

ESTD 1901

The Recorder

February '24

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



Vestry Vibes by Dougie Burnett

Dear friends,

The first Sunday we were all back in church after Christmas I used the all-age address to explore the seasons of the Christian year with the children and adults. I asked, what might be their favourite season of the Christian year? Needless to say the majority vote went to Christmas. Christmas does come with all that amazing vibrancy. There is the excitement of singing carols, Christmas lights, presents and family gatherings. But then Easter is also a major focus of the year. It is the heart of our faith as we celebrate Christ dead and risen.



Easter also tells us that in the world around us that spring is with us. Pentecost has its own sense of celebration with the dynamic story of the Holy Spirit inspiring the disciples. All those seasons of the year but we'll get our vote in some way. But what about Lent? Somehow Lent comes with a more dour character, but maybe it should be a bit more than that.

Did you know that the word "Lent" comes from the old English word "lencten" which simply means "spring season." It is the time when we can see and feel that the days are lengthening. I don't know about you, but I always feel that sense of relief when the days are not quite so short. When it is so dark I tend to feel that I simply want to hunker down. As the days grow longer I feel more moved to venture out again and do more things. Maybe it is appropriate that during Lent we start to use images and metaphors of venturing out on journeys and pilgrimages. We think of the time when Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness. Within the gospel readings for each Sunday we start to follow Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem. The big word that seems to cover most of Lent is that of repentance. Again that can have a very dour character to it. It certainly felt that way when I was growing

up in Scotland. However, the true meaning of repentance involves turning around the embrace that which is truly life-giving. What is Easter unless we have first been through Lent? So maybe Lent is worthy of at least a bit of a vote as well? It is all to say that each season of the Christian year has something to offer us in the way of the Good News of Jesus Christ. We live into each one and hopefully come out of then just a little bit more God-shaped than before.

By the way, we have got a terrific Lent Conversation series in February and March. We will be dealing with issues of faith, climate justice and climate change. Those details are also in this edition of the Recorder.

And don't forget the World Day of Prayer on Friday 10.30 a.m. on March 1st, at Victoria Methodist Church. This year the service is provided by the women of Palestine.

Dougie

Pause for thought

“

Whoever identifies with Greta [Thunberg] in any way in the future, in my view, is a terror supporter.

Arye Sharuz Shalicar
Spokesman for the Israel Defense Forces



Worship details

... at Redland Park

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

February 4th Rev Dougie Burnett
(Rededication Service, including Communion)

11th Rev Dougie Burnett

18th Rev Dougie Burnett

25th Rev Dougie Burnett

Zoom log in: 732 001 8996 passcode 8cC7Zv

Sunday evening worship at 7 p.m. via Zoom

February 11th Taizé style worship at RP

25th

Zoom log in: 815 4053 7777 passcode 087103

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

... and at New Brunswick

February 4th Barb and Rick Kirby

11th Angus Gregson (will include Communion)

18th Wendy Magee

25th Rev Sue Cossey

March 3rd Angus Gregson

Other key dates

Redland Park

Elders' meeting: Weds 7th at 7.30 p.m.

New Brunswick

Feb Fri 2nd & Sat 3rd Whitefield Player Pantomime at Patchway.
See Brenda for further details.

Tue 6th Joint Southmead Churches Prayer Meeting. This month hosted by the Pentecostal Holiness Church at 7.30 p.m.

Mon 12th Praise, prayer & Bible study at 7.30 p.m. At NB, followed by tea and cake.

Advance notice...

Sat Mar 9th Church 'Christmas' party. More details to follow.
[Ed: I thought the Christmas party was usually in May?]

The 7 o'clock worship on **Sunday, February 11th** will be "live" in Redland Park in the Taizé form. We are hoping to stream it via Zoom too.

Taizé worship is a very reflective style. At its core are some simple chants, each of which is sung several times over. As we repeat the chants there is time to think about the text as a whole, or pick out a phrase or a word and let your mind dwell on it as you sing.

Between the chants there is silence as we offer ourselves to God, and to listen for him. There some brief readings, there are some prayers for others, and again, silence for reflection and for your own prayers.

It's a great way to set yourself up for the week ahead, walking with God. If you haven't experienced this style of worship before, "O taste and see."



