# CONTACT April 2023



Volume 64 - Issue 4 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 April	10.30am	Morning Worship – David Lloyd
	3.00pm	Messy Church
06 April	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday – Holy Communion
07.April	7.00pm	Good Friday – Rev Phil Nevard
09 April	10.30am	Blossoming of the Cross and Holy Communion – Rev Phil Nevard
16 April	10.30am	Morning Worship – Rev Phil Nevard
23 April	10.30am	Go4th
30 April	10.30am	Family Service led by Junior Church

## The closing date for May Contact is Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April

#### David Nunn is the editor, so please email your items to anne.nunn@btinternet.com

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

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Dear Friends,

There are many things that punctuate the year and are markers of the passing seasons. We are used to a succession of false springs in the UK where it gets warm in early March, the daffodils appear and our spirits are lifted only to find ourselves scraping ice off the car windscreen with a credit card a few days later. There is, of course, the tradition of listening for the first cuckoo in Spring – reflected in Delius's orchestral piece. In Denmark, young maidens listen out for the first cuckoo and then count how many times it calls. Each call is thought to represent one year before she will be married. Some take the appearance of swallows or spring lambing season to be their markers that Spring is here.



Whilst Advent and Lent are in many ways very different, they do have a common element of watching and waiting for signs. Lent is very much a long wait watching the signs of gathering fear reaching its deepest anguish in Holy Week before Easter Day dawns. It fits very well alongside our waiting for Spring, which we are often doing at the same time of year.

It isn't hard to see the marks of a deep winter across our world at the moment. The horrific war in Ukraine, earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, and, as I write, a report highlighting deep-rooted and institutional racism, homophobia and misogyny in the Metropolitan Police Force is published.

In the face of all that wintry coldness, what does Easter mean? When we celebrate Christ Risen, what difference does that make? Are we shouting empty and hollow joy into a world that is still traumatised by pain, loss, despair and fear?

If there is a point to journeying through Lent and Holy Week rather than just leaping straight to the good news of Easter Day, it's this: that the pain and death, suffering and grief is very real. It is a part of the world in which we live. The violence, heartbreak, pain, fear and suffering are very much with us. The Jesus we proclaim cannot and does not avoid the reality of that – that's what Good Friday is. We can't skip it. Easter must take that into account. Easter doesn't mean that the pain won't happen. The road to Easter Day has a cross which cannot be bypassed.

So what is the Good News of Easter Day? I doubt that it's only one thing, but for me it always has at its heart the solid and dependable truth that death and pain and grief and loss will NEVER have the last word, they will never be the ultimate victors, they will ALWAYS ultimately be extinguished by love, joy, peace and hope.

At the heart of my Easter Day faith is the bottom line, that I CAN always give a reason for the hope that is in me. That hope has its sure foundation in Easter Day, in life conquering death, in love overcoming hatred, in Jesus Christ my Lord.

Christ is risen. HE IS RISEN INDEED!

Every blessing, *Rev'd Phil Nevard Phil* 

## **Our New Elders Team**

March Church Meeting said goodbye to Maggie who has been Elder and Church Secretary for a good few years. Tribute was paid for her hard work and dedication through some difficult years and we wish Maggie a fruitful time of refreshment as she steps back from what has been a very demanding role.

Church Meeting elected new elders onto the team which mean that the shape of the team is now different. Please remember your Elders in your prayers. The focus of the Elders Meeting over the coming months and years will be to work towards firmly establishing a culture of growth in the life of our church. The things we will focus on over the next couple of years will be:

- To continue our efforts to establish a vibrant culture of prayer throughout the whole of our church life;
- To foster a culture of welcome, hospitality and invitation in the life of our church;
- To lead the congregation in thinking about how best to shape our pastoral care for the years to come;
- To lead the congregation in thinking about how our worship life might change and develop.

Our Elders are: Mary Simuyandi, Mike Purdy, Beryl Penny, Rosemary Livings, Anne Pegram, Peter Sharpe and Jenny Karpuk.

## **Eco Items - SFC**

\* Not including March's collection, we have now collected 6.35Kg of blister packs for recycling. In old money, that's 14lb which equates to over 3000 blister packs saved from landfill! THANK YOU!! Remember, we hold a collection every communion Sunday - the second Sunday of the month.

