

July-Aug  
2021

St John's  
United Reformed Church

# Record

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

## Contents

### A law unto themselves?

Occasionally the comment is made: "He's a law unto himself." Generally, this comment means that the person does whatever he wants regardless of what others expect. However, this is an example of a saying that has come to mean the opposite of what the author originally intended. That author was the Apostle Paul, who, in his Letter to the Church at Rome, wrote of Gentile God-fearers: "When Gentiles who are outside law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law unto themselves...[and] they show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness." (Rom. 2:14-15). Hence, the original meaning of those who are 'a law unto themselves' refers to those who have internalised what God's law requires, obey it, and therefore do *not* do whatever they want.

This saying came to mind recently when, on a London bus journey, I found myself in the minority of those wearing face masks. It reinforced what has become apparent to me during the pandemic: that the assessment of risk—the risk not only to oneself but also the risk one poses to others—varies greatly from one person to the next. I can only assume that the non-mask-wearers (and those who wore them as 'chin-warmers') believed not only that they were not at risk of contracting Covid-19 but also that they posed no risk of transmitting Covid-19 to others on the bus.

So far as we know, having received two Covid-19 vaccinations does indeed reduce one's risk of developing severe symptoms when Covid-19 is contracted, and it also reduces the likelihood of transmitting the virus to others. However, reduction is not the same as elimination, and apparently some of the double-vaccinated have gone on to be infected

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and exhibit symptoms. We must also consider those who refuse to be vaccinated, as well as the minority who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. About a third of people who contract Covid-19 are asymptomatic, which means that one could unknowingly spread the virus to others.

All this has come into focus once more because, at the time of writing, Covid-19 infections are rising significantly, and from 19 July the English Government has relaxed all pandemic restrictions except for a continuing quarantine requirement. The Elders' Meeting had a full and frank discussion about its responsibility as the Trustee Body for those who use St John's Church Building. There were differences of opinion, but in the end the consensus was reached that relaxing all restrictions inside our

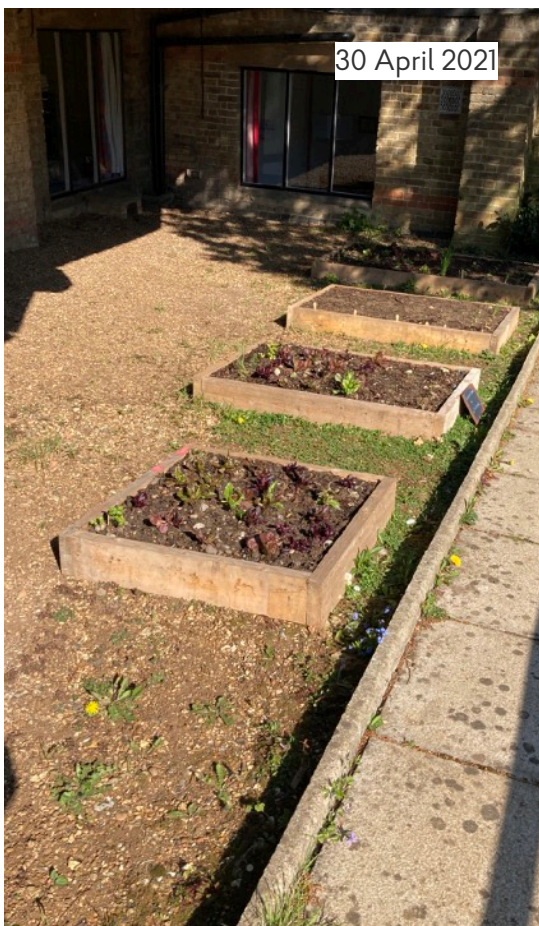
building posed an unacceptable risk to health. Hence, it was decided to continue with the same restrictions, but to allow quiet singing behind masks in worship (see page 12).

