

Palmers Green United Reformed Church November Magazine 2021

For all people who seek and share the Good News of Jesus Christ
Member of Churches Together in Palmers Green and Winchmore Hill



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HARVEST PHOTOS



Pictured from our Harvest Service on 24 October 2021 are flowers by Jean Alderman, a display supporting Ethical Consumerism, and non-perishable food items



brought by the congregation to share. In addition to the photo on the front cover, see also details of our service on page 13.

WORSHIP SERVICES - NOVEMBER 2021

Date	Time	Service	Worship Leader
Sunday 7 November	11am	Morning Worship	Mr Martin Wells
Sunday 14 November	10:45 am	Remembrance / Parade Service	Ms Gill Whiting
Sunday 21 November	11am	Morning Worship	Revd John Mackerness
Sunday 28 November	11am	Advent Service	Revd George Watt

Morning Worship is held every Sunday and includes Holy Communion on the first or second Sunday of each month. Arrangements for additional services are publicised in advance. Christian Education for young people takes place during morning worship.

BIBLE READINGS FOR NOVEMBER 2021 WORSHIP SERVICES

7 November	14 November	21 November
Mark 12.38-44 1 Kings 17.8-16 Psalm 146 Hebrews 9.24-28	Mark 13.1-8 Daniel 12.1-3 Psalm 16 Hebrews 10.11-14,(15-18), 19-25	John 18.33-37 Daniel 7.9-10, 13-14 Psalm 93 Revelation 1.4b-8
28 November Luke 21.25-36 Jeremiah 33.14-16 Psalm 25.1-10 1 Thessalonians 3.9-13		



2021 CHURCH DIARY

Christmas Lunch: Sunday 5 December 2021 at 12:30pm in Main Hall.

To plan this properly with Covid safety measures in place, we will need numbers well ahead of time. Please let Tina Ashitey know by 30th October if you intend to come.

Elders Meetings:

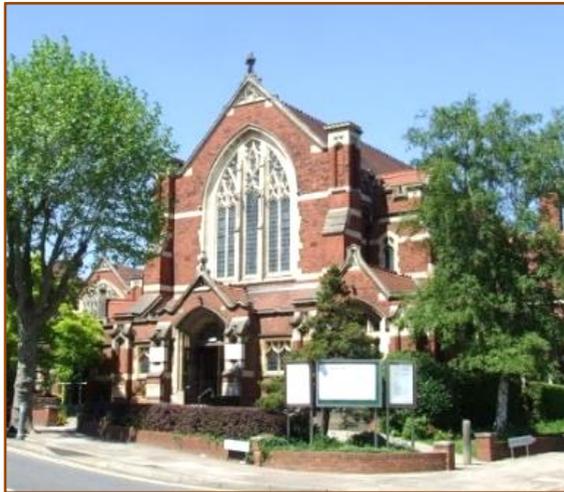
Wednesday 1 December at 7.30pm

Church Meetings:

Sunday 14 November (Annual Forum)

'A Place for Coffee' at 10.30 am -12.00 noon on Saturday mornings has now reopened in the Sanctuary. Please feel free to join us.

Please also refer to the weekly **Bulletin**, available by email and by post, and to **NewsShare** email messages, for more up-to-date information about events.



HALLS LETTING: Contact Mikayla Coote, Bookings Manager
Tel: 01553 278949, email: pgurcbookings@outlook.com
Please visit our website for more details -
<http://www.palmersgreenurc.org.uk/halls.html>

Ministers' Letter?

Are we here or not? That is the question... Not a philosophical question, simply a practical one! Mark and I write this at a time when we still don't have a date for departure to Fiji. But that might have changed by the time you read this! The complications of having to arrange a move halfway around the world during a global pandemic, with three organisations and ourselves involved are manifold, but not insurmountable. Watch this space!

But, for the moment, in a month when we remember, when we look back on the past and give thanks for the freedoms that we now enjoy here in the United Kingdom as we ourselves reflect we keep on pondering Hegel's quote that "History teaches us that history teaches us nothing".

What do we mean?

As an exercise for this month why not look up the number of deaths that occurred through warfare or, as they are often called these days, "skirmishes" in the past twelve months, even in times of Coronavirus.

Humanity still seems to be intent on hurting itself, hurting others, whether it is because of an ancient dispute, or the desire to take over more land or whatever might be the reason fighting, injuries and deaths still occur.

And we, as Christians, are not immune from such fighting. How many wars have been started by Christians over the years?

When will our approach change? How can it change?

"All we are saying... is give peace a chance" (John Lennon)

The difficulty is that we are not sure that we really can afford to "give peace a chance" in the words of John Lennon. We want to hold on to what we have, we don't want to risk losing out and we want to be "winners". To stop having an armed force of one kind or another is just a

step too far for many of us. “We have to defend ourselves” is the response that often comes. But what are we defending ourselves from or for?

Such decisions, such thinking, in fact wars themselves, spring from our inability to control ourselves, our failure to get on with our “neighbour” where we live.

Enemies spring up even in our day-to-day life, and it feels like we need something to oppose or at least someone to oppose, often it is a people group of one kind or another. Does this go against the grace and mercy of God, who invites us to welcome all into the kingdom of God?

