

CHURCH NEWS

Kingston United Reformed Church

SEPTEMBER 2023



**Beauty in Unexpected Places
(Grass Verge in Norbiton)**

Photo by Lena O.

WORSHIP & EVENTS DIARY – SEPTEMBER 2023

The following is the anticipated diary for September, but please see the e-mailed Weekly Notices, particularly for daily prayers, Bible Study and other Zoom sessions. Updates, together with further KURC activities, can be found in the events calendar on the KURC website.

Sunday, 3 rd	10.00 Worship & Communion – also live-streamed
	11.30 All Age Worship
	Messy Church at the Church
	17.00 Reflective Worship
Tuesday, 5 th	19.30 Elders' Meeting
Wednesday, 6 th	10.00 Tots' Praise
Sunday, 10 th	10.30 Combined Worship – also live-streamed
	11.30 Annual General Meeting – also live-streamed
	17.00 Reflective Worship
Wednesday, 13 th	10.00 Tots' Praise
Saturday, 16 th	14.30 MacMillan Afternoon Tea with biscuit decorating
Sunday, 17 th	10.00 Worship – also live-streamed
	11.30 All Age Worship
	17.00 Reflective Worship & Communion
Wednesday, 20 th	10.00 Tots' Praise
Thursday, 21 st	12.30 Lunch-time Concert
Saturday, 23 rd	14.00 Crafternoon
Sunday, 24 th	10.00 Worship – also live-streamed
	11.30 All Age Worship & Communion
	17.00 Reflective Worship
Wednesday, 27 th	10.00 Tots' Praise

ADVANCE NOTICES:

Saturday, 7 th October	10.00 Harvest Workshop
Sunday, 8 th October	10.30 Harvest Service & Day In/Out

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LETTER FROM LESLEY



Dear All,

There are times when keeping your heart tender is a massive problem.

Something happens and you want to come out swinging. Or you are left feeling bitter by events. It is a massive challenge to keep on loving.

How do we do it? Speaking for myself – badly.

Tips please...

* A few I would offer is to continue to see the person as a child of God. A child, falling down - not successful at everything, but growing and developing. To remember that whatever they have done, they are loved by God. God does not celebrate our sin, but God is the constant loving parent. I am reminded of those parents who tell the police about the crimes of their children. The child may end up in prison and still the parent says they love them. You can love someone and acknowledge they have done wrong. So much easier to condemn and rage.

* Secondly, to keep our eyes on Jesus. He was the one who prayed for his persecutors at the point of death. Forgiveness is what he asked for. He is our model of how we are to be.

* The third thing is to remember we cannot do everything. We cannot sort all things out. Our calling is to do our best and put things in Jesus' hands.

The serenity prayer is helpful:

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can
and wisdom to know the difference.*

We need to remember there are things we can do nothing about. Usually, we fret about them and it is a waste of energy.

Yours, Lesley

More from Lesley:

The **Big In/Out Day** on Sunday, 8 October, will be a day of activity and learning.

Help for Christmas Day Lunch will you be around? Would anyone you know like to help? We need cooks and people to make the party go with a swing. Offers to Lesley.

MEMO FROM MARTYN



I have been reading the Old Testament and have recently got to the prophets. One phrase keeps coming up, usually after a long passage about the pending destruction or punishment of the Israelites. The phrase is “so that you might know that I am the Lord”. The prophets seem to be saying that this is what God will do and then the people will know God is at work.

In conversations I have had over the years a question often raised is, “if there is a God, why doesn’t God intervene and prevent disasters happening or give some sign that God is there?” Hearing that, I’m reminded of the passage in Luke 16 v31 where Jesus says “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced, even if someone rises from the dead.”

But it remains a puzzle. If God revealed Godself so positively in Old Testament times, why not now? Some tell me I am taking a very localised view and that in some parts of the world miracles of healing and mass feedings are still happening. Others will say it is a lack of faith in the Western church.

I’ve often tried to play out scenarios where God did intervene, say by stopping anyone getting hurt in a road collision. They all end up in a pretty chaotic world. Bruce Almighty, if you’ve seen the film, was a humorous attempt to give an answer to what would happen if God did intervene and answer our prayers. I remember one bit where everyone won on the Lottery and got a few dollars each. Rather than being thankful for an answered prayer, they were all annoyed that their winnings were so small!

There are serious questions here though. For example, why are so many starving or dying of curable diseases, while others have shops full of food and first-class medicine available. (Part of the answer is what we can do to alleviate these issues, through supporting Christian Aid, for example.)

I guess I’m a little bit like doubting Thomas. He wanted to see the risen Jesus and the crucifixion wounds before he would believe.

At times like this, I often look out into my garden and wonder at all the marvellous plants, trees and flowers and give thanks or remember those times when I’ve felt God especially close and that is enough.

Martyn Verge



SALLY'S STORIES



Sally receiving a goodbye card from Haru before she moved back to Japan.

