

# C O N T A C T

## May 2018



Volume 59 - Issue 5  
Sawston Free Church – Little Abington URC – Castle Camps URC

**Sawston FC Regular Church Activities** but please check diary below for full details or contact the relevant group.

<b>Sunday</b>	Every Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of month  2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month  3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of month 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of month 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of month	10.30 am 3.00 pm  10.30 am 6.00 pm 6.00 pm 6.30 pm	Morning Worship Messy Church <b>No evening service</b> Holy Communion as part of Morning Worship Quiet Time with God Evening Communion Go4th Praise Service ( <b>No evening service</b>
Monday	Alternate - see diary	10.00 am	Craft Group
Tuesday	Term time only	6.15 – 9.00 pm	Boys' and Girls' Brigades
Wednesday	Fortnightly see diary	2.00 pm	Wednesday Fellowship
Thursday	Term time only	10.30 – noon	Time for Tots
Saturday	Last Saturday of month	10.30 am	Monthly Prayer Meeting
For further details of these activities, please contact one of the Elders (see back page). Four housegroups meet regularly. For information contact the Minister or Church Secretaries.			

### Three Churches Services and Dates for Your Diary

Date	Sawston	Lt Abington	Castle Camps
<b>Sun 6 May</b>	10.30am: Morning Worship - Andy Nightingale 3pm: Messy Church	10.15am: Morning Worship - Mr Chris Salter	10.30am: Communion - Rev Bruce Waldron
Wed 9 May	2pm: Wednesday Fellowship (page 17)		
Sat 12 May	<b>8am: Workday</b> (page 17)		
<b>Sun 13 May</b>	<b>Sawston Fun Run</b>	10.15am: Morning Worship - Mrs Maureen Kendall	10.30am: Morning Worship Dr Janet Bottoms
Mon 14 May	10am: Craft Group (page 17)		
<b>Sun 20 May</b>	10.30am: Pentecost - Rev Bruce Waldron 6pm: Evening Communion - Rev Bruce Waldron	2.30pm: Communion - Rev Bruce Waldron	10.30am: Family Service Penny Flynn
Wed 23 May	2pm: Wednesday Fellowship (page 17)		
<b>Sun 27 May</b>	10.30am: Trinity – Shared Service SFC - Rev Bruce Waldron 6.30pm: Go4th : Bruce Waldron	10.15am: Morning Worship - Mr George Tadrous	10.30am: Morning Worship Rev Michael Wilson

This diary appears on the website. If you know of anything else you would like on the web diary, email: [contact@sawston.com](mailto:contact@sawston.com)

### Rotas

	Car	Flowers		Car	Flowers
May 6	Tony Moss 834220	Doris Phillips	May 20	Tony Moss 834220	Vivien Ford
May 13	John Conway 833953	Maggie Jones	May 27	Gordon Heald 833983	

The closing date for **June** Contact is **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May**.

**David Nunn is the editor, so please email your items  
to [contact@sawston.com](mailto:contact@sawston.com) or [anne.nunn@btinternet.com](mailto:anne.nunn@btinternet.com)**

# Contact

The monthly magazine of  
**Sawston Free Church, Little Abington & Castle Camps URC's  
United Reformed – Methodist**

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www.sawstonfreechurch.org.uk  
www.facebook.com/SawstonFreeChurch

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## From the Minister's Desk



I have two seminars to attend this month.

The one at the beginning of the month is a gathering of URC ministers from all over the country, to search out together how we might tackle the URC's Focus for the next few years, "Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today".

The seminar at the end of the month is for myself and Sharn; it is a course designed to help ministers when they are retiring to think about all the issues involved in that process.

Despite having said very clearly for over a year now that I will be retiring on the 16th November 2019, forty years to the day from when I was ordained, I still have people coming up to me, time and time again, and saying "I hear you're leaving us soon!" I tell them "No, not soon. In a year and a half's time". Inevitably they reply "Oh I thought it was this year. Oh, you're going next year!" and they walk away looking so disappointed..."

Isn't it odd how people can pick up one part of a message correctly and yet the other part of the message incorrectly?

That's why this "focus", "Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today" is so important. Like the disciples, we pick up some parts right and other parts wrong. We are constantly in need of redirection, re-instruction, re-orientation.

One thing is sure. Any aspect of our faith that causes us to despise or denigrate another follower of Christ, is not walking the way of Jesus. Any interpretation of faith that does harm to another is not walking the way of Jesus. Any aspect that assumes our superiority over another is not in the image of Him. Any interpretation of faith that divides us up into camps, whether it's the fundamentalist or the liberal or the left wing or right wing is a tribalism that doesn't belong in the gathering of disciples of Jesus. Any petty talk that puts another down, or fosters petty dislike and then validates it by getting others on side, is not of Christ. He doesn't work like that.

Walking the way of Jesus means any friend of His is a friend of mine, and worthy of the greatest respect because Jesus has accepted him/her as His friend, and He is my compass, not my own personal proclivities. And if I believe that God is going to work through me, because I follow Him, then I had better assume that God is going to work through "them" based on precisely the same assumption. That means my fellow Christians, of whatever ilk or disposition, are worthy of the greatest respect, because Christ is alive in them.

Are you consciously trying, all the time, to walk the way of Christ, conscious that your calling is to live the life of Jesus today? I hope it's a healthy preoccupation of yours, and mine.

Page 13 gives further views on "living the life of Jesus today"

**Bruce**

## Message From Castle Camps



May has arrived and after a few weeks of snowy weather, we are now enjoying seeing all of the spring flowers. Gardens are looking lovely and we are starting to hear the sound of lawnmowers!

This year, our Songs of Praise was on Palm Sunday, led by Richard Hart and the choir of St Mary's Church in Haverhill. We enjoyed the fellowship and it was good to see everyone. The offertory was donated to the Teenage Cancer Trust.

On Easter Sunday, we had a Blossoming of the Cross service. This was our first such service and was well attended.

Sarah Davey started the service with a beautiful solo together with another one later on. The cross looked beautiful with all of the different flowers and greenery.

We should like to thank everyone who helped with the decoration and particularly Tony and Jamie for making the cross.

After the service, we had an Easter Egg hunt for the children which they enjoyed, whilst the rest of us had refreshments. The offertory was donated to the Arthur Rank Hospice.



