

Sep-Oct 2024

St John's  
United Reformed Church

# Record

Somerset & Mowbray Roads, New Barnet, Herts., EN5 1RH

## *The Singer and the Song*

In *The Magician's Nephew*, the first book in *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis, Digory is there at the very creation of that world.

*In the darkness something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing. It was far away and Digory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to come from all directions at once ... It was, beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise he had ever heard. It was so beautiful he could hardly bear it ...*



Houston Physicist, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

*Then two wonders happened at the same moment. One was that the voice was suddenly joined by other voices; more voices than you could possibly count. They were in harmony with it, but far higher up the scale: cold, tingling, silvery voices. The second wonder was that the blackness overhead, all at once, was blazing with stars. They didn't come out gently one by one, as they do on a summer evening. One moment there had been nothing but darkness; next moment a thousand, thousand points of light leaped out—single stars, constellations, and planets, brighter and bigger than any in our world ...*

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### Trusting God by:

- Walking the way of Jesus
- Putting faith into practice
- Valuing all people equally

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*The new stars and the new voices began at exactly the same time. If you had seen and heard it, as Digory did, you would have felt quite certain that it was the stars themselves who were singing, and that it was the First Voice, the deep one, which had made them appear and made them sing.*

A very poetic and beautiful description of the creation of a new world, albeit fictional. Lewis clearly had in mind verses from the book of Job, when God asks him,

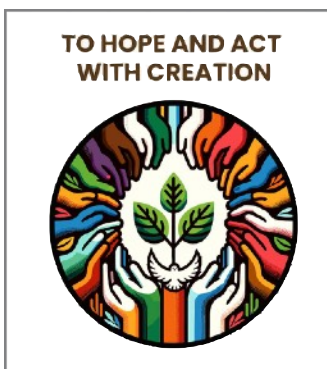
"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
... while the morning stars sang together  
and all the angels shouted for joy?" (Job 38: 4,7)

Early philosophers, like Pythagoras, believed in the *Music of the Spheres*; that each of the planets, through their orbits, must produce a particular note according to its distance from an immovable centre - the Earth.

'If earthly objects such as strings or pieces of metal make sounds when put in motion, so too must the Moon, the planets, the Sun and even the highest stars. As these heavenly objects are forever in motion, orbiting the Earth, surely they must be forever producing sound.'

As we know now, sound doesn't travel in a vacuum, nor is the Earth at the centre of the universe. Nevertheless, sound and music are all part of God's creation. One just has to listen to birdsong to know this. So, if we identify with Lewis's metaphor of the Creator singing his worlds into existence, can we say of our own world that God's creation is still singing?

This month, from September 1<sup>st</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>, is known as the *Season of Creation*, a time when the Church globally reflects on humanity's relationship with the natural world - of which it is part - and responsibility towards it. We have an opportunity on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September to join with our friends from Brookside Methodist Church and St Mary's, East Barnet at St Mary's to celebrate and pray for creation, for we are all too aware of the current perilous situation facing the world's ecosystems, climate and endangered species.



The theme of this year's *Season of Creation* is 'To hope and act with Creation'.

In the letter of Paul the apostle to the Romans, the biblical image pictures the Earth as a Mother, groaning as in childbirth (Romans 8:22). Francis of Assisi understood this when he referred to the Earth as our sister and our mother in his *Canticle of Creatures*. The times we live in show that we are not relating to the Earth as a gift from our Creator, but rather as a resource to be used.

And yet, there is hope and expectation for a better future. To hope in a biblical context does not mean to stand still and quiet, but rather groaning, crying, and actively striving for new life amidst the struggles. Just as in childbirth, we go through a period of intense pain, but new life springs forth.