“I hate saying goodbye to children when they leave”.

Esther helping Sally to read the Bible story to Messy Church.

“We had a good number of tots and teens that day.”



“Even the parents enjoy Messy Church!”

To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see the final page

Pastoral News at 14. 8.23.

**Out of care for people's privacy,
names are not included
in the Pastoral News section of the
online Church News**

For our young people going back to school, college and university and those starting in new educational settings, our prayers are for you all.

Lord, we come before you asking that you will fill our minds with your peace and our hearts with your joy. Give us the ability to set down all our burdens and worries for our lives, family and future so that we may overflow with hope. Amen.

Ann Macfarlane

CONGRATULATIONS TO JENNA AND TERESA AS THEY CELEBRATE THEIR DEGREES



This summer I graduated from LSE with first class honours in History. Having received my Bachelor of Arts from the International History Department, I have decided to pursue secondary teaching in the subject of History. In September, I will be starting my teacher training with Teach Wimbledon, who placed me at Ricards Lodge Girls' School where I will observe other history teachers and start learning how to teach history. For 4 days per week, I will be at the school earning my QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) and for 1 day per week I will be at Roehampton University studying for my PGCE (Post-

graduate Certificate in Education). I am really looking forward to this exciting and busy year and, fingers crossed, this time next year I will be a fully qualified history teacher!



Teachers typically trained on two-year or three-year Certificate courses at Teacher Training Colleges. During the late 1960s and early 1970s Teacher Training College Certificates were gradually wound down and teaching became a graduate profession. UK law changed so that all trainees had to complete a graduate or postgraduate course. Universities decided that the thousands of individuals who had received Teaching Certificates between the 1930s and the 1980s were to be awarded Honorary Bachelor of

Education Degrees at special ceremonies. So, at the end of last year, I discovered that I was eligible to apply to receive an Honorary Degree! At the end of June, I joined several hundreds for a Graduation Ceremony and afterwards celebrated with the family.

TRIBUTE TO VALERIE PARKINSON

19.11.1937 – 6. 7.2023

The following are extracts taken from Deanne's tribute to her mother at the Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration on 26 July:



Mum was born into a Christian family, the eldest of 3 children. The family moved multiple times in Mum's childhood as a result of her Father's work for the Ministry of Food during the war. She found this regular uprooting very difficult emotionally, as friendships were disrupted and she had to start again each time. This may be one of the reasons why, once she had moved to Hampton Hill after she married, she never wanted to move again. She went to Guildford Grammar School for girls and did well. She loved music, dancing (which sadly was not a pastime that Dad enjoyed) and playing hockey and tennis.

Mum wanted to be a teacher but her Father couldn't afford to finance the training so she took a secretarial course, then went to work for the Distillers Company, a fore runner of British Plastics. Her boss and wife became lifelong friends and, effectively, extended family.

Although Mum never had formal teacher training, she loved to work with children, initially through her involvement in the Girl Guide movement. She was a Girl Guide herself, then she went on to be the Brown Owl of the Campsbourne Brownie Pack.

Graeme, Martin and I arrived in quick succession early in their marriage when money was very tight. As was the norm at that time, Mum gave up her job when I arrived, and became a full-time home maker. I can recall, in the days before they could afford a car, Mum walking with us all the way from Hampton through Bushey Park to Teddington and back, pushing the pram with Martin in it and Graeme riding on top and me walking alongside to go and do the weekly shop in Sainsbury's.

We had memorable family holidays in the UK over the years. Initially we went to stay on a farm on the cliffs above Dover, camping in a field full of wild flowers that was regularly invaded by calves. It was on one of these holidays that I remember Mum helping me with a project to collect and press wild flowers. She really loved nature and had a broad knowledge of plants, trees and flowers and enjoyed passing this on to next generations. We also had

holidays in North Wales and in North Norfolk for a number of years and there are happy memories of building sandcastles and searching with Mum for shells along the seashore and also brass rubbing of original brasses in churches. There were also stays in Derbyshire, re-exploring the Peak District which is an area that Mum really loved, having lived there from the age of 3 to 6 in the war years.

More recently, as the family grew with marriages and grandchildren arriving, Mum and Dad enjoyed holidaying in France with them. Hannah and Alex have lovely memories of times spent with Nanna and Grandpop, pottering about exploring France, collecting conkers, visiting castles and trying different food. And they finally had bigger long-haul holidays as a couple to South Africa, a country that they explored on several occasions.