Rededication Service at RP, 4th February

Redland Park URC concluded 2023 with a full and successful Christmas programme that attracted bigger numbers of worshippers than anticipated. We currently have a supportive, inclusive ethos that reaches out across the congregation, with more members than 12 months ago and a creative schedule of events at the start of 2024. We must all be thankful for this!

I first voiced my hopes for a Rededication Service last summer. I believe that at Redland Park we can further consolidate our current positive stability, by collectively renewing ourselves and our church to our God.

As a church, we do share each others' lives and news and we do serve and respect each other. I believe that this is a good time for us to commit to spreading the good news of Jesus to each other, and further afield, and to respond to Jesus by reaching out and supporting those in need, by confronting injustice and by safeguarding God's wonderful creation. Genuine Kingdom values!

The church is the body of Jesus Christ and so we rededicate ourselves collectively to His calling. Within that church, we are called to be living stones and so we rededicate individually to His service.

“You are the vine, we are the branches, keep us abiding in You.”

So I pray that we can all come together strongly and worship, both reflectively and joyfully, at February's Communion Service and rededicate ourselves to God.

Les Fry

Pause for thought

As I type this (22nd January) the death toll in Gaza from Israeli strikes since 7th October is 25 000, which is just about 1.2% of the population. This includes an estimated more than 10 000 children.

The equivalent percentage, if this had happened in the UK, is a death toll of 814 000, including 326 000 children.

What would we do if something caused this loss of life in the UK?

Christmas prayers



Christmas. Remember that? Both churches offered the chance for people to offer their own prayers and hang them on the tree - on stars at New Brunswick and on doves at Redland Park.



Not surprisingly, there were many prayers for an end to conflict:

- peace in Palestine
- may peace and justice come to the Middle East and Ukraine.
- world peace
- for peace throughout the world
- for goodwill to each other and all the wars to end
- that peace can be achieved, common sense be seen, and men can live together harmoniously
- dear loving and compassionate God, please change the hearts of those filled with hate to hearts filled with love, and so avoid wars and oppression where your children suffer so much.

There were prayers for people in need for other reasons:

- for all who mourn or are in distress
- for all the homeless people, that they may find homes
- For those suffering with ill health and all with any kind of trouble – bless them all

... and there were prayers for individual people - it wouldn't be appropriate to name them here. If you prayed for them, has that prayer been answered yet?

Sometimes the need is so huge it's hard to know how to pray, but we can take heart that "the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We don't know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will".

Romans 8:26-27

People news

... from Redland Park

We were able to congratulate **Teame Mebrahtu** on being given an OBE in the New Year's Honours List, with a card as well as a formal presentation in church on 14th January, with Zeb and Paris present. Teame is held in high regard in the church family.



Bristol University, where Teame taught for 24 years, wrote an appreciation which, if you're reading the *Recorder* online, you can access by clicking on this link...

[2024: School of Education alumnus recognised in King's New Year Honours](#)

We think of **Peter and Anna Ambrose** who find it difficult to come to church at present, although were able to come for one of our Christmas Services; our prayers are with them.

We continue to think of **Terry King**, currently living with dementia, and Sally who is caring for him; we hold them in our prayers.

We think of **Viv Hayden**, who can't come to church as often as she would like but worships on zoom; we pray for better health for her.

Sheila Smart is always very pleased to have visitors and asks to send her best wishes to everyone at Redland Park.

We pray for all those currently in the Bristol Churches Night Shelter, that they find more permanent accommodation; there are now two months left of the six month shelter this year and Redland Park has been very supportive, as usual.

...from New Brunswick

We were so pleased that **Jen S** was able to join us at one of our services before Christmas and able to stay and share our Christmas Fellowship Lunch. However, since being discharged from hospital is finding day to day living a little challenging. We continue to uphold her in our prayers.

Very much in our thoughts and prayers at this time are **Julie and family** after the passing of dear Pete. After a brave battle Pete passed away on 29th December. His funeral will be held at Westerleigh Crematorium on 23rd January at 2 p.m. May the whole family feel the comforting arms of Jesus surrounding them at this sad time.

It was good to have Christmas Greetings from **Delwyn** and to know that he is well and sends best wishes to all.

