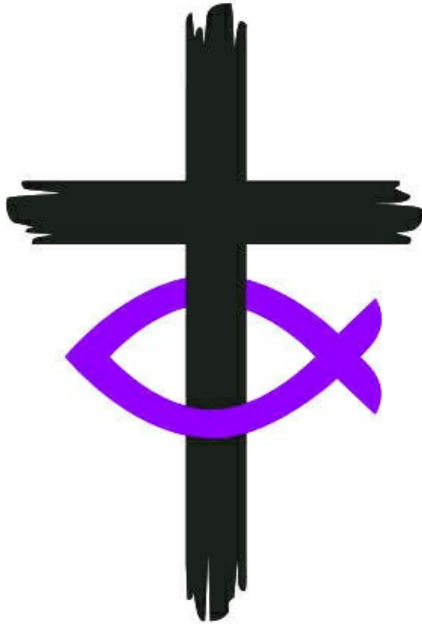


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# The Recorder

May '25

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



*The death of Pope Francis came too late to include anything in this Recorder. The URC has a tribute at <https://urc.org.uk/on-the-death-of-his-holiness-pope-francis/> which I would urge you to read.*

## Vestry Vibes by Dougie Burnett

Dear friends,

From the wonderful celebration of Easter Sunday itself we move on into the season of Easter. That will take us all the way to Pentecost Sunday - this year is on June 6<sup>th</sup>.

During the season of Easter we hear many of the narrative accounts of how the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples and others prior to his ascension (40 days later). Maybe one of my favourites of such accounts comes from John 21. That is the story in which Jesus appears to the disciples who, no doubt, were still trying to figure out what had just happened. Maybe sensibly they had returned to their known professions as fishermen. Sometimes you just need the familiar around you in order to make sense of the unfamiliar! It gives you some solid ground to work from. John 21 is the story in which the catch they then make, with Jesus guidance, is that of 153 fish. By coincidence that was also the known number of nations at the time. Jesus then makes them breakfast in what looks like a 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. version of a barbeque. After that he then encourages Peter into a ministry of nurture: "Feed my sheep." Looked at another way you could say that this whole story also conveys the sense of:

- Going out to all nations. That is the mission of the church.
- Jesus' nurture of us.
- Our pastoral role of others.

All of this happens in what could be seen as remarkably ordinary surroundings. Isn't life mostly that way? But it is always the ordinary imbued with the extraordinary. Or, should that be the ordinary always embraced and surrounded by the extraordinary? Either way, it is always about feeling for that reality of God.

So, enjoy the season of Easter. Follow on through the readings with the "*Keeping Up With The Vicar*" page. What would be your favourite post-resurrection story? Maybe it is the Emmaus road story? What would



make your choice your favourite? That might tell us much about our faith. After Easter it isn't quite as exciting, but it is always deeply meaningful.

Dougie

*Ed: Why not write about your favourite post-Easter story? Why not do it now - just a paragraph - and send it to me before you forget.*

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### **Our Prayer for a Just and Fair Future**

Great Spirit, heavenly Father, source of life and love. We rejoice and give thanks for your bountiful planet. Great plains, verdant forests, deserts of rock, sand and ice, mountain ranges, rivers and oceans: ecosystems to meet the needs of all your creatures.

We mourn our separation from you, each other and all creation.

We have forsaken your calling to be custodians:

when we drill for oil, gas and minerals, despoiling the earth, poisoning the waters and fouling the air with climate changing gases;

when we fell ancient trees, over-exploit the oceans and techno-farm food, destroying soils, traditional food systems and indigenous communities;

when we desecrate your world with trash where nothing in nature is intended to go to waste;

when we live lavish lifestyles and turn our other cheek to poverty, injustice, war, famine and unbearable human suffering;

when world leaders and multi-national corporations put profit before the wellbeing of people, communities and a flourishing planet.