The annual vintage tractor run in memory of Roy Haylock was held on Easter Saturday when 36 tractors took part in a very interesting trip. The proceeds of this event, totalling £1,500 were donated to East Anglian Children's Hospice, in memory of the late Sara Hall (nee Haylock).

We send our best wishes to Phyllis Aldridge who celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and enjoyed a surprise party arranged by her family.

We send our love and best wishes to you all.

God Bless

***Mary and friends***

This article was in the Parish magazine of a Norfolk church and they gave us permission to use it.

## **We All Need A Tree**

I had hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse and he had just finished a rough first day on the job: a flat tyre made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill packed in and his ancient pick-up refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation. His face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterwards he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier. "Oh that's my trouble tree", he replied "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again, funny thing is", he smiled, "when I come out in the morning to pick them up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before".

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### **PLEASE REMEMBER CHRISTIAN AID WEEK**



**Tea Dance with Cream Tea**  
St Mary's Community Hall  
**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2.00 – 5.00pm**  
Entrance by ticket: £6 incl. cream tea  
(10 yrs and under £3) from 11 High Street  
Tel: 834220 or contact Pam, Tony or Mary



## Communication



A member of a certain church, who had previously attended services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the minister decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited.

The pastor made himself comfortable but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the play of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all on its own. He then sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all this in quiet fascination. As the lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow and then it's fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. Just before the pastor was ready to leave, he picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said, *"Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday"*.

Lynne Riecansky



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### **SEASIDE SPECTACULAR HOLIDAY CLUB**

**Christians  
Together in  
Sawston**

**30th July – 4<sup>th</sup> August 2018  
9.30am-3.30pm  
at Bellbird Primary School**

Holiday Club is on the horizon again and this year we're going to the seaside! For five days primary school children (from end of Reception up to Year 6) will be meeting up with Jesus and His friends on the beach to find out 'What does a disciple need in their bucket'!



## The Blessings of Spring ~

By Deborah Ann

I love the Lord with all my heart and soul. My Holy Spirit inspired poetry tells of my trust in God, my faith in Christ Jesus my Saviour and my journey into finding peace that truly passes all understanding. I pray it will be a blessing to all who read it ~ To God Be The Glory! ~

There are many blessings,  
that each new Spring brings  
you can see it bloom about  
and hear the song it sings.

With winters bleakness over,  
and brighter days ahead  
comes promises of new life  
Springtime loves to spread.

As God unfolds the flowers,  
and their buds begin to show  
He gives to us the assurance  
grace in our hearts will grow.

He sends us the robin's song,  
with the promise to provide  
a shelter under His mighty wing  
where in His love we can abide.

He melts the snowy covers,  
and sends the refreshing rain  
sprinkling us with His mercies  
to heal winter's ache and pain.

God's given to all His Son,  
to shed upon us a new light  
and the real blessing of Spring . . .  
is keeping Jesus in our sight



Julie and Simon Robinson are happy to share the news that their eldest son Dr Michael Robinson will be getting married to Dr Rachel Tresman on Saturday 26 May. The wedding will take place at St Nicholas's Church, Cranleigh, Surrey.

## Massai Warriors – News Update

What a difference a little bit of rain makes – well, a lot actually. When we last left Kenya in October 2017, everything was desperate. There had been little rain for that year and the preceding 4 years, the average farmer had lost more than half of their livestock with some losing all. When we arrived mid March, it had been raining for about 2 weeks, the grass was re-growing and green and the animals were starting to look healthy.



There were a few days of torrential rain which brings its own problems. Reaching our school becomes difficult as the mud tracks turn into makeshift rivers. There are no bridges across the proper rivers in this area so the normal route of hopping across the large stones becomes impossible when the rivers become a raging torrent of water. During our short time in Kenya, 4 children from a school about 10 miles away died whilst trying to cross a river on their way to school.



It's near the end of term so sports day. However, it's not the kind of sports day that you or I would remember. Primary children run, jump and throw against each other but school against school rather than age against age. Since some children miss many years of primary education, a child can be 20 before they leave Primary school. So you have a 10 year old running against someone who is 20. Guess who wins? In the long distance races, children often wait in the bushes just waiting to come running out for the last few laps. The photo shows the high jump. No sand or soft landing area so the jumping method is to spring from both legs then bend your knees up to your chin as you clear the bar and land on your bare feet.



We mentioned in the last newsletter that Kenya was introducing a new curriculum. Although teachers have been given very little information about the new curriculum, we have had to introduce it to 5 of our classes since January. The curriculum is skills based rather than the old knowledge based, so, for example children learn about keeping chickens by having some chickens around rather than just reading about chickens in a book. The photo shows the school's chicken coop constructed from waste material by Dadio, one of the boys in the orphanage and Wambua the caretaker.



The girls learn about building a traditional Maasai hut, a task always undertaken by the women in Maasai tradition, using twigs, cow dung and mud. Here is a photo of their efforts.



To help the transition to a skills based curriculum a Scottish head teacher, Margaret, has kindly offered 2 months of her time to help the school's teachers and head teacher. Margaret is half way through her first month and is showing and teaching the teachers how to get the children more involved in their learning. Margaret is writing a daily blog about her experiences

One unexpected area she has been catapulted into is on corporal punishment. The school recently had a bad case of beating by one of the new teachers when a class of children did not meet with his learning expectations. The teacher is no longer with the school and Margaret is spending much time showing the teachers Positive Behaviour Management techniques. Although illegal, Kenya is a country where beatings are common, but they will not be tolerated in this school.

A new Baby class started in January. It should have been 25 children but somehow had grown to 32 with a number of underage teachers' children. One more thing to sort out! The school now has 9 classes with 245 children.

A couple of new initiatives from the Kenyan government. Firstly, there is now a central register of all school children. Every school child must have a school registration number that relates to their birth certificate, to be completed by April. This is probably to stop Government funded schools from inflating their number of pupils and so getting extra funding. However at our rural school, around 95% of children do not have birth certificates and the Government system to create them is creaking under the strain. Strangely, if a parent greases the official's palm with a little cash, the birth certificate can be done much faster.

