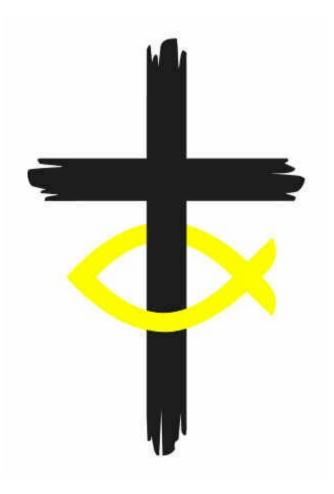
# The Recorder

### November '23

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



# Vestry Vibes by Dougie Burnett

Dear friends,

This month sees the Act of Remembrance. November 11<sup>th</sup> is always a significant date in the year. Our Remembrance Service is Sunday November 12<sup>th</sup>. Some years ago when I was training for the ministry some of us wondered if the significance of Remembrance was being lost as the years went by and the memories of the two World Wars receded into the past. We wondered if Remembrance Sunday would continue to be a date observed within the church calendar. How wrong we were. Subsequent events, including various wars such



as the Iraq war, demonstrate that sometimes the tragedy of human conflict is repeated, and that the cost of that conflict is always there and has to be reckoned with.

As I write we are just over two weeks in to the conflict arising from Hamas terrorists attacking men, women and children in Israel. Many have been killed. Many have been taken hostage. There has loss of life on both sides. As I write any land invasion of Gaza by Israel is still pending. The international community is trying to ensure that a humanitarian catastrophe does not happen in Gaza, and that the conflict does not escalate. With everyone having access to social media these days it is so easy to find graphic images as to what is happening on the ground. The cries of pain and outrage are also very much there. It is so easy to become overwhelmed by those emotions. Set against all of that the claims of faith can seem a bit remote and even irrelevant.

But then again, all of this is happening in what we know as the Holy Land. Our faith story is set in this very place. It all happened in those places that now feature in the news headlines. It has never been that peaceful a place to be. Armies have always come and gone and waged conflict there. Assyrian, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans. Despite all of that the faith tradition of which we are part has always insisted on a very different reality and a very different God. The prophets always insisted that with God could we find the way of peace and love. Somehow that generated the faith that kept peace hoping. Maybe as we see these awful images on our TV screens, we could at the same time meditate of verses of scripture and sense for the hope that is always there:

God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46.1)

I lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 121.1-2)

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40.31)

What does the Lord require of you? But to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6.8)

Dougie

### A Rocha's "Easy Eco Tips for NOVEMBER

Have yourself a Greener Christmas.

What ways can you make sure your Christmas is both a celebration of Christ's coming and better for His Creation?



Check out A Rocha UK's twelve tips for a greener Christmas at: https://arocha.org.uk/our-twelve-tips-for-a-greener-christmas/

# Worship details

# ... at Redland Park

# Sunday morning worship 10.30 a.m. (at Redland Park and on Zoom)

November 5<sup>th</sup> Rev Dougie Burnett (will include Communion)

- 12th Rev Dougie Burnett
- 19th Rev Dougie Burnett
- 26<sup>th</sup> Rev Dougie Burnett

There will be Junior Church learning opportunities each Sunday.

Zoom log in: 732 001 8996 passcode 8cC7Zv

# **BRING AND SHARE LUNCH**

Following the last Bring and Share Lunch at Harvest time, we hope that everyone will be happy to come to the next one in the Conference Room on **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**, after the service, or after coffee and a chat.

### Sunday evening worship at 7 p.m.

November 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> via Zoom Zoom log in: 815 4053 7777 passcode 087103

# ... at New Brunswick

### Sunday worship at 11 am

November	$5^{th}$	Angus Gregson
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- 12<sup>th</sup> Les Fry (Remembrance Sunday) Worship will begin at 10.50 a.m.
- 19th Rev. Helena McKinnon (will include communion)
- 26<sup>th</sup> Angus Gregson

December 3<sup>rd</sup> Rev. Dougie Burnett



### Also "at" Redland Park:

### Cell groups - both via Zoom

Mondays at 8 p.m.Zoom log in: 831 5113 5751 passcode 508239

Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m.

