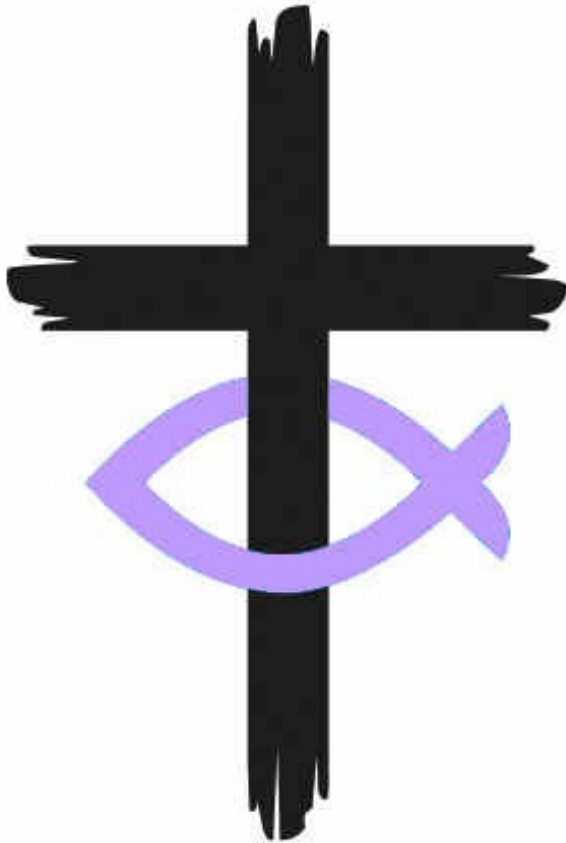


ESTD 1901

The Recorder

October '24

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



Vestry Vibes by Dougie Burnett

Dear friends,

At the September RP church meeting I made particular reference to the Church Life Review (CLR) articles as featured in the latest edition of *Reform*. The Church Life Review is that vast piece of work being undertaken by Church House under the direction of our General Secretary, the Rev. John Bradbury. In common with all other denominations we are now at a point where we need to restructure our life as the URC to meet the challenges of a very



different world from the one that we knew even 20-30 years ago. I think that URC Church House is to be commended as to how they are seeking to be transparent, and to involve us as local churches in what is going on and the work that is being undertaken. It is complicated and challenging, but also hopeful.

One of the focuses of the Church Life Review will be how to enable our local churches to be the churches they want to be. What does that mean? It means helping local churches with things like compliance.

I know that might not sound like much, but for those of us who have to deal with it, it really has become a real headache. The CLR is looking at how we can make life easier for our local churches with regard to compliance to enable them to give expression to their mission. John Bradbury writes a very imaginative podcast as from 2030, which involves looking at a variety of settings across the URC. 2030 sounds like a long way into the future. But it is only six years from now. These imagined settings illustrate how things might work through.

There is also an article about who is who on the Church Life Review Steering Group. It is good to connect names, faces and skill sets. There is an intriguing article called "Burn the Scaffolding" by the Rev. Dr. Susan Durber, formerly the principal at Westminster College, Cambridge. She talks about the nature of change. It is challenging. But then, as she says

in her last sentence of the article, “If Christ is in us, we won’t mind changing the odd lightbulb...as long as the light can shine.” And then there is an article called, “Next Steps”. That outlines what happens next. That will include having two General Assemblies in 2025. Yes, that is two General Assemblies!!! There is that much work to get done.

I hope that we can discuss these articles at the next Church Meetings which will be on October 24th for NB, November 17th for RP. Both churches are more than able their heads around these issues. We will order some more copies of *Reform* so that we can all read the articles ahead of the meeting. In the meantime please do pray for all of those involved in this work. It is not straightforward. It is a complicated piece of work, but God is around and calling us onward. So, can we do it? Yes, we can!

Dougie

Pause for thought

As I type this (24th September) the death toll in Gaza from Israeli strikes since 7th October is 41,455 which is nearly 2.0 % of the population. This includes an estimated more than 16 500 children.

The equivalent percentage, if this had happened in the UK, is a death toll of almost **1.34 million** including 534 000 children. What would we do if something caused this loss of life in the UK?

On 8th September – *prior* to the Israeli attack on the Al-Mawasi refugee camp (they’re bombing a *refugee camp*??) – UN secretary general **António Guterres** commented on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, saying:

“The level of suffering we are witnessing in Gaza is unprecedented in my mandate as secretary-general of the United Nations.