We pray that our words, our pilgrimage and our actions may be a witness to world leaders, encouraging and inspiring them to make radical commitments at the forthcoming climate talks. Commitments that will restore the earth and lead to justice for communities confronted by the climate crisis. And may they lead us onto a new path for a sustainable future *where we live in harmony with all life.*

Open our senses and be with us that we may walk in safety. Awaken us to our true nature, to live in peace with you, each other and all creation. By restoring harmony and balance we too will be restored to wholeness.

Amen. *Prayer by Bishop Geoff Davies, South Africa's 'Green Bishop'*

## **Worship details**

### **... at Redland Park**

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

May 4<sup>th</sup> Rev Dougie Burnett, including Communion

11<sup>th</sup> Rev Dougie Burnett

18<sup>th</sup> Rev Dougie Burnett with ZRC and BKC

25<sup>th</sup> Angus Gregson

Zoom log in: 732 001 8996 passcode 8cC7Zv

**Sunday evening worship** at 7 p.m. via Zoom - *Questions God asks*

May 11<sup>th</sup> Is it right to be angry?

25<sup>th</sup> Are we too comfortable while there's chaos around us?

Zoom log in: 815 4053 7777 passcode 087103

### **Cell groups** – both via Zoom

Mondays at 8 p.m.

Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m.

For both, the Zoom log in: 732 001 8996 passcode 8cC7Zv

### **... and at New Brunswick**

**Sunday morning worship** is at 11.00 a.m.

May 4<sup>th</sup> Heather May

11<sup>th</sup> Angus Gregson,  
including Communion

18<sup>th</sup> Wendy Magee

25<sup>th</sup> Rev Dougie Burnett

*The Easter cross at RP on Easter Day*



## Other dates...

### ... at Redland Park

- May Wed 7<sup>th</sup> Elders' meeting at 7.30 p.m.  
Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Barton Camp (see more, later in the *Recorder*)  
Sun 11<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> Christian Aid week  
Sat 17<sup>th</sup> Christian Aid Fair (also more about this later)  
Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Organ Treats: John Talbot. Cake at 10.30 a.m., organ music at 11.

... and every Thursday, coffee in the front vestibule from 10.30 a.m. till 12.

### ... at New Brunswick

- May Thu 1<sup>st</sup> Church meeting at 7.30 p.m.  
Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> Southmead Quiz at 7 p.m.  
Tue 6<sup>th</sup> Joint churches prayer meeting. Hosted this month by St Stephens at 7.30 p.m.  
Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Church Social (which of course will include food).  
3 - 6 p.m.  
Mon 19<sup>th</sup> Bible study and prayer evening and cake at 7.30 p.m.  
Sat 31<sup>st</sup> Monthly Craft Event at Greenway Centre from noon to 3 p.m. Entry Free.

### **A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips for MAY** *Support pollinators.*

Nothing says Spring like the buzz of a bee! But bees are declining because of habitat loss, climate change and agricultural intensification. Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May is World Bee Day, so look around to see how you can improve habitats for bees and other pollinators - even small efforts make a difference. Read more about bees, butterflies and habitats that support them such as wildflowers, in our Target 25 resources at

[arochoa.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25](http://arochoa.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25)

and pray for the rejuvenation of these crucial pollinators.

## **CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY (CAP)**

Members of the Tuesday evening cell group led the service on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, with resources provided by CAP, with stories about those in poverty and how they manage to work their way out. Envelopes were provided for donations for those who wished to, and thanks to everyone who did, as we raised £235 for this worthy charity.

CAP is a national ecumenical Christian social justice charity, committed to tackling poverty in the UK. We work in partnership with churches, and with people in poverty themselves, to tackle the root causes of poverty.

We put gospel values of justice and compassion into practice. We know that the real experts on poverty are the people who live with it. Our work is driven by their insights and experiences. We help them to make their voices heard. We speak truth to power, campaigning nationally and locally for policies that will loosen the grip of poverty on people's lives.

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### **People news... from New Brunswick**

*from Brenda Drake*

We are pleased to learn that **Angie** is making good progress at home. The hospital are pleased to see a great improvement in the condition of her skin. We continue to uphold Angie and her son in our prayers. Praying God's continuing healing.

It has been good to see **Elaine** back worshipping with us these last couple of weeks. May her health improvement mean that she is able to be with us Sunday by Sunday.

