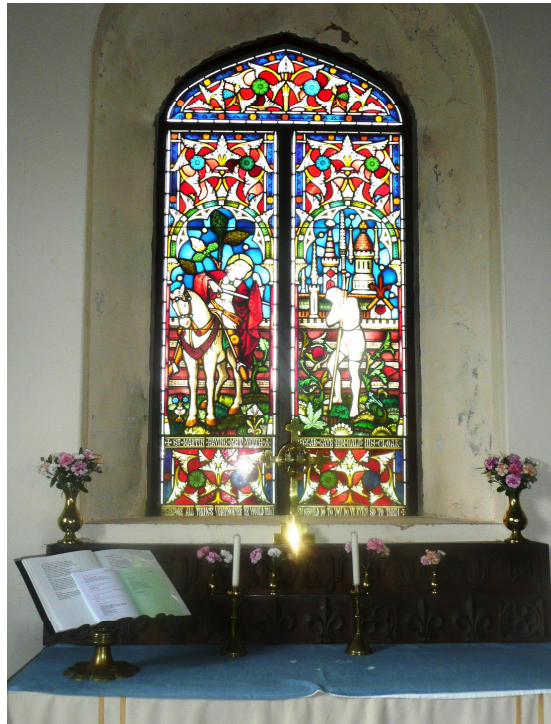


CONTACT

March 2023



Volume 64 - Issue 3
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:

05 March	10.30	Morning Worship – Dr Mike Wilson
	3.00pm	Messy Church
12 March	10.30	Morning Worship and Holy Communion – Rev Phil Nevard
19 March	10.30	Morning Worship – Rev Phil Nevard
26 March	10.30	Go4th

The closing date for **April** Contact is **Friday 17th March**

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to anne.nunn@btinternet.com**

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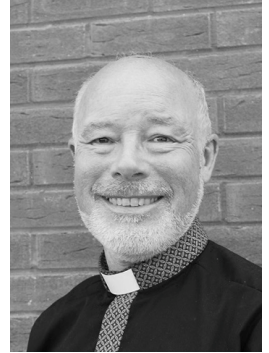
Contact

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

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Dear Friends,

“Be still and know that I am God”. These are much-loved words among those who pray. They are often on the lips of Christians who have found a quiet space to be in God’s presence, who have withdrawn for a moment from the noise and bustle of life to listen for the voice of God. Be still... just let me rest in this quiet moment... without all the distractions and all the noise, God’s voice will be clearer to me.



There’s nothing wrong with this, we all need such moments of rest and calm and quiet and these times can enrich our spiritual lives and nourish our souls. The secular world also seems to have caught up with this ancient religious understanding and you will often hear meditation or mindfulness being talked about in secular circles.

But it’s worth another look at the context in which these words were spoken. The words come from Psalm 46:

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging...*

*He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;*

The words are spoken in context where war is raging, mountains are trembling, the seas are raging. This is not an invitation for us to spend some quiet prayer time, this is a command to the quaking mountains, to the boiling sea and to the nations at war to CEASE AND BE STILL!

This is the same as Jesus standing up in that storm-tossed boat and shouting “PEACE, BE STILL!” Not an invitation to the disciples for a quiet moment of prayer in the face of a storm, but a command to the very wind and waves to BE STILL! The disciples realise, perhaps for the first time, just who Jesus is – the one who commands the wind and the waves.

As I write, war is raging and Syria and Turkey are picking through the rubble caused by the earth shaking. The world is far from peaceful or calm. We weep at the destruction of it all. But our faith would always have us hold on to the sure knowledge that our God is the God who can command the storms to cease. There are no easy answers when they continue to rage, but our God is the same God as the God who gave the psalmist hope in the middle of warfare and chaos.

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.*

Thanks be to God, Amen!



***Every Blessing,
Rev'd Phil Nevard
Phil***

Reflections from: God Calling

Wonders Will Unfold

I am with you. Do not fear. Never doubt my love and power. Your heights of success will be won by the daily persistent doing of what I have said.