Our thoughts and prayers are with other of our friends at the start of this New Year. Thinking especially of Ruth and Peter, Mary, Wenda, Robin R, Margaret, Elizabeth, David F. Each has needs which are known to our Loving Saviour and we pray for His response to each as required. May they be assured of our love and support too.

CELEBRATIONS!

Those celebrating birthdays during February.....

3rd Lisa and Becky. 27th Ruth.

We wish them all a happy day, one full of Gods' richest blessings.

A Rocha's "Easy Eco Tips for FEBRUARY

Go green for Lent. The weeks leading up to Easter are a time for self-reflection, repentance and emulating Jesus' obedience to the Father. Is there something you'd like to give up or take up during Lent that will enable you to reflect on God, contribute to our planet's well-being and enhance others' lives through sustainable, ecofriendly living?

Explore some of these changes at arocha.org.uk/go-green-for-lent/

What's been happening at Redland Park?

The Grinch

The Junior Churches of Redland Park and the Bristol Korean Church booked out Screen 2 at the Everyman Cinema on 16th December for our own Christmas showing of "The Grinch."



This animation relates the tale of a very grumpy creature who is determined to steal Christmas from a happy local community. Some inventive and devious constructions enable him and his faithful dog Max to disrupt the festivities amongst the happy, friendly, colourful people of *Whoville* but..... (no spoilers here!!)

Some reviews.(uncensored)

"We all got a comfortable seat and lots of popcorn, coke and chips in front of the giant movie screen!"

"I enjoyed laughing with my church friends (and some cried a bit I think)!"

"The Everyman is a wonderful place to relax and enjoy tasty snacks."

"The Everyman has too loud speakers!"

"It's great to have our own Cinema." "I really like animated movies."

"I think the Dr Seuss 'How the Grinch stole Christmas' (2021) is rubbish compared with the 1980's version because they removed all the really funny bits." *[Hmm ... they seem to have had a great time!]*

Huge thanks to the Junior Church team for organising this.

The wonder of Hexagons (and bees)

On November 18th Rev Helena McKinnon and Yanna Vogiatzaki led the Redland Park young people in a creative afternoon as part of our plans for the front vestibule. Over 20 young people participated in abstract designs within a hexagon frames. Carol Fry shared with us some secrets of bee keeping with details of the strength of the hexagon shape in which the bees choose to store their honey. "Our bee pictures will help the front vestibule to celebrate God's creation."



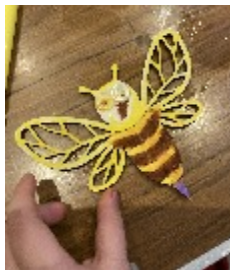
"I enjoyed the help of the older girls, making my patterns better."

"It was great to decorate great pictures of bees, and to laugh at their faces!"

"We ate pizza from Pizza Workshop, and drank litres of apple juice!"

"Seeing all of the hexagons joined together made us all feel good!"

The Art work that was created will next be exhibited in the newly decorated front vestibule amongst wooden hexagons full of living products and other messages from the Redland Park Church family.



BRISTOL CHURCHES NIGHT SHELTER

The night shelter is going very well this year, and several guests have already been helped into permanent accommodation, as well as some helped into work. This means more guests have been welcomed in, with the opportunity of finding their own accommodation and/or work.



Several churches are helping serve lunch or dinner with different phases, e.g. Phase 1 October for six weeks, Phase 2 mid-November for six weeks, and Redland Park is serving lunch every Wednesday. This includes sandwiches, fruit, crisps, drinks and biscuits. One church provides a welcome box for each guest, which includes a warm blanket, shower gel, a toothbrush and toothpaste, a woolly hat, etc, and others have provided Christmas gifts.

The shelter hopes to help 28 people into permanent accommodation this year – up from 21 last year.

Each guest is allocated one of the staff to support them with applying for accommodation, or contacting Immigration or the Housing Department.

St Mungo's, Borderland and Bristol Hospitality Network act as the referral agency for the shelter, and inHope gives governance oversight.

There are rules the guests must abide by, e.g. no alcohol or illegal weapons, no visitors, no anti-social behaviour, and people must be in the hotel by 9.00 p.m., but they have their own room, often en suite, with three meals per day and support, and is what most of them need to make a new start, and they take the opportunity gladly.