We continue to remember those folk who aren't able to worship with us remembering **Jen S, Wenda, Margaret, Robin, Gareth** and **Eugenie**. We also think especially of **Anita** and **Roger** as they seek suitable accommodation for **Paul**. We uphold all these folk up to God who knows each and everyone's needs. May these people be assured, too, of our love and support.

### **CELEBRATIONS!**

We have no birthdays to celebrate in May. But there may be folk who have things to celebrate in their own families. May these times be happy occasions full of love and God's blessings.

....and from Redland Park

*from Carol Fry*

Please hold **Wendy and Brian Day** in your thoughts and prayers on the loss of their daughter, Alison, who died mid April with a long-standing heart condition. Some of you may remember Alison who will have grown up in Redland Park alongside their other daughter and son, who is currently visiting from Australia.

Please also remember friends of the church who are unable to attend at present.

**Peter and Anna Ambrose** are at home and being supported by family. We pray for both of them. **David Hayden** is improving slowly after a fall; **Viv** is able to drive locally but has sight problems so we haven't seen them for some time. We pray for better health both of them.

**Audrey Bryant** is well cared for in Westbury Gardens, with family and friends visiting; we send her our prayers.

**Sheila Smart** is getting frailer but appreciates visits from family and friends.

We send all these friends our prayers.

**Suzie Atkins** is currently at home again but still awaiting further treatment. We send our prayers for her and hope that the planned treatment will prove effective. We pray for Jane Beazer too, still having treatment which we hope is working well.

**Teame Mebrahtu** has been staying with his daughters and receiving treatment for a painful condition. We pray for his better health and hold him in our prayers.

We pray for some of our young people taking exams, some planning further education, some new schools; this is an exciting but difficult time for them (and their parents!) so we send our prayers.

There are other members and friends with health issues at present and we pray for them all, and for those of our friends in nursing homes or care homes and unable to come to church; we are blessed with technically able people who host our services on zoom.

## **Bristol Churches Night Shelter**

*from Carol Fry*

... finished at the end of March, with a great total of 28 people helped from homelessness to either temporary or permanent accommodation. A lot of work goes into following this up and planning for next year. We pray for the staff who will be moving on, for the guests who have found permanent accommodation, for the homeless people still on the streets in Bristol and around the country. There is a shortfall in funding for this year going into next, so if you feel you can make a donation, please email <https://www.inhope.uk/donate/> Choose '**Bristol Churches Shelter**' in the drop-down option called '**I want to support.**' Many thanks.

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## **DAYS GONE BY!!**

*from Brenda Drake*

During March we held our annual Gift Day at New Brunswick. As always God's people here were very generous, helping to raise £2477. 21! God continues to bless us as we work for Him in Southmead. As I marvelled at this wonderful total I started to recall Gift Days of the past when things were far different. It was quite an occasion! The church would be packed with all the different groups who met week on week. Women's Guild, Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade (all very smart in their uniform) Youth Club, Morning Family Church (formally Sunday School) and of course those folk who weren't involved in any of these activities. The Roll Call was announced by the Treasurer. A representative of each organisation would come forward to bring their contribution. They would then return to their seat and that organisation would then all stand and sing a verse of a pre-selected hymn as a response to that all that organisation were in agreement of their gift. These days Gift Day is a more less grand affair. We still bring our contributions to the front (our tins and Blessing Boxes), other gifts are placed in separate envelopes and placed in the collection plate. We sing a collective hymn in thanks and praise. But no matter how we contributed to Gift Day, I (as Treasurer) am always in awe of the generosity of our little congregation. The week following Gift Day I announce the total during the notices and it always makes me very emotional to think of God's goodness to us. So I just want to finish by thanking each and every person who helped achieve this year's total. Even down to the 21p!