Faith was always at the core of Mum's life, although it was not something of which she spoke very much. Her faith was one expressed through service. We attended church as a family, but the move to Kingston Congregational Church in 1967 rooted Mum in a Christian family that she really valued and served for many years. For her it was mutually beneficial. She received support and encouragement on her Christian journey, and in turn she built wonderful friendships with people who she remained in touch with until the very end. She had lovely memories of holidays with Cliff and Myrtle Austin in France which were full of good wine, nice food and lots of fun. Mum became involved in teaching the 7-11 year olds and led the Junior Department, teaching for over 40 years. She helped put together YPD festivals, ran groups and craft activities in holiday clubs, made calligraphic posters for events, sang in the choir and musicals, and latterly undertook coffee duties and organised the coffee rota and catering supplies for the coffee service. All of these activities gave her a deep sense of purpose and self-esteem.

Mum also volunteered for many years for the Hampton Hill Community Care group, offering friendship and driving services to members of the community. She was also very involved in supporting the local scout group that Martin, in particular, was very involved with.

Mum was a woman of simple tastes. She loved spending time in the countryside and was a great spuddler, an aspect of her character which at times drove her family to distraction but came to the fore positively with her grandchildren who she loved to potter around with, collecting conker and acorns and feeding ducks.

Although Mum always denied that she had a sweet tooth, she was always a sucker for desserts and cakes! There was always some form of dessert at home; baked jam roll is a legend within the family, filled with home-made plum jam from plums that grew in the garden. Even when she was frail towards the end of her life, she would eat a dessert. Needless to say, there will be tea and cake after the service today.

Mum was not a person who relished the limelight, but she had a quiet way of making people feel at ease and being interested in them. She had a twinkling smile, and always enjoyed hearing what everyone in the family was up to, particularly in recent years when her ability to get out and about was so curtailed. She loved meeting her great granddaughter Lydia and seeing photos and videos of her latest antics which brought her great joy.

We are grateful that we all got to spend some good time with Mum in these last months, and even more grateful that her earthly battle is done. She faced her illnesses in her later years with quiet courage but with a degree of frustration, although she didn't lose her smile and kindness to others, particularly at Knowle Park where she was living. She is now at peace and has the joy of meeting her Maker face to face and being reunited with Dad. I just hope that he will have learned to dance in heaven!



FLOWERS FOR SEPTEMBER



- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3rd | Madge Cole |
| 10th | Vacant |
| 17 th | Martyn & He Yeon Verge |
| 24th | Robin Pilbeam & David Anderson |

Nearly there



The much-needed new chairs for the Mayo Hall are almost paid for. The cost was £13,742.84. An anonymous donation, plus the donation of £1,155 from Kingston U3A and members' giving means £13,620.00 has been raised, leaving a small balance of £122.84. **Thanks to all concerned for their generosity.**

Community Lunch on Mondays

The Monday Community Lunch continues to go from strength to strength. John Fisher and Ruth Anderson have now joined the team who take it in turns to cook and serve a 2-course meal. Writing today, Monday, 14th August, we had somewhere between 25 and 30 people eating lunch.

Camillo Fernandez joined us as guest pudding chef. He created his signature dish (ask him for the recipe, it's a delicious combination of milk, eggs, bread and caramel!). It went down a storm. Here's the evidence!



LBC (LONDON BROADCASTING COMPANY)

LBC celebrates its 50th Anniversary on 8 October 2023. A little-known fact is that Gavan Kelly, Joan's husband, was the Engineer on the first day's transmission of the station. Joan is a longstanding member of KURC and attended the evening service for many years. Below is a photo of Gavan on that very first transmission on 8 October 1973:

Theirs is an interesting story – Joan sailed from Scotland to Canada and Gavan had recently travelled there from Australia. They met at a dance in Canada and later settled in Australia for 10 years. On return to England, Gavan got a job as an Engineer at the start-up of LBC and remained there for more than 30 years.

Until recently Gavan and Joan have been regular dancers at the Friday afternoon dances at KURC and have been married for 64 years.



Gavan & Joan
at LBC's 40th
Anniversary

The Mutterbox When foreign journalists were looking to improve the quality of their voice reports, Gavan created history by designing the Mutterbox which quickly became famous among radio reporters in the BBC and other broadcasting organisations from the late 1970's to the mid-1990's when later technology took over. Gavan went on to make many more Mutterboxes, selling them at a very reasonable price.

For radio enthusiasts who would like to know more, please see:

<http://www.orbem.co.uk/odds/mutterbox.htm>

LBC was the UK's first licensed commercial radio station, a week ahead of Capital Radio. LBC's debut was deemed a success when 8,000 listeners called in to have their say on phone-in programmes. As of December 2022, the station broadcast to a weekly audience of 3.9 million!

Tolpuddle Martyrs

On 9 July John and I went to Poundry in Dorchester to celebrate our wedding anniversary with our friend Jan. When travelling and exploring the countryside, Jan suggested we stop at Tolpuddle Village and she told us briefly about the story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. John already knew about the story, but even he was not sure what and why the events happened here, but I had never heard of them before.