What's coming up?

Eswatini

Thank you to everyone at church for all your support; it means so much to me. I'm going on my trip to Eswatini with school, through an organisation called World Challenge. I'm going this summer (July 2024) and I will be going for two weeks. For the majority of the trip I will be doing volunteer work in orphanages. I will find out the exact jobs I will be doing closer to the time, but it is likely to be work such as building bike racks or helping prepare meals.



I have been busy fundraising for over a year, doing car washes, Easter chocolates, scrunchies and lots more. Most recently I have made Christmas tags. Everyone at Redland Park has been so supportive of me doing many of these, thank you.

I am looking forward to the experiences I am going to have out there, and I will be sure to report back about these when I get back!

I feel that the Christian values such as love have supported me on this journey, and reminded me of why I am doing this. The generosity of everyone at church has also supported me so much.

I can't wait to tell you all about it when I return!

Emily Hirsch

Found amongst Rev. Cyril Grant's paper (*thank you, Myra*)

Spring gardening hints

Plant four rows of peas — **Prayer, Perseverance, Promptness, Politeness**

Then, four rows of lettuce:

Let us be faithful

Let us be unselfish

Let us be truthful

Let us follow Christ

Finally, four rows of turnips:

Turn up for church

Turn up with a smile

Turn up with new ideas

Turn up with determination

to make everything count for something good.

Lent Conversations: Faith, Creation and Climate Change

Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham & Redland bring you a series of talks — Christian responses to our environment and the climate crisis.

22nd February Dr Ruth Valerio

Climate Justice and the Church, a global perspective.

Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at Tearfund, Ruth is an environmentalist, theologian and social activist. She is Canon Theologian at Rochester Cathedral. She enjoys living sustainably - practising what she preaches and inspiring others as she does so in the South of England with her family.

Ruth has written several books, including the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2020 Lent book, 'Saying Yes to Life'. She is a regular contributor on Radio 4 and the BBC World Service. Ruth is also the co-founder of the Oikos Network: for mentoring Christian environmental leaders across the world.

Venue: All Saints, Pembroke Rd, Clifton

**Tuesday 27th February Mary Colwell *Curlews, Conservation and Faith*
- a personal take from a former TV producer**

An award-winning author, producer and campaigner for nature, Mary has 4 major conservation awards, including the RSPB Medal in 2022, written four books, successfully spearheaded the establishment of a GCSE in Natural History, and in 2019 set up the charity, Curlew Action. She is Chair of the Curlew Recovery Partnership England. She has four major conservation awards, including the RSPB Medal in 2022.

Venue: Clifton Cathedral, Pembroke Rd, Clifton

Later in the series:

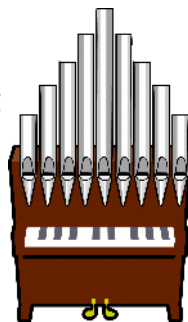
Tuesday 5th March Revd Dave Gregory *Seeing God in creation*

Monday 11th March Revd Dr Al Barrett *Living out an earthed faith*

Redland Park URC Organ

A group in Redland Park, led by Richard Pedlar is developing two projects using the Redland Park Organ.

A new series of organ concerts has been planned. The first was on January 20th with Richard Johnson as the soloist. There are five concerts in the first series. We are fortunate to have attracted an extremely talented group of soloists.



We invite you to support these concerts and hope you will enjoy them. Each Concert is on a Saturday with coffee and cake at 10:30 am, followed by organ music at 11 a.m. for 45 minutes. All ages are welcome. A donation is invited.

The list of the rest of the concert dates:

February	17 th	John Davenport
March	23 rd	Ashley Marshfield
April	13 th	Eric Tyson
June	22 nd	Claire Hobbs

Why should you come? Redland Park has one of the most interesting and versatile Pipe Organs in Bristol. It has (roughly) 2,455 pipes, 58 stops and 4 manuals [keyboards *to the rest of us*] + pedals. It is a large instrument and allows the organist to present a wide variety of music well.

The second project is in partnership with the Bristol Beacon who have set up a Workshop for Schools about the Organ, using the RP Instrument.

