

CONTACT

January 2022



Volume 63 - Issue 1
Sawston Free Church – Castle Camps URC

Churches Services and Dates for Your Diary

Future Services-(also available via zoom) SFC email: secretary@sawstonfreechurch.org.uk,
Castle Camps email: sarabdavey@outlook.com

Sawston Free Church:

02 January 10.30 Morning Worship – The Elders
09 January 10.30 Covenant Service & Holy Communion - Rev Phil Nevard
16 January 10.30 Morning Worship – Rev Phil Nevard
23 January 10.30 Go4th with Phil Nevard
30 January 10.30 Morning Worship – Rev Dr. Mike Wilson

The closing date for **February** Contact is Tuesday **18th January**

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to contact@sawston.com or anne.nunn@btinternet.com

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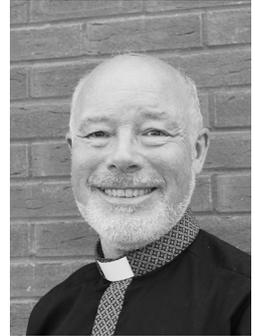
Contact

The monthly magazine of
**Sawston Free Church United Reformed Methodist
& Castle Camps URC**

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Dear Friends,

I am sometimes struck by the observation that those of my friends who begin Christmas the earliest are often also the ones who abandon it the quickest! I have friends who put up Christmas trees before the end of November, yet pack it all away the day after Boxing Day! It's almost as if they pour so much energy into preparing for it and waiting for it that they have none left to enjoy it.



Traditionally, Christmas STARTS on 25th December and then runs for 12 days until 6th January when Epiphany starts. Hence - the Twelve Days of Christmas. So, even though we are into the new year, Happy Christmas!

Epiphany is when we often think of the Magi arriving, but more than that, it is a time when we think of the impact of Christ's birth being felt and recognised by all nations and in all places. All around the world, except in the UK, Epiphany is a huge festival with processions of Magi and camels, Kings Cake (Recipe on page 8 -why not make one this year?) and in many countries, men leap into icy waters, competing to be the first to retrieve the wooden cross that the priest has thrown!

You've probably packed it all away now, and the house might seem a little dull now the decorations are gone. In our house a tradition has grown where we "accidentally" leave up one Christmas decoration, somewhere obscure. Through the year we notice it and it makes us smile.

My prayer is that you will find a way to keep hold of some small part of what Christmas is about - and carry it through the year. Hold on to a little bit of that Love, joy, peace and hope. Hold tightly to the light that shines in the darkness, the light that the darkness can never overcome.



Every Blessing,
Phil

Christmas Services



Thank you Phil for all our services this Christmas. So many of us in church and at home on Zoom took part in them and felt warmed and uplifted by the story of the first Christmas and the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christmas Eve, our first “pyjama” service at 5pm had several children dressed up ready for bed, and some adults too! The children sat on the floor on a blanket and listened to Phil telling the Christmas story. We cut out paper snowflakes and stuck them on the front sliding door. At the end of the service we all lit candles to sing the final carol.



Christmas morning we had a traditional service with carols, readings and a story. It was good to share too what gifts people had been given!

The morning of Boxing day we joined with Whittlesford URC and the Anglican Church for a very special service . The church was lit with many tea lights and there was a large nativity scene set up at the front. It all had a magic atmosphere. Phil talked about the traditional nativity scene and pointed out there were more people who could be included in it, e.g. Elizabeth, Zachariah, baby John, King Herod to name but a few. It was a very thought provoking service.

Thank you Whittlesford for letting us join with you this year.

Mary

‘As visitors to Sawston, we brought our two children aged 5 and 8 to the Sawston Free Church Christmas Eve Family Service ‘Pyjama Party’. It was lovely! The perfect family activity for a busy Christmas. It was only half an hour long, so ideal for our small children. The church was warm and bright, beautifully decorated, and the people were so welcoming. We sang two well-known carols, the children gathered on a special rug to hear a speedy version of the Christmas Story by the juggling minister, and babies crawled freely all over the carpeted floor. We then moved out to tables spread around the church, for a craft activity making paper snowflakes, which were stuck up all over the glass doors at the front of the church. It was heartfelt and fun, a really lovely way to bring some extra sparkle into Christmas’

Ruth Bardell (Daughter of Rev Mike Wilson)

Reflections

Many many years ago my darling Aunty Mabs gave me a daily reflection book which I have treasured ever since. Actually the book she gave me was an old copy and eventually fell to pieces.