When we were entering the village of Tolpuddle, we noticed some sort of activity taking place. Jan told us that festivals happen here every year and this year, on Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th July, there will be many Trade Union groups represented from all parts of England. They will be marching with their bands and banners. There will be concerts, speeches, many craft stalls and food and local agricultural produce. (Unfortunately, as I came to know later, this year, for the first time in history, the festival was cancelled at the last moment due to the adverse weather conditions!)

As we were short of time and could not go to the local museum or to explore further, I did a little research on my return to find out why, in 1834 in Tolpuddle, after the protest of the 6 men for a fairer wage, inspired and led by a staunchly Methodist George Loveless, who was a lay preacher at the Tolpuddle Chapel, they were all arrested, tried under the Mutiny and Seditious Societies Acts, and sentenced to transportation to Australia as convicts. Basically, they were accused of making a “secret pact” which they did under a tree, which has been preserved through the centuries in their memory until today. (See a photo of Natasha under this famous tree on the next page.)

At the time, although Trade Unions were not illegal, the swearing of an oath on joining was, which these men did as members of the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers. And unfortunately for them, the French revolution took place and any organised dispute against the government and the King in England was treated with suspicion and stopped at once. Methodism was also not favourably welcomed in the country at that time, and George Loveless even obtained a licence to permit him to meet his fellow Methodist worshippers at his house.

After the 6 men were shipped to Australia, the outcry from the British public was so high that, after many campaigns, petitions, protests and newspaper campaigns, the 6 men, now given the name “Tolpuddle Martyrs”, were allowed to return to Britain.

When being imprisoned, George Loveless scribbled these words: “**We raise the watchword, liberty. We will, we will, we will be free!**”. A massive demonstration marched through London, the seeds of Trade Unionism were sown and the way to modern democracy was paved in Britain.

If you would like to find out more about this important historic event, the book “*The Story of George Loveless and the Tolpuddle Martyrs*”, written by Andrew Norman, would help you to understand it.

Natasha Reid



A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips SEPTEMBER

Green your home this Autumn. Tackle climate change and reduce your heating bill by testing how draughty or leaky your home is. Find the gaps that let the cold air in and warm air out (think keyholes, letterboxes, gaps around the edges or bottoms of windows and doors, loft hatches, floorboards etc.) and fix these gaps using the correct materials: (there are lots of handy tutorials on how to do this online). Now is also a very good time to prepare for winter by sticking tinfoil or radiator panels between the wall and radiator, as these will help reflect heat back into your room during the colder months.

For more practical ways to enjoy, nurture and defend nature, sign up to A Rocha UK's Wild Christian email at: arochoa.org.uk/wild-christian

ARCHIVE OF THE MONTH



We rarely get such an unusual visitor to our church sanctuary. This beautiful eagle owl was brought to the children's Summer Holiday Club in 2000 and greatly enjoyed itself hopping and flying around. No doubt any mice would have quickly run for cover!

The photo was taken by Mervyn Page who contributed many photos of church life to our archives.

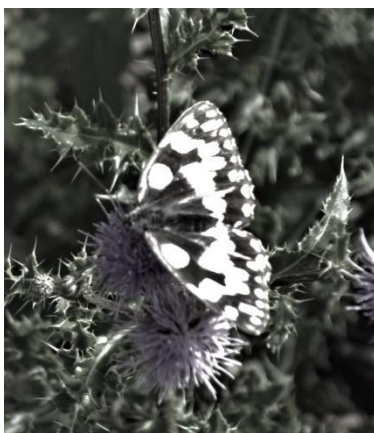
It is quite appropriate to have an eagle owl in church. There are several references to eagles in the Bible, the two most familiar being Exodus 19 v4: "I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself", and Isaiah 40 v31: "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their

strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint".

The reference in Exodus 19 is used in the second verse of Joachim Neander's well known hymn 'Praise to the Lord the Almighty the King of Creation' where Neander writes: 'Praise to the Lord who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth; bears thee on eagle's wings and through all troubles sustaineth'. (Rejoice & Sing No.74)

Many churches have eagle lecterns (usually made of brass) where the eagle's outspread wings cradle the Bible. Nobody knows the origin of this custom, which goes back many centuries, but it is quite possible that there is a link with the biblical references above.

John Fisher



This butterfly is unmistakable from all other species found in the UK. Like the Painted Lady butterfly on the front cover, it is found on thistles, road verges, field margins and disused railway lines.

Marbled White Butterfly
Photo by Jenny Tarbutt

BOOK OF THE MONTH



Book of the month is 'Chasing Francis' by Ian Morgan Cron. This novel takes us on a pilgrimage, through history, doubt and the Italy of St Francis, as a Pastor of a mega church goes on a leave of absence to Italy after a crisis of faith. Both heart-warming and poignant, and in some instances will cause you to burst out laughing, this book will challenge our view of how we do church. RRP £9.99 but 10% off for church members.

Farewell Haeun!

Sadly, we have to say goodbye to Haeun at the end of August. She very much wanted to stay with us, and we are most reluctant to let her go, but her visa is only valid for two years and that time is now up. Regrettably there is no possibility of an extension.