How do we respond when someone cheats us out of something, or we feel that we have been slighted or wronged?

Do we more often than not forget God’s words to us, spoken through the apostle Paul?

“Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?” (1 Corinthians 6:7)

And, when dealing with other people, how often is our response more like Peter’s: *“Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” (Matthew 18:21)*

Jesus’ response to that question widens the approach and encourages us to keep on forgiving.

Give, give, give – that is God’s way.

Forgive, forgive, forgive – that too is God’s way.

So why are we still wanting to fight, to make and distribute weapons of war, to stand “against” other peoples. And, if we do need to stand “against” others who and what determines who that should be?

The Catholic church has often been the one who has taken the lead in making pronouncements about warfare and the need for peace:

“Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.”

(Pastoral Constitution quoted in ‘A Textbook in Christian Ethics’ edited by Robin Gill)

Christians are divided on how to respond to the issue of war and peace:

“Some understood the gospel of Jesus to prohibit all killing, some affirmed the use of prayer and other spiritual methods as means of responding to enmity and hostility” (US Catholic Bishops in Gill above)

Your views may be different to ours, but we think that the way of Christ is one of the peacemaker and the peacekeeper and we cannot reconcile that view with being anything other than pacifists, people who want to see peace in the world and who work to that end.

As you remember this month, those who died in warfare, and those that are still left behind picking up the pieces, offer up another prayer for those who will die in warfare this year, and for those who could begin to make peace happen.

Pray too, that you, in your own heart would find the true peace that God offers us all in Jesus Christ.

With many blessings,

Melanie and Mark



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a group of different people looking for and finding, strength and meaning in God's love.

You will always be welcomed gladly.

We worship and pray together.

We learn about God's love and forgiveness through Jesus, the Bible and with the help of each other.

Together we will work to make Jesus present by loving actions done, and by loving words spoken, in this church and beyond these doors.

PRAYER DIARY

November Prayer Calendar

From Revd Melanie Smith

1 All Saints' Day: Give thanks for all those who have achieved extraordinary things in the name of Christ.

2 All Souls' Day: Remember all those we know who have died. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

3 Pray for the Finance and Fabric

Resources Committee that meets this evening; grant them wisdom as they steward our physical resources.



4 COP26 UN Climate Change Conference (1st-12th): Pray for the wisdom of world leaders that they will take the action required to divert more catastrophic damage to God's creation.

5 Bonfire Night: Pray for a world of religious and political tolerance and the end of capital punishment.

6 International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians (7th): Pray that all Christians may be able to worship without fear.

7 Enfield Churches Debt Centre: Pray for the event at 6.30pm at Enfield Baptist Church this evening, where people will gather to hear about the progress of the Debt Centre, one year since its Zoom launch.

8 In 1968, **Shirley Chisholm** became the first black woman elected to the United States Congress. **We pray for all those campaigning across the world for racial equality.**

9 Pray for our Elders and Pastoral Visitors, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world." (Teresa of Avila)

10 Pray for Churches Together in Palmers Green, Winchmore Hill and Grange Park, that we will draw ever closer to each other in love and service.

11 Armistice Day: Pray for peace in the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, and commit to walk in the ways of peace, in thought, word and deed.

12 St Cecilia's Day (patron saint of musicians and organ builders!): Pray for all those who enhance our church worship through their musical gifts.

13 World Diabetes Day (14th): One hundred years on from the discovery of insulin, pray for all those who live with diabetes and that a cure might be discovered.

14 Remembrance Sunday Pray for uniformed youth organisations, especially those taking part in parade services today, and Gill Whiting leading our service. Pray also for our Annual Forum Meeting.

15 Interfaith Week (14-21st): In our listening, speaking and activities with people of other faiths, may we discover the joy and encouragement of similar approaches, understandings and practices and be ready, recognising great diversity, to accept that we may not agree, but we can be friends.

16 Anti-Bullying Week (15-19th): “It is not enemies who taunt me, I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me, I could hide from them. But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend, with whom I kept pleasant company...” (Psalm 55:12-14). Pray for all who are victimised and bullied.

17 Living Wage Week (15-25th): “Listen! The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.” (James 5:4) Pray for fair wages for all.

18 It is 30 years since Terry Waite was released from captivity in Beirut, **pray for all political prisoners** in the world today, especially Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe still held in Iran, and her family.

19 World Toilet Day: Pray that all might have access to safe clean water and sanitation, thanking God for charities like Water Aid, and Toilet Twinning.

20 Universal Children’s Day: Pray for all children who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 crisis, the costs of which may last their lifetime.

21 World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims: Pray for safe roads, and a rethinking of how we use transport.

22 The first Biro ballpoint pens went on sale in the UK 50 years ago today. **Pray for literacy worldwide** and equal access to education.

23 Enfield and East Hertfordshire Local Area Group meets tonight. Pray that our local churches may be bound in closer unity and fellowship with a shared vision for God’s work in this area.

24 Pray for the work of homelessness charities locally, especially **All People All Places**.

25 16 Days Activism Against Gender Violence (25th-10th December): Pray for the end of violence against women.