In making this decision, I believe that the Elders and I, in the absence of government law, were effectively being 'a law unto ourselves'. That is, we asked ourselves: What does God require, and what does the Gospel specify, that we as a local church ought to do at this stage in the pandemic? If confessing Jesus Christ as Lord means, among other things, dying to selfishness and loving one's neighbour, then the most unselfish and neighbourly thing we can do currently is minimise the risk that we may pose to one another when we gather in an enclosed space.

Julian Templeton

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## What a difference a month makes!



**W**e have to thank the many volunteers who have worked hard to transform this disused area under the church overhang into this wonderful kitchen garden. Not only does the area look so much better, but most of the produce is going to the foodbank.

Laura Templeton



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK  
10-16 May 2021



**Thank You!**

Christian Aid Week was once again very different this year but by adapting our fundraising, we ended up with our largest ever total: £3,423.60! Over two thirds of this amount was raised through a specially created JustGiving page, enabling people to donate online but over £1,000 was also raised from cash and cheque donations.

- Some of us were moved to donate after watching the very inspiring film, Thank you for the Rain, the story of a Kenyan farmer, Kisilu Musya, who became a campaigner for climate justice.
- Janet and I took up the 300,000 steps challenge in May and have the proof to show anyone that we did manage to succeed. Thank you to everyone who encouraged us to keep going! The weather wasn't always helpful but unlike the women in Kenya we heard about, we didn't have to carry back heavy containers of water. Special mention to Ron who found that he also achieved the target unintentionally, prompting him to donate. And also to Hugh who donated according to the number of steps he managed to walk in May.
- Some of us donated in thankfulness for our Covid vaccinations.
- Ray and his neighbour Will still distributed envelopes along their local roads and raised a large amount.

With the build up to the COP26 conference, the main focus this year was Climate Justice and the impact on the poorest communities around the world. This message from Christian Aid reminds us why our support is still so desperately needed:

*The climate crisis hurts us all. But people living in poverty fight the worst of it every day. From drought to flooding, climate change robs people of control over their lives. Extreme weather means people like Rose, Florence & Kisilu in Kenya are struggling to survive without a reliable source of water. Your generous donations will help more communities build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live. A reliable source of water will help families withstand long drought or relentless rainstorms.*

So thank you to everyone for your very generous support this year which will make a huge difference to many lives.

Alison Bond



## Grant Awarded for the Enhancement of Hybrid Worship and Outreach

**S**t John's Church was awarded a grant of £7,134 from the Thames North Synod to make enhancements to its audio-visual equipment. The grant has enabled the purchase of cameras and presentation equipment to allow us to stream live services from and into St John's Sanctuary. The purchase of the initial phase of AV equipment, valued at £21,150, was funded through the generosity of church members. This was in addition to the extraordinary generosity of members, along with other other grant funding, that has enabled the creation of a new tea point and accessible toilet, and the complete refurbishment of the Peter Collins Pipe Organ. On 27 July a remote-control camera, video mixer, streaming processor, and interface equipment will be installed by Creative Audio-Visual Solutions. This equipment will help us to offer a better quality visual and audio experience to those who access

worship and meetings in our Sanctuary remotely. *But* we can only do so if we have enough people willing and able to operate the equipment. Training will be offered for operators, so please approach Ron Mobbs or Paul Elsdon if you would be willing to give it a try.

It so happens that St John's Church's development of its digital hybrid capability is in line with a recent URC General Assembly resolution to create: "a role within the United Reformed Church that most effectively embraces: the development of hybrid church; the incorporation of online congregations into our church structure; and maximising the opportunities afforded by virtual forms of church for mission, outreach, evangelism, and the development of discipleship."

**Julian Templeton**

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## The Pachamama Project



**P**eriod poverty was already a global issue but Covid has shone a light on the most vulnerable in every society.

Girls and women who cannot afford sanitary products cannot leave home for school or work when they menstruate. Girls who cannot go to school, miss out on education and how to look after themselves and their rights, leading often to pregnancy and very early marriage.

These washable pads are made by volunteers and sent to refugee camps or wherever there is a need. Even local Food Banks have had requests for them.

Knowing that I sew, a friend suggested I might be interested in making some and it certainly makes a change from making incubator quilts for Barnet General's Prem unit.