Zoom log in: 312 983 3387 passcode 795550

# **Other Redland Park dates:**

November	Wed	1 <sup>st</sup>	Elders' meeting at church, 7.30 p.m.
	Wed	8 <sup>th</sup>	Junior Church leaders' meeting 8 p.m.
	Sun	19 <sup>th</sup>	Church meeting 12 p.m.
	Tue	21 <sup>st</sup>	Finance & Property committee 4.30 p.m.

# **Other New Brunswick dates:**

October	Mon 30 <sup>th</sup> 7.30 p.m. Bible Study (and cake) at New Brunswick.
	The parables - shepherds, sheep and goats.

November Sun 5<sup>th</sup> Joint churches service at St Stephens at 3 p.m. It will be followed by refreshments and a time of sharing. All are welcome.

- Tue 7<sup>th</sup> The monthly Joint Churches prayer meeting this time hosted by St Stephens this will commence at 7.30 p.m.
- Sun 12<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Sunday so please remember that the service will commence at 10.50 a.m. to enable us to share in the silence at 11 o'clock.
- Fri 24<sup>th</sup> Southmead Quiz night, 7 p.m. at New Brunswick. Admission £3. All profits to Southmead good causes.
- Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Craft and Preloved Fair at the Greenway Centre. This is from noon to 3 p.m.

# **People news**

# ... at Redland Park

We remember our good friend **Teblez Mebrahtu**, who died a year ago on 17<sup>th</sup> October, and whose memory will be celebrated by family and friends. We pray for Teame and their daughters as they mourn her loss.

We pray for a good recovery for **Les Fry**, who was knocked off his bike and broke his arm while on his way to Broad Plain. We hope he makes a complete recovery after the operation.

We send our best wishes to **Peter and Anna Ambrose**, who are finding it difficult to come to church these days but who appreciate our prayers.

It was good to see **Lewis Manyika** in church for Harvest, along with Florence and the Zimbabwe Reformed Church. Lewis has been suffering from ill health for a while but he was much missed. **Florence** has been to Zimbabwe a few times in the last year or two as her mother is unwell; we pray for her.

We were glad to see the great, great (great?) niece of the **Revd Urijah Rees Thomas**, our first minister, in church recently. She came with some papers and photographs she had unearthed from him and was interested in Redland Park, as well as Barton Camp that he helped to found.

The earth and all that is in it seems to be one disaster after after another, some related to climate change, some related to people fighting amongst themselves, usually with innocent people suffering most. We pray for all those countries suffering from natural disasters, those suffering from climate change, especially those in the developing world, from conflicts and wars, repression and abuse, especially Ukraine at the moment, as well as Israel and Palestine. Dear God, please look after all your people and the wonderful world you gave us.

# Meanwhile at New Brunswick ...

We wish **Liz** well when she goes for her knee operation. We pray that all will go well and recovery will be smooth.

We wish **Jo H** well as she starts a new job. After 14 years as a school cook she is having a career change and going to be a Pharmacists' Assistant.

Jen S is still in the BRI but progress is still slow. She would appreciate our prayers.

We send our best wishes to **Mary** who recently had to go to hospital to have an object removed from her ear. We hope to see her back worshipping us very soon.

Because of the situation in Israel and Gaza we are sorry to hear that Angus's trip to the Holy Land has had to be cancelled. Let's hope that it can be rearranged when things are more peaceful in the area.

Many of our folk have now had the latest round of vaccinations. Some have had some side effects to these and we uphold all those who have been laid low because of their jabs. Hope you are all now recovered.

There are those who we continue to uphold in prayer among them are Robin W, Margaret B, Wenda and Susan, David F, Roger, Anita and family. God knows of each of these folks' needs and we ask for His Comfort, Healing, Strength, and ever loving arms to enfold all these folk named and those whose names are written on His hands.

