, with everyone joining in the chorus.

Our Life has its Seasons – Take Two ...

(With sincere apologies to Shirley Erena Murray)

Our life has its seasons, and God has the reasons
Why you must now leave us for your new role.
You've guided us onward, for our future mission,
As whole life disciples, to be our goal.

*But there's never a time to stop being grateful
There's never a time when we'll forget
There's never a time to stop saying
We'll miss you, farewell.....*

A time to be teaching, a time to be preaching,
A time to be praying, a time to rest,
A time to be studying the writings of Karl Barth,
A time to be sleeping with Night Shelter Guests.

But there's never a time.....

A time for designing, a time for creating,
A time for the garden, a time to heal,
A time to be caring, a time to be sharing
A Pimms in the garden with a bring-and-share meal.

But there's never a time.....

A time for a visit, a time for a meeting,
A time to be singing some harmony,
You always kept going in spite of the pressures
With the help of a coffee from a real machine.

*So there's never a time to stop being grateful
There's never a time when we'll forget
There's never a time to stop saying
We'll miss you, farewell.....*



Responding, first Laura, overcome by emotion at times, said that St John's "provides wonderful memories".

Then, Julian admitted he found it "excruciating being on the receiving end of so much praise". He plucked some incidents from his ministry at St John's: – disruption in church when Roz Douglas and Heather Elsdon intervened and quietly led out a noisy protestor; the music, a tribute to St John's fine director of music Richard Harvey who, he said, can switch from a Bach chorale to a modern worship song in an instant; the community garden led by Heather Elsdon and Wendy Alcock; the willingness of members to step up and help out – David Paul propping up a long ladder in the stairwell while Andrew

Mills teetered on the top rung slotting in a new fluorescent tube; Zoom and how the Elders adapted worship using it during the pandemic; Lesley Calder calmly adjusting the Night Shelter rota after a volunteer could not make it; Jon Finlayson's "lightbulb moment" suggesting a cantilevered solution to install a tea point and accessible toilet at the back of the Sanctuary thus transforming the premises for wider use.

"I COULD NOT HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT."

Julian thanked the church for his own compassionate leave granted when his father died and when Laura was ill and he also recalled Tony Alderman's Barnet lifetime achievement award when Marion Hopwood produced a wonderful cake to celebrate it.

"I could not have done this (ministry) without your support."

"I have to put distance now between St John's and us – I owe this to the leadership team."

"This is not meant to be unfriendly or uncaring."

..... It is as if Julian and Laura have gone into another room.

After a six-week sojourn in New Zealand where they will meet their latest grandchild, Laura and Julian will be moving to Leyton. They remain in our memories forever. They are not far away but they will keep separate to enable St John's to rise to the challenges of 2023 and beyond.

David Porter (and others)



Joan Patricia Coombes *Obituary*

31st May 1936 – 1st August 2022



JOAN WAS AN ONLY CHILD. She grew up in Borehamwood during the war years and from an early age she loved to dance; she took tap dancing lessons from the age of 10, performing on stage as a dancer in pantomimes and shows. As she grew up it was clear she was a clever girl; she was also a very striking redhead and, aged 15, was elected May Queen for the annual Borehamwood Carnival. She had Scottish Country Dancing lessons while at school and joined the Girl Guides. On leaving school she worked in an office, but her calling was always towards being a nurse.

Just before she was 16, she met her future husband, Michael Coombes. Aged 19, Joan became a State Registered Nurse and, on the 4th January 1958, Joan married Michael. They had three children; Heather, David and Richard. Joan played badminton at St Mark's Church Hall where she and Michael made many good

friends. Badminton remained very important to them both, playing at BSCA where Joan started a junior section. She was still playing with the family aged 82; three generations playing together.

The family moved again in 1972 to Queens Road in High Barnet and Joan resumed her nursing career at Barnet General Hospital. She loved the job and was very good at it. She carried on nursing until 1992 when forced redundancy meant she had to leave. Earlier that same year, Michael had suddenly died, and her life was turned upside down. A couple of years later she moved to Leicester Road, close to both Heather and Richard and their families. Joan was an enormous help to both their families as they grew up; all seven of the grandchildren - Joshua, Harry, Hannah, Naomi, Patrick, Harriet and Alex - had a fantastic relationship with their grandmother and many happy memories were made during these years. She took up Scottish Country Dancing and it became a huge part of her social life, teaching groups to dance and running a club at St John's. She enjoyed a theatre group, a poetry group and travel to interesting places.

Joan was an active member of St John's. She was a door steward and helped out with breakfasts for the homeless. Helping others less fortunate than herself was very important to her and she undertook visits to a London Women's prison where she visited and chatted with inmates who otherwise had no visitors. Joan took huge pride in – and thoroughly enjoyed – her voluntary work at the Cancer Research Shop. Colleagues say she was an expert on the steaming machine and could process garments better than anyone. She tried to live her life being as green as possible and thoroughly approved of recycling as much as she could.

In her later life Joan had a wonderful 20-year relationship with Denis and they were fantastic companions enjoying many holidays together. It was a very loving relationship with Joan caring for Denis in his last years. More recently Joan had a lovely friendship with Roland; they had plans to do many things together, plans that sadly will not be fulfilled.

Joan died peacefully on Monday the 1st of August after 36 hours in Barnet General Hospital. While any loss of life is so sad, her family take comfort from the fact that she lived a fantastic, active and fulfilling life right to the end of her 86 years.

- from the eulogy given at Joan's Memorial Service

Malcolm Bye *Obituary*

7th October 1935 – 31st October 2022

MALCOLM HORACE BYE was born in Bishops Stortford in 1935. He went to Cheshunt Grammar and then undertook National Service in the Royal Engineers.