26 Pray for Pam's Pantry at our sister church in Ponders End, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." (Matthew 25: 35)

27 National Tree Week (27th – 5th December): "For the trees reflect who and how I can be, standing tall, true, honest and undeniably me, unafraid to love, to give, to share and to bend, so I bless the forests as I learn from them." (Clare Dubois)

28 Advent Sunday: Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

29 Pray for the work of refugee charities, especially Care4Calais and the **London Churches Refugee Fund**, and for the end of the hostile environment.

30 St Andrew's Day: Pray for our sister church, the Church of Scotland, and the communities in which it works.

If you would like to contribute and compile a list of prayers for December, please contact Joan Bayliss.

Editor's Note: The '*Praying Hands*' image is a pen-and-ink drawing by the German printmaker, painter and theorist **Albrecht Dürer**.

Our Farewell Tea for Melanie and Mark

On Sunday afternoon 10 October 2021, members of our church joined those of Winchmore Hill and Ponders End URCS to officially say 'adiós' to Revds Melanie Smith and Mark Meatcher who have been our shared Ministers for the last three years.



As was announced in their Pastoral Letter in the August 2021 issue, they have accepted a call by the Council for World Mission to take up four-year posts at the Pacific Theological College in Fiji, and will leave the UK to start their new jobs in a few weeks.



Farewell Teas for the North Enfield Churches that Mark is Pastor of were held separately. On this page, are some photos of ours.

Harvest Sunday Worship on 24 October 2021

At this very well attended Morning Worship, which included children, we welcomed our Service Leader Mrs Kathleen Laing (pictured right) who is an Accredited URC Lay Preacher from High Cross URC Tottenham, and whose theme was 'You reap what you sow'. Bible Readings were from **Deuteronomy 26.1-11, Psalm 23, and James 3.18**, read by Jean Alderman and Jill Bysouth.



Hymns to resounding organ music by Robert Evans included 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow' by Thomas Ken, 'Morning has broken' by Eleanor Farjeon, 'The Lord's my shepherd' by David Grant and William Whittingham, 'Tell out my soul' by Walter Greatorex and Timothy Dudley-Smith, and 'Jesus is Lord' by David Mansell. Members of the congregation had brought non-perishable food items to be distributed by URCs from Lancaster Road and Ponders End, and photos of these are shown on page 2.

'Unseen UK' Freedom Service on Sunday 17 October

We welcomed Mrs Nancy Hands (pictured right) Accredited Lay Preacher from Trinity Methodist/URC Church, Enfield to lead our service to mark Anti-Slavery Day on 18 October. Bible Readings were from **Proverbs 31.8-9, Isaiah 61.1-2, and Luke 4**. Among the hymns we sang were 'Thou whose almighty word' by John Marriott, 'Jesus Christ is waiting' by John Bell, 'God's spirit is deep in my heart' by H. J. Richards, 'This we can do for justice' by Brian Wren, and 'God of Freedom' by S. E. Murray.



Mrs Hands stressed the need to be on the lookout for evidence of modern slavery and said this can be reported on the **Modern Slavery Helpline: 08000 121 700**.

In Loving Memory of **Adrian Albert West**

10 Dec 1941 – 11 Sept 2021

*“In Him, we live, and move, and have our being,
God, you love me; I seek to love you.”*

Winchmore Hill URC Sanctuary was (allowing for social distancing) full to overflowing, on Tuesday 28 September 2021, with friends and family of Adrian West, a well-loved leader of the United Reformed Church and the London Gallery Quire.

The Order of Service began with entry music ‘Now Thank We All Our God’ by Sigfrid Karg-Elert performed by Nathan Hulse, and an introduction by Revd Melanie Smith. This was followed by a reading from Psalm 150, ‘Praise the Lord!’ and the hymn ‘Thine be the Glory’ to the music of G. F. Handel with words by Edmond Budry and R. B. Hoyle. We then had prayers and a reading of ‘Serenade To Music’ by William Shakespeare, adapted by Vaughan Williams, read by Alan Franks.

A moving tribute (page 15) was read by Adrian’s son, Clement West, and this was followed by ‘Year by Year’ by Adrian West read by David Furber; The Reluctant Prophet of 1 Kings 19, by Revd Melanie Smith; and



‘Sequence’ by Adrian West read by Cliff Woolley.

Words of Commendation were spoken by Revd Melanie Smith, and Revd Jim Gascoigne led Prayers of Intercession. Following the Blessing, members of the congregation (pictured left) performed ‘Enrico’ by Thomas Hardy.

From Revd Jim Gascoigne and Clement West

Time and again Adrian has been valued for many gifts and talents, especially his wisdom, and we have benefitted over the years. He became a Church Member in 1972 and an Elder the following year. Always reading and always thinking, Adrian's leadership in worship was always insightful and stimulating, intellectually and spiritually. His participation in the life of this church, his roles in the Synod, as Chair of the Lea Valley District and as Local Leader at Harecourt URC in Islington for over a decade bore those hallmarks. There is a resounding sense of loss and from it love flows out to each one of Adrian's family. We are grateful to Clement for sharing this tribute to his father:

I've found in life that when someone close to me dies, I find out many new things about them and see how they appeared to others, and how this differs from my experience. It is in the spirit of this that I chose to talk at the funeral about those things people might not know about my father, Adrian West.