Haeun has been a tremendous asset to our church, playing the organ and piano at all our services, helping to lead the choir, and assisting So Young and Sally with youth work. We are really grateful.

What now? We don't have an abundance of organists/pianists to call upon, but we think we can just about manage for the time being. Ruth is busy learning the organ! We will certainly investigate the possibility of obtaining another graduate from PUTS (the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary Music Dept) in Seoul, Korea. This is where Haeun and HanSol both studied.

So goodbye Haeun – thank you for everything you've done and may God bless you in the future, wherever He leads you. Do please come back and see us when you can!

Ruth Anderson and John Fisher

Church Secretary's Report to the AGM – 10th September 2023

This is my fourth annual report as church secretary.

During the year Covid has remained in the background, but some people are still anxious.

At KURC use of the premises is now more or less back to pre-Covid levels, though there are fewer people using the foyer on some days than before. It has been good to see some new groups using the building in the year.

However, one group, a number of mice, were not so welcome! They moved in when the building work across the road started and are proving difficult to remove!

We have been greatly blessed with many dedicated people who welcome visitors and serve on the Coffee Bar. Carol Clack does a great job with a team of volunteers.

Catherine Treweek and Georgi Todorov, our Centre staff, do a great job presenting a friendly face to our premises users, while also dealing with a whole range of issues that arise in a big building like ours.

Worship continued in a range of ways with the 10am/10:30am, 11:30 and 5pm services each offering their own style. While Lesley leads most services, we are blessed with a number of members and friends who also conduct worship.

This year has been particularly significant for Lesley as she reached 25 years as our minister toward the end of last year, and in October celebrates 40 years in ministry.

We continue to share the morning service on the internet. The technical issues we experienced for a time have now largely been resolved and the system works consistently. There is now a sizeable and loyal online congregation. We are grateful to Cathy Seymour, Janine Goddard and James Mason who have been working on this throughout the year. It is also good to see a number of others involved and able to operate the equipment.

The daily prayer meetings continue through Zoom and we recently added a session on Saturdays. Though small numbers attend, it is good to know that prayers are being offered every day of the week. We thank all those involved in leading the sessions for their faithfulness to the task.

The Bible studies continued on Zoom, ably led by Ken Bartlett with support from Stuart Chandler.

Sally Butler and the youth team work hard to engage with the children, young people and families who take part in a range of activities. Most we never see on a Sunday, but it is good to know that they are involved. Some newer initiatives, such as “Crafternoons” and “Take Time to Craft”, are becoming part of the regular pattern and it is good to see these appealing to a wider audience.

The Community lunches that KURC hosts on a Monday continue to be popular. Numbers have grown through the year, but there is always enough food to go around! Thanks to Bron Robinson, Ray Charlton, Carol Clack and others who run this on our behalf.

In August we once again ran activities alongside the town centre “Thumbs up its Thursday” initiative run across Kingston. This is proving a good way of getting ourselves known by local families.

Our aging building continues to provide challenges. During the year the project to provide safe access to the plant room was completed. This lays the foundation for other work that is needed and the feasibility study for this is underway. We also replaced the chairs in the Mayo Hall which, after 40 years of service, were past their best! The Management Group under the leadership of Cathy Seymour, ably supported by Linda Austin and others, does a great job in looking after the building.

Christine Chippendale, our Treasurer, continues to look after the church’s finances. We are grateful for her dedication, expertise and advice.

Lots of other things have been happening, much of it is unseen but important to the smooth running of the church. We are richly blessed with many people who give their time and skills to the church. It is only with so many willing to play their part that we can do as much as we do. Thank you all.

Martyn’s report will be presented at the AGM on Sunday, 10 September, following the 10.30 service.

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Holly Christie will be editing October’s Church News. Articles and photos to Holly please by Friday, 8 September.

holly@thisdemandinglife.com

Si Musica cibum amoris sit lude!

In the sanctuary on 28th June we had a delightful Summer Concert performed by the K3A Orchestra. We very often have recitals or other concerts in the church, but this was more significant as, firstly, the audience was half-full of young school children from St. Joseph's School in Kingston. It was very thoughtful of the management and teachers to try to expose their pupils to cultural things, as the majority of whom probably only know and understand pop-music.

The conductor, Rupert Bond, explained to the children what was being performed and why different parts of the music would sound so different. With a touch of humour, and with the language that children could understand, he tried to involve them to participate while the orchestra was playing, and asked them to accentuate the music by clapping where necessary during the performance of the overture of the comic opera "Pirates of Penzance" by Sullivan. I am sure the children enjoyed it very much. Then he explained about the 2nd and 3rd excerpts (Habanera and Toreador) from the opera "Carmen" by Bizet.

The pupils were less enthusiastic about Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3. And I smiled when some of the children jumped every time the cymbals were played fortissimo – some of them even put fingers in their ears to protect from the sudden musical volume!