Secondly, plastic bags are now banned in Kenya. It took us about 30 minutes to repack and remove all the plastic bag contraband from our luggage to avoid a possible 4 year imprisonment or £300 fine. The local village of Kisamis, which used to be covered in used plastic bags, is now noticeably cleaner.

Water – with all the rain it is easy to forget that once the rain stops, clean sources of groundwater become so very important. We have now repaired more than 450 hand pumps installed by other charities. I cannot promise that all are still working but each pump caretaker has received a training course about how to make simple repairs to keep their pump working.



The photo shows a women caretaker being trained in how to replace pump seals.

The 2 very deep solar powered pumps in Olepolos continue to serve their communities. The one at the school pumps 4000 – 6000L of water each day from 500’ below ground, just using the power of the sun. The other solar pump, about 3 miles from the school, has been more troublesome. The



community is responsible for looking after this pump and twice people have tried to steal the solar panels. The panels cannot be removed but are easily broken and every time they are broken, the pump stops working. It’s now all working again just waiting until it is needed in the next drought. The children are always interested to hear about their sponsors in the UK, as you can see.

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*I found this article in the magazine of the little chapel at Lanhydrock, the National Trust house in Cornwall, whilst on holiday recently.*

*Lanhydrock is part of the Bodmin Team Ministry which also includes St Petroc, Bodmin, St Stephen, Nanstallon, St Hydroc and Lanivet.*

***Yvonne Sparrow***

## **On The Other Side**

A sick man turned to his doctor, as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, “Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side”.

Very quietly, the doctor said, “I don’t know”

“You don’t know? You, a Christian man, do not know what is on the other side?”

The doctor was holding the handle of the door. On the other side came a sound of scratching and whining, and as he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with an eager show of gladness.

Turning to the patient, the doctor said, “Did you notice my dog? He’s never been in this room before. He didn’t know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened, he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing... I know my Master is there and that is enough”.

# History of Sawston - Fields, Pastures and Ditches

(Extracts from A History of Sawston- T.F.Teversham)

“Soon after Anne and I moved into London Road we met our neighbour Mrs Mary Wakefield who has now sadly deceased. She loved her garden and often told us about the days when she could see cattle grazing in the meadows behind her house. I thought I would try to find some more detail about this meadow and its cattle”

David

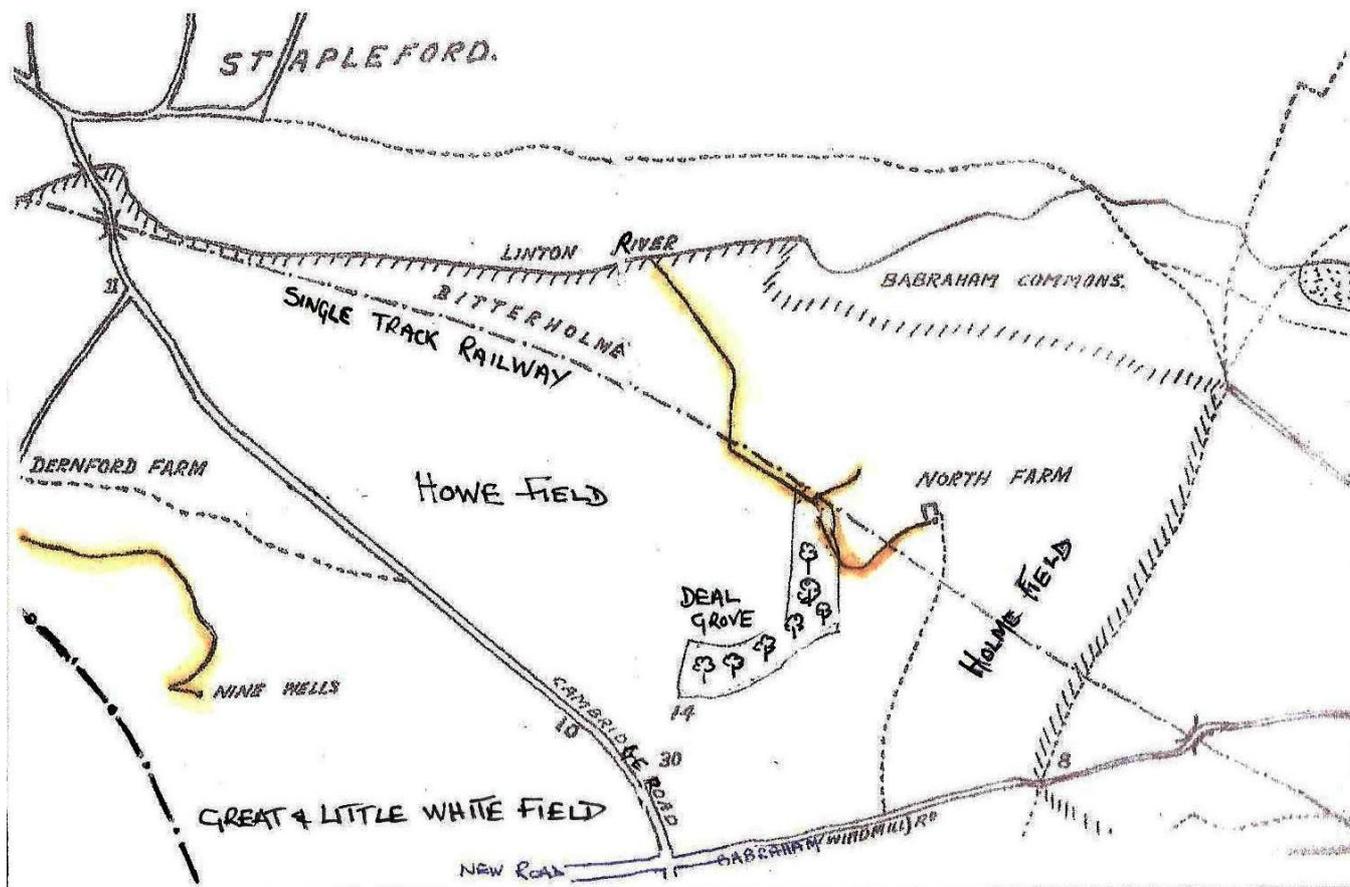
## Fields and Pastures

By the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, all the inhabitants of Sawston were under an obligation to observe the orders or byelaws relating to the cultivation of the arable lands, and the grazing of the common pastures and meadows, under the communal system.