Just briefly about his background, he was born in 1941 in Ipswich, grew up in Upminster and went to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He then became a civil servant, marrying in 1971 and going on to have two children, of which I am one.

He was always, until his illness, athletic, having no trouble climbing the apple trees to prune them or reach hard to get fruit, well into his seventies. He told us once, when running for the 29 bus that the conductor asked him why he needed to get on the bus when he could run like that. He must have been around 60 years old then.

He also used this athleticism in his folk dancing where he was renowned amongst the local folk clubs for his ability to swing partners and to dance enthusiastically. I remember having to run to keep up with him walking as we left Enfield Town football matches in the cold, and he would speed back to the car park, arms swinging wildly to get himself warmed up. One of my earliest memories is him standing with me at an Ipswich Town match, I must have been very young, standing on a milk crate.

He had a keen sense of humour and was a fan of the columnist Miles Kington, who wrote for the Times and then the Independent, especially on the fictional language of Franglais. Adrian would recount times of reading the column and laughing out loud on public transport.

He liked to dress formally, and I do not think he ever wore a pair of jeans. He was very fond of wearing ties to the extent that he got mistaken for a sales assistant in a TM Lewin shop in Jermyn Street. He once told me he would like to have been an archaeologist, having been on digs during his holidays. He retained an interest in ancient monuments and I remember his enthusiasm for Wayland's Smithy up on the Ridgeway. His love of old churches is also something I can testify to, having wandered around many during family holidays.

Food was a great pleasure for him, with a love of custard, the kind you get in powdered mix and add milk, and for classic fruit cakes. The 'Mmmm,' he let out whilst enjoying some Simnel cake during, I think, a pause in his chemotherapy, will live with me.

He loved spending time in the garden; I remember him catching grasshoppers in the front garden in ice cream boxes then to transfer them to a new life on the back lawn. He had an extensive collection of cacti that would migrate each year from the house into the garden and return for the winter.

He was very well read, as befits a graduate of English at Cambridge, and that seems to have stood him in good stead as he applied this to writing sermons. I also need to mention music. He started singing unaccompanied folk songs from his time in university, I think he once told me he was briefly in a skiffle band. He collected blues records back in the day, and then later in life became more interested in early music.

It has been striking from the cards we have received how many lives he touched, and it is wonderful to see how much he meant to so many.

The Celebration of Adrian's life continued after the service with a hearty, long-lasting gathering (pictured at the bottom of the next page) for food, drink, music and dance in the Church Hall.

Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the PGURC April Magazine 2017 page 17:

Visiting Service Leader - Adrian West

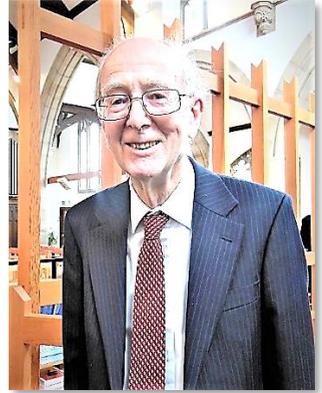
Adrian has been a welcome visitor and friend to our Church for many years, last leading our service on Sunday 19th March 2017. Often appearing with his wife Gillian, who is choir director, organist and an elder at WHURC, he will return to lead our Maundy Thursday Service at 8pm on 13th April 2017. He writes:

“I have been a member of Winchmore Hill URC since 1972, with an interval between 2002 and 2012 when I was attached to Harecourt, Islington URC in the capacity of Lay Pastor.

“Creating and delivering church services is something I greatly enjoy, and I became an Assembly-Accredited Lay Preacher in 1989. I also sit on various URC committees, and am currently Secretary of the Enfield and East Herts Local Area Group.

“I am deeply interested in hymns and have a great love of singing - not only hymns, but West Gallery music (church music from about 1720 to about 1850) and folksongs. My other great passion is folk dancing.

“My working life was spent in the Inland Revenue, largely as a legal expert, but that seems a long time ago as I've had 15 busy years of retirement since then. **Adrian**”



The Struggles of God's People

A sermon by Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch (pictured right), Retired URC Minister and Worship Leader at our church, delivered at our Morning Worship on Sunday 26 September 2021.

Bible Readings:

Numbers 11.4-6, 10-16, 24-29

Psalm 19.7-end

James 5.13-end

Mark 9.38-end

Introduction:

This Covid era has been a time of struggle, uncertainty, and questioning about the faith. Some Christians have been asking, 'why has God let this happen?' Others have even asked, 'Isn't this God's punishment for the world?'

These are interesting questions, but they point to a certain level of misunderstanding about God and about God's people.

There are times when we're presented with an idealised picture of God's people – God's always live peaceably, are happy with our lot, do the right thing, and nothing ever goes wrong.

It doesn't take more than a few seconds to realise that this is an idealised picture

- whether of our lives,
- or of the lives of countless people who have gone on before us,
- or of the lives of those seen in the scriptures.