I’ve never seen such a level of death and destruction as we are seeing in Gaza in the last few months.”

Worship details

... at Redland Park

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

October 6th Rev Dougie Burnett, including Communion

13th Rev Dougie Burnett

20th Angus Gregson

27th Rev Dougie Burnett

Zoom log in: 732 001 8996 passcode 8cC7Zv

Sunday evening worship at 7 p.m. via Zoom

October 13th & 27th

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 is: 732 001 8996 passcode 8cC7Zv

... and at New Brunswick

October 6th Astrid Domingo Molyneux (Leprosy Mission)

13th Rev Sue Cossey, include Communion

20th Rev Gaby Doherty

27th Rev Helen Mckinnon



Other dates...

... at New Brunswick

- October Tue 1st Joint churches prayer meeting at Kingsholm,
7.30 p.m.
- Sat 5th Quiz and cream tea 3 - 6 p.m.
- Fri 18th Southmead Quiz at 7 p.m.
- Mon 21st Praise, Prayer and Bible Study at 7.30 p.m.
More about Ephesians, 4:17-5:2 , plus tea and cake.
- Thu 24th Church meeting at 7.30 p.m.

... at Redland Park

- October Wed 9th Organ meeting, 10 a.m.
- Wed 9th Elders' meeting, 7.30 p.m.
- Sat 19th Organ Treat Andrew Kirk and the Henbury Singers.
Cake at 10.30 a.m. with organ playing at 11.00 for
about 45 minutes.

A Rocha's "Easy Eco Tips for OCTOBER

Contribute to wildlife conservation. If you're lucky enough to have garden, clean bird feeders to prevent diseases spreading to winter migrants. Install a nest box well before breeding season to provide a cosy retreat for small birds during cold winter nights. Prepare to support more birds next year, with more tips at arocha.org.uk/give-abird-a-home.

As you observe the local birds reflect on this verse, 'I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine.'
Psalm 50:11.



People news

from Redland Park...

from Carol Fry

Please remember our friends **Peter and Anna Ambrose** in your prayers, both with health problems. **Sheila Smart** is always happy with a visitor and **Margaret Prigg**, both in Avenue House which has been isolating due to several residents with Covid recently; we pray for them all. Please remember **Terry King** who was such a stalwart of the church, and **Audrey Bryant** in Westbury Gardens, and we send them our best wishes.

We now have a new Moderator at last, after a year and a half of vacancy, so we welcome **Revd David Downing** and hope to see him at Redland Park sometime soon.

We remember **Janet Lockyer** in our prayers, after her death in September. She had been a member and regular attender for so many years, along with carers in recent times.

We think of **Michael Kearley** who had an operation recently which turned out to be more complex than first thought, and recovery is proving slow, but we hope will be successful.

Congratulations to **Les Brentley, Jane Penrose, Linda Croft and Sally King** who have all celebrated big birthdays recently. Love to them all.

We shall be welcoming four new members to Redland Park at the October communion service, and we send them our prayers in this new beginning – **Jayu and Joojin**, who came from the Bristol Korean Church on settling in the UK, and **Minjae and Mintae** who are relatively recently arrived in Bristol, although Mintae has lived in Glasgow as well. Mintae will be baptised as well as becoming a member.

We will also be welcoming two non-serving Elders from sister churches in November, by co-option, to support our Elders Board – **Ron Lyle** from Nailsea and **Martyn Steel** from Muswell Hill, our organist. They will observe at the October Elders meeting and be inducted at the November communion service.

from New Brunswick...

from Brenda Drake

It was so nice to see Mary back worshipping with us recently. She is looking well and enjoyed sharing in worship with us. Mary is very happy in her 'new' home and is very much enjoying the food!! We pray this will be the first of many more visits.

We have been pleased to see **Angie** back worshipping with us. Her hearing problem seems to be improving and she is feeling generally better in herself.

Jen S is still in BRI although there is now talk of her being able to go home. However her current accommodation is not suitable for her needs. Jen would appreciate prayers regarding this situation that something more appropriate can be found. She also very much wants to return to worshipping with us and especially being able to share with us at our Fellowship Lunch.

Lou and family are still in our thoughts and prayers as their situation seems to change from day to day and adjustments are made on a regular basis. We think too of Carol and David who continue to support where and when they can.