Daily, steady persistence. Like the wearing away of a stone by the steady drops of water, so will your daily persistence wear away all the difficulties and gain success for you and secure your help for others.

Never falter, go forward so boldly, so unafraid. I am beside you to help and strengthen you.

Wonders have unfolded. More still will unfold, beyond your dreams, beyond your hopes. Say "All is well" to everything. All is well.

=====

It is wonderful to know that the Lord is always with us, helping and guiding us, we just need to ask. All is well.

Many blessings to you all

Kate Leach

Some Ideas For A More Eco Lent



1: Plant something

Planting is synonymous with the new beginnings of January and February, the sacrificial element of Lent and the long-awaited arrival of Spring. And it's not just symbolic – this is a great time of year to begin sowing and growing if you've ever considered it. Right now in the UK we are sowing tomatoes and peppers, 'chitting' potatoes and late starters, like me, are just getting our garlic and broad beans in the ground.

2: Refill and Reuse

This lent, try buying your groceries like they did in the old days; by refilling instead of replacing. Pasta, oats, lentils, household cleaning products, toiletries – all manner of things - you can go to Sawston Add & Weigh shop and buy them there. Why not pop in and check out their stock?

3: Plant a tree each time you surf the web

Ecosia is a revolutionary web browser, where the people behind the company will literally plant trees each time their search engine is used. They say "We plant trees where they're needed most. Our trees benefit people, the environment and local economies." I've been testing it for the duration of writing this article and I'm sold! It was simple to install and I'm getting perfectly good search results. Passive actions like this can feel really empowering if other eco-swaps aren't as accessible to you. You might even find you want to stick with Ecosia once Lent is over!

<https://www.ecosia.org/>

4: Give up wasting food.

In the UK in 2015 7.3 million tonnes of edible food (worth £13 billion) were thrown away. It was estimated that the average person could save £200 a year by shopping and planning their food consumption better. In addition most food waste goes into landfill where it produces methane gas and adds to the problem of global warming.

One reason for so much waste is misunderstanding of food labelling. Only two labels are really important - '**use by**' and '**best before**'. '**Use by**' dates apply to perishable foods e.g. fresh meat, fish. The date given is the cut-off date after which it is considered unsafe to eat the product. It is important therefore to look at these dates when buying food and also to keep an eye on them in the fridge. If you are not going to be able to eat it by the '**use by**' date then you can freeze or cook/freeze the item to use later.

'**Best before**' dates refer to the quality of the product. It will still be safe to eat after the '**best before**' date but may not taste quite as good although you could remedy that by using some extra herbs or spices or adding a little wine or cream.

Labels such as '**sell by**' and '**display until**' are just instructions to the retailer to help their stock control. The labels do not refer to the safety or quality of the food.

Many foods remain edible even beyond the '**use by**' date e.g. foods with lots of fat such as hard cheese, sugary foods like jams or biscuits, salty items like pickles or crisps, dried pasta, rice, pulses and tinned goods. If it looks OK and smells OK it more than likely is OK. A useful website which provides advice about how long food lasts is www.eatby.com

World Day Of Prayer

The earliest record of Taiwan church women's participation in the World Day of Prayer dates back to March 1935 in the Taiwan Church Press. Since then, WDP has become an ecumenical prayer worship service that is familiar to the ears of Taiwanese Christian women. Each year, the worship handbook is translated into 13 languages including Mandarin-Chinese, Taiwanese, and indigenous languages that are used during worship services

Each January, women from the Presbyterian Church in different regions take turns holding a demonstrative WDP worship service during their national women's training. Afterwards, each representative returns to her respective region and carries out the worship service in March.

The theme of the WDP 2023 program is based on Ephesians 1:15-19, the letter sent to a faith community to express gratitude. Paul gave thanks to God for the Ephesians living out their love and faith, and prayed that they could see these three truths: the hope to which God has called the disciples, the riches of God's glorious inheritance among the saints, and the immeasurable greatness of God's power.