Today we're going to have a look at scripture passages which remind us of the reality of the way in which God's people have lived and what they



have struggled with, but also remind us of God's love and that, whatever happens, however difficult the times are, God is there for us.

Sermon

The first passage for today from Numbers, immediately sets the scene of the dangers of people having an idealised picture of themselves.

We know the story so well. God sets the people free from slavery. God supplies the people with what they need. But they still feel they haven't got enough.

They start complaining.

They remember the good times. There's that wonderful list of food that they're missing out on: meat, fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlic – all the things they had in Egypt in 'the good old days.

And now all this is gone.

They'd forgotten that in Egypt they'd been slaves, and now they are free.

What's interesting, as so often when the people complain, is what happens next.

There's a kind of argument between God and Moses.

God is portrayed in a very human way (typical of early parts of the Hebrew scriptures.) – God gets angry with what is happening.

God and Moses have a bit of a set to.

Moses is displeased with God – asking why he's put all this on him. He complains back to him – it's all far too much, he can't cope, how could God expect so much of him.

How could you expect me to carry this people?

Then the interesting bit happens. God says to Moses, 'OK, if you need more help, I'll give you more help; if the people need more food, I'll give them more food – I'll give them meat, not just for a day or a week, or a couple of weeks, but for a whole month.

In fact, so the scripture goes on, God says, ‘I’ll give them enough meat so they get sick of it!’ And the people said but we’ve haven’t got any herds or sheep to provide food. And God says, wait and see. And a mighty wind comes and brings quails, more than enough birds for a month.

God gives Moses both a team of leaders, and enough food for the whole people.

But there is also that warning – beware what you wish for, because you might find when it comes that it’s too much.

God responds with generosity and abundance. He hasn’t deserted his people or stopped caring for them. He has heard their cry, and he has responded. He’s responded, not only with food, but also with people.

Seventy people are set apart from the people as a whole, as elders, to share with Moses. And as they share with Moses, so they are given a share of the spirit that God has given Moses. They aren’t there in their own strength.

And even two who haven’t pitched up, Eldad and Medad, are given a share of the spirit.

There’s still a cause for complaining – Joshua runs to Moses and says, because Eldad and Medad haven’t pitched up, shouldn’t they be stopped. But Moses knows God’s generosity and simply replies ‘would that all God’s people were prophets and that God would put his spirit on all of them.’

This issue of complaining and of trying to be exclusive is echoed in the Gospel reading, as it builds on the story of Eldad and Medad – the ones who weren’t there, yet upon whom the spirit still fell.

Here it’s an argument between John and Jesus.

John says to Jesus ‘look, we’ve seen someone casting out demons, but he’s not one of us’.

Jesus immediately responds with words that John would have found challenging – challenging because they went against the presuppositions that everyone had to, as it were, ‘sign up’ to Jesus in the same way.

Jesus says to John ‘don’t stop him, whoever is not against us is for us.’

He’s opening up the kingdom more widely than the disciples had imagined.

It’s a warning not to draw boundaries and barriers against people that God is already including. It’s a challenge to be open to recognise God at work in different people in different ways. For God’s love is greater than we can imagine. God’s love is already present in unexpected people and unexpected places. What’s asked of us as Jesus disciples, as Jesus asked of John, is that we keep our eyes open to where God is at work; that we don’t make easy assumptions that because someone is not alongside us, they are not with us.

We need to be open to see where God is at work in unexpected people and places.

The next verses in the gospel, expand on this encounter with John and Jesus. Jesus says that we need to look to ourselves and our own lives to see whether we measure up to God’s call.

We need to be, as it were, radically self-attentive. [that’s why we include the prayer of confession in our worship – to give us a moment to look at our lives and see where we might have fallen short of God’s love and God’s grace, and to seek again God’s forgiveness.] This isn’t just about putting ourselves at the centre of life, it’s about being attentive to ourselves in God’s presence, experiencing the generosity of God’s love.

Jesus says ‘Don’t put stumbling blocks in people’s ways’

He follows this with a really scary list of what might happen to even the simplest parts of our bodies if we cause people to stumble. It’s a symbolic list, but it’s part of the challenge to be attentive to every part of our selves – what we do with our hands, where our feet take us, what our eyes see.

In both of these passages there’s an individual response and a community response. Jesus draws attention to the way we are each as individuals called to live. But it’s in the context of being part of the people of God.

The way we live as individuals and the way in which we live as a community is a sign of alternative values to much of the world around us. These values are about living together, sharing together, being open to the person who is on the margins. These values are about seeking to heal the suffering and divisions of a hurting world, saying that it's not how much we have but how much we can give, that matters. It's about being spiritual people, rooted in a material world, seeking God's way and God's purposes.

I want to draw out three points from these readings:

Firstly, they're sounding a note of realism. Living as God's people isn't always going to be easy. There will be times of struggle and hardship. There will be times when we wonder, as did the people in the wilderness, whether God has deserted us. There will be times when we want to argue and complain. There will be times when we're challenged by the wideness of God's love, reaching out to people we might not want to include.