## What's been happening?

*During Lent, the Clifton, Cotham and Redland Group of churches put on a series of talks, under the heading, "Facets of violence - paths to peace". The talks were excellent, blending learning, experience and passion. Here are reflections from some of the people who were there. They can't be summaries, but just things that have stuck with us.*

*There are a lot of words. Maybe read them at different times and reflect.*

**1 Rev Dr Helen Paynter** of Bristol Baptist College and Director of the Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence. ***Desire and Shame: how our disordered hearts lean towards violence and what God is doing about it.***

What drives human violence? "The Holocaust was not abnormal. What *was* abnormal was that it was allowed to go that far. Eichmann wasn't a monster, but a petty man who just did his job very well." We are all capable of it. A reflection on Genesis 1-3 points to how disordered desire, shame and scapegoating can lead to violence becoming normalised.

An American psychologist, working with violent criminal in a US prison, noted that they see themselves as already dead; (without God) "we have no-one capable of forgiving us". I wonder, how can we as a church bring the hope that is so central to our faith?

Three values of God's kingdom: justice, peace, holiness. Pursuing one of these independent of the others becomes a vice. How can we seek justice/peace but with mercy? There's certainly a tension between them and today's political world.

**2 Bekah Legg** ***Speaking up for the women with no name***

Beauty for brokenness

Hope for despair

Lord in the suffering

This is our prayer

Inspiring words from Graham Kendrick.

The Lent lecture by Bekah Legg from *Restored* speaking up for *The Woman with No Name* gave us hope for some of the broken women of our world, those suffering abuse or neglect at the hands of others.

The caring community we heard about centred in many churches, was an inspiration.

My concern is that many men and women suffer abuse and maltreatment at the hands of their partners behind closed doors, and so what goes on is often hidden. They are often disfigured, feel shame and blame themselves. How to get them to a safe space at church where they can talk and seek practical help is a challenge. It is sometimes difficult even to recognise those in need of help.

Samaritans and other help lines also provide a safe non judgemental space for many of these men and women who may have access to the phone when their partner is out, and who can take the opportunity to offload their shame and anxiety, to explore options for change, and to learn that what is happening to them is not something they should be ashamed of or for which they should blame themselves.

*Jane Pedlar*

**Bekah Legg** related the story in Judges 19 - an horrific tale not to be read by those of a nervous disposition! She spoke about domestic abuse and the worst statistic she reported was 1 in 4 churchgoers is a victim. There is a book for female survivors on the table in Redland Park, together with a guide for churches to address the issue.

**What we can do though, is:**

1. Pray – gather together, get small groups together, use the liturgy.
2. Speak up – share social media posts, speak to a church leader, invite a speaker to church.
3. Support survivors – with the handbook, share their network, support local services.
4. Equip your church - get equipped and trained, get resources such as this book and signposting.
5. Speak with church leadership.
6. Start a Bristol Conversation about Restored Beacons – churches, or a group of churches, which are a Beacon of support.
7. Engage men – share First Man Standing (FMS) information; invite men to pray with you. Use the FMS study guide for men’s groups.

*Carol Fry*

#### **4 Rev Karen Sethuraman *Who is my Neighbour?***

Karen was born and grew up in Northern Ireland during “The Troubles”.

Much of her talk, I suppose inevitably, centred around her experiences of those times and what she is now doing about Peace and Reconciliation. She spoke very much from the heart and was passionate in passing on to us her enthusiasm for working towards peace with our neighbour.

Karen is an ordained minister of the Baptist Church, therefore a Protestant, however, she found such resistance to her work for peace and reconciliation within the church that she (painfully) decided to continue outside the institution of the church. She would see people as God’s children, not as Catholic or Protestant. This did not sit well with her congregation or others within the wider church community. I asked myself the question – how much do **we** put obstacles in the way, both of worship itself and in sincere ‘togetherness’ in working for a common goal, among our different denominations? To what extent do we really put Jesus at the centre of everything?

Karen has created an organisation called ‘Soul Space’, where she believes her ministry is to come alongside people, whoever they are, whatever their background or beliefs, to listen and accompany them on their journey. There is no agenda and the purpose is not to try to get people into church. It is to recognise and value the humanity and worth in each individual and to communicate that to them. To show God’s love.