I mentioned this to a shop assistant in a Christian book shop and she informed that it had indeed been reprinted. I was overjoyed and bought several copies and gave them to friends. Over the coming months I would like to share some of the daily reflections with you, the ones I've found helpful and inspiring.

Kate Leach

January 1st Between the Years

***Our Lord and our God. We joy in thee.
Without thy help we could not face unafraid the year before us.***

I stand between the years. The light of my presence is flung across the year to come - the radiance of the sun of righteousness. Backward, over the past year, is my shadow thrown, hiding trouble and sorrow and disappointment.

Dwell not on the past - only on the present. Only use the past as the trees use my sunlight to absorb it, to make from it in after days the warming fire-rays. So store only the blessings from me, the light of the world. Encourage yourself by the thought of these.

Bury every fear of the future, of poverty for those dear to you, of suffering, of loss. Bury all thought of unkindness and bitterness, all your dislikes, your resentments, your sense of failure, your disappointment in others and in yourself, your gloom, your despondency and let us leave them all, buried and go forward to a new and risen life.

Remember that you must not see as the world sees. I hold the year in my hands - in trust for you. But I shall guide you one day at a time.

Leave the rest with me. You must not anticipate the gift by fears or thoughts of the days ahead. And for each day I shall supply the wisdom and the strength.

Greetings From Castle Camps



I've never put much stock in New Years Resolutions, all the hype and build up just to crash and burn (no? Just me? oh well). I'd rather take each day as it comes and try my best in that day. One of my favourite verses is Psalms 143:8 *"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go for to you I entrust my whole life."*

I wrote that passage in my journal during the midst of 2020 and followed it with lots of reminiscing about attending church when I was little and how I missed the services at our chapel.

Sometimes it just seems like the night is so long! My mother always said "Patience is a virtue. Say it with me PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE" and us cranky, unruly kids would mumble it back to her. Now I say it to my dog and my husband "say PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE" I am sure Winnifred understands me in her own way, James definitely understands me, whether he has heard me clearly or not is still in debate. To be fair, I need to have that phrase on repeat for myself most days!

I know it won't be long now, soon the morning will come and we will again hear word and see evidence of His unfailing love.

Sara Davey

=====

TWO LITTLE BOYS

A couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10, who were excessively mischievous. The two were always getting into trouble and their parents could be assured that if any mischief occurred in their town their two young sons were in some way involved.

The parents were at their wits end as to what to do about their sons' behavior. The mother had heard that a clergyman in town had been successful in disciplining children in the past, so she asked her husband if he thought they should send the boys to speak with the clergyman.

The husband said, 'We might as well. We need to do something before I really lose my temper!' The clergyman agreed to speak with the boys, but asked to see them individually. The 8 year old went to meet with him first. The clergyman sat the boy down and asked him sternly, 'Where is God?'

The boy made no response, so the clergyman repeated the question in an even sterner tone, 'Where is God?' Again the boy made no attempt to answer. So the clergyman raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face, 'WHERE IS GOD?' At that the boy bolted from the room and ran directly home, slamming himself in the closet. His older brother followed him into the closet and asked what had happened. The younger brother replied, 'We are in BIG trouble this time. God is missing and they think we did it.'



Christmas – John Betjeman

The bells of waiting Advent ring,
The Tortoise stove is lit again
And lamp-oil light across the night
Has caught the streaks of winter rain
In many a stained-glass window sheen
From Crimson Lake to Hookers Green.

The holly in the windy hedge
And round the Manor House the yew
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,
The altar, font and arch and pew,
So that the villagers can say
"The church looks nice" on Christmas Day.

Provincial Public Houses blaze
And Corporation tramcars clang,
On lighted tenements I gaze
Where paper decorations hang,
And bunting in the red Town Hall
Says "Merry Christmas to you all."

