

May-June
2021

St John's
United Reformed Church

Record

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

What do we need to prune in order to encourage new shoots of resurrection life?

I've been out in the Manse garden with the secateurs lately, and I've noticed that this tends to make Laura nervous! Not only her, because my pruning has in the past not always achieved the results that I had hoped. Some over-enthusiastic pruning of the blackcurrant bush last year resulted in a much-reduced crop; I've agreed to leave it alone this year! However, unless we want our gardens to be a wilderness—and I realise that some opt for this to encourage more insect and bird life—and if we want a good show of blooms and a healthy crop of fruit, pruning is necessary, and weeding even more so.



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The author of the Gospel According to John has Jesus dispense some important truths about growth in the Christian life heavily disguised as pruning advice. “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Any branch of mine that is unfruitful he cuts away; and any fruiting branch he prunes clean, to make it more fruitful still.” (John 15:1-2) The no-prune approach to gardening would leave the fruiting branch alone in the hope of getting at least some fruit from it. The experienced pruner knows where to make the cuts that will result in more fruit. The point of the analogy is that *God prunes us* in order to make us more fruitful; but if we are unfruitful, we risk being cut off.

No church that I know of would admit to being unfruitful; and it is true that churches can be fruitful in ways other than numerical growth. However, every church ought to ask whether the structures and traditions that served it well in the past still serve it well in order to bear fruit today; and if not, is some pruning necessary? This question is being asked at the national level of our denomination.

Recently the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, John Bradbury, presented a discussion paper entitled ‘Toward the Future of the United Reformed Church’ (see link: https://urc.org.uk/images/MissionCouncil/March-2021/A1_Future_of_the_URC.pdf) in which he takes a hard look at the continuing numerical contraction of the URC and asks whether our structures are sustainable. He thinks some pruning is needed; pruning in order to be the church God calls us to be.

What shape are we called to be? If we shepherd our resources with wisdom and care, what new worship, evangelism, witness and service might become possible? What do we need to let go of – what does ‘death to self’ look like for the United Reformed Church? How do we prune and plant and tend that out of death the shoots of new life might emerge? How do we prepare ourselves to recognise the new shoots of resurrection life when we see them?

The coronavirus pandemic, alongside the tragedy and isolation and disruption it has caused, has also forced us as a church to adapt and reshape what we do. For instance, we have found a new shape for worship that can be delivered in about 40 minutes! We have discovered that being housebound does not necessarily mean that one has to drop out of church life, but there are ways of participating fully from home. We have worshipped with fellow Christians in the Czech Republic and in Uganda. To me, these are all new shoots of resurrection life.

And alongside this we have discovered that some aspects and activities of church life that we thought were essential are not so important after all. Some we can do without altogether. We are being pruned, and we may yet have to be pruned further in order to sustain church life. That won’t be easy or painless. But let us take courage from Jesus’s promise: “any fruiting branch he prunes clean, to make it more fruitful still.” Let us regard the secateurs of change not with nervousness, or fear, but with trust in the promise of future fruitfulness.

Julian Templeton

Introduction to Karl Barth’s theology and to Affect

Thursday 27 May, 8:00 pm via Zoom

Julian will give a 30-minute talk about the subject of his PhD thesis, the theology of Karl Barth and the significance of Affect. No prior knowledge will be assumed, and there will be opportunity for questions and discussion. This is being offered to St John’s Church and the North London Local Area Group of 12 churches.



Christian Aid Week 2021

Christian Aid Week is coming: 10-16 May 2021. The climate emergency is one of the greatest injustices we face. Together we can help to relieve the suffering being inflicted on millions of people around the world because of climate change.