I was expecting, somewhere during the talk, based on the title ‘Who is my Neighbour?’, the parable of the Good Samaritan, and I was not disappointed! Karen recounted her own Good Samaritan story:

In the same way that the victim in the Bible story was wounded and broken, so Karen was emotionally and spiritually wounded and broken when she came up against such resistance in the Church to her efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in her home of Northern Ireland. She had previously befriended a member of Sinn Fein, called Deirdre – in many people’s eyes, the ‘enemy’. When she was at her lowest, Karen found that she was not supported by her own ‘clan’ but by her friend (the ‘enemy’), Deirdre. Deirdre came alongside her, bringing her back to

emotional, psychological and spiritual health, helping her woundedness to heal. Deirdre's mantra was 'Your clan is my clan'.

Karen believes that wherever there are humans there will be conflict. I'm sure she is right, and that her own mantra 'Friendship and Story' is the way towards peace and reconciliation. To listen to the story of the other, in friendship and love, without judgment, and to seek solutions together.

A truly inspirational and hopeful talk.

*Les Brentley*

## **5 John Cooper *The fierce urgency of peace***

John is the Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an international Christian movement committed to peace, justice and non-violence, and he sought to increase our understanding of peace.

At the heart of his input was evidence that the increase in military weapons transparently does not engender peace. Our responsibility as Christians, is to offer both challenge and hope. This is a vital message as war in one place seems to provoke starvation in another. John offered graphic information of how even an immediate cessation of the war in Ukraine would not bring immediate peace as the after effects of the conflict will take a whole generation to mend. Over past 3 years, Ukrainian children have spent more time in bomb shelters than in classrooms.

John provided us with three Biblical messages to underpin our outreach to the world;

1. Matthew 4. Jesus is shown the kingdoms of the world with the temptation- "All these I will give you, if only you will fall down and do me homage." Jesus counters with "You shall do homage to the Lord your God and worship Him alone."
2. Luke 19 vv 41/2. Jesus alerts the disciples, " "What will bring you peace is now hidden from your eyes." but urges our role as servants - Luke 22:26, "The highest among you must bear himself like the youngest, the chief of you like a servant.". We must promote peace through humility not aggression as peace is much more than the absence of conflict.
3. John 20:15; Jesus often addressed the disenfranchised and marginalised, represented in this Resurrection story by Mary, a solo woman who

mistook Him for the gardener. The disenfranchised cannot fight back weapon for weapon, but peaceful prayers and gatherings can prompt peace, and John believes can bring down autocratic regimes.

His conclusion was that we must urgently create non-violent responses to Human Rights abuses and in particular, spread hope by helping people fall in love with the world again.

*Les Fry*

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*There was also a series of reflections each day of Holy Week, shared across the CCR churches and the university chaplaincy..*

## **Travelling Light Through Holy Week**

*Helena McKinnon*

### *Monday* Multi faith Chaplaincy **A Costly Fragrance**

Sam Hackett, the free church chaplain at Bristol University, led us through a sensory interpretation of Mary anointing Jesus' feet. Tables were spread with several kinds of herbs and spices which we were invited to handle, absorb and smell. Sam reflected on the powerful reading from John's gospel as we took in the aromatic bouquet of each condiment, reminding us of the costly nature of Mary's offering.

### *Tuesday* Cotham Parish Church **Dying to Live**

Here we gathered for another sensory experience. This time we were invited to listen, walk, touch and feel the nearness of nature as we connected with aspects of Jesus' words, 'unless a grain of wheat dies, it remains but a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit'.

We listened, walked in the garden then picked up seeds and planted them in soil, as we reflected on humankind's destructive tendencies towards the earth.

### *Wednesday* Victoria Methodist **'And it was Night'**

This evening we shared together at Victoria Methodist the story of Judas' betrayal and the conflicted motives that drove him into the hands of Jesus' enemies. Patrick prepared a meditation on the contrast between darkness and light and this whole time together was enhanced by some

beautiful music and singing from the choir which added to the sense of collective belonging.