The Project supply patterns and instructions, plastic poppers and any fabric that one cannot source oneself. Most sewers have a stash of fabric so it is a great way of putting some to good use.

I did not know that in this modern age so many women are keen to use these reusable, washable pads but since starting with the Project, I find that both my daughter-in-law and my grand-daughter use these "green" alternatives that avoid pollution and chemicals.

Do look at the website where you will see these pretty pads that are supplied in fours, in a little drawstring bag. I believe that it is a very worthwhile cause. <https://www.thepachamamaproject.org>

**Marion Hopwood**

## Presentation to Tony Alderman



On Saturday 3 July, we had intended to meet in the Manse Garden, but the wet conditions necessitated a change of venue to St John's Church Large Hall for household picnic lunches. After lunch we made a presentation to Tony to thank him for 17 years of service as Church Secretary, and 38 years of service as an Elder. He was presented with Brentford FC memorabilia, a hotel voucher, flowers for Myra, and a large card signed by members and designed by Laura (see page 6). Tony recently retired as Church Secretary and a Serving Elder on health grounds. However, we are very pleased to see that he has resumed leading worship and is in demand again at St John's Church and other churches. Along with his skilful chairing of Elders' Meetings, Tony's jokes, quips, and puns will also be missed! We will also miss the deep and wide knowledge of the Synod that he brought. But it is reassuring to know that he will be at the end of the telephone as queries arise. Thank you, Tony!

**Julian Templeton**

"In good 'Strictly' style, I thank you, I thank you, We thank you for your generosity of gifts to mark my retirement as Church Secretary. I have been lucky enough to work a great TEAM."

**Tony**

# Tony Alderman's Thank You Card



## The New Synod Moderator

**T**he Rev'd George Watt, formerly Minister of Reigate Park URC, was inducted as Moderator of the Thames North Synod on 5 June at City Temple URC, and the service was live-streamed.

### George writes:

*Dear friends,*

*I would like to thank you for the warm welcome and messages I received for my induction. I look forward to getting to know you and serving the Synod. If you need to contact me my email is:*

*[moderator@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:moderator@urcthamesnorth.org.uk) and my phone number is 020 7799 5000. My day off will be Friday. I am available to lead worship from the beginning of September, although I won't be able to preach in*

*every church!  
Please  
contact  
Colleen if you  
would like to  
book me*



[modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

George came to St John's Church recently, where Julian briefed him about the 12 churches that comprise the North London Local Area Group, and was also able to show him the Community Garden.

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## 550th anniversary of the Battle of Barnet

**B**arnet Museum have announced that a new play called *The Fog of War*, written by local playwright, James Godwin, will be performed outdoors by the Bull Players (The Bull Theatre) on 18th and 19th September 2021 at 2pm in the garden of Monken Hadley Church House, Hadley Common (Behind St Mary the Virgin Monken Hadley Church). The play is part of the commemoration of the 550th anniversary of the Battle of Barnet; it is devised to complement the Barnet Medieval Festival (hopefully taking place on the previous weekend - 11th September).



The play explores the tension of civil war from a peasants perspective, relying on the records of the War of the Roses for historical accuracy. It is produced recorded and edited by the Barnet Community. A group of women are forced to protect their home from raiding soldiers. In a land plagued by death and ghosts ruled by demented kings, will they survive, and at what cost?

Tickets (£10) are available from The Bull Theatre, 68, High St, Barnet (Tel 020 8441 5010) or via their website (additional £1.37 online booking charge): [thebulltheatre.com](http://thebulltheatre.com). (Check the website in the

event of heavy rain for alternative dates/venue).

Local artist, Keith West, who has painted some spectacular works for Barnet Museum about the Battle, will also be exhibiting some of his paintings in St John the Baptist Church from 11 September. The exhibition opening will be a brief ecumenical blessing, and will take place in the morning of 11 September, followed by a parade down to Byng Road, where the Medieval Festival will take place.