God's calling has a meaning and a purpose. Oftentimes we are frustrated by difficulties and obstacles and may even lose our hope and faith or rely on our weak human nature. However, we are called to keep our "hope and faith" in God's kingdom and promises. Through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, we come to see the faithful, loving, and gracious God. We regain our hope and faith to face the challenges and move forward. As it was written in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Throughout the letter, the author shared his prayers for the saints in the trust that they could grasp how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ is (Ephesians 3:18). Should we be willing to respond to that love by living not for ourselves but for God? The love of Christ may be revealed through our actions, which will point to God's glorious and abundant inheritance! What are the stories of faith that you have heard?



Ephesians 1:15-19

The artist, Hui-Wen HSAIO, used several motifs that highlight Taiwan's best-known features to express how the Christian faith brings peace and a new vision to Taiwan.

The women in the painting are sitting by a stream, praying silently and looking up into the dark. Despite the uncertainty of the path ahead, they know that the salvation of Christ has come.

The Mikado pheasant and the Black-faced Spoonbill, two endangered species, are both of unique significance to the Taiwanese people. Their distinctiveness symbolize characteristics of the Taiwanese people—confidence and perseverance in times of difficulty.

The green grass and Phalaenopsis (Butterfly) orchids stand out against the dark background. They are the pride of Taiwan, which has a worldwide reputation as the "Kingdom of Orchids." Green grass represents the Taiwanese as simple, confident, strong and under God's care.

All welcome to the service at our Lady Of Lourdes – March 3rd - 7.00pm

What Is Your Heart's Desire?

In last month's magazine we looked at the first letter of the acronym SHAPE – how has God shaped us for mission and service? Maybe you now have a better understanding of what your Spiritual Gifts might be. This month we look at the next letter – H – for “heart”. What are you passionate about? What is your heart's desire?

God plants and develops certain desires and longings in our hearts. These are the things which motivate and excite us... the things we most love or long to do. These “heart's desires” are pointers to the kind of ministry which God may be calling us to.

Directions:

- a) Pray for insight as you write your answers to these questions.
 - b) There are no right or wrong answers! If you get stuck on a question, just leave it blank. You can always come back to it later.
 - c) Don't be concerned about whether or how you could do a certain thing.
 - d) Complete the questionnaire as if there were no obstacles to fulfilling your heart's desire. Dream dreams! (We can be practical later).
 - e) Write down the first instinctive response which comes into your mind. It might be just one word, or two or three things. (You have about one minute per question!)
-

- 1) If I won a million pounds tomorrow, what would I do with it?
- 2) What do I enjoy most? Why?
- 3) What gives me the greatest sense of satisfaction and fulfilment?
- 4) If someone were to ask a group of my friends, what would they say I am really interested in or enthusiastic about?
- 5) What are the things I have always wanted to do, but have always put off?

- 6) If I knew I simply couldn't fail, what is the first thing I would do?
- 7) What sort of person would I like people to remember me as being?
- 8) At the end of my life, I'd love to be able to look back and know that I had done something about...
- 9) If I could change 3 things to make the world a better place, what would they be?
- 10) What issues, causes or beliefs do I care most passionately about?
(E.g. What do I get most concerned, excited or angry about?!)
- 11) What activities, tasks or roles do I most want to be involved in?
- 12) Who are the people I would most like to help, serve or work with?
(E.g. a particular age group or people in a specific situation, problem, activity or profession?)
- 13) What place or context do I care about most?
(My workplace/neighbourhood/area/country/somewhere abroad?)
- 14) What do I long for, for the life of my church?

Now try to focus your Heart's Desire. Look at your answers above. Does any theme or pattern or need emerge from several of them? Jot it down here.

(Please note that the views expressed in this article are those of the author, Michael Wilson, and not in any way representative of the views of Sawston Free Church.)

