

ESTD 1901

The Recorder

March '23

News and views from Redland Park &
New Brunswick United Reformed Churches



www.redlandparkurc.org

New Brunswick Update

Preachers for 11 am Services

March
12th Angus Gregson (will include Communion)
19th Trevor Ranger (Mothering Sunday)
26th Rev Douglas Burnett (Gift Day)

April
2nd Angus Gregson (Palm Sunday)
9th Angus Gregson (Easter Day)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

7th March is the monthly Southmead Joint Churches meeting at 7.30pm. Our host this month will be the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

9th March at 7.30pm will be our next Church Meeting

18th March Church 'Christmas' Party from 3pm

Friday 24th March at 7pm will be our next 'Southmead Quiz'. Cost £3 inc tea, coffee and nibbles.

25th March is the date for the next Craft and Preloved event at the Greenway Centre from 12-3pm

28th March Bristol Area URC meeting will be held at New Brunswick at 7.30-8.45pm

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

During the past weeks several of our folk have fallen to the bugs' that have been around. These include **Gill, Elaine, Mary and Angie**. We hope by the time you are reading this all our folk will be feeling much better.

We continue to uphold to the Lord, **Anita, Roger, Paul and all the family** as they continue to cope with their current situation. May God minister to each of them in their different circumstances.

Our thoughts continue to be with **Ruth and Peter** at this time. May they be assured of our support and prayers. May God be with them as they adjust to a changing situation because of illness.

Julie and Pete and the wider family are in our thoughts and prayers at this time as they support each other. May they be assured of our support and love.

In all these situations we ask that God sees the need and will answer with His Mercy and Peace.

On a brighter note we wish Gary a safe and happy time as he goes on a long awaited holiday.

Some of our folk will be celebrating a birthday during the month of March.

12th Gill / 18th Hazel. We wish them happy days. To all those who may be celebrating other events we pray that these too will be happy times shared with family and friends.

Vestry Vibes by Douglas Burnett



Dear friends,

Lent, I suppose, can have about it both an up side and a downside. The downside might be said to be that emphasis on repentance. We start Lent with Ash Wednesday, and sackcloth and ashes. Ash Wednesday might be said to be sombre and serious. In many ways that is fair enough. It is good to take issues seriously when they matter. Getting things right is what the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness are all about. That is all about getting the fundamentals right, that everything that things follows should work out right as well.

I suppose that you could call it a downside, but it is not just depressing. I am all for downsides such as this one. But what I have always enjoyed about lent is that this season always coincides with the days getting longer. Of course that is one of the likely origins of the word Lent. It means to lengthen. It means much the same as the "*spring season*." So, despite anything to do with grief and the like, I can't but help feel my mood lightening as we gradually move towards Easter. I don't think that I am the only one. The Orkney library in Kirkwall posts photographs of what it is like outside their front door every 5pm on every Thursday from January through March. The lighter evenings get a lot of likes on Twitter. No wonder we all feel so much better by the time we get to Easter Sunday!

There is some theological and spiritual insight in all of this too. At our journey's end there is the resurrection. That is for me the most profound representation of hope. I suppose that most of the time it works at the sub-conscious level. But it is always there, shaping and guiding what I do. I have got no

concept as to what my world perspective would be without it, I have never known anything else, but I suspect that it would be all the poorer. So here we are at the start of our Lenten journey.

I look forward to journeying with you over the next few weeks.

Don't forget that we have also got the Lent Conversations. This year they are all based physically at Victoria Methodist Church and revolve around theme of art. Don't forget that we will also have the Holy Week devotions. Details of those will be e-mailed out in due course. But even if you can't get to any of those, then be sure to join us in person or online on Easter Sunday itself. Christ is Risen...always...even in Lent.

Dougie



Message from the Church Secretary: It is with great sadness that we report that **Andrew Sims** has passed away. He has been an absolute stalwart of Redland Park throughout his life and there will be future opportunities to celebrate his life, his wisdom and his sense of fun. In the meantime, our thoughts and prayers must be for his wife Suzy, his sisters Kate and Alison and his children Hannah, Matt and Helen and their families.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Psalm 116 v 15.