\* We now have a leaf-mould bin on our little patch of grass beyond the car-park. Please note, this is NOT a compost bin, so please do not be tempted to put food-scraps in it, it is only for leaves!

If anyone still has piles or bags of leaves left over from Autumn which they haven't got round to disposing of, please let the minister know and he'd be very glad to collect them, or if you are able, leave the bags next to the leaf-mould bin so that we can shred them before adding them. We still have room in the bin!

\* March Church Meeting approved a slightly modified version of the Solar Panel scheme. We want to get maximum benefit out of any expenditure and we would dearly love to create a situation where the Footprints Café can benefit seriously from "free" electricity. If further investment is found in addition to our own commitments, then we may move quickly to make further changes. This will always done in consultation with Elders, Fabric and Finance committees.

#### Phil

#### Christian Aid Week: 14-20 May 2023



- Soaring costs are affecting people here and around the world.
- Families in Malawi are paying the price of this global crisis.
- Food, fuel, fertiliser and school fees have doubled in price in the last 12 months.

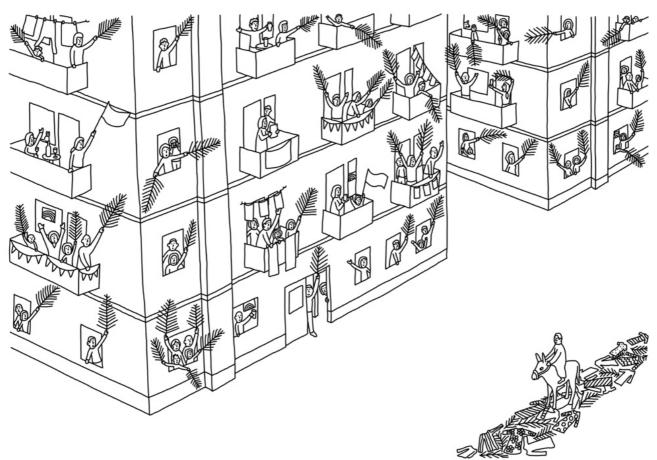
- Hard-working famers are seeing their harvests fail as the climate crisis brings increasingly erratic weather.

We shall be supporting Christian Aid with the following events. Please mark these dates in your diary.

**Quiz Evening with Ploughman's Supper - Friday 19 May -** 7.30pm at SFC Tickets £8 will be available soon from Mary 837433 or Pam 834220

Also please save the date for our always popular **Cream Teas in the Challis Garden** - **Saturday 9 September**.

## Palm Sunday In A Pandemic





## The Union Of One Man And One Woman

(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.)

Preaching in Sawston the other week, I remarked that Palestine at the time of Jesus was a polygamous society. Over tea and coffee afterwards I discovered that this was a new and intriguing thought to some. Let me dwell upon the point at greater length here. It is sometimes hard to accept that something that to us is absolutely fundamental to the Christian life was not to Christians of an earlier age. To some commentators (some of considerable repute) the idea that Jesus accepted polygamy is repugnant. They read the New Testament in the light of their conviction. To my mind, the weight of objective evidence against them is overwhelming.

Throughout the Old Testament story, Jewish heroes have more than one wife. David and Solomon spring to mind. Others have concubines. (Abraham, for example.) Just prior to the gospel period, King Herod the Great is notorious for having had nine wives, many, but not all, contemporaneously. The Jewish/Roman historian Josephus (who incidentally provides the most important contemporary non-Christian evidence of the historical life and death of Jesus) speaks of polygamy as a recognised Jewish institution. This is the society in which Jesus lived. Polygamy remained a Jewish institution well into the Christian era. Indeed, Jewish law is still far from unequivocal on the subject.

George Joyce, in his *Christian Marriage* (2007) remarks, 'When the Christian Church came into being, polygamy was still practiced by the Jews.' There is not a single line in the New Testament to suggest that Jesus in any way stood out against the Jewish norm. Rome had always required monogamy of its citizens but in AD 212, when the Emperor Calacalla admitted many Jews to Roman citizenship, he gave them an explicit dispensation regarding polygamy. In AD 285, Diocletian banned polygamy throughout the empire without exception, but the Jews successfully ignored the ban. The 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian theologian Justin Martyr complained that Jewish teaching permitted polygamy. Justin was correct, but it should not be concluded that Christianity was by then uniformly monogamous. It certainly wasn't! Justin was of the opinion that it *should* be.