*(from the Season of Creation website)*

So let us join our song with the rest of creation in the hymn based on St Francis's *Canticle of Creatures*:

*All creatures of our God and King,  
lift up your voice and with us sing,  
"Alleluia! Alleluia!"*

*Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,  
ye lights of evening, find a voice.*

*Let all things their Creator bless,  
and worship him in humbleness;  
O praise him! Alleluia!*



## BREAD CHURCH

On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> August we were delighted to welcome back our former member and elder, now the Rev'd Simon Aley. The service was based on the concept of Bread Church, and followed a format he had used in other churches. He arrived with an assortment of ingredients, equipment and a bowl of dough which had been proving in his car on the drive from Rutland...

At St John's we were ready with three tables prepared for breadmaking and some homemade bread to augment that which was to be made during the service, in true "Here's one I prepared earlier" style.

The service began in the usual way, then the congregation were encouraged to gather round the three tables and to begin to make the bread dough. As each ingredient was given out (flour, yeast, salt etc.) a volunteer read a Bible passage about it, and the finished dough was left to prove during the sermon. The bread went in the oven as the coffee was served and people were able to try it later or take a piece home. Members of the congregation brought with them donations of cheese, pâté, chutney, and fruit to share, and enjoyed a simple lunch together. It was an interesting and enjoyable variation on our normal service of worship.

Simon was ordained in Peterborough Cathedral in 2021 and has been curate in Oakham since then. He is to be licensed at St Mary's Church, Yelden, in November and will then become the Priest in Charge of the Stodden churches, six churches in the Bedfordshire Wolds. We wish him well as he embarks on this next phase of (part time) ministry and look forward to welcoming him again at some point in the future!

\* \* \*

The service at which Simon is to be licensed takes place at 7:15pm on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November. He has issued an invitation to anyone who wishes to attend. Speak to your Elder if you would like to go and we will try to arrange transport.



Editors





## HARVEST DONATIONS for FOODBANK APPEAL

Chipping Barnet Foodbank is supporting more local residents than ever at the moment with very low stocks. St John's harvest gifts will be going directly to the Foodbank. See the list on the left. There is more information here: <https://chippingbarnet.foodbank.org.uk/2024/08/29/harvest2024/>

David Paul can also give you details; he will be contributing an article on the Foodbank in the next Church Record.



## Community litter-pick for New Barnet

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September

Meeting at 10:30am at St John's URC, to form small groups which will focus in and around Station Road and East Barnet Road.

Hand-held grabbers and 'street cleaning' bags will be provided (by the London Borough of Barnet's Green Spaces team) in order to minimise risk from sharp/dirty objects, but volunteers are encouraged to bring their own pair of gloves (preferably heavy duty) for extra safety.



**St John's URC Fellowship Garden Party** held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August at St John's Large Hall and in the Community Garden was very successful. Forty six people attended and the weather was kind. Food was plentiful; and Chris Sausman entertained us with keyboards and vocals. Thank you to everyone who supported and helped us. It was a very enjoyable afternoon.

Marjorie O'Connor (Fellowship chair)

## Review of 'Queen of Katwe' - our FILM NIGHT movie

Here's a mainstream movie set in Africa that's not about conflict zones, has an entirely black speaking cast, and is centred on the intellectual achievements of a female protagonist – this makes Queen of Katwe an altogether radical anomaly, yet it couldn't be more multiplex-friendly. It's the true story of Ugandan chess champion Phiona Mutesi, tracing her triumphant progress from hard knocks in an impoverished district of Kampala. Newcomer Madina Nalwanga has a rueful, quiet appeal as Phiona, Lupita Nyong'o is affecting as the tough mother keeping an embattled family together, and David Oyelowo is warm and slyly charismatic as the committed coach who guides Phiona and a group of other kids – a terrifically winning young ensemble cast – through struggles