Secondly, they're sounding a note of hope. In the difficult times and the struggles God doesn't give up on God's people. Even in people's complaining, God is still listening and responding. In fact, the moments of complaints are the very moments when he raises up more people to help out, and pours out his spirit on his people. When we feel we've had enough, when times are too hard, we can remember that God is still present, still drawing us to himself, still embracing us with love.

James in his letter sums up the hope we have, and how we can work for this hope in prayer, in singing songs for praise, in acts of healing. Then there will be the promise of a great harvest.

Thirdly, they're sounding a note of generosity and abundance. This is what God's love is about - God's orientation is always one of generosity and abundance. God goes on caring for the people and wants us to share in this care. So, we should beware if we try to limit God's spirit to those who are just part of the in group; we should be attentive to ourselves as to whether we cause others to stumble, by the way we live or what we say or do.

It's interesting to note again what God does give in these scriptures: food [quails], elders – leaders to help the people out [In the URC elders are

really important, especially in a time of vacancy], the harvest that comes from prayer and healing.

It's good in these covid times to think about what God has given us – e.g., in terms of technology helping us to connect more widely with each other; in terms of the care that the church can offer to the homeless and hungry; in terms of working for the renewal of God's gift of creation.

Sometimes I hear people say that one of the lessons that has been learnt in the church in these covid times is that we need to close more churches, because we're really struggling. I believe that the real lesson is that we need to grow the church and open more churches, because what the Christian faith stands for is needed more in these challenging times than ever.

When we are open to receiving God's grace, then we can give of ourselves to others, and share this gift of grace, that others might have life, and life in all its fullness.

Let us give thanks this day for God's generous grace, alive and active in our lives.

Editor's Note: Revd Dr Welch also led our Morning Worship on 30 September 2018, and her sermon on a similar theme entitled 'Realism and Hope' was published in our November 2018 issue, page 7. Her new book, 'The Holy Spirit and Worship' was reviewed in our March 2021 issue page 23. She is a former Moderator of General Assembly and amongst other important roles, represented the URC on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (1991-1998).

What gets in the way of our relationship with God?

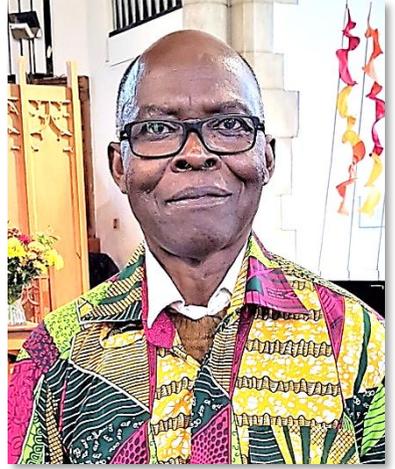
A sermon by Dr Paul Ashitey (pictured right), Accredited URC Lay Preacher, elder and Worship Leader at our church, delivered at our Morning Worship on Sunday 10 October 2021.

Bible Readings:

Amos 5.6-7, 10-15

Hebrews 4.12-16

Mark 10.17-31



When I arrived in this country in 1978 as a budding young dentist, I complained about so many things. One day, my friend told me after I have given him an earful that there was a place reserved for people like me at Hyde Park corner where I could stand and say anything I want without fear of being arrested. I must say I didn't have the guts to verify what he said. The Gate mentioned in Amos reading speaks of establishing justice there. The gatehouse of a middle Eastern city was often a place where business was transacted, justice administered, and legal agreements made. It was also a place of prophecy. Where do we go today for justice and prophetic words on living a good life?

Popular Jewish morality was simple. It is believed that prosperity was the sign of a good person. If a person was rich, God must have blessed him or her. Wealth was proof of excellence of character, and of favour with God. The danger with possessions though, is that they fix our thoughts and interests to this world. Material possessions tend to fix our hearts to this world, making it especially difficult for us to contemplate leaving it. One Dr Johnson was once shown around a famous castle and its lovely grounds. After he had seen it all, he turned to his friends and said, "These are the things that make it difficult to die".

Material wealth is an acid test of character. For every 100 who can stand adversity, only one can stand prosperity. Prosperity can so often easily make people arrogant, proud, self-satisfied, worldly. It takes a really big

and good person to bear it worthily. It is a responsibility. We will always be judged by two standards: how we got our possessions, and how we use them. The more we have, the greater the responsibility. What is our attitude towards wealth today? Do we see it as an indication of God's blessing or as a burden? Were there examples of wealth being used well in Jesus' time? Are there today? After all his wealth, the rich young man in the Gospel reading still thought and felt something missing.

The story of the rich young man could be seen to be saying that rich people cannot have eternal life or share in God's kingdom. The rich young ruler seemed to be doing everything he could to earn eternal life. He followed the laws and thought that the effort he put in, and the way he lived his life would tick all the boxes. But then Jesus said something that changed everything for him. Jesus is quite clear in his direction: go and sell everything; "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God". A humorous comment, but a serious challenge. So, are all rich people doomed? And how rich is rich? What might get in the way of our entering the kingdom of God?