There may be others who are not named here but we assure them of our prayers and support. All are known to our Lord.

We uphold all these folk to our ever listening God asking that He ministers to each as their need requires.

CELEBRATIONS!

October seems to be a quiet month among the folk at New Brunswick for birthdays but we do have one celebration and that is **Becky and Nick** who celebrate their wedding anniversary on 12th. We wish them both a very happy day.

There may be others who have something to celebrate during the coming month and we wish you a very happy day and for everyone God's richest blessings.

REDLAND PARK CHURCH CHARITIES (Church in Society)

The two church charities that we currently support (North Bristol and South Gloucester Food Bank and The Vine Trust) will be coming to their two year conclusion shortly and the Elders discussed the whole range of charities supported by the church, not counting the charities that we all support as individuals. They decided that we would support one charity each year, rather than two for two years, so nominations are requested for an overseas charity for 2025 and then we will ask for a local charity for 2026. Nomination forms are available, or please give a name and description to Carol Fry.



Back by popular request, the quizzing highlight of the year.

In the last 7 years churches, including RP & NB, have raised over a million pounds for **Tear Fund** via their quizzes. And all this without any knowledge required about famous trains, although you might find out a little more about our city, and you'll certainly be able to learn a bit more about the amazing work that Tear Fund is enabled to do by your gifts.

Adverts in the next few weeks! And clear your diary for the next quiz on

Friday 15th November

WHAT DO CHOCOLATE AND TOILET ROLLS HAVE IN COMMON?*

asks Carol Fry

For many years, the *Traidcraft* stall at Redland Park was run in church after Sunday morning services. During lockdowns all churches closed their physical doors. Some were able to go online, but not all were lucky enough to have a few technical-minded members (or the equipment) to work an online system. But it meant that trade for *Traidcraft* collapsed and they went into administration.



A smaller company is evolving called *Transform Trade* but this does not have the range of goods of the original company so a decision was made to try to encourage sustainable goods, reducing plastic and being environmentally friendly. This is working reasonably well, but is there anything else that could be done, and items to stock, to help our eco-friendly credentials?

Without producing any looks of horror, there will be some *Traidcraft* Christmas cards for sale from November – purchased in their closing down sale, so sale prices!

**They are the best sellers on the fair trade stall.*

A huge thank you to Carol for continuing to run the stall, for getting the card reader to work, and latterly to source all the stock too. Thank goodness she lives so close to Gloucester Road!

More about Carol later in this issue!

While we were sharing at a recent 7 o'clock service a cartoon came to mind. I haven't got copyright permission to add it in here, but imagine someone slumped against a tree, complaining to God. "Oh God, why is it all going wrong? Why is there so much injustice, war, hunger, famine in the world? What are you going to do about it?"

**NOT A
CARTOON**

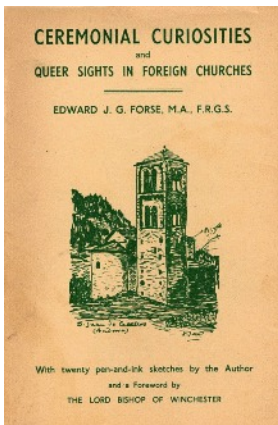
And a voice from heaven comes: "I was going to ask you the same thing."

A Forse to be reckoned with...

by *Martyn Steel*

It is quite amazing what you can find while browsing in a second-hand book shop. A long-standing female friend of mine (45+ years) and my late mother, can't and couldn't bear such places. The former hates the thought of books that numerous unknown hands had touched, felt and fondled; my mother on the other hand, just hated the amount of time I spent with the fondling. In her latter years she became quite vociferous about it, but despite that we really did get on!

I was in the town of Hay-on-Wye a number of years ago. A nemesis for my female friend and my late mother, as it is a place well-known for its plethora of bookshops. My heaven; their hell. I came across a very



strange book. It was written and illustrated by an English Anglican priest, first and only printed in 1938. For such a relatively slim volume it had a cumbersome title: *Ceremonial Curiosities and Queer Sights in Foreign Churches*, followed by: *Ecclesiological and Other Notes*.

If made into a film (never), I would pity the editor/producer who endeavoured to reduce the title to a couple of words for Netflix and co!