Malcolm married Sue in 1962 and moved to Barnet where they set up home in Clifford Road where Andrew was born. They were married for an amazing 60 years reaching the milestone on 20th October 2022. They moved to Dinsdale Gardens where Robin and Tim arrived a little later. Mary-Ann arrived 10 years later. Malcolm pretty much grew everything feeding the family all year round in the garden at Dinsdale and still kept it up right to the end.

He studied via correspondence to enable him to qualify as a Chartered Surveyor, working his way up to become partner in Sturt and Tivendale, Whetstone. He eventually "retired" at 72. He helped countless friends find their homes and forged a reputation as an excellent surveyor becoming a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and an incredibly fair and honest man.

Sport was one of his passions. As a youth he played 1st team for most sports including being a bowler for Hertfordshire, as well as regional counties representative level for football and county level rugby. A few years later he focused more on hockey. He recruited one of Barnet Hockey's strongest and most successful Teams between – '66-'74.

A knee injury made him refocus on golf, joining South Herts Golf Club. As with everything he soon became a huge part of the club serving as both Captain and President and also as Herts Captain and got involved with the Truants Society. He gave back to the game as much as he took from it.

Dad was a central member of the rotary club, helping to raise money and putting time and effort in to make a positive contribution to the world. In later years he became involved with the Jesus Hospital Trust and helped the charity with their properties and its smooth running.

Malcolm joined St Johns in 1963 with Sue and attended and supported the church since then. He was a founding member of the "young couples" group who originally met up with the young children and this evolved to monthly parent meet ups for dinner – Peggy Goodman started this tradition off. Years later some of the original members still meet! He started the dementia club at the church and helped raise money to set up the school in Uganda with Rosemary and Tony Shepherd – just a couple of examples of the wonderful things he did to help others. He will be missed sorely by his family and by all the lives he touched.



Mary-Ann Lewis

Calendar of Events

JANUARY

| | | |
|--------------|---------|--|
| Wednesday 18 | 8:00pm | Fellowship: The Trussell Trust Foodbank by Victoria Miller |
| Thursday 19 | 9:30am | Mainly Music |
| Sunday 22 | 11:00am | Worship led by Roz Douglas |
| Tuesday 24 | 8:30pm | Men's Group at The Railway Bell |
| Thursday 26 | 9:30am | Mainly Music |
| Sunday 29 | 11:00am | Worship led by Alison Bond |

FEBRUARY

| | | |
|--------------|---------|---|
| Thursday 2 | 9:30am | Mainly Music |
| Sunday 5 | 11:00am | Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Andrew & Valerie Mills |
| Tuesday 7 | 8:00pm | 'What do we believe about baptism?' Discussion via Zoom |
| Thursday 9 | 9:30am | Mainly Music |
| Sunday 12 | 11:00am | Worship led by David Paul & Richard Harvey |
| Tuesday 14 | 7:45pm | Elders' Meeting |
| Wednesday 15 | 8:00pm | Fellowship: Dabs and DNA Detects by Chris Truran (ex-policeman) |
| Sunday 19 | 11:00am | Worship led by Rev. Roger Orme |
| Tuesday 21 | | Shrove Tuesday |
| Wednesday 22 | | Ash Wednesday |
| | 8:30pm | Men's Group at Ye Olde Mitre Inne |
| Thursday 23 | 9:30am | Mainly Music |
| Sunday 26 | 11:00am | Worship led by Sarah Beaumont |

MARCH

| | | |
|------------|---------|--|
| Thursday 2 | 9:30am | Mainly Music |
| Saturday 4 | 2:30pm | World Day of Prayer 2023 Annual Service (see notice) |
| Sunday 5 | 11:00am | Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Tony Alderman |

Copy for the March/April edition of *Church Record* to be with the editors
by Friday 24 February.

churchrecord2023@gmail.com



St John's URC Fellowship Programme for 2023

St John's URC Fellowship welcomes everyone, irrespective of faith or beliefs. We provide a friendly environment where people can meet and enjoy an interesting talk. This may be in church when we are allowed, or over Zoom - watch out for the Zoom email links.

Our monthly talks cover a wide variety of subjects, with many being inspirational personal stories.

Meetings start at 8:00pm

| Date | Talk, Subject or Activity | Speaker |
|------------------|--|----------------------|
| January 18 | 7:45pm AGM - 8:00pm The Work of the Trussell Trust Food Bank | Victoria Miller |
| February 15 | Dabs and DNA Detects - Tales from an ex-Policeman | Chris Truran |
| March 15 | A Week in the Dolomites | Bruce Bennett (RSPB) |
| April 19 | All Over by Christmas - World War One in Barnet | David Berguer |
| May 17 | Desert Island Discs with Hugh Martin | |
| Saturday 24 June | Outing to Benington Lordship Flower Festival | |
| July 19 | The Magician | Leon Thompson |
| Sunday 13 August | 2:00pm Fellowship Garden Party at 37 Northiam, N12 7ET | |
| September 20 | Crime and Punishment in London | Diane Burstein |
| October 18 | Spymaster - Barnet Connections | Dr Helen Fry |
| November 15 | Lieutenancy and the Monarch | Stuart Nagler |
| December | Fellowship Christmas Celebration - details to follow | |

Annual membership £10.00. Entrance £2.00 inc. refreshments. Visitors £5.00.

Talks also available via Zoom for members. Invite your friends to join us.



East and New Barnet World Day of Prayer 2023 Annual Service



Saturday 4th March at 2:30pm

St James Church,
71, East Barnet Road,
EN4 8RN
(opp.Sainsbury's)

The theme is '*I have heard about your faith*' and is organised by the Christian Women of Taiwan

ALL are WELCOME