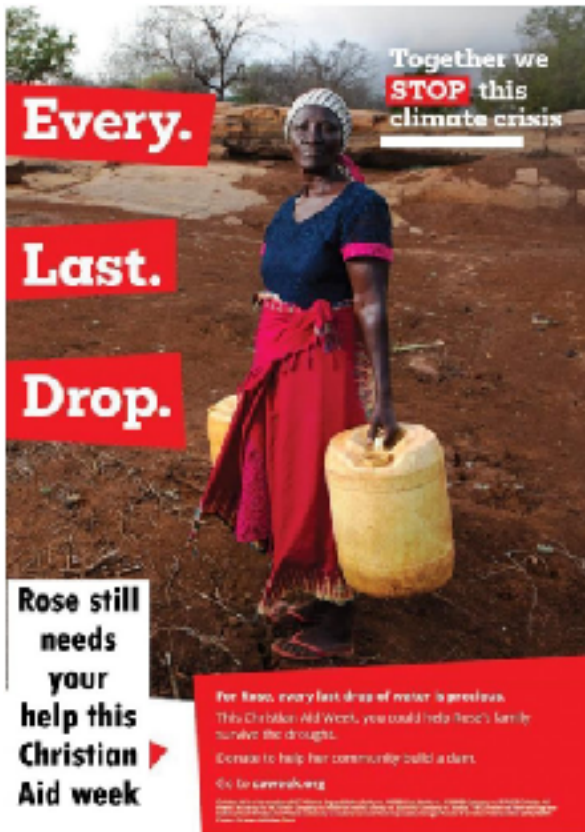
People like Rose in Kenya, are struggling to survive without a reliable source of water. From drought to flooding, climate chaos robs people of control over their lives. *I often feel hungry, Rose says. Because of climate change, I worry a lot about food. I pray to God that the rainfall will become normal like it used to be.* In recent years, the drought has been so bad that it has caused a hunger crisis. Crops wither and die. Rivers run dry. People struggle to survive. The coronavirus pandemic has only made this lack of water more critical for Rose. Without water for handwashing, it is a struggle to stay safe from the virus. Please support our fundraising and help to provide reliable water sources, for people like Rose. Your gift will help support Christian Aid's vital work with some of the poorest communities in the world.

This year members and friends at St John's URC, New Barnet and other local churches are responding to this need in a variety of ways:

- Why not join me to **Challenge Yourself** to walk 300,000 steps in May or team up with someone to do this jointly. Or set your own alternative challenge: e.g. to cycle a certain distance, or learn 100 words in a foreign language
- On **Monday 10 May at 7.30pm** join us to watch the film 'Thank you for the Rain', the story of a Kenyan farmer who became a campaigner for climate justice. Perhaps consider donating what you would normally pay to go to the cinema to see the powerful message of this 90 minute film
- Maybe you could make a donation based on what you believe your **Covid-19 vaccination is worth** and remember those who don't have access to this benefit
- **Pray** for significant change this year at the G7 and COP26 conferences

Christian Aid Chief Executive, Amanda Khozi Mukwashi has said:

"People living in poverty are on the frontlines of the climate crisis. They are losing food, water, homes and family. Every day, they walk further, dig deeper and build stronger to survive. They battle the worst of a climate crisis they did not create. This is unjust. Now they face a double threat, as coronavirus threatens lives and livelihoods like never before. Let us stand together with those on the frontlines to battle coronavirus and fight for climate justice. With God's vision of a more just world in our mind's eye and hope in our hearts, let us raise our voices as one to create lasting change, before it is too late."



This year also sees the UK host the G7 summit where leaders of some of the world's richest nations meet to discuss global

countries and for their debts to be cancelled so they can better confront the climate crisis. We need a green recovery that leaves no-one behind – either in the UK or in the world's poorest countries – and a stop to the expansion of fossil fuel energy.”

So, please consider thinking about what you can do to help bring about a fairer and more just world. For those of you who would like to make a donation and under guidance from Christian Aid, we have set up a JustGiving page, so that if you do decide to Challenge Yourself, you will be able to share this link and spread the word to others outside the church. If possible, we would encourage you to make your donation this way but some envelopes will still be available at the church for any cash or cheque donations. Do speak to me if you need any further guidance on this.

issues and COP26, the next annual UN climate change conference. Both provide opportunities to increase the pressure on government leaders for change. Amanda adds: “We’re calling for an increase in financial support to the world’s poorest

The link to the JustGiving page is: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/or310176barneturcgroup>

Your donation of any size will make a difference, so thank you for your support!