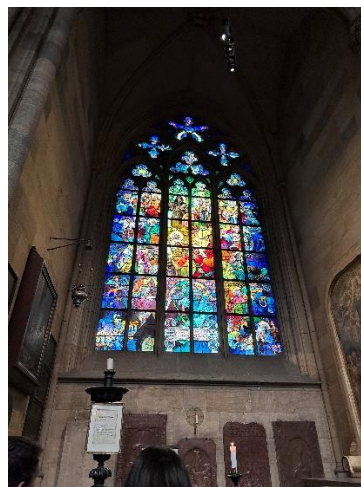
At the end of the concert **our own Liz Bartlett** was congratulated on being a founder member of the K3A and was presented with a Charter inaugurating her as President of the K3A Orchestra. Sealed and tied with a red ribbon, the Charter was opened and read to the audience by a member of the K3A Orchestra. It was written humorously in the way it would have been written in the 18th century.

We all applauded and wished Liz well in her new accolade, and we look forward to hearing more performances in the future.

Natasha Reid



Hyunju Kim shares photos from her lovely holiday in Prague with her husband and daughter:



Lunch-time Concert – 21 September

The September recital is on Thursday, 21 September at 12.30 pm and will be given by pianist Catherine Leonard and cellist Mary Mundy. Together they will be playing Beethoven's Cello Sonata No. 3 in A Major Op. 69. Catherine will then play Schubert's last and arguably greatest piano work, the piano sonata in B Flat Major D960.

Have you heard the one about the Church Mice?

At the July church meeting I was asked to speak about our current issue of mice. One of the consequences when the demolition work started across the road from the church, has been that some mice have lost their homes. Some have attempted to move into our church building. To be fair they have been quiet church mice, preferring to wait until there is tranquillity before venturing to find food in the foyer. The trouble is that one mouse very quickly becomes a community of mice.

We do try to keep to our mission of being a welcoming, caring, worshipping Christian community serving all, but this has been a bit of a challenge!

I would like to thank the church members who came up with some ideas. One was to get a church cat. We did interview one cat but she tended to prefer to watch the mice. Another suggestion was to charge them rent. Personally, I am a little nervous that they would not only gnaw through their credit cards but also the card machine.

So, we have gone down the more traditional route of paying for specialist help. Hopefully by the time that you are reading this the mice will have relocated and will be happily settled into their new homes back across the road!

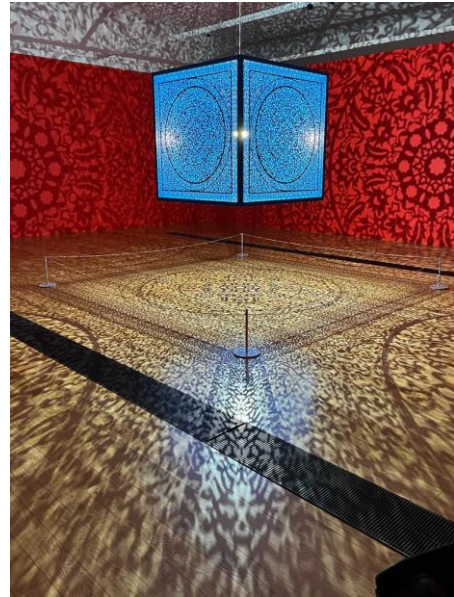
Cathy Seymour



CAPTION COMPETITION

Captions please to Holy Christie for the next edition by Friday, 8 September - holly@thisdemandinglife.com

PLANTS OF THE QUR'AN



Many of you may have visited the Marianne North Gallery situated in Kew Gardens. I went recently only to discover an awe-inspiring exhibition displaying Sue Wickison's years of world-wide scientific plant exploration. The olive is referred to. The Qur'an states that human beings have been chosen to be 'stewards' of the earth and that we have a duty to manage and care for our environment. Islamic Gardens may have sustainability and biodiversity conservation at their heart, together with great aesthetic beauty. Private spaces have traditionally provided safe places for women to meet and socialise.

The plant illustrations are exquisite. The names of specimens have changed several times as different cultural and environmental situations have changed worldwide.

The exhibition ends with an iconic light installation lit from within. This intricately detailed floating steel cube casts elaborate floor-to-ceiling shadows that transform the surrounding gallery space. The presence of gallery visitors is integral in experiencing shared space, to simultaneously contemplate intimacy along with the differences and commonalities that shape our lives and relationships.

Ann Macfarlane

The Symbol of Suffering



An article "The Symbol of Suffering" by Neil Wright, which appeared in the Daily Mail on 7 August made me want to write using the same theme, as not everybody reads the Daily Mail and I am sure that only a very few (apart from Orthodox people) can give you the answer on why the Orthodox Cross is different to other denominations.

The difference is, that the Russian Orthodox cross has a short top beam above a main horizontal bar and a foot bar slanted downwards.