The author's name reads as lengthy as the title: *The Reverend Edward J. G. Forse, MA, FRGS, former Vicar of Southbourne and Senior Incumbent of Bournemouth*. I imagine the Reverend Forse to be an early 20th century Samuel Pepys, but lacking the plague, fire and juicy bits. Mr Forse spent many a time away from his Winchester Diocese walking all over Europe and keeping a diary as he trekked. How did he get the time off from parochial work I ask?

His walking obsession and mine differ. Forse and myself do have something in common though: he was a travel diarist, and I too, keep a journal when abroad. Whereas my journals are typically for my eyes and memory alone, Forse enabled all to see his, albeit in a fairly limited published edition run. Here is one entry of many:

On Friday, March 20th, 1908, I was walking from Forges to S. Chamant when I was overtaken by a vulgar countrywoman, about 40 years old, whom I could not shake off. She persisted in accompanying me and talking

all the while. Was I not afraid to travel alone, especially after the assassination of the King of Portugal? Had I heard of the schismatic priest who was lurking somewhere nearby Lubersac? Did I believe in Confession, for she certainly did not? Did I believe in hell? Their own priest told them not to do so, and preached fine sermons to show that there was no such place. She was an intelligent peasant and would not believe that I was English, "for no Englishman speaks couramment, but always one word at a time, separately," and she gave me some amusing specimens of the way English speak French! I told her she had better advise the priest to wait till he got to Hell before being too certain it did not exist: he would assuredly get there if he kept on preaching such sermons. I went on my way less discontented with my lot, realising the Church of France is not after all vastly more peaceful or united than the Church of England; nor are our doctrinal differences and parochial squabbles any worse than those of our neighbours across the Channel.



Rev. Edward Forse

The more you read, the more you get to know this kindly cleric and walk alongside the man who meticulously documented the people and places he visited on his sojourns throughout Europe during the early 20th century. The walking-obsessed cleric is surely forgotten by his congregations, most long since deceased.

But, a person is only really forgotten when their name is mentioned or read for the last time. So, Mr Forse lives on in his book of graphic reflections and this article.

Many a time I have lent out books and CDs; a large amount of them have neither been seen again nor been returned by the various recipients. If, in the highly unlikely event, please do not be offended if I refuse to loan my virtually irreplaceable copy by the 'Revered J G Forse MA FRGS'. It is one of those quirky, comforting books that needs to be always sleeping on my shelves and occasionally awakened by me from time to time.

And to my late mother, I say a very belated sorry and God bless you!

Know Your Elder

Carol Fry at Redland Park

Where did you grow up?

Lancaster, a small town with not much going on at the time (a University, teachers' training college and other things were opening up but I felt the call of the big city), so I left at 19 and moved to Manchester.



A memory from your youth?

We used to holiday in Cornwall, which took three days to get there from Lancaster, usually towing a caravan, before motorways had been invented. My mother said she just loved Cornwall.

What brought you to Bristol?

Les.

[Ed: And isn't it great for all of us that they're still both here?]

Who/what led you to faith in Christ?

My family were not churchgoers; my three sisters and I were sent to Sunday School, but I think that was to give my mother peace to cook Sunday lunch. That, and my nursery school with stories about Jesus, were just that – stories. My best friend in Manchester is Catholic, so I went to her wedding, children' baptisms and First Communions. Her church was quite informal, guitars and pianos, etc, so I tried my local C of E church and felt at home. Then I met Les who was a church-going Methodist . . .

Why did you start worshipping at RP?

When I was visiting Les in Bristol in the winter of 81/82, a terrible snow storm meant that Bristol ground to a standstill, with people sledging down Whiteladies Road, skiing across the Downs. Redland Park Church was the

nearest one. We made the mistake of signing the visitors book so, of course, Cyril came to visit!

Something particularly good about living in Bristol?

I love all the events, all the theatres, the buzz of the city, and access to countryside – and the M6.

Something I don't like about Bristol?

The drinking water! I was used to Lake District water which was pure, so I always have a filter jug to get rid of Bristol limescale.

Something you really value about RP?

All the people, and all they do for others.

From the former president of the USA, Donald Trump:

“The biggest threat is not global warming, where the ocean is going to rise one-eighth of an inch over the next 400 years,” Trump said. “The biggest threat is nuclear warming.”

Quoted from an interview with Elon Musk on X 12th August 2024

And perhaps some more meaningful quotes:

“Science takes things apart to see how they work.
Religion puts things together to see what they mean.”