I was 'triggered' by listening to our minister, Phil Nevard, preaching his pre-Lenten sermon on Matthew 5: 28-30, and Jesus' warning about committing adultery 'in the heart'. Obviously, I have no quarrel with what Phil preached that morning. Rather, I was relieved to be reminded that Jesus employed hyperbole. He didn't mean to suggest that we should actually pluck out our eyes or cut off our right hands. Not every reader of the gospels over the centuries has been as discerning as our Phil, however. As he preached, I mused on how Origen, the great 3rd century theologian, on reading Matt 19:12, castrated himself 'for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.' It is impossible to know how many in succeeding centuries followed his example, but without doubt, they did.

How could Origen, a man of outstanding intelligence, have supposed that Jesus wanted that? Could I suggest that it comes from starting from the proposition that self-inflicted pain does one good? This is to stray towards the still little-understood phenomenon of self-harm, so distressingly prevalent in our own day. Without wishing to appear over-simplistic, dietary self-harming seems often to involve an altered perception of self such that harming appears to the victim as a rational, considered response to a perceived situation. Would that the remedy were as easy as the analysis! Sadly, it is not. But we do at least now understand that aggressive social conditioning can play a major role. It is, to a significant degree, *everyone's* fault, not just the victim's. They just pay the price.

It is nearly forty years since Peter Brown wrote his seminal text, *'The Body and Society.'*(1) Monks and nuns of the early Christian centuries, like their mediaeval and later imitators, set out to generate enhanced spiritual awareness through brutal fasting regimes. Their declared 'enemy' was sexual craving, which they regarded as the sin of all sins. Men and women alike found that the more they fasted, the more lurid their sexual fantasies. They took this as clear evidence that they were on the right track. The devil always attacks God's most determined warriors the hardest. In retrospect, they were the victims of an obsessive spiritual culture that valued self-inflicted suffering (and fasting in particular) as a 'cure' for an astonishingly aggressive cultural aversion to all things sexual.

How could careful readers of the New Testament ever have supposed that such brutal self-harm constituted a constructive spiritual exercise? (I am not, of course, writing about monitored diet-control, and its undoubted benefit to both health and well-being.) They read (or perhaps wilfully mis-read) passages in St Paul about punishing his body (1 Cor 9:20) and exalting spiritual food over physical food. They read of his deep suspicion of all fleshly pleasure. The obsessions of four centuries later were there in embryo in pagan, Jewish and Christian culture in the time of St Paul.

Jesus fasted, did he not? Well, there are only fourteen references to fasting in the New Testament (only from Matthew Mark and Luke) and most of them consist of Jesus' warnings about fasting 'as the Pharisees do'. Perhaps the most significant story, told three times, is of John the Baptist's disciples marvelling that the disciples of Jesus did *not* fast (Mk 2:18 etc.). The Christian life, Jesus seemed to be teaching, is a life of compassionate celebration, not deprivation. As for Jesus' forty days in the desert, is that Jesus setting us a great example, or giving us a dire warning? To me, the story says 'Don't go there!' It nearly destroyed Jesus before he'd begun. 'Fast for forty days. Make yourself weak and vulnerable. Here comes the Devil.' Just as the desert Fathers later discovered.

Paul was 'crucified with Christ' (Gal 2:20) but he didn't mean he sought physical crucifixion. He suffered for Christ (2 Cor 11: 24 ff) but he didn't *invite* suffering. You need to read Isaiah 53 as a description of the perfect Christian to reach the bizarre conclusion that self-imposed suffering is good for you. But whatever Isaiah 53 might be, believe me, it most certainly is *not* a blueprint for Christian living.

(1) Peter Brown. *The Body and Society – Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. Faber and Faber 1989.

Come And Join The Celebrations ! Linton Free Church

Dear friends at Castle Camps & Sawston

Greetings from your fellow Christians in Linton

“Your old men shall dream dreams and your young men have visions”

Just over three years ago, Linton Free Church dreamt dreams and had visions for how we could transform our buildings for the 21st century, whilst respecting the rich heritage of a 200 year old listed church.