Being born during the Soviet era, when religion used to be proclaimed as the "opium of the people", I was baptised much later in Tanzania in the local Anglican church by a Danish priest. So, in one of my visits to Crimea I asked the priest from the local church about the difference of the Orthodox cross, and he explained to me exactly what the article in the Daily Mail is talking about.

The small top crossbeam represents Roman governor Pontius Pilate's inscription: in older Greek, it is "The King of Glory". In later iconography it is INRI, the initials for the Latin *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum*, which means "*Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews*".

Jesus's hands were fixed to the middle crossbeam while the bottom bar represents a footrest to prolong His torture.

From the Bible we know that Jesus was crucified at the same time as two thieves and their crosses were placed on each side of Jesus' cross. So one of the thieves said to Jesus: "*Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!*" And the penitent thief rebuked him by saying: "*At least we deserve to suffer, but this man is innocent!*" And then he asked Jesus to remember him in paradise. So that is why the beam is slanted to show that the penitent thief goes to paradise and the unrepentant one goes down to hell.

Since the 6th century the slanted cross is featured in the Byzantine church in art, but never affixed to church domes.

At the end of the 15th century the Orthodox Cross was used by the Moscow Church when its rulers declared themselves the Third Rome, successors to Byzantium and defenders of Orthodoxy.

In 1551 at a council of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Grand Prince of Moscow, Ivan the Terrible, declared this form of the cross to be the standard.

Natasha Reid



Finance
The United Reformed Church
United Reformed Church House
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

9 August 2023

Ministry And Mission Fund – Annual Letter To Local Churches

**To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our
Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

Dear Friends,

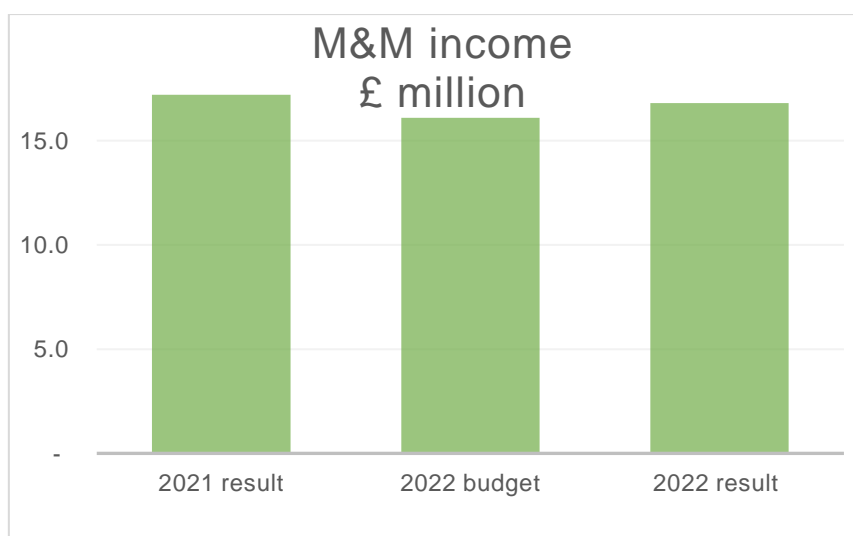
When will normal service be resumed?

As we are writing this letter and closing off the URC's accounts for 2022, the country is still torn with industrial disputes, mostly notably with Health Service workers, rail industry workers, teachers etc. etc. Whatever your view as to the wisdom or justice of such action, we suspect all of us are affected by the disruption to some degree.

In church life too, are we back to "normal life"? Some churches no doubt have returned to something like their pre-Covid level of activity and attendance numbers. Quite a few have recommenced their activity but find their numbers have reduced. Some churches have found re-opening too difficult and have decided to close.

Whatever the "new normal" was to be, we suggest its arrival has (like many trains) been disrupted, delayed, or cancelled all together.

The URC's finance officers had concerns that the late arrival of the return to normality would impact very significantly on the giving to the M&M Fund in 2022. However, the churches responded magnificently and the giving to M&M was £600,000 ahead of budget. It was also only 2.5% down on 2021's result.



To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see the final page

So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2022 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could. With normal service not yet resumed, 2023 is not going to be an easy year either. We now have the added disruption of high inflation, pushing up wages and overhead costs. As the Spirit directs and as our means allow, can the churches once more respond to the call of our gracious, loving and ever-generous God?

Again, thank you all!

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,

Ian Hardie (Immediate Past Treasurer)

Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)



LAST TEMPTATION BUT ONE

Martin Scorsese announced he is making another film about Jesus. After meeting Pope Francis in May, the director said: "I have responded to the Pope's appeal to artists in the only way I know how: by imagining and writing a screenplay for a film about Jesus." His controversial 1988 film *The Last Temptation of Christ* drew protests from some Christians but was well reviewed in *Reform*.

Reform, July/August 2023

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"The worship is over, let the service begin."