Fines were usually imposed for any breach of the orders, these being collected later either by the bailiff or the town constables. The orders were mainly concerned with the grazing of the common fields and pastures by cattle, sheep and horses; pigs were not allowed on the commons.

The common arable fields were in the areas known as:

- Church Field (off Church Lane)
- Holme Field (Babraham Road to Babraham Common & Bitterholme)
- Howe Field (Huckeridge Hill & Dernford)
- Great and Little White Field (off New Road and Mill Lane).



The only orders affecting these arable lands related to the maintenance of the intervening baulks and to the pasturage of the aftermath.

Each of the arable fields was cultivated and cropped by the village community working as a team, each man, according to the stock and equipment which he owned, supplying draught oxen or horses, plough gear, carts etc. and the labour required at the various seasons for ploughing, harrowing, sowing, manuring and all the other field operations.

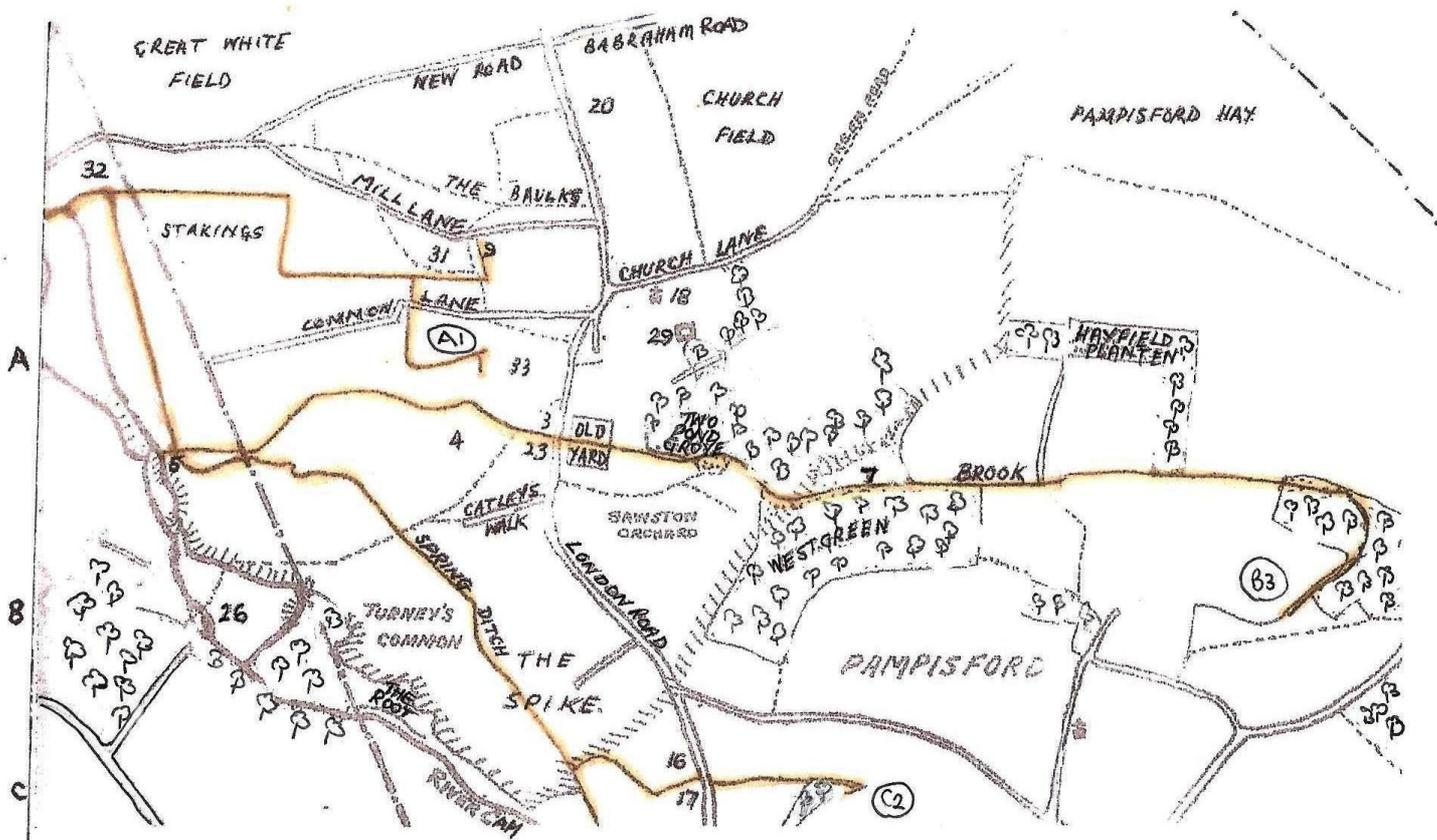
There were a number of baulks across these fields, "way-baulks" which served as accommodation roads for the various tenants who farmed a strip or strips of land in any particular field. The line of the balk marked the end of each strip and the balk was common property.

Any plough damage to the balk caused inconvenience for the passage of the carts and the offender was invariably ordered to lay the balk as it had been beforehand. It was also an offence to cut the grass on the balk or to tether cattle or horses along it.

The pasturage after the harvest of these fields was also controlled. The "great cattle" under the town herdsman having the first feed; at a later date it was the sheep the "town flock".

There were also considerable stretches of outlying pastures which were not mown and provided coarse feed throughout the year for cattle, sheep and horses from the Spike area, Turney's Common (this was Mrs Wakefield's view) down to Catley's walk and the footpath to Whittlesford. To the north of the village the pastures were at Bitterholme, North farm, Dale Moor and Dernford. From time to time, the town herd moved into these outlying pastures and it was an offence to prevent cattle from joining the town herd on these occasions.

