

Sep-Oct
2023

St John's
United Reformed Church

Record

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

MEETING THE MODERATOR



On Sunday 3rd September we all had an opportunity to meet with Revd George Watt, Moderator of Thames North Synod. He led our worship on the theme of blessings, which included the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; after which he mingled and spoke with members of the congregation over some light refreshments. He stayed on with the Elders for some discussion on the future of St John's Church.

(more photos on back page)

Contents

- 2-3 Interview:
Tony Alderman
- 4-5 Creation Season
- 5 Community Garden
- 6 Fellowship
- 7 Our Frontline/
Rev Maggie Hindley
- 8-9 Calendar
- 9 Women's Group
- 10 Moderator's visit

Trusting God by:

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

Contacts

Website: www.stjohnsnewbarnet.org.uk

Record Editors: Richard & Janet Harvey, Email: churchrecord2023@gmail.com

Church Secretary: Alison Bond, Tel: 020 8440 1941 Email: aegbond@hotmail.co.uk

Church Administrator: Alison Cousins, Tel: 07816 115 817 Email: info.stjohnsurc@gmail.com

LOOKING BACK OVER SIXTY YEARS

- INTERVIEW WITH TONY ALDERMAN

So, Tony, the first service you led was the Enrolment Service for the 13th Ealing Boys Brigade at St Aidan's Presbyterian Church, W13, on 13th September 1963. What do you remember about that service?

I was 18. The church was packed. Afterwards, the Church Secretary said to me, "I didn't know you had it in you!" Which was confidence building. I tried to talk about teamwork. The congregation was mainly boys from the Boys Brigade and their families. The motto of my school and of the London Borough of Ealing was "Respice, Circumspice, Prospice" ("Look to the past, the present and the future") I prefer to look to the future... which is what I will be doing on 13th September. I don't want to look back; I want to look to the future....

How has your life as a preacher and worship leader developed from those early days?

Really it started before 1963. As a Boy's Brigade leader, I was taught to speak to the bricks at the back of the room. Every Sunday morning we had a Bible class before the service and I started to lead these; we had notes written by the theologian William Barclay. I tried to Tony-ise it! There is plenty of good material available, Roots, Church of Scotland, William Barclay; you use these and your theology is likely to be on the right track. As happened to me at Regent Square one Sunday - probably twenty years ago - a recently retired Canadian Presbyterian minister came up to me at the end of the service and said something like, "I like your folksy style". I thanked him and said, "I leave theology to the theologians". He tapped me on the shoulder and said, "So do I. So do I."



Most of us can identify people who have influenced or guided us in our Christian life. Was this the case for you?

I grew into Christianity rather than have one single moment. I can think of times at the Boys' Brigade camp. I was the camp cook. Our suppers were quite raucous but at the end one of the leaders would stand to deliver a message and in the quietness that followed, with the tent canvas flapping, there were some magical moments. I was given some great advice by the minister at St Aidan's when finding challenges in people, to count a person's assets on one hand and their faults on the other, and see if the assets outweigh the faults; there is good in most people!

Did you ever consider training for the ministry?

No. I don't consider myself to be academic enough.

Are there any Bible passages or themes you tend to use more than others?

Service. We are made in the image of God and the only example we have is Jesus. I've always struggled with the idea that I'm made in the image of God and the only way I can accept this is by believing that I'm made in the way he wants. And if we want to follow Jesus's example, we're not to sit on our backsides doing nothing but get out and use our limited skills for the betterment of others, at work, in leadership or in other ways. When churches are looking for a minister, it needs to be a really good match, and in my opinion, a church that can't run itself shouldn't have a minister.

Which Bible passage(s) do you find the most challenging?

None that I can immediately think of. The "in the image of God" - I am uncomfortable that God could be anything like me...

Do you plan services differently for different congregations?

Yes. There are congregations that are really traditional, there are congregations that like humour. One congregation accuses me of too much football analogy! The only sermon I've ever kept was my first one. I repeat a lot of stories, for illustration. I do stay after services, to talk to people. Some of them tell me not everyone who comes to preach will do this. You make good friends if you talk to people. And I've encouraged people in the churches to lead worship themselves, which some of them now do. And preparing to lead worship you learn yourself.