We also note the death of **Elaine Savage**, who was a regular member at Redland Park up to about 20 years ago. Her daughter Chloe, who also was a member, moved back to Bristol recently to look after her mother in her last illness, as well as her disabled brother, and has been attending Redland Park again.

Audrey Bryant moved back home in mid-February with support from her family and carers and we hope that all goes well for her. Our prayers are with her.

We continue our prayers for **Jane Beazer** while she continues with her medical treatment and we hope for improved health.

We pray for the Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter as it provides accommodation and support for several homeless people through the winter. They all appreciate a room of their own, meals provided by many

churches around the city, and support as they find work, open bank accounts, and find accommodation of their own. The shelter runs to the end of March and Redland Park has been providing lunches and servers every Wednesday since the beginning of November. Thanks to everyone who has given support.

We pray for refugees and asylum seekers everywhere, and ask the government to be compassionate to them all, and to help bring peace to the world. We pray especially for Ukraine at present, and for Russia that their leader develops some humanity, and for the people of Turkey and Syria after the earthquakes there.

We also pray for countries suffering from natural disasters, especially those areas suffering from the effects of Climate Change bringing drought and famine to countries in Africa and floods to Pakistan.

From Audrey: I am home! though still rather housebound. Thank you to all the church friends who have given me so much support through thoughts, prayers and visits. I do want you to know how grateful I am and how much I appreciate it.

May God make your year a happy one!
Not by shielding us from all sorrows and pain,
But by strengthening us to bear it as it comes.
Not by making our path easy,
But by making us sturdy to travel any path.
Not by taking hardships from us,
But by taking fear from our heart.
Not by granting us unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping our face bright, even in the shadows.
Not by making our life always pleasant,
But by showing us when people and their causes need us most.
And by making us anxious to be there to help.
God's love, peace, hope and joy to us for the year ahead.

Author unknown, adapted by Debra Mooney.

God of peace and justice,
With sorrow and lament, we hold the situation in Ukraine before you, a year on from the Russian invasion.
We long for an end to the conflict and the bloodshed and suffering.
We remember people in Ukraine living in fear of death and destruction.
We pray for all who grieve lost lives and opportunities.
May those who have been displaced find safety and welcome in their new communities.
We pray that those with authority and influence will work for a just peace which provides security for all.
As we hold in our prayers all affected by the war, we pray that they may know that they are held in your loving arms.
In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen

To Redland Park Church,

We wanted to say a massive thank you for your donation from the collections at the Carol Service and Christmas Day Service.

This will help us to continue our work in our surrounding community.

Best wishes, from the N Bristol and S Glos Foodbank.

CARING IN BRISTOL:

Thank you so much for your incredible support through an amazingly generous £375 donation. Your support really does mean the world to us; we have been overwhelmed by how caring Redland Park Church has been towards our local charity.

As you know, much of our work focuses on helping people who are rough sleeping move away from the streets; providing early help and assistance to ensure people don't become homeless in the first place, and supporting marginalised young people, often in crisis who fall between the gaps of other services. Bristol has an acute housing crisis which, when coupled with the cost of living crisis, means that more people than ever will be struggling to maintain their tenancy.

This year, as you can imagine, has been tougher than ever for our local charity, both in terms of fundraising but also the pressure on our services. However, it is caring churches in the community like yourselves that make a huge difference and allow us to continue to support people in our city.

Sincerely, Luke Mitchell

Corporate and Community Partnerships Co-ordinator

We hope that once again we can hold our annual Christian Aid Fair during Christian Aid Week, May 14-20 this year, with stalls selling books, CDs, DVDs, bric a brac, plants, maybe some Korean food, tea and coffee, etc. If you are de-cluttering, please bring items to church and we can store them.



Christian Aid funds, which we help to support with our Fair, Big Brekkie and envelope money, has so far helped: Afghanistan – where we have been forced to temporarily suspend our programme.

Ukraine - continuing to work with many different needs. 24th February marks one year since the invasion

East Africa - your response has helped us to provide aid, but the crisis continues as we tackle Climate Conflict and Covid – details of one recent success story in Ethiopia is on the website. Christian Aid Week – the main resources will be available after the conference – but we will focus on Malawi.