And London shops on Christmas Eve
Are strung with silver bells and flowers
As hurrying clerks the City leave
To pigeon-haunted classic towers,
And marbled clouds go scudding by
The many-steepled London sky.

And girls in slacks remember Dad,
And oafish louts remember Mum,
And sleepless children's hearts are glad.
And Christmas-morning bells say "Come!"
Even to shining ones who dwell
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true? And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me ?

And is it true? For if it is,
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissued fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare –
That God was man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.



A Meditation on two Marys

As I see it ...

by Mike Wilson

Like so many people, I was ill before Christmas - three long weeks just lying or sitting around willing the days to pass. I have a standard way of coping with these episodes. I sleep, watch trash on television, and read.

My reading began with pickings from Margaret's amazing collection of children's books. They were all I could cope with. This time I chose Rosemary Sutcliffe. I knew I was getting better when, on visiting the bookshelves for further supplies, I picked out Sebastian Faulks' 2001 novel, *'On Green Dolphin Street.'* It is a domestic novel set against the background of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In it, Faulks (a gloomy novelist) searches unsuccessfully for lasting significance and value in the shallowness of modern culture. I find that I have noted two remarks.

The heroine, Mary, aged 40, is married to a drunken diplomat, Charlie, and has two children at primary school. Out of the blue, a friend asks her 'Are you happy, Mary?' She pauses to roam mentally over her not-very-exciting life. Out of the humdrum of ten years, she recalls achingly precious moments with the children, and, before that, thrilling episodes in her and Charlie's courtship. Faulks comments,

(i) *'Who could not be touched from time to time by the ridiculous joy of existing?'*

'Touched', maybe, but what lasting value can you put on these shafts of loving delight that come in a flash and then retreat into memory, leaving only the humdrum behind? Can they reach out *from* the memory sufficiently to render the drabness of the present 'happy'? Mary isn't sure that they can.

(ii) *'A tremor of self-consciousness came to her: this is my life, it seemed to be reminding her; this is the man I chose to spend it with, in what he regards, rightly perhaps, as a delusion, a convenient pretence that there can be value without permanence.'*

Charlie, Mary's clever, demoralised and ruthlessly cynical husband, believes in the modern way that there is no lasting value in anything. Even the happiness of a precious moment is delusional, rooted as it is, in nothing at all. One can only selfishly grasp at occasional passing moments of delight and thereby stem (for an instant) the inevitable flow of nothingness. Hence his dependence on alcohol, for, as he aged, he found ever-fewer reasons to resist the engulfing darkness of life. Mary so wants him to be wrong.

Think of another Mary, and of the innumerable pictures that come through our letter boxes at Christmas of her gazing down in totally absorbed love at the baby Jesus in her lap. That, surely, is the epitome of a moment of totally engrossing joy? If Charlie were right, the Nativity would be over and gone in a flash. And it would be Mary's moment alone. Yet to us Christians, that moment stretches out over 2,000 years and over the entire globe, and it speaks to us, albeit not as overwhelmingly as it once did to Mary. Moreover, that moment so long ago gives depth, meaning and direction to our lives, just as it did to Mary's and the first witnesses of Jesus' life.

It seems to me that even in our cynical, modern world, love, conceived in Christian terms, always has depth, direction, purpose and meaning. When a life is lived with a succession of deeply loving and joyful moments, it becomes far more than a mere scattering of happy dots that get ever more thinly spread as life progresses. Rather, each joyous 'dot' brings renewed depth, purpose, meaning and direction to the entire life lived.

In his early essay, *'Of Maidens and Young Men,'* R. L. Stevenson famously wrote 'To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.' The idea that hoped-for moments of profound joy are the special preserve of youth is, it seems to me, grossly mistaken. The young have their own joys, of course they do. But, as the Mary of Faulks' novel discovered, the middle aged (in her case) and the elderly (in mine) can also discover anew the joy that bursts into their lives unbidden; to disrupt, to add depth, purpose, and direction, and to transfigure. Every time that happens, it seems to me, it isn't just another dot tossed into the drabness of life, but another marker-point on a Christian pathway that has a depth, a purpose, a holiness and a meaning that is all its own.

My Friend The Blackbird

A Poem by L. Reed (September 1965)

Mr L Reed wrote regular articles and poems for Contact.