Under pagan Roman rule, the Christians did not share the concessions given to the Jews (partly because of anti-Christian Jewish lobbying). As Christianity became more prominent, it behoved ambitious Christians to fit in with Roman ways - hence the contentious remarks at 1Tim3: 2&12 and Titus 1:6. But ordinary Christians retained their polygamous lifestyle, even after Constantine's conversion and Christianity's formal adoption of monogamy.

James Brundage, in his *Law, Sex and Christian Society* (1987) remarks that the early Christian Fathers (until the 5<sup>th</sup> century) 'were quick to dissociate themselves from the long-standing Jewish tradition of polygyny *(sic)* '. In their view, *all* sexual activity was inherently sinful. True, St. Paul

had remarked, 'Better to marry than to burn' (1Cor7:9). But far better, he had said, not to marry at all. The Fathers heartily agreed. One wife was grudgingly acceptable. But two...!

Polygamy continued in Christian Europe for over a thousand years, not applauded, but not successfully outlawed either. Brundage remarks that only by the twelfth century was polygamy 'no longer common in Christian Europe.' That said, the practice of concubinage, whereby a man could have both a wife and a concubine, long continued. Indeed, there were endless legal arguments over what, if any, were the inheritance rights of both concubines and their children.

As for our own day, there are reports that in Kenya the Roman Catholic Church quietly turns a blind eye to polygamy in its congregations. More concretely, in the 1970s, the Lutheran World Federation resolved that the admission of polygamous candidates to full membership of the Libyan Lutheran Church was acceptable. I confess that when I discovered these last two assertions, I was not only surprised, but shocked. Whether Jesus would be shocked is another matter entirely.

#### **Reflections from: God Calling**

#### **Fruit of Joy**

You have to hush the heart and bid all your senses be still before you can be attuned to receive Heaven's music.

Your five senses are your means of communication with the material world, the links between your real Spirit-Life and the material manifestations around you.

But you must sever all connection with them, when you wish to hold Spiritcommunication. They will hinder, not help.

See good in everybody. Love the good in them. See your unworthiness compared with their worth. Love, laugh, make the world, your little world, happy.

As the ripples caused by a flung stone stir the surface of a whole pond, so your joymaking shall spread in ever widening circles, beyond all your knowledge, all anticipation.

Joy in me. Such joy is eternal. Centuries after, it is still bearing Joy's precious fruit.

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This one always reminds me of, a simple smile and hello to a stranger in the street can be passed on to so many.

Have a lovely day. Kate Leach

## Your S.H.A.P.E. for service

Over the last two months we have offered ideas to help you reflect on S-Spiritual Gifts and H-Heart's desire. This month it is the "A" of our SHAPE – Abilities!

The aim of this Reflection exercise is to help you become more aware of all the abilities you have (knowledge, skills, talents, strengths) for serving God and others.

On page 7 are 4 lists of abilities. They are roughly divided into the same 4 categories as we will use next month used for exploring *"How is your personality energised?"* 

This is deliberate because:

- a) we are usually energised and enthusiastic about the things we are reasonably good at; and
- b) we tend to work at developing our abilities in areas which we feel energised and enthusiastic about.

However, don't worry too much about precision - some of the abilities could be put into more than one list or column. Note that this is definitely not a comprehensive list of abilities – this is just a general starter list, to which you can add more of your own special abilities.

#### Instructions:-

- 1. Go through each *ability* in the four lists on page 7:
  - Put nothing against the ones where you think you have no ability;
  - Put one tick in front of the ones you have a moderate level of ability at;
  - Put two ticks in front of the ones where you have a strong ability.
- 2. Ask yourself:
  - a) "What do I know most about?" Add your answers to the Information column on the right;
  - b) Add any further abilities you have to the other columns on the sheet;
  - c) Look at all the words you have added on the next page and put one or two ticks against each.
- 3. Show your list to at least one person who knows you well and is likely to be honest and objective. Ask them to tell you whether they agree with your ticks; and add any other ticks or extra words for further abilities which they think you have.
- 4. At the bottom of the page, write out a list of your strongest abilities (the ones where you and the people you consulted, have agreed to put two ticks). Some of them are probably even stronger than others so put the strongest ones at the beginning of your list and underline them. Pray about this and thank God for all your abilities.