Rabbi Jonathan Sachs

“Science investigates, religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge which is power, religion gives man wisdom which is control.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”

Albert Einstein

Keeping up with the vicar, part 148

Here are the lectionary readings for October. Our readings in Mark this month cover Jesus' final approach to Jerusalem. As the disciples struggle to understand what Jesus is saying about what's ahead for him, the Messiah, he gives some radical teaching on the status of women and children (and on being a disciple) and what keeping the Law really means.

I was talking with my Mum recently, and she told me she reads a chapter of the Bible each morning as part of her "quiet time". (When I've tried that I usually abandon the plan somewhere in Numbers or Leviticus.)

But in this long stretch between Pentecost and Advent, the Lectionary does have a useful protracted focus or two. Last month we looked at James, a really practical, what-your-faith-should-look-like-in-action letter.

This month we go back just one book in the bible but a huge focus shift as the writer of Hebrews tries to explain to Jewish Christians, through umpteen examples from the Old Testament, why Jesus is the ultimate High Priest, and what that means for us.

I lead worship most Sundays and so I value these sequential runs for building up sermons, although I'm aware that the churches I'm at might not have had the same readings in the preceding weeks. September's always a challenge as Harvest services pop up, although Harvest would fit in so well with James' letter. Maybe you could read through the passages below *down* the column in one go to get a feel of where they're heading.

There's also a big Lectionary focus on Job. I'm not sure I'll be including the Job passages in the services I'm leading. Hopefully the next page will help.

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.

	OT	Psalm	Gospel	NT
Oct 6 th	Job 1:1; 2:1-10	26	Mk 10:2-16	Hebrews 1:1-4
13 th	Job 23:1-9,16-17	22:1-15	Mk 10:17-31	Hebrews 4:12-16
20 th	Job 38:1-7,34-41	104:1-9,24,35	Mk 10:35-45	Hebrews 5:1-10
27 th	Job 42:1-6,10-17	34:1-8,19-22	Mk 10:46-52	Hebrews 7:23-28

The book of Job. I find so much of Job a real challenge. The premise, his friends' "advice", God's explanation, the fairy tale ending. I don't think I'm alone. How many sermons will you hear about Job this month? But it's summarised in the 4 weeks of October. Here are the weekly notes from the resource *Roots*, [copied with permission] but what do **you** think?

6th: Job: an honest and upright man, who loses everything (home, family, prosperity, health) yet refuses to blame God, believing that both good and bad comes from God's hand. A dialogue between God and Satan (called 'The Accuser' in some translations) seems to indicate that God has allowed this - is this the same God who takes a child in his arms and blesses them? There are some things we are not equipped to understand, but as God is faithful to us so we are called to be faithful to him.

13th: Despite the unhelpful accusations of his 'friends' that he must be a sinner to have suffered so much, Job continues to protest his innocence. He wishes that he could find God who, in his deep darkness, he still believes would listen to him. Searching for God may start quite close to home: in speaking out our questions we may find that help comes from those who listen and allow us to share our problems. Solutions may take longer, but God has a plan for us that includes this life and the next.

20th: A dialogue between Job and God. Rather than providing words of comfort in Job's suffering, God points Job towards his power as the creator of the universe. God's omnipotence throws Job's creatureliness into stark relief. This is an opportunity to hear God's side of the story of Job. He calls Job to consider who he is – and we are invited to do the same. There seems to be a contrast when Jesus speaks about being a suffering servant. But here is the paradox of the God we serve.

27th: The Book of Job concludes with Job's second response to God and his realisation that he has come to a deeper knowledge of his place within God's creation. There is a rebuke for Job's friends and their counsel. Job's fortunes are restored, there is an inheritance for his daughters and he dies at a great old age. Job's realisation that God is the omnipotent creator leads him to recognise that he spoke of things beyond himself. The only way forward therefore is to repent and recognise God's unfathomable mystery. We, too, are invited to embrace the mystery, and allow ourselves to be changed by our encounter with God – to see him with new eyes, just as Bartimaeus was able to do.

Deadline for contributions for the
November *Recorder* is **15th October**.

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.

Many thanks to everyone who
contributed to this edition.

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The *Recorder* is the monthly magazine of
Redland Park *and* New Brunswick
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Bristol, Bristol,
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