Outside my bedroom window, quite early every morn
My friend comes there to see me, some time about the dawn
He sits right on the topmost branch, a rather large pear tree
He whistles and he sings up there, it seems, with so much glee

He comes there every season, and never yet has missed,
He knows he'll get his breadcrumbs, all brown and real sun-kissed
He goes through all his repertoire, such lovely thrilling sounds
Then when he has finished all, down to the plate he pounds

I always have it ready, a plate just by my bed
So he knows that by his music, he will very soon be fed
This music is so beautiful, like heavenly astral bells
This is his line of business, for this is what he sells

Of all the birds who whistle, the blackbird is the best
He beats the nightingale and thrush, and also all the rest
He simply loves his music, his body shakes and thrills
With tones high up, and then low down, and many, many trills

One morning he was singing, his breakfast waiting there
When down came cheeky sparrows to see what was the fare
But when, my friend, he saw them, down he came so fast,
Away went cheeky sparrows, he looked so big and vast

He'll soon be mating, and away with her he'll go
I wonder if he misses me, for I shall miss him so
But there, I have a notion, he will come back next year
And fill my ears with music, my lonely heart to cheer

Recipe Corner

Kings Cake

PASTRY:

1 cup milk
¼ cup butter
2 (.25 ounce) packages active dry yeast
⅔ cup warm water (110 degrees F/45 degrees C)
½ cup white sugar
2 eggs
1 ½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
5 ½ cups all-purpose flour

FILLING:

1 cup packed brown sugar
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
⅔ cup chopped pecans
½ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup raisins
½ cup melted butter

FROSTING:

1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 tablespoon water

Step 1

Scald milk, remove from heat and stir in 1/4 cup of butter. Allow mixture to cool to room temperature. In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in the warm water with 1 tablespoon of the white sugar. Let stand until creamy, about 10 minutes.

Step 2

When yeast mixture is bubbling, add the cooled milk mixture. Whisk in the eggs. Stir in the remaining white sugar, salt and nutmeg. Beat the flour into the milk/egg mixture 1 cup at a time. When the dough has pulled together, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Step 3

Lightly oil a large bowl, place the dough in the bowl and turn to coat with oil. Cover with a damp cloth or plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume, about 2 hours. When risen, punch down and divide dough in half.

Step 4

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Grease 2 cookie sheets or line with parchment paper.

Step 5

To Make Filling: Combine the brown sugar, ground cinnamon, chopped pecans, 1/2 cup flour and 1/2 cup raisins. Pour 1/2 cup melted butter over the cinnamon mixture and mix until crumbly.

Step 6

Roll dough halves out into large rectangles (approximately 10x16 inches or so). Sprinkle the filling evenly over the dough and roll up each half tightly like a jelly roll, beginning at the wide side. Bring the ends of each roll together to form 2 oval shaped rings. Place each ring on a prepared cookie sheet. With scissors make cuts 1/3 of the way through the rings at 1 inch intervals. Let rise in a warm spot until doubled in size, about 45 minutes.

Step 7

Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes. Push the doll into the bottom of the cake. Frost while warm with the confectioners' sugar blended with 1 to 2 tablespoons of water.

Cook's Note:

Make sure to buy a new small plastic baby so you can get the full effect from this cake! Sprinkle with purple, green and gold sugar, or decorate with whole pecans and candied cherries.

Note: Be sure to tell everyone to inspect their piece of cake before they begin eating it. To be extra careful, use a plastic toy baby that is too large to swallow. Alternatively, hide an orange wedge or 3-4 pecan halves inside the cake (avoid items that may hurt someone's teeth) and then simply place the honorable toy baby outside on the top of the cake for all to see and adore!

Christmas Apple Pies

This is a recipe for those who do not eat mince pies. Yes there are some of us! Also, lovely in January.

Ingredients:

6 oz of self raising flour. 3oz of margarine or butter. Water to mix. A few teaspoons of milk. Cinnamon powder or any other spices that you like. One 12 holed bun tin. Extra flour for rolling out pastry. 2 medium sized Bramley cooking apples peeled, cored, and well chopped up. Sugar to sweeten. Round pastry cutter that fits the bun tin. 1 sharp knife.