Look a little more closely and we see that the man's problem was not the fact that he had great wealth, but the importance this had on his life. Jesus' directive to give up his riches was not a statement about wealth or even lifestyle per se; it was a challenge about what took priority in the man's life. And that was his wealth! Although he wanted to inherit eternal life, and although he knew God's commandments and the Law of Moses, his riches were more important to him. Why was that? Perhaps it was the status, security, comfort, or power they gave him. But we need not dwell on that question, because again it is not those things or themselves that caused the problem. Whatever it was, it got in the way of his relationship with God. It prevented him developing or deepening on that relationship. That is the challenge posed here. Whatever it is that gets in the way of developing or deepening our relationship with God is the equivalent for us of the rich man's wealth. Will we take up the challenge to reflect on our lives, and see if there's anything that qualifies?

In this passage, people make choices. The rich young man chose to follow the laws of Moses for most of his life. He had another choice to make

when Jesus suggested that he sell all that he had in order to inherit eternal life. The disciples also made choices, as Peter points out towards the end of the passage, declaring that they (the disciples) left everything to follow Jesus. Jesus commended them, but that does not mean eternal life is the result of completing a tick list of requirements. So, what is the answer?

There is something else we need to note in this passage... and that is the camel... the camel and the eye of a needle. We don't need to explain it; we just need to understand the concept: some things are just not possible. No one can earn the right to eternal life. The rich man stood no chance... not because of his riches, it is simply not possible. Not possible for us mortals. But with God, all things are possible. Jesus' words remind us that God's kingdom is open to everyone who puts God at the centre of all they do—even though we know that this is, and always will be, work in progress!

The Gospel passage ends with another statement reflecting the revolutionary nature of God's kingdom, where the 'first will be last, and the last shall be first'. What would that look like in our church and society? How can we tell if we are genuinely living it?

TO SAVE GOD'S PLANET

More information about COP26

From Jill Nugent

In November the UK government hosts COP26 – the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicates that a 1.5° rise in global temperatures is likely to be reached by the year 2040.



The conference needs to agree to more cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in most countries. It also must deliver on the long-promised

\$100-billion a year climate financing to enable developing countries to make use of green energy. Initially the UK needs to get its climate policies in order, then it can encourage nations such as Brazil, India, Canada and Australia who are particularly slow to act.

Studies amongst students show a rise in ‘eco-anxiety’ amongst young people. They are the ones that are perhaps more vocal about the need for governments to act. As Christians we should join in, at least prayerfully, to encourage real change. There are a number of prayer initiatives – check out the Christian Aid website to find out how you can send a prayer boat. There is an ongoing climate walk to Glasgow and several other climate marches are planned. A Global Day of Action is to be held on 6th November and a service of solidarity is to take place in Glasgow on 9th November.

Developing countries are suffering the most from climate change as changing weather patterns affect harvests and food supply. In turn this affects communities in other ways, for example, the status of women, who are expected to fetch water and tend crops. There is a rising trend in both Africa and Asia of girls being sold into marriage, either for the family to gain a dowry or offload someone they see as a ‘financial burden’.

It is important that we keep up to date with climate justice. We too must act as best we can to slow climate change. We can pray, eat less meat, switch to renewable energy, even plant a tree. Just a few things to think about! Every small action is useful.

Editor’s Note: See also articles to do with COP26 in the October issue pages 25-36.

Eco Church Requirements

From Revd Melanie Smith

The requirements for the Eco Church award are that our church’s communications (e.g., newsletters, service sheets, magazines, social media etc.) include items relating to the theme of caring for God’s earth. It also asks about the following:



1. Has our church appointed an individual or group to champion the cause of our church community becoming more environmentally sustainable?
2. Is walking and cycling to church services and events promoted in our church?
3. Is the reduction of car use encouraged in our church?
4. Do the members of our church receive encouragement to undertake a personal carbon footprint audit?
5. Does our church encourage members to reduce their personal energy consumption?
6. Does our church encourage members to limit their waste by adhering to the principles of reduce, re-use, recycle?
7. Does our church host activities and/or events that facilitate the recycling and/or reuse of goods (e.g., clothes swap events or 'give and take' schemes)?
8. Does our church operate a communal Christmas and/or Easter card scheme among the congregation?
9. Do we promote personal use and consumption of Fairtrade and/or ethically sourced goods in our church?
10. Does our church encourage members to use food at home that is LOAF (Locally grown, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fairtrade)?
11. Does our church run or partner with other organisations in running a food cooperative that enables members to bulk buy ethically sourced produce at wholesale prices?
12. Do we encourage the ethical investment of personal savings at our church?

Editor's Note: More information about Eco Church can be found on their website at <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/> .



NOTICES

What's Going on Here?

We are still holding regular services in our Sanctuary at Palmers Green URC every Sunday at 11am. We look forward to seeing everyone, as we share in worship together.

We will continue to send out copies of our weekly Sunday Bulletin and Monthly Magazine by email. If you don't currently get these, please ask Harry Goforth to add you to the mailing list. This will help us all to keep in touch with news of our Church Family and maintain our Church community life. Items to include in the Bulletin or Magazine can be sent to Jean and Harry, respectively. See back page for Magazine copy dates.