Please be mindful that the Malawi stories are an example of how we fund our projects and this funding is unrestricted and helps us provide aid in emergencies and places in need throughout our world.

Lent – resources are available on the website – if you are planning anything, and it is appropriate, please do invite me along. We can also help with publicity if needed.

Other Information

Beacon of Hope – We have partnered with Ugandan artist Matt Kayem to create a 'Beacon of Hope' which illuminates five powerful messages of hope about hunger, equality, health, climate, and justice. From 16-29 January, beaming brightly in the grounds of Southwark Cathedral, our stained-glass style 'Beacon of Hope' will create an awe-inspiring spectacle of light and colour with messages of hope to lift everyone's spirits. You can see more on our website- we are investigating ways of sharing this display at other Cathedrals.

Campaigns – We continue to raise awareness about Climate Justice and our Lent resource is based on the Talking Climate Justice evenings which we have been hosting (and continue to hold) across the country. These have been very successful in engaging local communities, political leaders and Church members in talking together. Please look at our website for more information on these and on Loss and Damage.

Christian Aid - UK charity fighting global poverty - Christian Aid

Andrew Sims

Our dear departed friend Andrew Sims leaves a deep hole in our lives, but we must now rejoice in his life and spirit which lives on.

Andrew's values were embedded in the close and welcoming family manse, in which he grew up and which was to have a profound and constant influence on the rest of his life.

He was deeply grounded in the non-conformist and congregationalist tradition which encouraged engagement, hard work, and a life of service. Andrew was not swayed by prevailing ideas or practices which did not accord with his Christian beliefs and conviction. He was always loyal, supportive and concerned for the wellbeing of others.

It happened that through several generations and congregational church circles our family paths crossed, but it was not until 1969 that I first met Andrew. When having just moved to Bristol, by pure chance I answered an advert in the Evening Post inviting a new flat mate to share with two other young professionals in a top floor flat on Pembroke Road. It was only when I was called back for a second interview when I decided to take my girlfriend Jane, that we were all to discover our common heritage, and I was subsequently invited to take the spare room. It was the beginning of a lifetime of close friendship.

Within a short time, I realized that Andrew was extremely playful and fun loving with characteristic ambition, persistence, determination and competitiveness. His humour enabled him to diffuse any difficult situation and to laugh constantly with others and at himself. He hated anything which might be construed as pomposity or exploitation. No-one could describe Andrew as domesticated, but this was compensated for by his mother, his chosen friends and much later by Suzy who was to become his beloved wife.

Andrew honed his leadership skills through the example of others, as a scout leader and as a team player. Despite various health complications he would constantly challenge his many friends to compete in various activities and always ensure that he was on the winning side. At Clifton College he was captain at Fives. Later he joined Janet Stables Badminton club in the Highbury Chapel Hall.

In the post war years Redland Park church was in ruins, but through a fund-raising campaign by the church and under the leadership of his father the Revd. Basil Sims, Andrew witnessed the rebuilding of the church. The family later moved from the manse, then in Fernbank Road, to a new home at Western Congregational Theological College where his father became the principal, and the family transferred their membership to Highbury Chapel. When Highbury Chapel eventually closed Andrew returned to Redland Park where, during the Revd. Cyril Grants' ministry, he served for a time as church secretary. Over the years he has also served on the Elders Board and on the Finance and Property committee.

He was articled and trained as a solicitor attending law school in Guildford where

he was to encounter further lifelong friends. He later set up his office with Gavin Teague in Thornbury. In his professional life he had complete integrity, was discreet and a great advocate for his clients.

In 1972 Redland Park Congregational Church became part of the United Reformed Church, and Andrew had the task of transferring the individual property deeds into the care of the South Western Province of the United Reformed Church. As a Trustee a great deal of his charitable work involved the administration of Western College Congregational Trusts and the Highbury Mission (Broad Plain) Trust. He was closely involved in negotiating and setting up the Broad Plain Boys Club at Riverside Park after the closure of Anvil Street, and in the administration of the Broad Plain Club at Knowle West until its closure. The work involved in negotiating a planning permission, the sale of the site, and investing the proceeds for the future support of an ongoing chapter in the life of the Highbury (Broad Plain) Mission, was considerable.