Those dreams and visions have now transformed into reality and we would love to invite you come and join us in our celebrations as we thank God for all that has happened.

Open house : 10am- 2pm on Saturday 25th March and 2pm-4pm on Sunday 26th March.

**Something for all the family
Refreshments and Bouncy Castles !**

Dedication of refurbished buildings: 3pm on Saturday 25th March, with our moderator Rev Lythan Nevard

Morning worship on Sunday 26th March at 10.30.

Do join us for either of these events in person or on zoom (see www.lintonfreechurch.org.uk for the zoom link)

Please note there is no parking in Horn Lane – do use the village car park , High Street or Church Lane.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Rev Chris Kemshell (Minister)

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SFC - Church Workday – March 11th - 8am till noon

Please come and help keep our premises looking good.
There are various tasks to suit all talents and capabilities from painting to gardening, and a chance for a chat over cake and coffee.



Please let me know if you can come it really helps me to plan the work.

Thank You Gordon (833983)

From the Minister's Desk – Orwell & Royston



There is a tale of a traveller who was lost. He looked around, saw what appeared to be a friendly-looking local person – and went up and asked for directions to his destination. The local thought for a moment and then began, “Well ... if I was going there, I wouldn’t start from here”.

The starting point was as important as the destination. I’ve been looking back on some of the times I’ve shared with some of you since 2016. At that time we shared the “Gateways” studies together, and looked at the roots and branches of our Christian lives. In 2019 I shared a bit more about my journey since 2000.

At that point, I’m sure none of us had any idea how life would change in so many ways over the next few years.

At each of those “landmark” moments we were looking forward. Knowing perhaps where we wanted to be going in our spiritual lives. Each time at a particular starting point, with a recognition, too, that the destination wasn’t only as individuals but also corporately within church.

I’m writing this towards the end of January, just after using readings in a service that focused on readings which repeated the words, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light”.

The prophet Isaiah saw the “light” as a contrast to the “darkness” of the world. In Matthew’s gospel we see Jesus as the “light dawned”. The light that changes lives and illuminates our journey with and to God.

I’m sure that on our spiritual journeys we can’t say, like the friendly local, “I wouldn’t start from here”. Because we do. God’s hope is that we will be drawn to the light so that it illuminates our own lives – and that it will then be reflected back out into the world. Being changed we become agents for change. We won’t all grow, change and enable new life in the same way. That’s one of the beauties of being human!

Just maybe, we need to think of these words that I found on a coaster in a friend’s house a while ago: *“Families are like the branches of a tree: they grow in different directions yet the root remains the same.”*

Barbara Garwood

Environmentally Friendly Household Products

I have recently found a company who produce environmentally friendly household products and I sent for a free set of 9 non-bio washing capsules (with £1 towards postage) which arrived in just a few days.

I have decided to continue with them as they clean the clothes well and there is little perfume to it. If I use one capsule it would cost just 20p per wash. What also made me choose the product was the impact my two packs of 33 capsules have already had on the environment. I have saved 82.5g of plastic, 231.0g of chemicals and 1.5kg of carbon.