The first Organ Concert – a short review.

The first concert on January 20th was excellent. There were about 80 people in the church. Richard Johnson played the RP organ superbly well. He started with two short pieces and followed up with the huge Organ Symphony No 6 by C-M Widor, all demanding pieces, which used the full resources of the RP Organ. Whether the music was loud or soft, Richard and the organ made it sound interesting. In quiet sections, the audience was obviously rapt, listening avidly. The coffee and cakes were also excellent and with the music made an enjoyable morning.



World Day of Prayer Service 2024



Friday 1st March at Victoria Methodist

10.0 a.m. for refreshments and 10.30 for the service

We know how earnestly Palestine and Israel need our prayers at this time. No one could have known five years ago, when the women of Palestine were writing the service for 2024, the conflict that would engulf them now.

Despite all this, the women of Palestine want to share a love that is a reminder that they are there, and to give hope to everyone.

The theme of the service is 'bear with one another in love.' These words now seem prophetically appropriate, indeed urgent. Whatever our thoughts about this conflict, this service provides us with an opportunity to reflect and pray for both sides. It deserves your time to come this year or **Zoom** in at **ID 810 6140 3512** Passcode: **195389**

The artwork for this year's service was inspired by Halima Aziz.

Her artwork shows three Palestinian women praying together in a peaceful, outdoor space and is aptly named 'Praying Palestinian women.' We must hope their prayers are answered soon.

For further information see www.wwdp.org.uk

Anne Neugebauer

(Secretary for local WDOP committee which is part of Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham & Redland)



A “JUST WAR” ?

We are all challenged by the Israel against Hamas conflict and the practical and ethical issues that it raises. At the end of October, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) attacked the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza and in the subsequent press briefing the spokesperson, Danie Hagari, was asked about the 50 civilians killed; his response was to label them as “Unintended casualties in a Just War.”

As Christians, can we accept this? Do we accept the concept of a Just War? We explored this question in our 7 p.m. service on 10th December.

The 4th century Christian sage St Augustine detailed three acceptable prompts for a Just war:

- a. defending yourself against attack,
- b. recapturing things taken by an enemy, *and*
- c. punishing people who have done wrong. He was influenced by Old Testament texts like Deuteronomy 19 v 21: “Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” and King David’s words in Psalm 144 v 1: “Blessed be the LORD, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle.”

A more recent American definition of a Just Cause suggests “force may be used only to correct a grave, public evil, i.e., aggression or massive violation of the basic rights of whole populations.”

In order to try to decide if any war can be justified within our our Christian values we explored some Gospel texts:

“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.’” (Matthew 26 v 52)

Does this suggest that violence is always wrong?

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.(Matthew 5 v 9) Why does God seem so slow in generating peacemakers in Ukraine or Gaza?

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” (Matthew 10 v 34)

Can this really mean that Jesus will always be divisive?

KNOW YOUR ELDER

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

Alison Hooper at Redland Park

Where did you grow up?

I was born and grew up in Belfast in the sixties and more turbulent seventies.

A memory from my youth

I remember when I was 18 and living in Liverpool, opening my handbag when entering a shop as a matter of course to be searched and there was no security man to be seen. I searched around until it finally dawned that I could enter the shop without being searched – this was normal life outside Northern Ireland. It took me a while to realize that the way people lived in Northern Ireland was not normal when compared to the rest of the UK.



What brought me to Bristol?

I came to Bristol to study for my Ph.D. at the University of Bristol, Mathematics Department, under the supervision of Prof Keith Moffatt, a well known academic in fluid mechanics. I was also newly married and it was an exciting time for my husband and me.

Who/what led me to faith in Christ?

I was christened as baby and attended church and Sunday school every Sunday as a matter of routine. My faith has gradually grown as I have got older and hopefully wiser. I have learnt that doubting and questioning are part of the growing process.

Why did I start worshipping at Redland Park?

When I first came to Bristol, I lived in rented accommodation in Sneyd Park. I had attended a Presbyterian Church in Belfast and the only nearby church I could find that seemed similar was Redland Park URC. I went

sporadically for about 4 years before we moved to Australia for work reasons. On returning to Bristol, again with work, we eventually settled down in Bishopston and I returned to RP, a familiar place, to worship.