What are your hopes for the future - what are the challenges in the URC today?

I'd like to see an open day. Nice invitation cards, to the various hall users. It's trying different things, before it's too late.

There needs to be good "marriage guidance" between churches in vacancy and prospective ministers. A number of ministers don't want to move these days. I think ministers who have other jobs (like a chaplaincy) could also be 25% in a congregation.

What is the most peculiar thing to have happened during one of your services or the funniest thing someone has said to you after a service?

I met someone at a conference who said, "You're the person that told us that TREBOR is ROBERT spelt backwards!" I think my skill set is talking to people face to face. I like to see the colour of people's eyes when I'm talking to them. But someone always used to say to me, "I love you coming, Tony, because when you come I can look at the inside of my eyes". (*Laughter*) It's when the snoring starts you worry!

SPECIAL SERVICE FOR TONY ALDERMAN - 7:30PM ON 13TH SEPTEMBER

Everyone is welcome to the service at St John's Church at 7:30pm on Wednesday 13th September marking Tony Alderman's sixty years since his first preaching engagement.

There will be refreshments available before and after the service.

If you cannot be there in person the service will be streamed via Zoom.

The link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88605095397>

and it will also be available to watch later on YouTube.

Creation Sunday - 24th September



A Mighty River
Amos 5: 24

**Let Justice
and Peace Flow**
Season of Creation 2023

ON SUNDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER at 10:45am, as part of the Season of Creation, our congregation at St John's is invited to join with the congregations of Brookside Methodist Church and St Mary the Virgin Church of England at Brookside for a united service.

You may remember there was a similar service last September when the other two churches joined with us here at St John's for a united service.

“Future generations will never forgive us if we miss the opportunity to protect our common home. We have inherited a garden; we must not leave a desert for our children.”

[Joint statement from Pope Francis, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury.](#)



Click on [“Joint statement from ...”](#) to read the statement in full.

More information can be found here: <https://cte.org.uk/season-of-creation-2023/>

Season of Creation Prayer

Creator of All,

From your communion of love life sprung forth like a mighty river and the whole cosmos came into being.

On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden. You placed us into right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable. We broke with the flowing communion of love and sinned against you by not safeguarding the conditions for life.

We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats, we grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished, and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls to us through the book of Scripture and the book of creation. Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation.

Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace, and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures around us, and all creation.

Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the living waters of God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Community Garden



IT'S BEEN A BUSY and productive season in the Community Garden, with lots of crops grown to share with the community around us, including tomatoes, beans, raspberries and strawberries. The photo on the right shows Heather, Elaine and Sue, holding herb bouquets that were donated to the food bank.

Plans are in hand for developing the plot at the side of the church hall, now that the rubber surface has been removed and recycled. Details to come in the autumn!



FELLOWSHIP:

The Magician: Leon Thompson

A wonderful evening of magic tricks and fun was the treat for all those who came to the July Fellowship meeting. The magician, Leon Thompson, has a long association with St John's, going back to being a member of the Youth Club and a young table tennis player. He became interested in performing magic tricks at an early age and joined the Junior Magic Circle; he has now furthered his career performing at various venues to much acclaim.

Leon began the evening by acknowledging he was performing in a church and went through a musical deck of cards with the ace representing God; all further cards were linked to an aspect of the Bible, including that 4 represents the four gospels, 10 for the Ten Commandments and there are twelve picture cards in a pack representing the twelve disciples.

He continued with a variety of card tricks, rope tricks and spiral tricks each of which captivated the audience, who were just amazed at his clever magic ability. Leon did seek the help of the audience for some of his tricks, which left

the participants very puzzled at what he conjured up. One of the most baffling and funny was when a member of the audience was asked to pick a street out from an A-Z map of London. Leon had no sight of which street was chosen, but amazingly he announced the street picked out was Abbey Street which was correct. How he did that, we could not fathom!

We were in the front row, and did not see how he did any of the tricks.