**MALCOLM BOND**

## “Three Village Churches of Which I have Fond Memories”

**A**lan Pryor writes about three Cornish village churches he has visited

You may be aware that I am Cornish. My surname is Pryor and, from records of births, deaths and marriages, it was spelt Prior until the Reformation when it was decided that having a name which suggested that one was a descendant of a Catholic priest was pushing your luck! At the time most Cornish people could not read or write, so the spelling change probably went straight over their heads. My elder brother Michael became a mining engineer in Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia) and South Africa. He and his family retired to live in Johannesburg. In October 2019 he came to visit Su and me for a couple of weeks, and for part of this time I took him to

Cornwall, because he is an avid developer of our family tree and wanted to follow up on some leads. One particular wish was to visit the hamlet of Merther, near Tresillian and just a few miles from Truro (and a little further from Falmouth). Apparently one branch of our mother’s family lived in Merther over 200 years ago, and Michael wanted to visit St Cohan’s Church there, where they would have been “encouraged” by their employers to worship.

Sadly, this church was abandoned in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and the bells, font and pulpit, etc., were transferred to the new church at Tresillian Bridge, built in 1904, which has a very imposing front and can be seen if you drive along the A390 between Truro and St Austell. Sadly St Cohan’s Church is now a listed building, with no roof, and with its interior totally filled with a large tree and various shrubs.

Who was Cohan? He lived in the area in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and became the local patron saint. His true name was Coan (I told you Cornish people could not spell!). The British Kingdom of Dumnonia (consisting of Devon and Cornwall) raised an army, with the help of “a great ship army of Vikings” to fight the invading West Saxon army. There were various battles and it is believed that Coan was killed in one by King Athelstan (who later defined the modern boundary separating Devon from Cornwall to be the River Tamar). So, Coan became a martyr, and in Cornish the church is called *Eglos Merther*, meaning “Church of the Martyr”. Many photos of the tree-church at Merther and also the new church at Tresillian Bridge can be found courtesy of Mr Google!



Two of the round houses at Veryan

My second church of interest is in the village of Veryan, in the Roseland Peninsula of Cornwall. Su and I spent a week there in October 2020, and the local Publican could remember playing cricket against me from nearly 60 years earlier! John Betjeman described Veryan as “a mild tropical garden”. It is, indeed, a lovely village and the vicar (and land owner) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century built two



schools for the village, including a “*school for industry*” for girls, and also five nearly unique circular houses with roof-top crosses at the roadsides entering the village, several of which were the homes of his unmarried daughters: the purpose was to deter the Devil from entering the village, and certainly not to enter his daughters’ homes! Of course, the art of Fung Shui also believes that it is bad luck and tempting to the devil if a standard-shaped house (i.e. rectangular) has a front door which, once opened, enables you to see the back door ahead of you in a straight line. You need some internal walls for the Devil to bounce off back through the front door again, so that no damage is done!

One of the graves in Veryan churchyard is 98 feet long, and is the longest grave in Britain. On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1914 the German ship *Hera*, carrying a huge cargo of nitrates from Chile, became wrecked in a storm on Gull Rock. 19 men were washed ashore, drowned; only five survived. The local church immediately built the grave for the 19 bodies, which were laid head to foot, and the whole village and surrounding population turned out for the funeral, raising charitable funds to enable the survivors to be repatriated. If this had happened six months later it might have been a different story, because World War 1 started on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1914, and the local people might not have acted so benevolently towards their German friends! Veryan is well worth a visit if ever you’re in the area, the coast and coves are glorious. The seas are treacherous, though. Laura and Julian, you might be advised not to try swimming in the sea there!

The third of my memorable churches is one that Su and I came across in May of this year, when we were celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. It was the first week that lockdown was lifted and enabled us to stay in the delightful village of Lower Slaughter, in the Cotswolds. One village we visited was Lower Oddington, which is a couple of miles east of Stow-in-the-Wold. The village church of St Nicholas used to be centred among the cottages, but now is over a quarter of a mile from the village, and virtually all of these original cottages exist no longer and are buried in the fields and woods, one of the reasons for their demise being The Plague. The church is nothing particularly special to view from the outside. It has never been connected to electricity and does not

have running water, yet is still used – a funeral was held there the day before we visited. Its claim to fame is that it has the largest Doom painting in the U.K. on one of its internal walls. A Doom painting was intended to scare the local peasants into leading pious lives! The painting was emulsioned over during the Reformation lest it should upset whoever was ruling at the time, and only discovered again during Victorian times. A modern reproduction of the original painting is on display, but the Doom painting itself received some water damage after local gypsies stole the copper from the nave roof fairly recently.