Sally Foster-Fulton, Moderator, Church of Scotland General Assembly, closing the King's Honours of Scotland Thanksgiving in Edinburgh.



☺☺ SMILES ☺☺

A bloke in the pub told me that he had finished the bungalow that he built for his wife and him to live in. He had wanted a house, but that was another storey!

I'm an expert on ice-cream. I went to Sundae School.

I was walking in the jungle and saw a lizard on his hind legs telling jokes. I turned to the local leader and said; "That lizard is really funny!" The leader replied, "That's not a lizard. He's a stand-up chameleon".

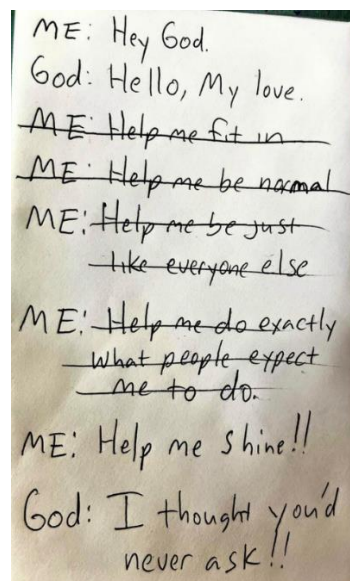
A man walked into a bar. "It's 25 years since I came in here."
"Sorry," said the barman. "I'm being as quick as I can!"

What did Mary say when she saw the wise men?
"Typical, you wait ages, then three come along at once."

A student was writing to the head of the mission in England who had founded his local school in the African bush. He wanted to end with a blessing, 'May heaven preserve you.' Not being quite confident of his English, he looked up the word 'preserve'. When the letter reached the head of the mission, it ended with the words: 'And may Heaven pickle you.'

What is the best and most infallible way to reduce your waistline? Just move your head slowly from right to left when asked to have a second helping.

A thief broke into my house last night. He started searching for money, so I got up and searched with him.





READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

Living by God's grace

Friday 1 September	2 Corinthians 11:16-12:13
Saturday 2 September	2 Corinthians 12:14-13:14

FASTING

Sunday 3 September	Isaiah 58:3-11
Monday 4 September	1 Samuel 14:24-30
Tuesday 5 September	Daniel 1:3-17
Wednesday 6 September	1 Kings 21:20-29
Thursday 7 September	Nehemiah 1:1-2:5
Friday 8 September	Ezra 8:21-23
Saturday 9 September	Acts 13:1-3

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (5)

1 He who comes in the name of the Lord

Sunday 10 September	Matthew 19:1-15
Monday 11 September	Matthew 19:16-30
Tuesday 12 September	Matthew 20:1-16
Wednesday 13 September	Matthew 20:17-34
Thursday 14 September	Matthew 21:1-11
Friday 15 September	Matthew 21:12-27
Saturday 16 September	Matthew 21:28-46

2 Confrontations

Sunday 17 September	Matthew 22:1-14
Monday 18 September	Matthew 22:15-22
Tuesday 19 September	Matthew 22:23-46
Wednesday 20 September	Matthew 23:1-12
Thursday 21 September	Matthew 23:13-28
Friday 22 September	Matthew 23:29-39
Saturday 23 September	Matthew 28:1-20

SOWING AND REAPING

Sunday 24 September	Psalms 65:9-13
Monday 25 September	Deuteronomy 16:13-15
Tuesday 26 September	Nehemiah 5:1-12
Wednesday 27 September	Ruth 2:2-8
Thursday 28 September	John 4:35-38
Friday 29 September	Galatians 6:7-10
Saturday 30 September	1 Corinthians 15:35-44

Kingston United Reformed Church – Information

A warm invitation is given to all who read this magazine to come and share in our services and activities

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Premises Assistant:

Georgi Todorov, Landline as above.

How to contribute to Church News:

Contributions on matters of reflection and opinion as well as reports of activities are welcome.

Copy for **Church News** must reach the editor by the second Friday of the month.

The next copy deadline for October is Friday, 8 September 2023

Editor: Holly Christie E-mail: holly@thisdemandinglife.com

FINANCIAL DONATIONS to KURC can be made in a number of ways:

Complete one of the forms at the back of the church to set up standing order payments.

Make regular cash gifts at the Sunday services. By using the offertory envelopes, you allow the church to reclaim Gift Aid.

You can also pay directly into our bank account: sort code 20-46-73, account number 60921289 and quote Kingston United Reformed Church Charity.

We also now have a digital collection plate (card reader) at the back of the church

Kingston United Reformed Church is a member of the Local Ecumenical Project in Kingston Town Centre with its partner, All Saints Parish Church in the Market Place.

The town centre ministers meet regularly.

We are a part of Churches Together in Kingston.

Kingston URC is also affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea (PROK)

You can also keep in touch with worship and activities at our church through our website: www.kingstonurc.org. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see the final page