ALISON BOND



Watch on Zoom Monday 10 May at 7.30pm

The Zoom invitation will be sent by email

Children cared for during lockdown in Thames North



Two churches in Thames North Synod have been working hard to keep their work with children alive and active during lockdown, as Panshanger Ecumenical Church and Grange Park URC have each found creative ways of keeping groups together safely.

Panshanger Ecumenical Church has developed a group which have evolved from its [Messy Church](#), both of which feel exciting and challenging, with a real sense of God guiding them as they step out. 'Mini Ministers' meets via Zoom, fortnightly. This is group of children who feel they have outgrown Messy Church, but still want to go deeper. Sessions start with a catch up, including what's been good, what's not been good, where is it easy to see God at work, and where is it has been harder to recognise God's presence.

Currently, the groups is looking at disciples, both the twelve who surrounded Jesus, and twelve from the local church, demonstrating that Jesus walks with ordinary people who become extraordinary because of Jesus' presence in their lives. It has been a real joy and privilege for

leaders to see and hear the children's relationships, both with Jesus and with all who attend Mini Ministers, developing. The group has led worship for the church pre-Covid, and hopes to do so again soon.

The children of Grange Park URC were able to come together physically for Children's Club on Saturday 24th October 2020, the first such meeting possible last year. Ten children, between the ages of 4 and 10 years were finally able to enjoy

each other's company. The first thing that struck leaders was the sheer excitement of the children, just being able to run and jump around with each other in a large space, followed by a programme of games, arts, crafts, stories and food. One of the crafts involved making table mats using autumn leaves, an idea found in an autumn edition of 'Families on Faith Adventures' from the [URC's Children's and Youth Work Team](#). As lockdown began again, thoughts turned back to discovering ways of helping the children with their ongoing spiritual development and wellbeing by providing materials for them to use at home, but care for the children has never stopped.

How has your congregation engaged with children during lockdown? Share your story with us by e-mail to wtw@urc.org.uk

Article reproduced from the United Reformed Church Website www.urc.org.uk

The Good Samaritan progresses!

A report by Rosemary Nakasiita
and Tony Shepherd

We are thrilled to report that a good start has been made on the new girls toilet and washroom at the Good Samaritan School for Deaf Children in Kitengesa, Uganda.

Rosemary has made two 180+ miles round trip to the school from Kampala during the last five weeks so as to report by Zoom on progress. Her photographs are here. The situation now is that:-

The 50+ foot deep pit has been dug out and is now safely covered-up so as to keep the rain and the children – out!

There has been a lot of rain which has held up progress but the builders are working hard to catch-up, six days a week.

Large piles of bricks, sand and gravel were delivered by numerous trucks ready to start construction. The ground for the footings was measured and remeasured again by the Headteacher - just to make sure! Foundations are going in and sections of the walls had been erected – the washroom is taking shape.

The work is well underway and the aim is to finish it by the end of June – provided the weather is kind. The new building will provide 6 toilet cubicles & 6 washroom cubicles. Also, 2 larger shower cubicles with seats will be for girls with additional physical impairments and for the younger ones.



The Director Scovia Nsamba, and her husband, Edward



Going through our project monitoring sheets

These will be better facilities than most of the girls have been used to at school and at home. They are excited by the prospect of new rooms but they will still use the rainwater collected from the roofs of the School buildings. It will, of course, be cold water – apart from the heat of the sun on the storage tanks!

When donations accumulate, the school plans next to sink a bore hole to obtain water from below ground which will also be available to the local community. Also, staff plan to provide health and hygiene classes to local people as well



Rosemary levelling the sand and bricks

as for children and students. The Director already gives support to local women and to other impaired (non-deaf) children as well.