Something good about living in Bristol

Bristol is a lovely place. Compared to many cities, it is relatively easy to get out of the city, and Bristol is surrounded by much beautiful countryside. During lockdown, however, I realized that Bristol itself is full of green spaces. No-one seems to be that far away from a park and open places to wander.

Something I really value about Redland Park?

I've been at RP now for about 38 years. I love the building which is so light and sunny. But I value most the people I have met there over the years and I hold dear their support and friendship.

PRAY FOR THE HOLY LAND WITH THE CHRISTIANS OF THE MIDDLE EAST:

Give thanks that the church in the Middle East is being salt and light in this devastating conflict.

Give thanks that charities are using their platforms to amplify the voice of the Middle Eastern Church in these critical days.

Pray for encouragement and strength for believers in the region, and that they will find comfort in knowing that they are part of the body of Christ throughout the world.

Pray for God's perfect peace, mercy, justice and love to reign in the Holy Land. Pray for a de-escalation of violence in the Holy Land and beyond as the conflict threatens to spread to other countries.

Pray for comfort for the grieving, healing for the injured, and for urgent aid to reach those in need.

Pray for wisdom, compassion and courage for church leaders in the region and all those in a position to make an impact.

Pray for wisdom, compassion and courage for church leaders in the region and all those in a position to make an impact.

A Redland Park Love Affair

David Hayden

Earliest Days

My parents were married at Brislington Congregational Church in June 1931. This was my mother's home church where several years earlier she met my father who, with his friend Reg Fursdon (later the minister of the long closed Clifton Down Congregational Church) from Redland Park were attending a Missionary Rally, possibly involving Bernard Thomas a teacher/missionary who we later knew at RP. My father's parents lived in a flat at No.3 Redland Park as they were the church caretakers and the whole family were RP members.

My parents' first home was a flat over the shop at 98a Whiteladies Road (now Neptune) and of course were regular attendees at their church opposite. My mother recalled the occasion when during the first hymn one Sunday morning she realised that she had forgotten to light the oven for the lunch joint and rectified the omission before the hymn ended.

Fast forward, just a little, to January 1933 and I made my first appearance at the Hampstead Nursing Home in Brislington. Is it too fanciful to suggest that, even though I have no recollection of it, my first entry through the portals of RPC was during 1932? The first direct evidence of my appearance on site is this photograph of me at 3 months with my grandfather and father (wearing spats!) near the steps to No. 3 Redland Park. Redland Park Church was founded in 1861 and I am proud and humbled to be able to claim some real connection with our church for well over half of that time.



The Rev Cyril Grant once told me that Mabel Bartlett, whom I can remember, could recall being bounced on his knee by The Rev. Urijah Thomas, RP's first minister. Not quite "dancing with a girl who danced with the Prince of Wales" but it gives me an, albeit very tenuous, link right back to RP's earliest days. *[Ed: can we bridge the whole of RP's history with two bouncing babies - on different ministers' knees?]*

At a very early age, and well before my sister was born in 1936, we moved from Whiteladies Road to Knowle and my parents joined the quite recently founded Knowle Park Congregational Church. This severed any direct connection with RP although family visits by my parents kept them up to date with RP news.

At the outbreak of WW2 my father was very ill with rheumatic fever and to assist my mother my aunts took me to live with them. I believe that they lived in Anglesey Place or maybe Manor Park. I clearly recall attending morning service and sitting next to Grandpa Hayden who controlled the somewhat primitive hearing aid system and its red light under his seat (very near where the current AV system is). At that time, and for many years after, an Anglican Chant was included in the service. This was a type of singing completely unknown to me at Knowle Park and it was a great relief when we eventually reached the *Gloria!*

All the above relate to the original church building which was destroyed by bombs during WW2. Is there anyone else who can remember attending services there?

David Hayden
(to be continued)

Good COP or bad COP? *Based on a a Tear Fund report from COP28*

There was concern in advance about a COP meeting being held in a country which depends on fossil fuels for the vast majority of its income, and a huge concern that fossil fuel lobbyists had 1½ more delegates than the ten most climate vulnerable countries combined. (Why is that allowed to happen?) **But...**

A key item was the Global Stocktake (GST) – the first ‘report card’ on climate action since the Paris Agreement in 2015. Paris was an important milestone which saw countries commit to limit warming to as close to 1.5°C as possible. Securing a strong agreement on the GST was widely regarded as a measure of the success of COP28, partly because the GST will shape national climate plans for climate action through this next decisive decade.