1 2 3



3 Obanks, 4 Wash Hills, 5 Swan's Corner, 7 Lady's Wash, 9 Stinking Ditch, 16 Eastern CL, 17 Langford Arch, 18 St. Marys Church  
20 Congregational Church, 23 Brook House, 26 Whittlesford Mill, 29 Sawston Hall, 31 Town Close, 32 Dovehouse Meadow, 33 Huntingdon Farm

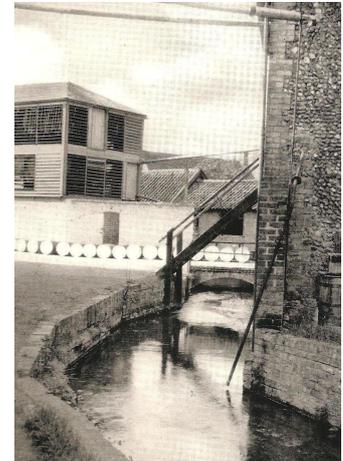
----- Footpaths //////////////// Sawston Boundary to the South - - - - - Railway Double Track - - - - - Single Track

### The Ditches

The three main ditches drained the most valuable pasture land in the village – The Brook, Spring Ditch and Huntingdon Farm ditch.

**The Spring Ditch** rises in Pampisford woods (ref C2) near the New Yard (Eastern Counties Leather ref 16) and after skirting the leather factory, it flows in a northerly direction past the Spike cricket field and across Turney’s Common. After passing under the railway it runs nearly parallel to the Brook. A few yards from Swans Corner (ref 5) it passes under the Brook through a small tunnel and then parallel to the railway to Dovehouse Meadow.(ref 32)

**The Brook** rises in Pampisford Grove (Ref B3). It flows across Pampisord Moor and along the north side of West Green wood. From here it skirts the east boundary of Sawston’s Orchard, where it is joined by the small stream from the Lady’s Wash (ref 7), and then flows on through the Old Yard, between Brook house (ref 23) and an area known as Obanks (ref 3) and then directly to Swans Corner to join the River Cam (Granta). The area across Wash Hills (ref 4) to the main river is an artificial cut, probably from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



*The Brook passing through the Old Yard*

**Prior to the cut**, the brook would flow across Huntingdon’s farm (ref 33), across Common Lane and Stakings to Dovehouse Meadow (ref 32). Common Lane was probably often under water and hence its earlier name of “Water Lane”.

### Huntingdon Farm Ditch

It was therefore of vital importance that the ditch between Huntingdon’s (ref A1) through Stakings to Dovehouse Meadow was maintained and kept open to help with the flooding, but it was a constant source of trouble.

In the year 1878 the main drain was laid through the village and from that time sewerage was led into the ditch around Town Close, Mill Lane and skirts the western boundary of the recreation ground. This was known as the Stinking ditch (ref 9), enough said.

*David*

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## *Thank You*

For the last few years, Min Huey of OWL (Papworth Trust) has been attending to all of our rooms bookings. This was arranged when we could see that the connection with the cafe could be useful to both us and OWL, as often people booking the rooms would be asking for catering and arrangements were mutually beneficial.

With Papworth Trust deciding to discontinue the OWL Cafe, it is necessary for us to take back responsibility for bookings.

Terry and Beryl Penny have very generously offered their services for this purpose so all booking should now be directed through them. You can still use the email address: [bookings@sawstonfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:bookings@sawstonfreechurch.org.uk), and the Pennys have taken over the bookings telephone.

We offer to Min our heartfelt thanks for doing a truly terrific job for the last few years. ***Thank you Min for your efficiency and wonderful customer relationship skills.***

*Bruce*



## Prayer Diary for May

I just received in the mail a Prayer Journal from [www.thykingdomcom.global](http://www.thykingdomcom.global) so for this month I'm going to share a slightly edited version of this resource designed for 11 days of prayer. I'm suggesting we spread it out over the month, so I'll date it as a guide.

### 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>

Choose five people to pray for during this month. Write their names down here and keep on praying for them. 1..... 2..... 3..... 4.....  
5.....

### 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup>

Are you close to God today or feeling far from Him, stumbling or shuffling through mud or running, or perhaps slowly drifting away. Turn around if you've been facing in the wrong direction, and pray for someone else you know who needs to turn around.

### 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>

Think of the person who makes you smile when they come to mind, what you value about them. Are you ever like that with Jesus. Spend some time in prayer, listing the ten things you love most about Him.

### 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

A couple of ways to see life: as if we're owed it all and deserve everything good, or to see all of it as gift. Your friends, family, health, future, past, the world around you, and all its diversity, and God's unremitting love for you are all gift. Give thanks, give thanks give thanks.

### 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>

Sorry, is not just a word, but a surrender, a giving up the right to try and prove you are right, to justify and explain. It is coming clean. Come clean before God today, and tomorrow, in everything, and pray for a sorry that comes from a heart touched by God.

### 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>

With the story of Jesus response to the 5,000+ hungry people, he had almost nothing to offer, but offered what he had. The people who have seen God do the most are those who have offered everything. Are you able to offer God in your prayer, your skills, your time, your money, your heart, your life: search out what more you may need to offer to God these three days?

### 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>

Prayer is refusing to carry things ourselves. It is the practice of off-loading to God all that we carry, not just the things that are too heavy or are unmanageable. Don't bear your burdens, or others, but take them to God, and listen in to what he is already saying to you about them.

### 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>

Who likes admitting they haven't got what it takes? We live with the illusion that strength is being self-sufficient. God invites us to see it the other way around. To know we are weak is our strength because we then turn to God who is our strength.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>

Often we are so busy with the things we have to do, the pressures of doing and responding. For these few days, take some time out to contemplate this amazing reality; you are loved with a perfect love. In the morning, in the midday and in the evening, stop and recall, you are God's creation and loved utterly by God.

### 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>

Have you ever given a present, out of love, and the person has failed to realise the thought and the love. A little task for a few days; each day, for a little while, stop: morning, midday and evening, until you find something in your world, to celebrate. Then take it to God, and celebrate it with God.

### 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>

Each day, each morning, midday and evening, for a little while, simply STOP, and let God fill the silence.

# An Introduction to Holy Habits

## *Part of the Address to The Synod Meeting, March 2018 by Paul Whittle*

***“Walking the Way: living the life of Jesus today”*** – is the latest strapline that the United Reformed Church is using, and it’s a great strapline, a great concept. It’s a call to discipleship, a call to missional discipleship. Of course, it is nothing new. The church has been doing discipleship for something around two thousand years. It is in our DNA. It is what we do. The first disciples encountered Jesus on a Galilean beach and responded positively to his invitation to go with him and be part of his team. ***Follow me and I will make you fish for people.***

However, though it is nothing new, many of us are valuing the renewed emphasis on discipleship. We recognise that our discipleship has often been less than it should have been – and we can see the value of being encouraged to proactively re-engage as disciples.