This is a living example of the concern shown by the good Samaritan in the Gospel story which Jesus told. Here is love shown with action and not just words. We give thanks to the Lord for enabling all this to happen and also for Scovia Nsamba, the Director and her husband, Edward, for their tireless effort in creating and maintaining this school. And like God's grace - it is all free!

Thank you so much to all who donated to this project which has so far raised £9,020, (leaving £530 still required.) For more information or up-dates, please contact Rosemary, in Kampala, Email her: rosemary.nakasiita@gmail.com > Tony's phone is 0208 440 6040 or Email: tonios2@btinternet.com.

Thank you all so much again for your wonderful support and prayers.

The school's website is:- www.goodsamaritanschoolforthe deaf.wordpress.com

The Community Gardeners have been busy creating and planting-out these new raised beds. Some are planted with salad vegetables to be donated to users of the Foodbank. The next time you are near Mowbray Road, take a look for yourself.



MEMORIES OF MARY EASTMAN RIP

Members and friends of St John's URC will be sad to hear of the death of Mary Eastman on February 8th 2021 at the age of 101.



Her husband, Reverend Philip Eastman, was the Minister at St John's from 1967 to 1986. On leaving New Barnet Philip and Mary moved to Swanage in Dorset where Philip took care of two churches, on a part time basis, for a further three years at Wareham and Lulworth.

Philip and Mary enjoyed a very happy married life together for 71 years until Philip died on 10th January 2016. Their strong Christian faith enabled them to grow old gracefully full of faith, hope and love sustained by the Lord.

Mary was a great support to Philip during his Ministry at St John's and during Philip's role in various Christian organisations including one supporting the Agricultural Missionaries and during Philip's time as Secretary to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. Philip's international peace work allowed him to meet many folk including Martin Luther King Junior, Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa.

During their retirement they enjoyed long walks appreciating the countryside and the great diversity of God's amazing creation. They were

also involved with the Bible Society Action Group in Swanage and contributed to the ongoing mission of the local Churches as well as supporting many Christian charities.

Mary was a keen artist and was a member of a Local Art Group in Swanage. I understand from her daughter, Andrea, that three of her paintings were even purchased for exhibition in Switzerland.

Mary was a very capable person in her own right. She acted as Secretary during the international conferences organised by Philip and entertained many folk from all over the world. Andrea remembers how privileged she felt, as a child, to sit around the dinner table with them and being able to listen and observe. These opportunities taught Andrea that there were people who really knew and loved the living Lord Jesus and who lived their lives accordingly, involving risk and sacrifice.

Mary was a quiet and thoughtful person and was always interested in other people and enjoyed entertaining. I remember visiting the Manse in Northumberland Road and enjoying an excellent tea prepared by Mary and taking part in stimulating conversations with both Mary and Philip.

Andrea reports that "St John's folk remained close to my parents' hearts, and often in their prayers, for the rest of their lives. The St John's Church Record was always closely read and snippets shared with me. My parents were always delighted to hear news of St John's, and the occasional phone calls, cards or visits from St John's members brought them much joy. To those of you who remember them, thank you for keeping in touch and some of you even came to my Father's funeral in 2016 - it has meant so much to us as a family and Aidan and I send you much love."

We give thanks for Mary's long and eventful life and remember in our prayers Andrea, her brother Aidan and all the family at this time.

Andrew Mills

Delivering Wellbeing through the Bible Society Community Gardens Campaign

Our church anniversary service on Sunday 25th April was a hybrid service led by Paul and Heather Elsdon. This means we had a congregation of about 20 people in the Church, plus a further 20 joining on Zoom watching the service live-streamed from the Sanctuary.

Paul centred the service around wellbeing and he asked the congregation to tell him, either in person or by using Zoom Chat, about their favourite places for finding feelings of wellbeing, calm and relaxation.

Suggestions included, watching the sunset on a beach on a Greek island, sitting by the side of Loch Lomond, or being in gardens or allotments.

Paul's sermon centred on the theme of wellbeing and he told us about the Bible Society Community Gardens Campaign. This has been inspired by the creation of the Bible Society Garden for the 2021

RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

(Note: Although I have been to RHS Chelsea it was a few years ago. Any spare tickets for this years show I would be happy to accept!)