His sleight of hand completely baffled us.

Another very notable trick was when he gave a pack of cards to the audience, and asked five people to select one and to stand up when they had their card. On receiving the pack back, he was able to tell us all five missing cards.

All too soon the evening drew to a close. We could have stayed all night as Leon was so entertaining! We will definitely be inviting him again at some future time.

Michèle Bubbs and Jean Davies

Garden Party at the home of Marjorie and Joe O'Connor



On Sunday 13th August, following the morning service at St John's, the Fellowship held their annual Garden Party, this year at the home of Marjorie and Joe O'Connor. Those attending enjoyed a lovely spread of food and drink, convivial company and fine weather.

Many thanks to Marjorie for organising this.

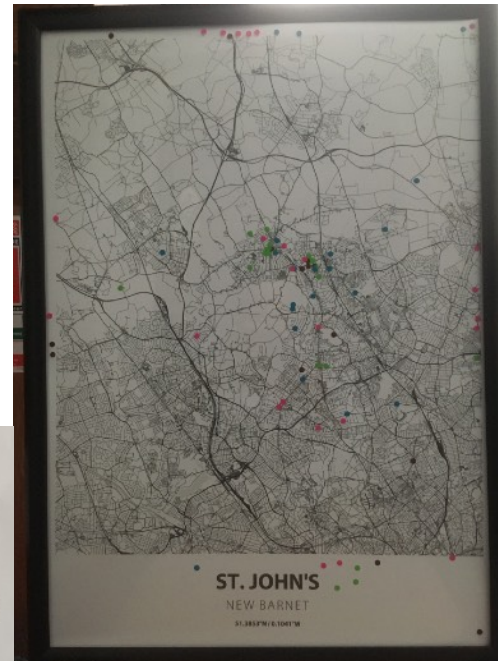
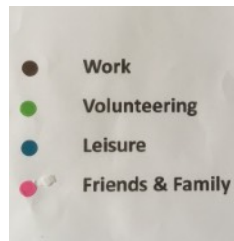
OUR FRONTLINE

THIS IS A MAP of 'our frontline' which is on display in the sanctuary. It shows our local area, with St John's Church just right of centre. The dots represent where we are during the week and the colours represent the activity we are involved in. (If you haven't put your dots on yet, please do.)

The map was a gift from Eddie Boon, Discipleship Enabler for Thames North Synod, to the churches taking part in the LICC Learning Hubs.

What is 'our frontline'?

Some of you will have heard the following account before. Neil Hudson - author of *Imagine Church* - was listening to a group of people engaged in an LICC Pilot project. He writes:



In the group was a lady called Isabelle. She was a quiet lady and hadn't contributed much to the conversation thus far. Turning to her, I asked her what she did with her time. She looked very thoughtful. 'I don't know; I've been wondering that while you've been talking. I just clean the house, go to the shops and look after the grandchildren from time to time.' I asked her to tell us more about the grandchildren. She told us that she picked some of them up from school and she told us that her oldest granddaughter came to Sunday dinner most weeks. Often she would ask Isabelle about church and what had been happening. So Isabelle would tell her about the service and the sermon. I asked her what age this grandchild was, expecting her to tell us that she was about ten years old. It turned out she was twenty-two.

The conversation that followed was really interesting. Up until then, the minister had assumed he'd been preaching to a largely elderly congregation, hoping somehow to reach a younger generation. Suddenly he found out that at least one of his listeners was passing on his sermon to a young twenty-something woman. He began to think what he might say at 11:30 to Isabelle that would be most relevant to her granddaughter a couple of hours later.

The others in the group had been friends with Isabelle for years. But they had never heard her talk this way about her grandchildren, didn't know their names, and had no idea of the challenges that they might have been facing. So no one could have prayed for them, nor for the ministry that this grandmother already had in the family.

We stopped, prayed and recommissioned Isabelle, back to her family.

A few months later, at the next meeting, I asked her about her grandchildren. 'Well, I don't know what's happening, but my daughter is asking questions about faith and Church now. I'm on a bit of a roll.'