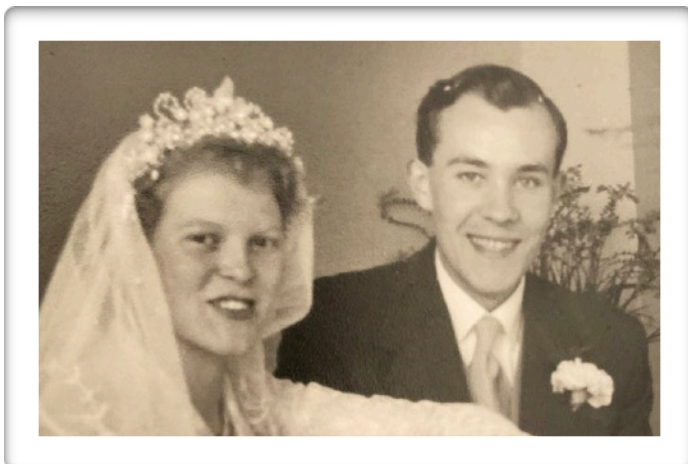


against poverty, self-doubt and snobbery.

The film's breezily affirmative agenda is a little predictably pursued at times, but this is a Disney production, after all. Even so, Mira Nair directs the cast with lightness and empathy, and cinematographer Sean Bobbitt helps her foreground the crackling sense of colour that made Nair's 2001 hit Monsoon Wedding so memorable. As feelgood stories of empowerment go, this has a ring of authenticity and mixes intelligence with irreducible emotional immediacy. When the actors meet the real-life originals in the end credits, that lump in your throat will become a mountain.

Jonathan Romney, The Guardian - October 2016

## *Congratulations to Michael & Dorothy Peryer on their 70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary*



*1954*



*2024*

**D**orothy and Michael were married in the Congregational Church, Tenby, on the 4th September 1954. Michael's Best Man was his cousin, and Dorothy's bridesmaids and flower girl were her cousins and Michael's sister. The minister was Rev'd Emrys Davies.

After a honeymoon in Looe, Cornwall, they started married life in Wembley, where their four children were born, and they moved to East Barnet in 1969. A long and active membership at St John's began, as Tony Alderman mentioned in the Communion service on 1<sup>st</sup> September. The flowers in church on that day were given by them and arranged by Ann Beath, and included the number 70 in red roses.

On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August they had a celebration lunch with their large family and many friends, including our former ministers, David & Alison Skitt, Michael and Pamela Diffey, and Julian and Laura Templeton. On Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> they entertained their neighbours at home, and brought the remaining cake to St John's on the Sunday for the congregation to enjoy with their coffee.

Editors





## Fellowship:

# Desert Island Discs with Roz Douglas

The July Fellowship meeting took the form of Desert Island Discs with Roz Douglas, an Elder of St John's Church, in conversation with David Porter looking back and choosing music reflecting various periods of her life.

Roz, whose maiden name is Rosalind Morris, was born in Park Royal and spent her early life growing up in Wembley. She was an only child. Her mother was a teacher and her father a commercial artist. As Roz pointed out, his job title was later changed to the modern term, graphic designer.

Roz told us her earliest memory was having whooping cough aged three. Two years later her family moved to a 1930's semi in Alperton from where she was able to walk to school on her own even at the age of five. It was another world, with very few cars.

She was close to her Nana who lived in Wembley but did not know her paternal grandfather who died soon after she was born.

Her other grandfather lived in Biddulph, near Stoke on Trent, and he was a miner who had to leave school at twelve to go and work down the pit looking after pit ponies. His wife, Roz's grandmother was a teacher, but she had to give up work when she got married because of the strict rules at the time about women working.

She was a remarkable woman who had eight children, and despite having very little money, she got four of them into teacher training college and one into Oxford University. At this point we listened to music by Handel which Roz told us reminded her of her grandfather because he had *Messiah* recorded on twelve separate 78 rpm records.

Living close to Wembley Stadium Roz recalled watching the late Queen Elizabeth and late Duke of Edinburgh driving through on their way to attend the F. A. Cup Final.