Method

Grease all the twelve bun tin indentations. Put oven on at 190C

In a bowl rub fat into the flour, add the water to form a firm ball. Flour your pastry board well and roll out pastry thinly. Line all the tins, if pastry does not quite fit ease it up until it does. Fill each case to the top with the chopped apple, spice and sugar. Now cut out 12 more rings. Moisten all over with a little milk and press down all around the edges with your little finger. Take a sharp knife and cut a slit in the centre of all the pies so that the steam can escape. Sprinkle each with a little sugar. Pop in oven for about 20-30 minutes

Cooks Perk

If you have any pastry over. Grease a little metal flat tin, roll out the pastry, sprinkle on a little sugar and spice and pop in the oven with the pies. When it is cooked, hide it until the coast is clear, and you can then enjoy it!

Beryl

The Water of Life

Back in July 2018, Anne and I visited Chester and whilst we were there we tried to visit the Cathedral, but unfortunately there was a service in progress and we could not see inside.

In the Cloisters of Chester Cathedral lies a garden with many different floral species including ferns, exotic and spring flowering bulbs, a collection of choice climbing plants, a herb garden, herbaceous plants, and specimen trees.

It is of interest throughout the year by virtue not only of plant species but the design, setting and a major sculpture **'The Water of Life'** by **Stephen Broadbent**.



The 'Water of Life' is a sculptural water feature that presents the life changing encounter between Jesus and the woman of Samaria, as told in John's gospel, Ch4.v14, celebrating the literal and spiritual, life-giving properties of water.

The circular shape brings the two figures face to face, lending intensity and tenderness to the encounter. Water flows continually from the shared cup, over the hands and into the pool in the dish below, from where the sculpture is illuminated, through the water.

Around this dish are the words: 'Jesus said **"the water that / I shall give will be an / inner spring always welling / up for eternal life."** John 4:14. The words are printed on the four sides of the sculptures plinth.

The sculpture was dedicated by the Dean of Chester Cathedral, Dr. S. Smalley, on 8th May 1994.

David

Twenty Years of Service From Our Organ

(This is a copy of an article that first appeared in Contact in August 1964)

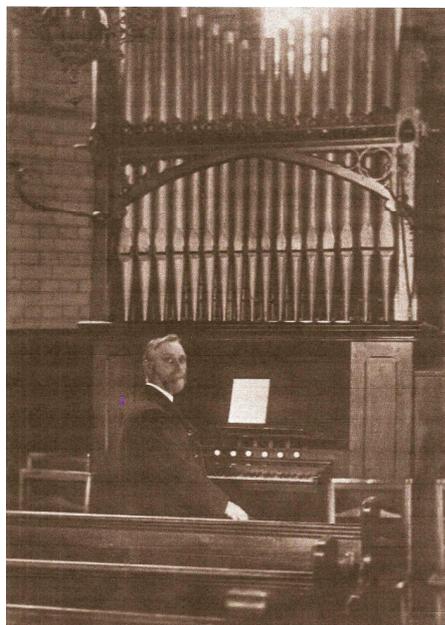
It is just over 25 years ago (1939) that the organ in our Church was dedicated by the minister, the reverend L.J. Ballard (who is now the minister of the St. Ives Congregational Church)

The previous organ had been acquired from Babraham Church. Apparently, it was a dreadful instrument; so much so that Mr Stallan (father of our present organist Miss A. Stallan) offered to donate a sum of money if two other deacons would do the same. This they did, and so the Organ Fund was started.

Boys were engaged to pump the bellows of the previous organ, and if the wind was used up too quickly, a frantic spasm of pumping caused a few audible squeaks occasionally! Thus the new fund had the blessing of the majority of members.

The choir used to arrange Chrysanthemum Fairs to raise money; in these efforts, the late Mr W. Resbury was foremost in supplying these lovely blooms from his garden for display and sale. The Lecture Hall used to look really beautiful, and was soon emptied of these plants and lovely blooms. These fairs became an annual event for several years and the helpers at these functions were too numerous to mention (as is still the case when the Church is in need). In addition, socials were held and some members of the choir sold home-made sweets to boost the resources of the fund.