All these folk are local and most known to us. But there are those with whom we shall never meet who also need our prayers. Thinking of the people in Israel and Gaza praying for the fighting to cease and for those injured that they may receive medical treatment.

The families of those affected by knife crime throughout the country. Praying for both the victims and their families as well as the perpetrator of these crimes and their families. Each will be touched by these acts of violence. We just ask God to be in each of these situations, wrapping His arms around them as He sees their needs.

### NOVEMBER CELEBRATIONS

We remember all those who will be celebrating birthdays in the coming days. We ask that God pour down His Blessings on them all whatever the occasion.

November 1st Natalie W, 3rd Barb K, 5th Liz W. 19th Les F and 27th Mary.

# TEAR FUND BIG QUIZ NIGHT

A huge thank you from Tear Fund (and from me) to those who took part on the Quiz on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for **all** the donations (and there were some particularly generous ones), and to New Brunswick for their big contribution from the church lunch



on 15<sup>th</sup>. (I did think of you sitting down to eat as I struggled up Wraxall Hill on my way back from Nailsea URC!)

When I last looked we have collectively given £410 to Tear Fund this year.

Nearly 6 000 people at churches across the country took part, and the total raised was just over £49 000 - definitely a BIG Quiz Night.

Angus

# TEAR FUND - IT'S RUBBISH!

Our world has an urgent rubbish problem. A quarter of the world's population - 2 billion people - have no safe way to dispose of rubbish, and it's people in poverty who are suffering the worst impacts of this rubbish problem. They are forced to live and work among piles of waste, which is making them sick, releasing toxic fumes, flooding communities and causing up to a million deaths each year. But Christians are uniting to take global action.

From **30<sup>th</sup> October to 5<sup>th</sup> November**, Tear Fund will be running a Week of Prayer and Action as part of the Rubbish Campaign. This will be an exciting week of going deeper on the issue of rubbish and how it's impacting people living in poverty.

Watch the video at www.tearfund.org/campaigns/rubbish-campaign as an intro to the problem.

And watch the short video introduced by the Bishop of Dover at www.tearfund.org/campaigns/rubbish-campaign/week-of-prayer-and-action to see what you can do. Poverty is not God's plan. You are.



# Harvest thanksgiving...

# MULTICULTURAL HARVEST AT RP

Redland Park was happy to celebrate Harvest on Sunday 24 September together with our Zimbabwe Church and the Bristol Korean Church.

The Lord's Prayer was celebrated in our own language, whatever that may be, and Prayers of Thanksgiving were said in English (by Dougie), Shona (by Collin) and Korean (by Yohan). We are very thankful to be able to worship together and celebrate the bounty of God's good earth.







Food collected was given to the North Bristol and South Glos Food Bank and we all enjoyed a Bring and Share lunch afterwards with food from around the world.

### ...and at NB

Our lovely congregation just keep on giving.

Donations this year also went to the North Bristol and South Glos Food Bank.



### URC, Baptist & Methodist statement on climate change targets

Last updated on 25 September 2023

### The United Reformed Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain and The Methodist Church in Britain issue the following statement in response to the Prime Minister's recent announcement on net zero policies.

"We are dismayed that the Prime Minister is delaying the implementation of policies to achieve net zero. As Christian leaders we are deeply committed to encouraging all within our sphere of influence to be ambitious in reaching net zero as we seek to care for God's creation. This transition must be rapid, equitable and just.

"At a time when so many people are struggling financially, the government has a crucial role to play in ensuring the cost of transition to net zero does not fall most heavily on those least able to afford it. Delaying measures to insulate homes will have the opposite effect, and slowing efforts to reduce fossil fuel use will increase climate impacts on vulnerable communities around the globe.

"Extreme weather events this year have demonstrated the urgency of the situation. The independent Climate Change Committee have assessed that even current policy measures are insufficient to meet the UK's climate targets. The government needs to urgently demonstrate how it will get the UK back on track to reach net zero before 2050.