Andrew was a member of the Rotary Club and took his turn as President raising many thousands of pounds for various charities. For all his charitable work he was rewarded with an invitation to a Buckingham Palace Garden party with Suzy. With his father, from early childhood he was a supporter and paid-up member of the Bristol City Football Club. He regularly attended their fixtures, a habit which he has passed on to his family. He delighted in and was an enthusiastic supporter of his children and grandchildren and their many sporting activities, and with Suzy regularly turned up on the pitch to support them. As was his father he was passionate about golf and Andrew was a member of the Bristol and Clifton Golf Club. Over the years with Suzy, Matthew, Hannah and Helen he enjoyed many happy UK and European holidays, camping and caravanning; and with friends there were skiing holidays and numerous European city breaks. But perhaps most of all he loved our walking holidays, following various trails, delighting in map reading and just appreciating the magnificent English countryside.

In all he did and achieved Andrew was, kind, patriotic, fiercely loyal and driven. He took the greatest pleasure in Redland Park Church, his family and his friends. Andrew and Suzy offered generous hospitality and a welcome to all in their lovely home. He loved life and during his illness with typical determination and perseverance he kept fighting on to the end.

We shall miss his company and we continue to hold Suzy and the family, together with his sisters Kate and Alison, in our thoughts and prayers.

Richard Pedlar
3rd March 2023

Christian Aid 2023 - not just one week a year!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Redland Park is going to hold our usual Christian Aid Fair on Saturday 13 May from 10.30am to about 1.00/1.30pm at the front of the church.



There will be books, plants, bric a brac, cakes, teas and coffees, etc, so anything you wish to de-clutter or donate we would be very grateful to have it.

If you can help on the day, either by coming and buying, making a cake, donating stuff, or helping run a stall, please save the date and let us know. Many thanks.

CHURCH IN SOCIETY GROUP

Lent Conversations.

Tuesday 7th March, 7.30pm, Victoria Methodist Church.
"The Methodist Modern Art Collection- discovering Jesus."
Sarah Middleton.

Wednesday 15th March, 7.30pm, Royal West of England Academy.
"Art and Faith in the west of England from the Newlyn School to the present day."
Alison Beavan.

Tuesday 28th March, 7.30pm, Victoria Methodist Church.
"One life, several (interlocking) careers."
Clive Hicks-Jenkins and Rebecca Gibbs.

LOSS AND DAMAGE - Climate Justice

If you happen to hit a parked vehicle in your car, who do you think should pay for the damage?
If the football you have just kicked (badly!) breaks the window of a neighbour's house, who is responsible for the repair?

There has been much discussion recently about LOSS AND DAMAGE relating to those countries who are suffering the greatest from climate change and who are the least responsible for causing it. Not least at COP 27, held in July last year, in Egypt.

You will no doubt have seen in the media the devastating effects of flooding, wild-fires and drought. There is no longer any doubt that these 'freak' occurrences are the direct results of climate change. It is the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world who are feeling the effects the most.

Below are some of the warnings and recommendations proclaimed by Antonio Guterres, the Secretary-General of the UN:

Humanity has a choice: cooperate or perish. It is either a Climate Solidarity Pact – or a Collective Suicide Pact

The deadly impacts of climate change are here and now. Loss and damage can no longer be swept under the rug. It is a moral imperative. It is a fundamental question of international solidarity – and climate justice. Those who contributed least to the climate crisis are reaping the whirlwind sown by others," he underscored, adding that during COP27 leaders must agree on a clear, time-bound roadmap reflective of the scale and urgency of the challenge.

The proposed Pact would see all countries taking extra efforts to reduce emissions, wealthier nations and international financial institutions providing assistance to emerging economies, ending dependence on fossil fuels and the building of coal plants, providing sustainable energy for all, and uniting to combine strategy capacities for the benefit of humankind.

António Guterres asked governments to tax the pandemic-driven windfall profits of fossil fuel companies and redirect the money to people struggling with rising food and energy prices and countries suffering loss and damage caused by the climate crisis.