## **CHECKLIST OF ABILITIES**

<b>√</b>	THINGS	✓	PEOPLE	$\checkmark$	IDEAS	$\checkmark$	INFORMATION
	Creating Constructing Putting together Mending Maintaining Collecting things and machines Building Playing instrument Visual arts Crafts Decorating Cooking Gardening Cleaning Organising Demonstrating Tending animals Sports Driving		Caring Encouraging Welcoming Teaching Peace-making Challenging Supporting Leading Motivating Counselling Healing Managing Listening Befriending Networking Collaborating Serving Visiting Delegating Helping Hospitality Relating to: Children Youth Adults Elderly		Planning Writing Inventing Designing Communicating Exploring Initiating Promoting Composing music Dramatic arts Singing Thinking Inspiring Causing change Adapting Vision-forming Clarifying Explaining Maintain principles Public speaking		Researching Informing Administration Finance Ordering Advising Discerning Analysing Remembering Sorting Checking Recording Chairing Instructing Discovering Summarising Finding out Listing Categorising Describing

My strongest abilities (ie. where I and the people I consulted have agreed to put two ticks), are:

#### Jimmy's is "somewhere where I feel safe".



Jimmy's is a community-based charity providing both support and housing to people who are rough sleeping. I'm delighted to share Jimmy's Cambridge 2022 Impact Report with you today.

Whilst 2022 saw us moving out of the pandemic it was still a challenging year for everyone. However, despite these circumstances, we were able to achieve great things, which is a testament to our incredible supporters and the community of Cambridge.

On behalf of everyone at Jimmy's, I would like to express our gratitude for how you have helped in these last 12 months. Together we will continue to do great things. Many thanks.

#### Mark Allan - Chief Executive

The charity opened in 1995 as Cambridge's first all year round night shelter, and now offers a much wider range of support. It remains one of the most prominent organisations within the community supporting people who have been rough sleeping in the city. Whilst Jimmy's has undergone several significant transformations since it opened, its ethos has remained the same – placing people at the heart of the support we provide. Valuing and respecting everyone who needs our services, Jimmy's staff work with each person to provide options, tools and skills to support them on their journey, developing a tailored pathway to independence. Through our many years of experience of working with vulnerable individuals we recognise the need for everyone to be treated in a confidential manner and with respect, compassion, and empathy.

2022 saw us launch a new service, providing significant one to one, on-site, daily support for individuals with complex needs – the first to be launched in Cambridge. This project is part of a wider partnership, led by Jimmy's, to tackle homelessness across the City. This year also saw us support over 250 people – making a life changing difference in helping them in their journey to independence. 10 years on from their first visit to the charity, we were honoured to receive the, now, Prince and Princess of Wales at one of our modular homes' sites. This visit celebrated the immense generosity and sense of community spirit in Cambridge and beyond – our modular homes project would not have been possible without a range of partners and supporters throughout the community. We also launched our winter campaign – Give Someone Shelter – and thanks to the substantial generosity of the people, groups and companies throughout our City (and beyond), we will be able to offer an additional five beds for those living on our streets. This is a project which will be realised in 2023.

Looking ahead, we know next year is likely to bring with it further challenges, especially as the impact of price rises continues to be felt by everyone across our community. We will continue to work tirelessly on the front line to tackle homelessness across Cambridge. As a charity every donation received this year has meant the world to us. It is during times of crisis that we especially recognise the exceptional generosity of the local Cambridge community and the hard work of all our staff and volunteers. We know 2023 is likely to be challenging for everyone, and every donation made will go directly to supporting a person off of the street and give us the opportunity to change their life. *Thank you for your ongoing support.* 

### URC and Methodist Church Condemn The Government's "Illegal Migration Bill"

(The URC, Methodist Church and Baptist Church work together in partnership through the JPIT (Joint Public Issues Team) through listening, learning, praying, speaking and acting on public policy issues.)

JPIT issued the following statement:

We are appalled by the proposals in the government's 'Illegal Migration Bill' to detain, punish and reject thousands of people seeking safety. They are completely incompatible with our Christian conviction that all human beings are made in the image of God and are therefore inherently worthy of treatment which honours their dignity. Instead of dignity, these plans will foster discrimination and distrust, and cause immeasurable harm to people already made vulnerable by conflict and persecution. If ever there was a contemporary example of ignoring our neighbour and walking by on the other side, this is it.