*Maudy Thursday Communion* Tyndale Baptist **Abiding in Love**

The whole of this Eucharistic liturgy centred on the last supper, the washing of the disciples' feet and the Jesus parting words. Sam King linked this episode with the first Passover as the children of Israel were preparing to leave Egypt. We were reminded of God's covenantal relationship with his people. The amazing visuals helped to focus our hearts and minds on the personal and intimate nature of Jesus words and actions.

*Good Friday* Redland Park URC **One Friday in time and eternity**

Here we reached the climax to the whole redemptive drama, in reliving the story of the crucifixion.

Words and visuals combined to draw on the truth of God's self-offering and what it means..

Contemporary images and videos interwoven into the liturgy demonstrated what the loving action of Christ's sacrifice still signifies, and how those connections continue to resonate with us today. At the end of the service, we stood outside to bear witness to the power of the cross .

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**In honour of Teblez Mebrahtu**

The family have set up a charity set up to commemorate and honour the memory of Teblez: the **Redeeming Light Foundation**.

As the name suggests, the foundation aims to shine the redeeming light and love of Jesus Christ over those most in need by helping to sustain highly effective organisations already on the ground working alongside local NGOs to ensure maximum impact and effectiveness of agreed project goals, with a focus understandably on Eritrea and Ethiopia.

To find out more and maybe donate, go to

[teblezmebrahtufoundation.org/](http://teblezmebrahtufoundation.org/)



## News from the Bristol Christian Education Council *Brenda Drake*

You may be aware that I am chairperson of BCEC. Back in March we had one of our quarterly meetings and someone in attendance shared this with the meeting.

Recently it has been 'World book Day' when children go to school dressed as a character from their favourite book. One particular girl aged about 9 went to school dressed as an angel as she said that her favourite book was THE BIBLE. If this was not enough she also made a cross (no doubt with help) which was about 60 cms tall to which she had attached pictures, little figures etc to illustrate her favourite Bible stories. What a wonderful witness from one so young. All those at the meeting were so uplifted by this little girl's actions.

The other thing that thrilled my heart was that on the following day, I was driving around with the radio on in the car when the news bulletin came on. One of the articles was to say about a survey done by SPCK that sales of Bibles had risen between 2019-2024 by 87%!!!

Many of these sales were among young people. Driven by a new interest in spirituality, especially among the Gen Z. This was aired on the National news which I thought was amazing.

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### Coming up...

#### IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

*writes Carol Fry*

Our annual Christian Aid Fair is on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May so we'll be asking all those with green fingers to pot up suitable plants to sell; all those having a clear out to bring in books, bric a brac, pictures, toys, etc, and anything that is suitable to sell. We usually have good weather for the Fair, and there is more foot traffic on Whiteladies Road because of the Farmer's Market.

The Fair raises quite a bit of money for Christian Aid, along with the envelopes that will have been delivered during the weeks in the roads around church. So **come and spend your money**, and restock your bookshelves after having donated so many book for others to buy.

Thanks to everyone who helps with the envelope delivery and the Fair.



**Redland Park day at Barton Camp, BS25 1DY  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025**



**Come and join in our activities or simply  
enjoy the fellowship the countryside.**



**SHARE**



**CREATE**



**SWIM**



**PLAY**

**Watch out for more information!**



*In the 7 o'clock worship times this spring, we've been studying some of the*

## **QUESTIONS GOD ASKS**

Here's one: **Where are you?** Genesis 3 vv1-13.

God has set Adam and Eve up in the absolutely perfect garden - the only restriction being one single prohibition. Yet his first question to them is "Where are you?" v9.

We've all grown accustomed to the beauty of Psalm 139 which reminds us, "Is there any place I can go to be out of Your sight" v7, with the acknowledgement "You'd find me in a minute - You're already there waiting!" In v10 - did the first couple not understand that there's no hiding place? God knew exactly where they were.

Adam and Eve were hiding, hiding out of fear and shame, and God was seeking their honesty, their acceptance that they had broken that prohibition. We can understand that - I sometimes try to hide from God, even though there is no hiding place, but I am reassured that He always knows exactly where I am - physically, emotionally and spiritually.