The UN chief said that while a fund for loss and damage is essential, it's not an answer if the climate crisis washes a small island State off the map – or turns an entire African country into a desert. How will we answer when 'Baby 8 Billion' is old enough to ask: What did you do for our world – and for our planet – when you had the chance?



In the face of such an enormous challenge we, as individuals, can feel small and insignificant. *"What can I do?"* Write to your MP, and keep writing, asking her/him to make sure this issue stays on the table. And putting pressure on Government to act.

PRAY. God is listening. As Christians we have an obligation to respond to those in need. To show compassion as Jesus did.

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes or daily food? If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

James 2: 14-17

Les Brentley

Easy Eco Tips from A Rocha.
Celebrate Spring! Make sure you're giving yourself quality time enjoying creation: smelling the blossom, tapping catkins, copying bird song, finding a footprint or identifying spring flowers with the Pl@ntNet app. Nature can boost our happiness so take time to observe nature in your gardens, on your balconies, and in your local green space.

Here are the Lectionary readings for March and the first Sunday in April. And we're already in Lent. At least the days are visibly Lengthening. The three year cycle of the Lectionary centres on one of the three synoptic gospels each year - this year it's Matthew - but for most of Lent we have an interlude in John's gospel. They're longer than the average weekly readings. Maybe if we were going to give up something for Lent, we could give up a bit more time from other things and spend it on reading the Bible more? Have you been reflecting on the verses Les Fry suggested to us?

We finished February with Moses spending 40 days and nights up the mountain with God, and then Jesus in the wilderness for the same amount of time. A key theme of Matthew's gospel is to point out (to a chiefly Jewish audience) how Jesus is the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. John mirrors this in an even more profound way; look at how the opening of his gospel parallels the beginning of Genesis.

So here we have four encounters between Jesus and a variety of people, all in need. And Jesus shows in the way he talks with them, in the way he deals with their underlying needs, that in him the kingdom of God has come.

Meanwhile the Old Testament readings, although sometimes seemingly unrelated, highlight key examples of humanity's failing – The Fall, the Israelites whinging during the exodus, and later in Exile because of their sins – and God's continuing love in spite of that – the call and blessing of Abraham, provision of water in the desert, the promise of restoration. All in a sense a preamble to Good Friday and Easter.

Many preachers use the lectionary readings as a basis for their preaching. The suggestion is to read them sometime in the week before Sunday worship so that if they are the ones used, it might help you get a bit more from the sermon.

March	Old Testament	Psalm	Gospel	NT
5th lent 2	Genesis 12:1-4a	121	John 3:1-17	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
12th lent 3	Exodus 17:1-7	95	John 4:5-42	Romans 5:1-11
19th lent 4	1 Samuel 16:1-13	23	John 9:1-41	Ephesians 5:8-14
26th lent 5	Ezekiel 37:1-14	130	John 11:1-45	Romans 8:6-11
April 2nd palm sunday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	118:1-2, 19-29	Matthew 21:1-11	Philippians 2:5-11

Redland Park Church Calendar

March 2023 at Redland Park URC.

Sunday services @ 10.30am. (At church and on Zoom)

5th Rev Dougie Burnett. (including Communion)

12th Rev Dougie Burnett

19th Rev Dougie Burnett.

26th Church Action on Poverty Service.

Zoom log in; 732 001 8996; passcode 8cC7Zv

7pm Sunday service @ 7pm.

12th and 26th through Zoom.

Zoom log in; 815 4053 7777; passcode 087103

World Day of Prayer.

Friday 3rd March, 10.30am Tyndale Baptist Church.

Zoom log in; 831 8799 5291 Passcode 810959

Elders Meeting.

Wednesday 1st 7,30pm by Zoom.

Zoom log in; 732 001 8996; passcode 8cC7Zv

Warmshare.

Wednesdays & Thursdays between 10.30am and 2.30pm.

Church Meeting.

Sunday 19th March, 11.50pm at church.

**Deadline for contributions for the
April Recorder is 26th March.**

Please send to the editor Sarah Trigg

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**or by post to The Recorder at the Church
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