In so many ways we are like Isaiah. We look around and we see so much that is amiss – and we fear that is all too much. We can hardly do anything, let alone enough. We are deeply concerned. Then, just like Isaiah, we feel God’s touch and so, when we hear the call, we are able to say, as Isaiah did: *here am I; send me!*

In the end, discipleship is not a big deal, though it is easy for us to evade it. It is easy for us to think it is too much. It is easy for us to think that we are not good enough. Strictly, we are not good enough – only, somehow, wonderfully, that does not matter to God. God wants what we can offer, and God never asks more of us than we can do. Both Isaiah and Simon Peter, as well as many others in the Bible, had to learn that lesson but, learning it, what a difference they made!

But what does it mean to be a disciple? What can we do to be intentional disciples? How can we be more effective? One of the suggestions around at the moment is to consider engaging in *“holy habits”*, and to encourage others to take up holy habits. I really like that idea. I think you can do all sorts of things with it to make it work for you. A habit is something that you do on a regular basis. You make it part of your life. A holy habit is a habit that is connected to God. God is holy.

One of the great Biblical statements about us is that we are made in the image of God. It is there in Genesis 1:27 – *So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them.* That is quite something and it lends a lot of credibility to the idea that we should develop holy habits. As God is holy, so we should do what we can to be holy.

There are innumerable ways in which we could approach this idea of holy habits. I don’t think that it would be possible, or legitimate, to produce a single definitive list. The list that we are mainly working to within the URCh at the moment is a list of ten, all of which can be found in Acts chapter 2. It is a good list.

They are actually all there in verses 42 to 47 of Acts chapter 2. *They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common: they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

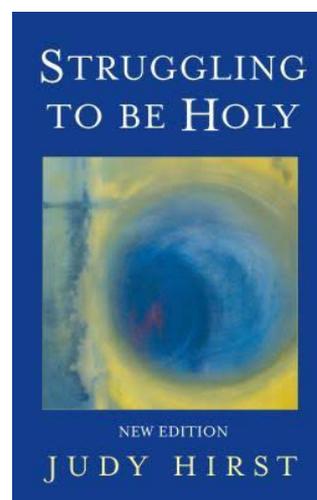
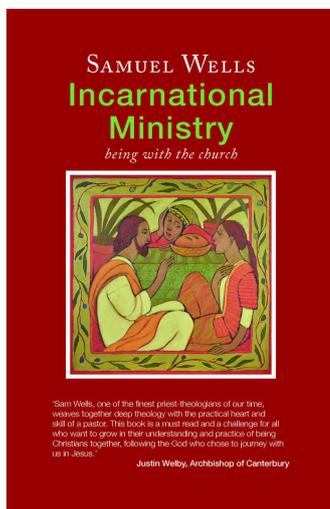
Ten holy habits are there in that passage – Biblical teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer, giving, service, eating together, gladness & generosity, worship, and making more disciples.

When we start talking about being holy, it can seem impossible. How can we be holy? Why aspire for something we can’t manage? Isn’t it better to ditch the idea of holy habits and reach for something more achievable? By conventional standards, those would all be appropriate questions – but that is not how we live. We look to God who transforms things, who sees things differently and who wants us to be involved.

Thus, the idea of holy habits is not only possible. It gives us a helpful way of responding to God as we can, and as we should.

I commend the idea of holy habits. There is no wish to be prescriptive as to how you approach them. Many have heard me suggest an alternative shorter list of five – bless, eat, listen, learn, sent – which is drawn from Michael Frost’s book, “Surprise The World” and you and I could all come up with other suggestions, all valid. In John chapter 1 a couple of John’s disciples went to see what Jesus was up to. What we are told about that encounter is that *they remained with him that day*. That is what we need – to spend time with Jesus, with God, and then we’ll develop the holy habits that are going to work for us.

(Books mentioned by Paul)



At the March Synod, Bruce was asked by Paul, in his role as Green Advocate, to talk about one of the HOLY HABITS.

*“I quite like the Moderator’s approach, so when he asked me to look at the holy habit of giving I said yes without hesitation. Then I started to think “What have I got myself into.” But the Holy Habits theme makes sense to me, so, here is a rough equivalent to what I said at Synod on the 17<sup>th</sup> March*

## My Holy Habits Talk to Synod

### The SLR on the firing line. (Self Loading Rifle)

In 1970, the Australian Regular Army gave me a ticket to Melbourne and there I was put on a bus to the First Recruit Training Battalion, Kapooka, and began my life as a soldier in the ARA. I thrived on the training; I loved it, and I learned to love my beautiful rifle, a mantra we were often told to repeat. Our standard issue weapon was an SLR, a gas recoil Self-Loading-Rifle that fired a 7.6mm NATO rimless round with a muzzle velocity of 2700 feet per second and an effective range of 800 metres. Its weight was 9.56 lbs unloaded and 11.4lbs fully loaded with a 20 round magazine. I learned to strip that rifle and re-assemble it with my eyes closed and I became as familiar with the drills as I was with my Military Service number. There was one particular drill I learned well. These rifles sometimes jammed when they heated up from repeated firing. The gas from the exploding round drives the piston that ejects the used round, and when the gas heats up, it sometimes jams the rifle. There was a drill. Clear the breach: Remove the magazine: turn the gas indicator down one notch; replace the magazine: load and continue firing. I could do that in three seconds flat.

I was out on the firing range, next to a bloke called Geoff Battle, and he had a good eye. The targets came up in quick succession at 75metres, 200 metres and 300 metres. We were firing round for round and each target was going down – and then I had a gas jam. In the heat of the moment, the drill kicked in: Mag off, clear breach, knob down, replace mag, reload, keep firing. I missed one target and Geoff beat me. The training corporal who was the scourge of the recruits looked down and said “Well executed drill Recruit”

I could never have done that gas jam clearance, under such pressure, unless I had rehearsed it, practiced it, again and again till it was second nature. **When we are under pressure, in a stressful situation, it is our habits that drive us, and dictate our actions.**

## Back seat with an octopus

In 1972 the Army posted me to Melbourne and it was there I met Sharn. As two young people we were part of a thriving youth group at the Dallas Baptist Church in Broadmeadows, Melbourne, and we used to all go out to the Youth For Christ rallies in the Dallas Brookes Hall in Melbourne with what seemed around a thousand young people. On one particular occasion I remember there were no seats left, so Sharn and I had to sit in the aisles, which I reckoned was alright because she needed a back rest and that was me; and I remember the speaker, talking to us about our sexual morality, and what he said to us young people was: "It isn't the right time to try and figure out your moral theology when you are sitting in the back seat of a car with an octopus."