Several specifications were received from organ builders, but the cheapest (and the one that seemed the best value) was from a Mr S. F. Dalladay from Sussex Organ Works, Hastings – his name can still be seen on the organ. He was retiring and wanted to clear his stock by installing them cheaply. He promised to install a new two-manual organ for £312, but with the organ stool and extra blowing equipment, came to nearly £330, a considerable sum in those days. (For those non-musical people, a two-manual organ is one with two keyboards).



An organ builder and his apprentice, who lived with two members of the church whilst they were here, finished installing it in March 1939. At the dedication service, the late Dr. Warmington was the organist. A present life-deacon, Mr F. Gee presented a matching screen (which he made himself).

Eventually, the organ was paid for with donations coming from as far afield as Canada and Australia.

It is fitting at this point to recognise the services of Miss A. Stallan, who has played the present organ since its installation. Nowadays, Mr Julian Haylock is able to help us sometimes. Mr Price must be mentioned as a help in need, as was the late Mr Laurie Barker. We are always grateful for such help.

Information supplied by Miss A. Stallan / Mr B. Walpole

Editor's Note:

Photo: original organ with Alfred Moss. There is a plaque next to the current organ which reads: In loving Memory of Alfred Moss.

Faithfully served with this Church as organist for 40 years and deacon for many years.

He entered into Eternal Rest, Feb 2 1925 aged 62 years Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord

"NAPPING"

How to stop worrying and love NAP.

I was born already an old woman, cardigan wrapped and inherent distrust of teens, so it was only natural that like an Argonaut to a siren I would be lured into napping.

A decade of doing gardening and house chores in my home - afternoon energy slumps set the perfect trap. And now that I have started I don't plan to stop.

Once I discovered that I didn't lose productivity and that MIDDAY SNOOZES actually boosted my energy, NAPPING became a form of self-care, but it took some work for me to get to it. Set aside time and embrace failure. The most useful advice I found about napping is to be okay with not falling a sleep because if I am not sleeping it's still a time to unwind and be alone and quiet. Too easily I would get frustrated by not falling asleep quickly enough and become ANXIOUS as to make the entire nap pointless.

Get lulled to sleep. One of the hardest parts of napping on schedule is to quieten an already loud brain. It's easy to ruminate and stress and to spend half an hour digging through my mind's detritus rather than unplugging. Practice of slowing breathing and focusing on physical sensations often helps me fall asleep. The things that make me comfortable and able to nap will be doubtless different to those used by other people. I'm on 'team in bed with blinds drawn' while still wearing my normal daytime clothes. You might want a sleeping mask, earplugs, white noise machine, black-out curtains, weighted blankets or pyjamas. I have found that improving sleep is ensuring that no one is in my living space to disturb me. Let people in my house know that I am NAPPING so they won't bug me.

Also kids are not known for respecting quiet time so I put my phone on "DO NOT DISTURB" setting. Keeping it brief: SLEEP inertia is that grogginess I feel after a long NAP. Where Am I? Why does my mouth feel like cotton? What day is it? These questions will often be worse after a long NAP, rather than short one. 30minutes is better and gives me few minutes to settle down and actually know the answers.

GOOD NAPPING!!!!

Bertha Carte

(with thanks to Inform: The magazine for Orwell and Royston Methodist Church.)

The Footprints Café



at
Sawston Free Church

The **Footprints Café** is a community cafe offering a wide range of reasonably priced Snacks and Meals together with Teas & Coffees, Cold drinks, Cakes and Pastries.

We are open Monday to Friday from 8.30 am to 3.30 pm. Breakfasts are served until 11.30 am.

The **Footprints Café** is located at the back of Sawston Free Church. Car parking behind the church.

NEW! Children's menu

ALAN CHAMLEY COUNSELLING, SAWSTON



Has 2020 been a tough year for you?

I provide a safe, encouraging, non-judgemental space for you to explore issues, such as social anxiety, stress, low self-worth, depression, rebuilding confidence, in areas of work, relationships, friendships and family issues.

As a visually impaired man, I have become aware that this has further facilitated my non-judgemental attitude towards clients.



I charge £43 per hour, £22 concessions.

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