"The commitments made at COP26 were instrumental in providing confidence to industry, investors and civil society that the UK was serious about rising to the climate challenge. It is a source of extreme disappointment that the Prime Minister's announcement will damage that confidence and undermine our collective efforts. As a country, we have moral and legal responsibilities to show leadership in tackling the climate emergency together."

Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, Moderator of General Assembly, United Reformed Church

Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain Revd Gill Newton, President of the Methodist Conference Deacon Kerry Scarlett, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

### Gaza - Israel

Here's a statement agreed at the URC South West Synod towards the end of October.

The URC South Western Synod expresses concern and condemns all acts of violence and retaliation. We stand for peace and unity and pray for the victims of the attacks in Israel and Palestinian victims caught in the violent crossfire of retaliation. We echo the words of our Christian siblings – The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem :

As custodians of the Christian faith, deeply rooted in the Holy Land, we stand in solidarity with the people of this region, who are enduring the devastating consequences of continued strife. Our faith, which is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ, compels us to advocate for the cessation of all violent and military activities that bring harm to both Palestinian and Israeli civilians ...

It is our fervent hope and prayer that all parties involved will heed this call for an immediate cessation of violence. We implore political leaders and authorities to engage in sincere dialogue, seeking lasting solutions that promote justice, peace and reconciliation for the people of this land, who have endured the burdens of conflict for too long.



A residential district of Gaza after an Israeli raid

# And here's a personal reflection.

I have to say at the outset that what Hamas did on October 7<sup>th</sup> was utterly wrong. And I think it's important that we don't say that, followed by a "but…". The indiscriminate killing of civilians of all ages, and taking hostages back into Gaza, was, is, simply and brutally, wrong.

I'm not an historian. From all I've read it seems that whenever you go back to to try to understand what brought us to this – 1973, the six-day war of 1967, the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the Balfour declaration in 1917 – you always need to go another step backwards. York in 1190? Joshua 1: 2–4? I didn't know who to ask in either of our churches to write an objective (is that possible?) history to help us to understand where we are now. If you are that person, please let me know.

I do remember, on 9/11, an anguished American woman crying out, direct to camera, "Why do they hate us so much?" It's a question that Israel, that Hamas, that all of us maybe, need to ask ourselves. Because if we don't try to understand why people are attacking us, we won't be able to begin to dismantle that hostility.

The state of Israel was created by a UN resolution after World War Two in land that was already occupied by Palestinians. The people in Gaza and the West Bank today are largely the refugees and descendents of people displaced by that in 1948 - something that they call "The Catastrophe" and from the Palestinian areas that Israel took over when they won the 1967 war. And Israel has continued to squeeze them further, building settlements, illegal by international law, in the West Bank, and largely confining the people in Gaza. And you can't keep two million people in the condition that those in the Gaza strip live in and not expect a violent response; plenty of people have been predicting it.

For me, this latest eruption of violence has helped to clarify the difference between *antisemitism*, being anti-Jewish, and being *anti-what-the-stateof-Israel-is-doing*. We all know the phrase, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". It's there in the Jewish Torah, repeated in Exodus 21, Leviticus 24 and Deuteronomy 21. But it's there to *limit* retribution, to make the punishment match the crime. There's nothing about four lives for a life. As I write this – it will have got worse by the time you read it – 1400 Israelis, almost all civilians, were killed by Hamas on October 7<sup>th</sup>; 6500 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have been killed by Israeli retaliatory strikes. The state of Israel is ignoring Jewish law in the Torah.

Leviticus 19: 33-34 says: 'When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God'. And in Numbers 15: 15-16: 'The community is to have the same rules for you and for the alien living among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the alien shall be the same before the Lord: The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the alien living among you.' "Alien" maybe isn't a word we'd use now, but here it just means someone outside the Jewish community. In the West Bank and in Gaza the state of Israel has been contravening Jewish law in the Torah for some time.