It is not the time to try and work out right from wrong when we are under pressure, when our feelings are running high, when our blood is pumping. **But what has been practiced and rehearsed and is as natural to us as breathing, this is what drives us in the moments where we need to react quickly, instinctively, and decisively**

## Dennis: I'll love you anyway

I remember so well a chap from one of my earlier churches, a man who I always regarded as a quintessential example of Christian grace and humility. He was a man of deep spirituality, who rehearsed before God often his gratitude for God's forgiveness and love to him. He had an adopted daughter who grew to be a wonderful woman, but in her teens she acted out some of the trauma that had been her experience of rejection and adoption. And one day, as only a 13 year old can do, she stood nose to nose with her father and screamed at him, "I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!" and Dennis, drawing on the depth of rehearsed grace and love, replied to his daughter "It's alright Darling, because I still love you!"

He could not have done that, in that deeply charged, stressful moment, had he not absorbed and practised, day by day, hour by hour, the abundant, overflowing generosity of God's heart, the generosity of spirit that seeks only to give, because of what we have been given. In the moment of stress, it is our habits that drive us.

Our habits drive us. In those moments when the pressure is on and emotions are roaring, the habits we have acquired drive us. Not what we think cognitively; not what we aspire to practically, not what theologians we assent to, but the habits of our heart and mind and thinking and being, the things we rehearse, the drills we practice day by day.

Habits are choice. We choose what habits we are going to acquire and nourish, and what habits we are going to not care about and seek to discard, and I'm tasked with talking to you about the holy habit of giving.

## What's giving about.

Whenever we talk about giving, people think about their wallets, and it's true that Luther said there are three things that need converting: our hearts, our minds and our wallets. But giving is an attitude of heart and mind that arises out of our profound, rehearsed, practised awareness of living in the presence of eternal gift and permeates our entire being. We live our lives in the presence of gift. In the beginning of creation, we read the nature of God whose first words to humanity are, **'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food'.**

We live in the presence, the environment, of gift, and the mess of our planet today is deeply attributable to the attitude of humanity that has been characterised not by what I can give to this planet but what I can take from it. In our environment, whether with nature, with family, with church or our own hearts, we need to turn it around, by living consciously in the presence of the God who gives freely, even to death, for us.

God has gifted us with His Son. His Son has gifted us with hope and direction and grace. He has gifted us with the promise of resurrection power, and finally, he has gifted us with His Spirit. Giving isn't something Christians do; it is an attitude of heart that is born out our long rehearsed faith and finds realisation in generosity of heart that responds with love to screamed abuse, and with forgiveness for driven nails, a holy habit that can only emerge because we have practised day by day and time and time again, consciously living in the presence of the generosity of God's grace.

Channel Four's *Jesus' Female Disciples - the new evidence* (8<sup>th</sup> April), presented by Professors Helen Bond (Edinburgh) and Joan Taylor (Kings, London) was excellent. They took the viewer on a lightning tour of recent and not-so-recent research into women in the early church. This was good popularising of serious research. So television 'does' Christianity after all!

Much of it was far from new. James Dunn remarked in his *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (1977), 'We can no longer doubt that there are many different expressions of Christianity within the New Testament.' He noted long-neglected evidence in the text of the New Testament, the women in the gospel stories and in Paul's churches especially. *Jesus' Female Disciples* summarised both new work and research done over the last forty years.

No-one these days doubts that the Gospel expression 'the disciples' includes both men and women, and that the women were very important. No-one doubts that the role of Mary Magdalene was central. It was she, after all, to whom the message of the Resurrection was entrusted. Everyone accepts that there is no evidence in the gospels for her being a prostitute. Bond's and Taylor's attempt to portray her as an independent business-woman connected to the fishing industry is, as yet, highly speculative. They totally ignored all the traditions in the non-canonical gospels that raise her to the heights of spiritual significance (and describe her as a prostitute). Their remarks about Salome and Joanna wife of Chusa were excellent. How on earth *did* the wife of Herod's steward come to be raking around Galilee with Jesus? To say that the women 'bank rolled' the entire Jesus operation is, at present, speculation rather than knowledge. But Luke 8: 2-3 is indeed a much neglected passage.

Bond and Taylor noticed that in Mark 6:6, Jesus sent 'them' out 'two by two'. The expression matches what the Greek Old Testament in use at the time says about the Ark perfectly. Their suggestion (utterly new to me) that Jesus sent his disciples out in male and female pairs the better to facilitate their ministry of anointing is both fascinating and powerful.

Then a huge jump to the 2<sup>nd</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> century subterranean Christian caverns carved out below Naples, and a wall painting of Cherula, seemingly a female bishop, complete with her teaching authority in terms of Holy Spirit and the four gospels. There is no doubting their reading of the symbolism. Nor is there any reason to doubt what it all meant. Recently, research into the so-called 'heretical' Christian movements has gone on apace, along with the reasons for their suppression. 'We need to account for two things. On the one had, Christians were strikingly diverse and disagreed about nearly everything.... On the other hand, when in the early fourth century [Emperor] Constantine ... actively supported Christianity, the idea that Christians should form a single, worldwide "orthodox" Church took hold quickly. (1) 'The diversity disappeared very quickly indeed, suppression not infrequently turning to force and, on occasion, to large-scale killing. Key issues were (i) centralisation of power (ii) pacifism and recruitment to the army (iii) the collaboration of church and state and crucially, (iv) the role of women in church and in society. Was Cherula the bishop of a Valentinian or Montanist Christian church? We cannot (as yet) say. Their books were systematically destroyed by the victorious centralising tradition.