And then she added, brilliantly, 'I know what I'm supposed to be doing now.'

Editors



ON SUNDAY 5TH NOVEMBER our service will be led by Rev Maggie Hindley. She served as a Church Related Community Worker and then as a URC minister until she retired in 2017, her last stipendiary ministry being at the London Faith Centre. She is a trustee of both the London Churches Refugee Fund and Grassroots - which exists 'to relieve poverty wherever it can and tell people about Jesus through word and deed' and is a Green Apostle for the URC, whose role is to provide information, support and encouragement to churches on ways to care for creation. Since retiring she has been part of the Community Peacemakers Team in Palestine, writing an article in last November's *Reform* magazine - 'What I saw in Hebron'.

Editors

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 12	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Wednesday 13	7:30pm	A special service to mark 60 years since Tony Alderman's first preaching engagement. * Refreshments available both before and after the service *
Thursday 14	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 16	11:00am	Green Christian Barnet: 'How we respond to climate change: what is the challenge?' Speaker: Andrew Summers
Sunday 17	11:00am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon followed by a Church Meeting
Wednesday 20	8:00pm	Fellowship: Crime and Punishment in London. Speaker: Diane Burstein
Thursday 21	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 23	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 24	11:00am	Creation Sunday. We are all invited to Brookside Methodist Church for a United Service. <u>Please note earlier start time and that there will be no service at St John's .</u>
Tuesday 26	8:30pm	Men's Group at <i>The Railway Bell</i>
Wednesday 27	11:00am	Women's Group: Coffee at <i>Vibe Café</i> , 6 Greenhill Parade, EN5 1ES
	12:15pm	Lunch at <i>Fresh Fries</i> , by the Everyman Cinema
Thursday 28	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 30	10:00am	LICC Learning Hub: 'Small Groups and Intentional Relationships'

OCTOBER

Sunday 1	11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Sarah Beaumont
Thursday 5	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 8	11:00am	Harvest: Worship led by Helen Snider & Andrew Summers
Tuesday 10	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Thursday 12	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 14	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 15	11:00am	Worship led by David Paul & Richard Harvey
Wednesday 18	8:00pm	Fellowship: Spymaster - Local Connections. Speaker: Dr Helen Fry
Thursday 19	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 22	11:00am	Worship led by Tony Alderman
Monday 23	11:00am	Women's Group at <i>Rise and Shine Café</i> , 2 Exchange Buildings, High Street, EN5 5SY

OCTOBER contd.

Tuesday 24	8:30pm	Men's Group at Ye Old Mitre Inn
Saturday 28	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 29	11:00am	Worship led by Rev Roger Orme

NOVEMBER

Thursday 3	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 5	11:00am	Memorial Sunday: Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Rev Maggie Hindley

Advance Notice

Friday 24 November 8:00pm Fellowship Concert: Katie's Jumping Fleas Ukulele Band (details t.b.a.)

St John's URC Women's Group

This new initiative is going well and the next meeting is on Wednesday 27th September at the Vibe Café, Greenhill Parade.

I know it might seem early but I have booked the Queens Arms for our Women's Group Christmas Lunch on Wednesday 29th November 2023. On this occasion we are inviting the men as well. It seems a suitable occasion to be all together!

The price will depend on numbers (we have to pay a 10% discretionary service charge for more than eight people) and does not include drinks - they are on top.

Three courses cost £24.75, two courses cost £19.25. These prices include £5 deposit which is nonreturnable. There is a choice of four starters, four mains - all served with seasonal vegetables and roast parsnips - and four puddings.

So if you're interested pay me £5 nonreturnable deposit a.s.a.p. and I will prepare copies of the menu for you to give me your choice.

Marjorie O'Connor (0208 445 6580 or 07515 910514)

We are grateful to the following people who provided the church flowers:
Tony Shepherd - Sunday 23rd July Susan Sweetingham - Sunday 6th August

Copy for the November/December edition of *Church Record* to be with the editors
by Friday 28th October.

churchrecord2023@gmail.com



Revd George Watt talking to members of the congregation after the service.



Meeting with the Elders.