COP also agreed on Day 1 to the creation of a new fund for **Loss and Damage**, pledging money to support measures in countries where the effects of Climate Change are most damaging to mitigate the effects . This was a significant accomplishment considering the issue failed entirely during negotiations at COP26 in Glasgow just two years ago. A number of governments announced new contributions at the outset, while others made commitments to the Fund later in the week, with pledges totalling \$770 million. Sadly, we have to note that monies pledged and monies delivered rarely match (including the UK).

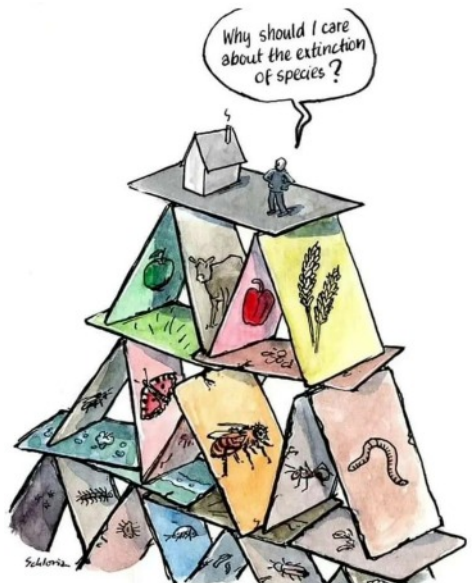
At the end of COP28 there was an agreement of a statement - as usual argued about by all the vested interests until well after the conference should have ended, and weakened to bring everybody on board - but at least it was agreed.

However the COP agreement does not go far enough, as Laura Young, Tearfund Ambassador and climate scientist, sums up:

“The final outcome of the UN climate talks has shifted the dial, though it falls short of the landmark energy agreement that would have hailed the end of the fossil fuel era. The result is a mixed bag of transitioning away from fossil fuels whilst opening the door to dangerous distractions and weakening of past commitments. We should applaud that countries have pledged to triple renewables and double energy efficiency by 2030, but unless coal, oil and gas are phased out at the same time, we'll continue to fuel climate disaster.”

It does leave us in the UK wondering why our government is blocking all on-shore wind generation - far and away the current cheapest form of electricity - while licensing more North Sea oil and gas drilling.

I'm not sure the climate is taking any notice of their reasoning.



Keeping up with the vicar, part 141

Here are the Lectionary readings for February and the first Sunday in March. This year in the Lectionary has a big focus on Mark's gospel, and a question that often comes up about Jesus is "Who *is* this man?"

The evil spirit we heard about on January 28th (Mk 1:24) seemed to know, and the readings on 11th & 18th affirm this. Taking the readings the other way round, what is *added* to the message in the Mark 9 story from the Mark 1 one? Worth asking ourselves, "How do I respond to that? What does that mean for me?"

I offered a challenge 6 years ago, and again in 2021: in the three readings from Corinthians and in Peter's letter, one verb features significantly. What is it? An edible prize for the first correct answer. (Not the same one as in 2018 – I ate that - as no-one claimed it.) Once you've found the verb, again it's worth asking "What am *I* doing about that in my day-to-day life?" Lent is, after all, a time of preparation.

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

	OT	Psalm	Gospel	NT
Feb 4 th	Isaiah 40:21-31	147:1-11,20c	Mark 1:29-39	1Cor9:16-23
11 th	2Kings 2:1-12	50:1-6	Mark 9:2-9	2Cor 4:3-6
18 th	Gen 9:8-17	25:1-10	Mark 1:9-15	1Peter 3:18-22
Lent 1				
25 th	Gen 17:1-7,15-16	22:23-31	Mark 8:31-38	Rom 4:13-25
Lent 2				
Mar 3 rd	Exodus 20:1-17	19	John 2:13-22	1Cor 1:18-25
Lent 3				

Deadline for contributions for the
March *Recorder* is **15th February.**

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