On this last, I would say that Bond and Taylor were spot on. Constantine wanted a strong, unified church that would support him and, through him, the State. He got it, too. Dissenting Christians paid a terrible price. Only the winners won. Bond and Taylor were also right to say that the emerging centralised church, the Mediaeval church, and the churches of the Reformation both Catholic and Protestant displayed no interest at all in undoing Constantine's work for nearly two thousand years. Sadly, what they did NOT say, was that in the last fifty years, what has happened has been truly wonderful.

**(1) David Brakke. *The Gnostics - Myth, ritual and diversity in Early Christianity*. Cambridge Mass. Harvard University Press, 2010. p5.**



## Peterborough Cathedral

The first abbey was established at Peterborough (originally called Medeshamstede) in 655 AD and largely destroyed by Viking raiders in 870. In the mid 10th century a Benedictine Abbey was created from what remained, with a larger church and more extensive buildings. The abbey's ancillary buildings were destroyed in Hereward the Wake's resistance to the Norman takeover in 1069, but the church survived until an accidental fire swept through it in 1116.



The present building was begun in 1118, consecrated in 1238 and the structure of the building remains essentially as it was on completion. Most significantly the original wooden ceiling survives in the nave, the only one of its type in this country and one of only four wooden ceilings of this period surviving in the whole of Europe, having been completed between 1230 and 1250. It has been over-painted twice, but retains its original style and pattern.

The main beams and roof bosses of the tower date back to the 1370s and those of the Presbytery to 1500. The renewal of the Presbytery roof coincided with an extensive building programme which included the processional route provided by extending the East End of the church. This 'New Building' is an excellent example of late Perpendicular work with fine fan vaulting probably designed by John Wastell, who went on to work on Kings College Chapel in Cambridge.

In 1539 the great abbey of Peterborough was closed and its lands and properties confiscated by the king. However to increase his control over the church in this area he created a new bishop and Peterborough Abbey church became a Cathedral.

Two queens were buried in the Cathedral during the Tudor period. Katherine of Aragon's grave is in the North Aisle near the High Altar, whilst Mary Queen of Scots was buried on the opposite side of the altar, though her grave is now empty (she was re-buried in Westminster in 1612).

St Oswald's Arm (the Abbey's most valued relic) disappeared from its chapel about the time of the reformation but the chapel still has its watch-tower where monks kept guard over it day and night.

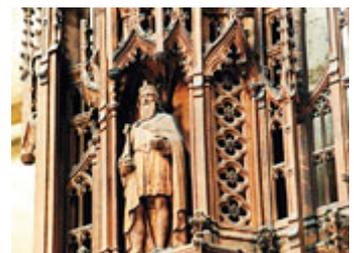
The Central tower was rebuilt for a second time in the 1880's and after this the whole central and eastern area of the church required refurbishment. This provided an opportunity for the creation of the fine, hand carved choir stalls, cathedra (bishop's throne) and choir pulpit, and the marble pavement and high altar which are at the centre of worship today.

In the 21st century the Cathedral still follows its traditional pattern of daily worship, as well as serving as a vibrant and developing community with outreach and education programmes, and performances and civic events.



*The NAVE CEILING*

*This original hand-painted wooden ceiling dates from around 1230-1250 and is the only one of its type surviving in Britain.*



*THE CHOIR STALLS: These magnificently carved wooden stalls date from the late 1800s.*



# CAMBRIDGE METHODIST CIRCUIT

## Events for May 2018

For more details contact the Circuit Administrator: Mrs Miriam Webb  
 Circuit Office: Wesley Methodist Church, Christ's Pieces, Cambridge CB1  
 1LG Office: 01223 352115 Email: [office@wesleycam.org.uk](mailto:office@wesleycam.org.uk)  
[www.cambridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk](http://www.cambridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk)

Sat 5 <sup>th</sup>	From 5pm	District Celebration at St Edmunds Cathedral on the theme of Day by Day in Worship and Mission with guest speaker - Revd Lorraine Mellor. Tea from 5pm, worship songs from 6 pm. Service starts at 6.30pm – all welcome. Free coach provided from various locations in the circuit. Booking essential for the coach & free tea. Contact the circuit office to book your space on the coach as soon as possible and by 27 <sup>th</sup> April. You are welcome to make your own way and just turn up to the service at 6.30pm at the cathedral. Come and share in this wonderful celebration!	Bury St Edmunds Cathedral
Mon 14 <sup>th</sup>	7.15pm for 7.45pm	Science Meets Faith 'Managing Type 2 Diabetes in India: the challenge of providing health care in a developing country' with guest speaker Dr Geoff Levine, Christian Medical College & hospital, Vellore, India and retired hospital practitioner in diabetes, Addenbrookes hospital. Free admission – retiring collection. Refreshments from 7.15pm – all welcome.	Wesley MC
Sat 19 <sup>th</sup>	From 10.30am	Coffee Morning for a small local Action For Children home – contact Susan Schofield or the Wesley office 01223 352115 for more details	Cambridge
Sun 20 <sup>th</sup>	6.30pm	Circuit Service for the Easter Offering on the theme of 'Seek Peace and Pursue it' using material prepared by the Methodist Women in Britain on behalf of the World Mission Fund. Refreshments from 5.30pm. Service starts at 6.30pm all welcome.	Wesley MC
Mon 21 <sup>st</sup>	7.15pm for 7.45pm	Faith in the Arts with Revd Malcolm Guite, chaplain of Girton College, speaking on 'Poetic Faith: Sounding the depths with Samuel Taylor Coleridge'. Free admission – retiring collection. Refreshments from 7.15pm – all welcome.	Wesley MC
Weds 23 <sup>rd</sup>	7-9pm	Leaving prison in faith – films, talks and discussion following the experience of four people leaving prison with faith. This event can be found on Eventbrite.	School of Divinity – St John's College
Thurs 24 <sup>th</sup>	7pm	The East Anglia District invites you to celebrate ministry during an Ordinand's Testimony Service for Revd Charity Nzegwu, with guest preacher - Revd. Jongi Zihle (London Chair). Everyone expected, everyone welcome – refreshments will follow the service	Royston MC

## Church Directory

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*I should like to thank everyone for their support in sending me articles that they have found either on holiday, travelling or from wherever.*

*If you visit an interesting place then do send me some details and a photo if possible. It maybe an interesting garden or church that you visited or a favourite poem.*

*Anything you feel may be of interest to other church members.*

**David**



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