This village and church are well worth a visit. Although some towns in the Cotswolds are over commercialised, so you may not enjoy a second visit as much as the first time, there are many glorious villages. Sadly, unlike touristy villages in many other parts of the country, we found only two nice cafes or tea rooms: in Blockley and Guiting Power. Plenty of pubs, though!

Alan Pryor

## Sylvia Stewart: in Memoriam

Article reproduced with permission from Queen Elizabeth Girls Grammar School Magazine

Sylvia, who had been a QE Guild Committee member for a number of years, died in Barnet General Hospital on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021, shortly before her 78<sup>th</sup> birthday. Those who have attended our AGMs at the Union Church in Totteridge may remember her helping with the organisation there, as it was the church where her husband had been the minister until his retirement a few years ago.

Born in Southgate, Sylvia grew up in New Barnet. It was a happy childhood, with an older brother and sister, and she put her initial interest in sporting activity down to being used to chasing around after them, fetching balls and other menial tasks befitting a younger sister. Starting at QEGGS in 1953, Sylvia excelled at sport, and in particular was a very keen tennis player, a passion that continued throughout her life. On leaving QEGGS she went to Chelsea PE college in Eastbourne to train as a PE teacher, and went on to teach at a girls' School straight afterwards.



She married her husband Philip, whom she met at a local youth club, in 1966, but continued teaching until giving up to care for their growing family. At one point she did briefly teach PE at QEGGS when Mary Adams had time off to go trekking in Nepal, and in later years was a PE teacher at St. Martha's Convent in Hadley.

Conveniently, Philip and Sylvia's house backed on to Gloucester Road tennis club where the family was heavily involved. She was a very active and successful member of the club for many years, playing for the club and winning many titles, until forced to give up playing by injury. Her active involvement continued, however, with umpiring, organisation, and helping with refreshments. Philip did not share this passion, but also joined in some club activities, joking that this was the only way he could get to see his wife.

Sylvia was also very active in the community. Philip was ordained in 1986, and she supported him in his ministry, as well as volunteering for a number of other local organisations. They were very much a team, and both devoted to their family, with two sons, two daughters, twelve grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Although a very positive member of our Committee, we had not seen a great deal of Sylvia recently. The illness and subsequent death of her husband Philip in 2018 was a cruel blow, and more recently the death of her older sister Phyllis, whose death we reported in October 2020, hit her badly too. These events, and her underlying health conditions, meant that the Covid restrictions affected her particularly severely, and before Christmas she had two short stays in Barnet Hospital while attempts were made to regulate her medication and alleviate her symptoms of exhaustion. She was subsequently admitted again on January 1<sup>st</sup> and in spite of a slight improvement to begin with, she then deteriorated, her problems exacerbated by a positive diagnosis of Covid as well.

She will be missed not only by her family, but by all those whom she helped and supported in the community, and by her many friends, including those on our committee.

***Please note that a Service of Memorial and Thanksgiving for Sylvia's life will take place at St John's Church on Saturday 27 August, 11:00 am, led by the Rev'd Dominic Grant.***

## Memorial and Thanksgiving for Phyllis Brown

**M**uch later than we had originally planned due to the pandemic, 50 people, including family, neighbours, and church friends gathered in-person on Sunday 4 July, with more on Zoom, to give thanks for the life of Phyllis Brown. Phyllis's niece, Isabel Stirling gave a moving tribute from the family. In the sermon, I briefly reflected on Phyllis's huge contribution to St John's Church over many years.