When two in three people who cross the channel to seek sanctuary in the UK are granted asylum following rigorous checks, it seems unthinkable to reject them before they have even had a chance to have their claim for asylum heard. Many people fleeing war and persecution in countries such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Eritrea and Sudan have been left with no safe and accessible routes to claim asylum in the UK, forcing people to make difficult and dangerous decisions. The UK falls far behind our global neighbours in welcoming people seeking sanctuary into our communities, and yet these plans essentially put a ban on claiming asylum and reject the UK's responsibility to play our part in responding to global inequalities and conflict.

We all agree that we cannot continue to see thousands of people risk their lives to reach safety in the UK, but the solution cannot be deterrence and punishment. As Christians, we believe that we should be amongst the first to welcome the stranger with open arms. We urge the government to withdraw this legislation, to honour our moral and international obligations and to behave with compassion and fairness by establishing safe and accessible routes to enable the UK to play its part in welcoming people in need of safety.

Signed by

Revd Fiona Bennett, URC General Assembly Moderator Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary of the Baptist Union Revd Graham Thompson, President of the Methodist Conference Anthony Boateng, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

## World Day of Prayer

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March a service was held at Our Lady of Lourdes to mark the World Day of Prayer for 2023. Each year the service is written by a group of Christian women of a different country and this year it was the turn of Taiwan.



It was cold dark night when we made our way to Our Lady of Lourdes but as soon as we entered the lovely church we received a very warm welcome. There were colourful orchids placed at the front of the church which reminded us that these flowers are the pride of Taiwan, which has a reputation as the 'Kingdom of Orchids'.

We opened the service with the hymn 'Praise my soul the King of heaven' and during the singing five women walked towards a Taiwan map puzzle, each woman carried a puzzle piece and put the piece up on the display board to complete the map. The worship service was based on Ephesians 1: 15-19 and included letters of encouragement for women who face suffering and injustice. It included stories of faith focused on issues that are shared by women and girls around the world and encouraged us to hold situations in prayer. Our service that evening was led by people from the churches in Sawston, we read from the booklet prepared by the women of Taiwan. We sang the hymns chosen by the same women. There is always a very special feeling when we come together and we think about people all over the world who also share this same act of worship.

After the service we were invited into the hall for refreshments and the opportunity to get to know each other. I found myself talking to two young mothers who had been extremely moved by the service as they could identify with some of the situations we had read out. It was a rather special evening and thank you to the people of Our Lady of Lourdes for their hospitality.

#### Sue Sisk

#### Today is the Day

If He were to say, to you this day "I require your life, require it today" Today is the day to repent of your sin And ask Jesus in to your life - today.

Tomorrow won't do if today He should say, "I require your life, require it today" This is the day, the day of salvation He calls you by name, calls you now - today.

Repent and believe, tomorrow won't do. When Jesus calls your name today. He loved you so much that high on a cross There at Calvary He died - for you.

On the third day He rose from the dead He conquered death, the first Easter day. He conquered death that you might live Life with Him and naught to dread.

Tomorrow won't do if today He should say, "I require your life, require it today" This is the day, the day of salvation He's calling you now, right now today.

Helen Sharpe April 2000

#### Robin Redbreast by George Washington Doane

Sweet Robin, I have heard them say That thou wert there upon the day The Christ was crowned in cruel scorn And bore away one bleeding thorn,— That so the blush upon thy breast, In shameful sorrow, was impressed; And thence thy genial sympathy With our redeemed humanity.

Sweet Robin, would that I might be Bathed in my Saviour's blood, like thee; Bear in my breast, whate'er the loss, The bleeding blazon of the cross; Live ever, with thy loving mind, In fellowship with human-kind; And take my pattern still from thee, In gentleness and constancy.



## What Robin Told by George Cooper

How do the robins build their nests? Robin Redbreast told me. First a wisp of amber hay In a pretty round they lay; Then some shreds of downy floss, Feathers too and bits of moss, Woven with a sweet, sweet song, This way, that way, and across, That's what Robin told me.

Where do the robins hide their nests? Robin Redbreast told me. Up among the leaves so deep, Where the sunbeams randy creep, Long before the winds are cold, Long before the leaves are gold, Bright-eyed stars will peep, and see Baby robins, one, two, three; That's what Robin told me.







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You can now join us in church, or from the comfort of your home using Zoom!

Email secretary@sawstonfreechurch.org.uk for more details

online