Aged eleven Roz won a scholarship free place to Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls (then in Acton, West London and now in Elstree) where she was in the netball team and the choir, and she chose her next piece of music to be 'Blow the wind southerly' sung by Kathleen Ferrier.

Roz recalled the days of wind-up gramophones and how the first record she owned was Elvis Presley singing *Heartbreak Hotel*, a big contrast to Kathleen Ferrier! She described how Radio Luxembourg was a popular radio station and how as a teenager "we all used to do our homework listening to it". When she first heard the Beatles singing 'Love me do' she thought at the time 'This is it'. The Beatles were going to be big.

Roz faced a lot of change when she was sixteen. Her Nana died and her father's job was moved to Birmingham. At school she was encouraged to sit for the Oxford and Cambridge University Entrance Exams which she passed and then studied history at Somerville College, Oxford where she had great fun working on *Cherwell*, the student newspaper, and thought maybe journalism would be a good career, so this is what she did after leaving Oxford. 📖



Her first job in journalism was as a graduate trainee reporter for The Guardian newspaper. She next moved to The Observer and then to BBC Radio Four and BBC Scotland. She moved to Newcastle upon Tyne to work for Tyne Tees TV as a TV reporter and presenter where she met her future husband Malcolm Douglas, then Head of News and they set up home near Hexham.

Roz and her family came to London to live in the Barnet area and Roz worked part-time as a freelance for newspapers, radio and TV whilst her children were young. Later she lectured on radio journalism at Barnet College. Roz and Malcolm are very experienced journalists, and they set up their own media training company 'TV News London' guiding many, many people in good presentational skills

In conclusion, David asked Roz about her church life at St John's. She told us that as an Elder she sometimes led Sunday Morning Worship where she hoped to be leading people to do the right thing, and her final choice of music was 'I can see clearly now' by Johnny Nash.

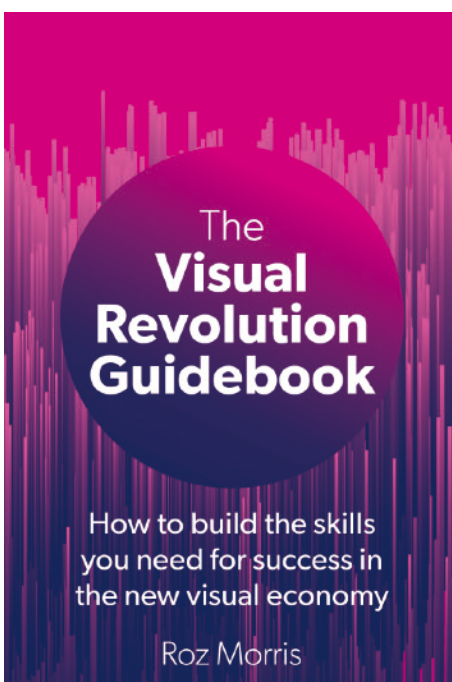
It was a most interesting evening enlivened by Roz's choice of music and we were very appreciative of the time Roz and David spent putting her 'Desert Island Discs' together.

Jean Davies

#### Roz's music choices:

- 1/ Comfort ye my people - from *Messiah* - George Frideric Handel
- 2/ Blow the Wind Southerly - Kathleen Ferrier
- 3/ Heartbreak Hotel – Elvis Presley
- 4/ Love Me Do – The Beatles
- 5/ Bright Eyes – Art Garfunkel
- 6/ Amazing Grace – Judi Collins
- 7/ Hotel California – The Eagles
- 8/ I Can See Clearly Now – Johnny Nash

## The Visual Economy



Are you aware of the visual economy? St John's Elder Roz Douglas has just launched her book, *The Visual Revolution Guidebook*, published by Right Book Press, and it spells out how we all now need visual skills. Roz's career has been in the media as a broadcaster and media trainer, and she points out that it's no longer enough just to be able to communicate by writing. Nowadays everyone can send pictures and videos using their phones and are looking at videos on social media. Visual images are being used every day for work and play. In addition, most working people are expected to take part in online meetings where they are on screen, but many still don't know how to look professional. Roz, writing under her maiden name, Roz Morris, provides expert advice on all this. She says: "My book is the first to bring together practical advice and guidance on the skills you need for success in today's fast-paced visual economy."