Phyllis was a private person. She did not draw attention to herself or to her work and service but quietly made her contribution as Treasurer. To me, she was an example of a Christian who did what she could, did it to the best of her ability, and trusted God to do what he alone can do. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Julian Templeton



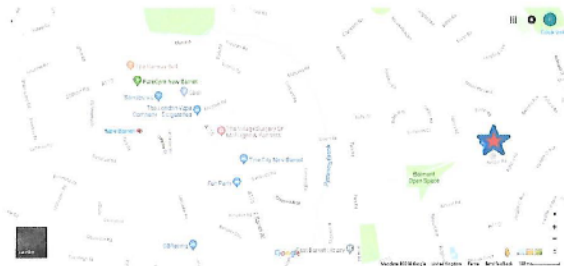
Sunday 15th August from 1.00 pm

At the home of Ron & Sue  
67 Belmont Ave Barnet EN4 9JS

Tickets £10.00 each, which includes lunch, soft drinks  
& Live Musical entertainment.

Feel free to bring your own Wine or Beer

Tickets from Sue Taylor or Marjorie O'Connor



Marjorie – 07515910514  
marjorie.oconnor@btinternet.com

Sue – 02084414333  
Old.friend1962@gmail.com

A large, stylized pink teapot graphic with intricate floral patterns on its body. The teapot is the central element of a promotional graphic for a summer tea event.

**World Day of Prayer**  
**Summer Tea**  
Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021  
2.30 to 4pm  
Garden of Holy Trinity Church Lyonsdown,  
18 Lyonsdown Road, New Barnet, EN5 1JE  
Tea & cake in the Garden

Fundraising Table Raffle

**Note:** It is our intention to continue to offer access to Worship in the hybrid mode, both in-person and via Zoom, so long as we have sufficient AV operators, and dependent on the Covid-19 infection rate in Barnet not rising steeply.

## St John's Calendar Events

<b>July</b>		
Sunday 25	11:00 am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon
	12:15 pm	Tea and Biscuits, Manse Garden, 11 The Fairway, weather-permitting
Wednesday 28	10:00	Pastoral Team via Zoom
Saturday 31	2:00- 4 p m	World Day of Prayer Garden Tea, Holy Trinity Church, Lyonsdown
<b>August</b>		
Sunday 1	11:00 am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Andrew and Valerie Mills
	1:30 – 4 pm	Community Fun Day, Holy Trinity Church Garden, Lyonsdown
Sunday 8	11:00 am	Worship led by Sarah Beaumont
Sunday 15	11:00 am	Worship led by Julian Templeton
Sunday 15	1:00 pm	Fellowship Garden Party, 67 Belmont Avenue, EN4 9JS
Sunday 22	11:00 am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon
Tuesday 24	7:45 pm	Elders' Meeting via Zoom
Saturday 28	11:00 am	Memorial and Thanksgiving for the life of Sylvia Stewart, led by Dominic Grant
Sunday 29	11:00 am	Worship led by Julian Templeton
<b>September</b>		
Sunday 5	11:00 am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton
Monday 6	6:00 pm	Finance and Management Committee
Sunday 12	11:00 am	Worship led by Andrew Summers and Helen Snider

### Arrangements for Worship from 19 July onwards

In view of the increasing infection rates in Barnet, the Elders' Meeting, as the Trustee Body, has decided that in order to protect all those attending worship in-person, unless you have a medical exemption the wearing of a face covering inside the sanctuary will continue to be required, as will the use of hand sanitiser on entering and leaving the building, and social-distancing. Quiet singing for everyone will be permitted behind face coverings, and fellowship outside the church building will be encouraged when appropriate at the end of the service, where face coverings can be removed. There will be no

resumption of refreshments after the service in the immediate future and the August Communion will be conducted in the same way as previous recent communion services. All these measures will continue to be monitored and will be reviewed by Elders on 24 August. It is intended to continue to provide access to worship in hybrid mode, both in-person and via Zoom, but this depends upon having sufficient AV operators to enable the hybrid mode, and those with the appropriate skills are encouraged to offer to undergo training in order to assist.