And now Israel has stopped the flow of water, electricity, medicines and food to two million people. This evening I read that hospitals in Gaza will run out of fuel tomorrow, after which lifesaving medical devices such as respirators and incubators will cease functioning. We should never accept this, never lose sight that this horror is being inflicted on human beings, on God's children, by God's children.

And every time Israel kills more innocent people they engender more rage and hatred and recruit more Palestinians and Arabs to the cause against them.

As one writer put it: "Am I pro-Israel or pro-Palestine? I have no idea. I'm pro-not-killing-civilians. I'm pro-not-trapping-millions-of-people-in-openair-prisons. I'm pro-not-shooting-grandmas-in-the-back-of-the-head. I'm pro-not-flattening-apartment-complexes. I'm pro-not-raping-women-andtaking-hostages. I'm pro-not-unjustly-imprisoning-people-without-dueprocess. I'm pro-freedom and pro-peace and pro- all the things we never see in this conflict anymore. Whatever this is, I want none of it."

We need to pray, but how do we pray into this situation?

# At Redland Park... The Church Foyer or 'Holy Nook'

The vestibule is having a make-over. Over the last few months we've been re-imagining the space at the entrance of the church building. Several ideas have been mooted and work should start soon.

The designs chosen will hopefully give expression to what matters to us as a Christian community.

It has become more than apparent that issues surrounding sustainability, caring for the planet and climate change have increasingly absorbed our attention and have been a priority, not just globally, but at our church meetings too.

So it is with this in mind, that we should make this important 'green' aspect of our faith come alive through the creative energy of our collective imagination.

The foyer will take on a distinctive new look reflecting themes that represent the value we place on the created order, God's world.

A living wall, comprising hexagonal frames, planted up and interspersed with poems, bible verses and pictures produced by the children will cover one wall and form the backdrop to this new area, while fresh furnishings will also help to create a more sociable space for us all to use.

If members of RP would like to support this venture, by sponsoring a hexagonal frame, a contribution of £20 would not only help to cover the cost of materials, but also demonstrate our commitment to caring for both planet and people in a cause that is so close to our hearts.

Thank you.

Please let me know if you would like to make a donation.

Helena helenamckinnon19@gmail.com 07982 941007



Does anyone know of someone who would be interested in renting the equivalent accommodation of a onebedroom flat (with its own kitchen) in a family house in Westbury, quite near the Downs.? Tel. 0117 962 4825

# **Know Your Elder**

A column where we get to know a little more about our Elders.

# Les Fry at Redland Park

### Where did you grow up?

Proud Preston in wonderful Lancashire was, and in many ways remains, my home town.

### A memory from my youth

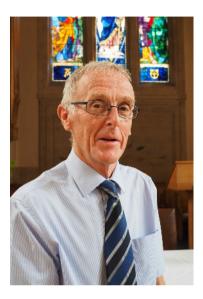
Our best family holidays were at Fleetwoodone hour on the 162 service bus from the end of our road. We stayed in Bed and Breakfast and spent the days in a chalet or on the hard sandy beach or in the bracing Irish sea.

Fleetwood was sufficiently close to Preston that the Church Scout Troup visited us each week and on a slow beach pitch, I played

some of my most dour, defensive batting innings - to the frustration of some of the more expansive teenage cricketers, who got less opportunity to bat themselves!

### What brought you to Bristol?

In summer 1973, Bristol City Council employed me for 6 weeks to work with children and build an Adventure Playground in Knowle West. I had a great summer, and made some good friends. So after a one year Teacher training in Exeter, it was natural that I sought my first teaching work in Bristol - and I haven't left yet!



### Who/what led me to faith in Christ?

My Mum had a deep Christian faith and I first heard the stories of Jesus from her, surrounded by other local children in half built council houses. She was a member of Kingsfold Methodist Church and at a Cliff College Mission event there, I accepted Jesus' personal call to me when I was 16.