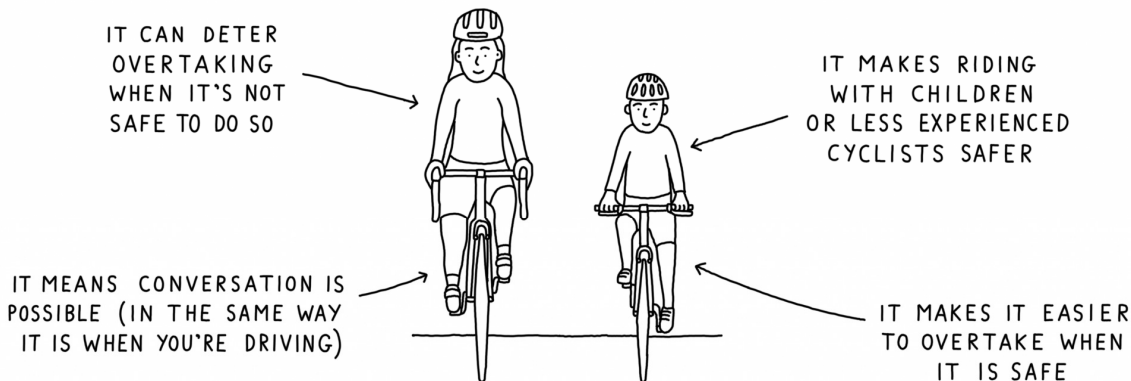
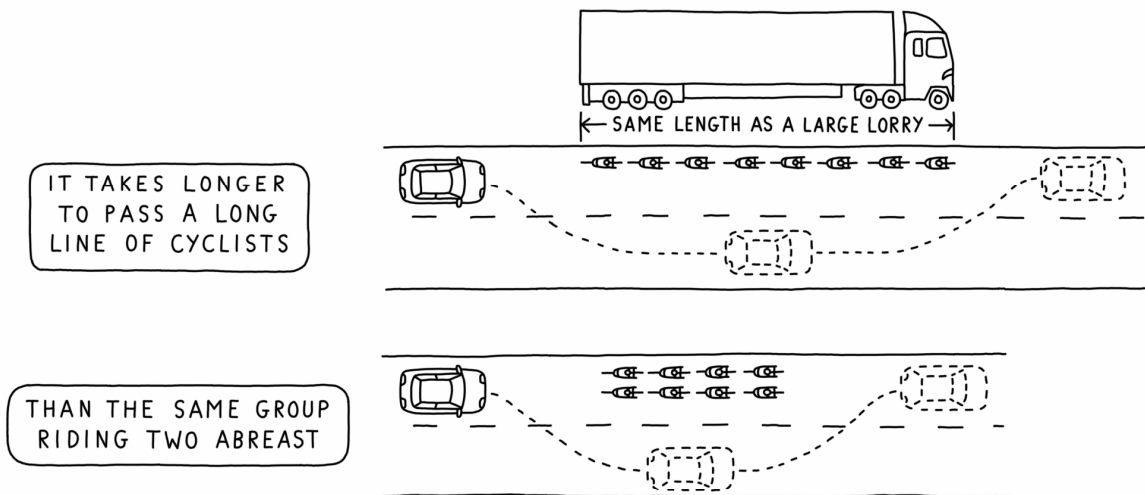
I feel it is the right thing to do in order to help save this planet and I was able to add a donation of 30p to help people struggling because of the economic situation to receive free washing capsules. I am certainly much more conscious of finding companies who have the environment at the forefront of their selling points by saving plastic, chemicals and carbon. Let's hope it's not too late to save the planet.

Joyce Goodall

With thanks to Inform – Orwell & Royston Methodist Church

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WHY RIDING TWO ABBREAST CAN BE SAFER FOR EVERYONE



A Hug

There's just no doubt about it,
we scarcely can survive without it.
A hug delights and warms and charms,
it must be why God gave us arms.
Hugs are great for fathers and mothers,
sweet for sisters, even for brothers.
And chances are some favourite aunts
love them more than potted plants.
Kittens crave them, puppies love them,
heads of state are not above them.
A hug can break the language barrier
and make the dullest day seem merrier.
No need to fret about the store of 'em
the more you give, the more there are of 'em.
So stretch those arms without delay
and give someone a hug today.



With thanks to Inform – Orwell & Royston Methodist Church

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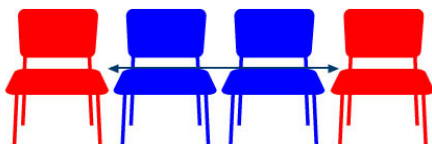
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Every Sunday at 10.30am
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The Footprints Café



at

Sawston Free Church

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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.

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