Roz Douglas

# Calendar of Events

## SEPTEMBER

Sunday 8	11:00am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon
Tuesday 10	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Thursday 12	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 14	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 15	11:00am	Worship led by Tony Alderman, followed by a Church Meeting
Wednesday 18	8:00pm	Fellowship: 'The Life of Elvis Presley'. Speaker: Mike Noronho
Thursday 19	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 21	10:30am	Community Litter-pick (see page 4)
Sunday 22	10:00am	<b>Creation Sunday:</b> United Service with St Mary's & Brookside at St Mary's Church Please note start time! No service at St John's
Wednesday 25	from 8:30pm	Men's Group at Ye Olde Mitre Inn
Thursday 26	9:30am	Mainly Music
Friday 27	7 for 7:15pm	Film Night: "Queen of Katwe". In aid of Good Samaritan School for Deaf
Saturday 28	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 29	11:00am	<b>Harvest:</b> Worship led by Helen Snider and Andrew Summers
Monday 30	11:00am	Women's Group: Sophies, 3 Cat Hill, East Barnet

## OCTOBER

Thursday 3	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 6	11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Sarah Beaumont
Tuesday 8	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Thursday 10	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 12	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 13	11:00am	Worship led by David Paul and Richard Harvey
Wednesday 16	8:00pm	Fellowship: 'Dinosaurs'. Speaker: Tony Hurford
Thursday 17	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 19	from 10:30am	Green Christian Barnet. "Families & Green Issues": Rachel Johnston, St Albans Diocese Environment Officer.



## OCTOBER contd.

Sunday 20	11:00am	Worship led by Alison Bond
Thursday 24	from 8:30pm	Joint Men's/Women's Evening at The Railway Bell
Friday 25		Copy date for November/December Church Record
Saturday 26	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 27	11:00am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon
Tuesday 29	11:00am	Women's Group: Rise & Shine Café, 2 Exchange Buildings, High Street, EN5 5SY

## NOVEMBER

Sunday 3	11:00am	<b>Memorial Sunday:</b> Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Rev'd Derek Lindfield
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There is to be a Women's Group Christmas Lunch with men invited too.

More details to come in October.

Contact Marjorie O'Connor if you are interested. (07515 910514 marjorie.oconnor@btinternet.com)



**Thanks for flowers:**

Roz Douglas - 14th July  
Tony Shepherd - 28th July



**ST JOHN'S URC FELLOWSHIP**

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO BRING YOU THE  
ART DECO JAZZ ORCHESTRA PLAYING  
DANCES OF 1920s and 30s

JAZZ CONCERT SAT.7th DECEMBER at 7pm  
£15 incl. refreshments

ST JOHN'S URC CHURCH - MOWBRAY RD, NEW BARNET EN5 1RH

TICKETS = MARJORIE O'CONNOR 07515910514 marjorie.oconnor@btinternet.com

# FILM NIGHT AT ST JOHN'S

Invite a friend or family member to this  free screening



Running time: 2 hours 4 minutes

'Queen of Katwe' is a true story about a young girl from the streets of rural Uganda whose world rapidly changes when she is introduced to the game of chess.

**FRIDAY  
27<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPTEMBER**

**7:15PM**

**REFRESHMENTS  
AVAILABLE  
FROM 7:00PM**

Donations  
welcomed for the  
Good Samaritan  
School for the Deaf,  
Uganda

Somerset & Mowbray Roads, New Barnet, Herts., EN5 1RH

**StJohn's**  
United Reformed Church