### Why did I start worshipping at NB?

As a Methodist living in Clifton, I was an occasional worshipper at Victoria. During the deep freeze of late 1981, Carol and I set out down Whiteladies Road, found the surface too treacherous and opted for Redland Park. Rev Cyril Grant visited us the next evening, and the rest is history!

### Something good about living in Bristol

Beautiful green spaces like the Downs, and ease of access to the rest of the UK by train or motorway - and of course, all my Bristol based friends - some of whom were actually born here!

### Something I really value about RP

I celebrate our liberal Christian values and the richness of the relationships that God has opened up to me through our shared fellowship.

### Anything else you'd like to add?

I believe that God has a personal plan for each of us;

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you for my own; before you were born I consecrated you." (Jeremiah  $1 \vee 4$ )

# CELEBRATE AN ANNIVERSARY OR A LOVED ONE

We all like to see flower arrangements in church and the flower fund needs our support. If anyone would like to sponsor flowers in church one Sunday, perhaps for a birthday or anniversary, or to remember a loved one, please let Sally King know and they can be arranged for a special flower or colour, as you wish.



# Commitment for Life

Every couple of months, Commitment for Life publishes *Moving Stories*, giving us an insight into where our commitment is making a difference.

Here's the latest, from our global partner, Zimbabwe.

# Improved livestock production, managing and marketing

In the Mudzi District of Zimbabwe, our *Commitment for Life* partners work to support improved livestock production, managing and marketing.

Livestock such as cattle, goats, chickens, ducks and guinea fowl are incredibly valuable resources for communal farmers. Yet these resources suffer the impacts of climate change most acutely. Thanks to the education, training, and support that you enable through your support, local farmers are taught risk reduction techniques and financial literacy.



Photo: by Kevin Snyman, Goat in Mudzi District

"[Our training...] covered goat production and management aspects such as improved housing, nutrition, and disease management.

"We are grateful for the improved knowledge," says communal farmer, Mr Never Kafura.

Watch this video for more on the work. www.bit.ly/45bYjnK

### Keeping up with the vicar, part 139

Here are the Lectionary readings for November and the first Sunday in December. We've reached the end of our year-long focus on Matthew's gospel as Jesus continues to challenge his listeners to be ever alert for the coming kingdom, and to live out the good news by putting into practice the gifts God has given us. Almost all of chapter 24 doesn't appear in the Lectionary – have you ever heard a sermon on it? Is it something we should awkwardly gloss over, or think about how it's relevant here and now?

And in his letter to the Thessalonians, who seem to be having a hard time and perhaps are getting a bit disillusioned, Paul encourages them to resist everything that undermines their faith, by holding onto their loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the middle of October we had that tremendously encouraging passage from Paul to the Philippians (4:4-6) with the threefold advice: rejoice, ask, with thanks. I don't know whether it was included in worship in either of our churches (it was at Nailsea!). But just at the moment, in the current state of our country/the world/what's going on in our own lives, that's maybe more of a challenge. We'll be exploring that, sharing our experiences and our questions, at the 7 o'clock worship on 12<sup>th</sup>. Why not come and be part of that?

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.

Angus

Nov 5 <sup>th</sup>	OT Micah 3:5-12	Psalm 43	Gospel Matt 23:1-12	NT 1Thess 2:9-13
12 <sup>th</sup>	Amos 5:18-24	70	Matt 25:1-13	1Thess 4:13-18
19 <sup>th</sup>	Zeph 1:7, 12-18	90:1-12	Matt 25:14-30	1Thess 5:1-11
26 <sup>th</sup>	Ezek 34:11-16,20-24	95:1-7a	Matt 25:31-46	Ephs 1:15-23
Dec 3 <sup>r</sup> Advent		:1-7,17-19	Mark 13:24-37	1 Cor 1:3-9

Deadline for contributions for the Dec/Jan Recorder is **15**<sup>th</sup> **November**.

Please send your contributions to the editor Angus Gregson **Email:** angus.gregson@btinternet.com **or** by post to *The Recorder* at the Church address at the bottom of this page.

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### The Recorder is the monthly magazine of

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