So, three questions to consider;

1. What trees do you hide behind?
2. When do you seek to hide from God?
3. If you can't find God, who's moved?

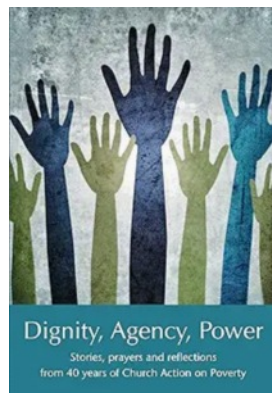
*Les Fry*

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## **DIGNITY, AGENCY, POWER**

This book includes stories, prayers and reflections from 40 years of Church Action on Poverty. It is more than just that – it has prayers, hymns and liturgies, stories of real people's experiences and struggles, stories of hope, transformation and challenging justice, poems, drama, Bible studies and theological reflections.

The Tuesday evening cell group used this during the Church Action on Poverty service, but it is available for anyone wishing to use it for a service (the church paid for it), or any other suitable time. It is in the church library (above the back pew!)



## Know Your Elder

## Matt Sims at Redland Park



### Where did you grow up?

I was born and grew up in Bristol and went away for University in Southampton and Law School in Guildford before coming back!

### A memory from your youth?

Redland Park related - Cyril Grant putting his hand on my head and asking whether I was good to my mother. Terrifying!

Bristol City football related - beating Chelsea 3-1 in the FA cup in 1990 on a wet and windy day at Ashton Gate with Dad - perfect!

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

Growing up in the Redland Park family. It has been a gradual process and Dad has even been helping after his death by a number of amazing things and signs, starting with a Catherine wheel in the fire as we prayed with Dougie at the exact time when Dougie said Dad was now in heaven.

### Why did you start worshipping at RP?

I am extremely fortunate that Redland Park has been my family's church for many years and all my life. My grandfather, Basil Hudson Sims, was the Minister (1948-1960) and it's amazing to be able to see and touch the stone he laid by the entrance to the church as it was being rebuilt after the war.

### Something particularly good about living in Bristol?

Living close to family - I'm very lucky.

### Something you really value about RP?

I love how everyone cares for and supports each other. We are all a constant in each other's lives.

*Matt will be surprised to learn that this just about completes the series. Who would you like to learn more about or see profiled so we can get to know our churches better? Let me know.*

## Keeping up with the vicar, part 154

Here are the Lectionary readings for May. Between Easter and Pentecost we get a passage from Acts\* in place of the usual Old Testament passage as the good news about Jesus begins to spread.

In the readings from Acts, Peter realises what taking the message of Jesus to “all nations” (Mt28:19) really entails. Somewhere in the week between 11<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> read chapter 10 to see how he realises this isn’t just for the Jews. The Messiah is for the Gentiles too. It challenges us to think who are “Gentiles” to us? Who do we need to take the Gospel out to?

Then the focus switches to Paul. After his conversion in chapter 9, he’s already well into his missionary lifestyle by the time we meet him again in chapter 16. It hasn’t all been smooth going. Paul’s been thrown out of the region around Antioch, been beaten up in Lystra and had a blazing row with his right hand man, Barnabas. But on the way a lot of Jews and Gentiles have been receptive to his message. A man I was talking with on holiday recently felt he, and all christians, should be a blessing to others. Maybe not in the way Paul was, but how can we be a blessing to each other, to people we meet, and as a church to the community around us?

Just as Peter realised in Acts 10 that the message was for the Gentiles too, Paul understands that the gospel needs to spread to Europe, and in Acts 16 we hear about the first church being set up in Philippi. No slouch in church planting was Paul.

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.

	Acts*	Psalm	Gospel	NT
4 <sup>th</sup>	9:1-20	30	John 21:1-19	Rev 5:11-14
11 <sup>th</sup>	9:36-43	23	John 10:22-30	Rev 7:9-17
18 <sup>th</sup>	11:1-18	148	John 13:31-35	Rev 21:1-6
25 <sup>th</sup>	16:9-15	67	John 14:23-29 or 5:1-9	Rev 21:10,22–22:5

Deadline for contributions for the  
June *Recorder* is **15<sup>th</sup> May**.

Please send your contributions  
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