North London Symphony Orchestra

Concert at PGURC

Saturday 4 December 2021, 7:30pm

The programme will include:

HUBICKI: Irish Fantasy

SIBELIUS: Violin Concerto (Soloist: MATHILDE MILWIDSKY)

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade

More information about their future concerts can be found at

<https://nlso.org.uk/concerts/>



NLSO have returned to their usual rehearsal venue at Union Church in Crouch End from 27 September, and have performed a detailed Risk Assessment to enable them to continue rehearsals safely and this can be viewed on their website.

NLSO has developed a reputation for presenting exciting concert performances in the North London area. As an ambitious non-professional orchestra, their aim is to present full large-scale symphonic repertoire featuring a varied mix of adventurous and lesser-known works, together with popular well-known pieces. Their concerts regularly feature well-known soloists.

Recent and upcoming concerts include works by Bax, Berlioz, Brahms, Dvořák, Elgar, Järnefelt, Korngold, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Nielsen, Patterson, Rachmaninov, Rimsky-Korsakov, Saint-Saëns, Shostakovich, Sibelius, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, Vaughan Williams, and Walton.

PGURC to host North London Sinfonia Winter Concert

Saturday 27 November 2021, 7:00pm

Programme:

Ravel: Piano Concerto in G (soloist: Olga Jegunova)

Prokofiev: Symphony No. 7

Tchaikovsky: Romeo and Juliet



NLS are looking for new **string players**, particularly violins and violas and have vacancies for all types of **brass instrument**. While they don't currently have vacancies within their woodwind section, feel free to contact them if you would like to be added to their list of extras and deputies. They have a **no auditions** policy, so if you're thinking of joining, why not go along and give it a try?

Visit the 'Join Us' page for more details at <https://www.nlsinfonia.org/>

Enfield Chamber Orchestra to perform at PGURC

Saturday 13 November 2021 at 7:30pm

Programme:

Beethoven: Leonora overture no 3

Grieg: Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.16

Soloist Gabrielé Sutkutė

Schumann: Symphony No.4 in D minor

Admission by programme at the door: £13.00 Concessions £11.00

Students (17-21) £5.00 children under 16 free



Enfield Chamber Orchestra (formerly Enfield String Players) was founded in 1942. We are a very friendly orchestra who first and foremost enjoy

playing great music. As a guide, a minimum standard of Grade 7 is needed to join, but a commitment to rehearsals and improving standards are the most important requirements. We meet on a Monday evening during term time.

Children's Voices of Enfield Christmas Concert at PGURC Sunday 12 December 2021 at 4:00pm

Festive carols to get you in the mood from their two fantastic Children's Choirs, and with congregational participation. Look for more details in the PGURC December Magazine 2021.



Their Musical Director Laurence Williams writes, "It's not too late to join - if you have a child or a relative who might enjoy us, please send them our way!"

For more information visit their website at <https://childrensvoicesofenfield.com/who-are-we> .

Doxecology Tour at St James Church Muswell Hill In partnership with A Rocha UK in worship and prayer during the COP26 Climate Summit.

Thirteen new, congregational worship songs that celebrate the wonder of creation, acknowledge our failures, and anticipate a glorious restoration in Christ.



Wednesday 3 November 2021 at 7:30pm (doors open at 7pm)

Early Bird Tickets £8, Standard £10, Concession £8; Buy online from either of the websites below:

<https://stjamesmuswellhill.churchsuite.co.uk/events/pyzlok5b>

<https://www.resoundworship.org/events/doxecology-concert-muswell-hill>

ABOUT OUR CHURCH

WE SHARE OUR PASTORATE WITH THE PONDERS END and WINCHMORE HILL URCS. Listed below are their main contacts:

Ponders End Church Secretary: Mrs Pat Lewis

Winchmore Hill Church Secretary: Vacant



We are part of the Thames North Synod in which there are 120 United Reformed churches in six Areas, headed by a Synod Moderator. The United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom has approx. 1,330 local Churches, 13 Synods and 43,200 members. It meets every two years in General Assembly and has its central offices at 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1 9RT. Through our membership of the Council for World Mission we belong to the world-wide Church of Jesus Christ. This is a Reformed and Congregational body for international exchange in Mission. The United Reformed Church is one of 32 member Churches.

We are a member of Churches Together in Palmers Green, Winchmore Hill and Grange Park (CTPGWHGP). In partnership with Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Baptist churches in our neighbourhood, we aim to explore the Christian faith together, and witness to the Gospel.

Interim Moderator – To Be Advised

e-mail: TBA

Secretary - Mr Martin van Staveren

e-mail: secretary@palmersgreenurc.org.uk

Treasurer (Interim) - Mr Brian Hosier

e-mail: brian@hosier.eclipse.co.uk

Palmers Green United Reformed Church is at the corner of Fox Lane and Burford Gardens, London N13 4AL and online at both www.palmersgreenurc.org.uk and www.facebook.com/PGURC/. Our magazine is published monthly and is printed by 'Office Interiors' in Palmers Green using approx. 85% recycled paper.

MAGAZINE COPY DATES FOR DECEMBER 2021 ISSUE

Publication is scheduled on or before **Saturday 27 November 2021.**

All copy, including Church Diary information, to be sent to **Harry Goforth** (preferably by email to: hbg@goforth.myzen.co.uk) by **Friday morning 19 November 2021.**