Called the "Bible Society: The Psalm 23 Garden", it is hoped that the garden will help us all during the pandemic.

Gardens can provide help us through the ups and downs of life, and lead us to a place of sanctuary. Psalm 23 - 'The Lord is my shepherd' -speaks of God's presence with us in all moments of life and the Psalm 23 Garden has since inspired many churches and schools to create their own community gardens.

At St John's we have our own community garden – brilliantly managed by expert gardener, Heather Elsdon - and so we are already in tune with the spirit of recovery after lockdown.

You can find out more here <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/psalm-23/> on the community gardens project and The Psalm 23 Garden based on Dartmoor where the designer, Sarah Eberle, grew up.

Roz Douglas



How many people were at this service?

According to this image, there was only five. There were of course more worshippers, but they are sitting at the sides, hidden from view. This still image is a clip from the video that people see on Zoom

which then goes out on YouTube. I don't think this empty church looks inviting to any potential visitor. So, can worshippers in the sanctuary, please sit in the central sections – even the front row! As all that is shown are the backs of people's heads, there is no worry about being recognised, if that is a concern.

Laura Templeton

This letter is the response Malcolm received after the latest donations



The Leprosy Mission England, Wales,
the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

Goldhay Way t: 01753 370565
Orton Goldhay e: post@TLNEMK.org.uk
Peterborough PE2 5GZ leprosymission.org.uk

St. Johns United Reformed Church
C/O Mr M Bond
2 Courtleigh Avenue
Barnet
EN4 0HS

Thank you!

Dear Friends

It's hard to believe that used stamps and collectables can help transform the life of someone affected by leprosy. The fact is they can!

By donating your stamps, you have been part of bringing transformation to the lives of people like Kunam and Yogeswary

Kunam (photo right) has been able to farm Coconut plants, which will provide vital nutrients to feed him and his family, as well as provide a sustainable living by selling the coconuts in markets.



Yogeswary (photo on left), has been able to learn a new skill in dressmaking. This new skill means she can make clothes and sell them for money, which will support her and her family.

Thanks to your kindness, you are enabling people affected by leprosy to access the cure they need and the resources they require to have a fuller life.

Thank you so much for all you do to support people like Kunam and Yogeswary.

Nicky Ward
Supporter Relations Manager

We would be grateful if you could continue to collect any of the following items please:

- Stamps of all descriptions (GB and Foreign)
- Coins & Bank notes - Cigarette Cards
- Postcards - Medals

Age UK Barnet Gardening Competition

Age UK Barnet has recently been awarded the contract for Dementia Support by the local authority. They will be providing support, information, and advice services plus day opportunities - from crafts and games to reminiscence, music and drama - for Barnet residents living with dementia and their carers. This new venture gives them the perfect opportunity to reach out and make a difference to more older people in Barnet.

We're aiming to promote fundraising activities which keep both the mind and body active.

We are launching a Gardening Competition running from Monday 26th April – Tuesday 10th August!
Our three competitions are:

- **Grow the Tallest Sunflower**
- **Most Creative Recycled Flower Container**
- **Grow the Heaviest Carrot**

We are excited to be working in partnership with The Flower Bank and Sunshine Garden Centre, who have generously donated prizes for our first-place entries!

Tickets cost £5 per entry and all proceeds go towards Age UK Barnet. To enter find a QR code on any of our social media sites, or visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/AGEUKB>



Barnet ageUK

GARDENING COMPETITION

£5 per entry
All proceeds go towards Age UK Barnet

Grow the Tallest Sunflower
Most Creative Recycled Flower Container
Grow the Heaviest Carrot

26th April - 10th August 2021

To find out more and register for one or all of our competitions scan the QR code using your camera app:

Or visit:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/AGEUKB>

With prizes donated by:



SCAN ME

Any queries contact: abbie.davies@ageukbarnet.org.uk

We are encouraging local schools, care homes, businesses, and residents to enter and get involved. Send us regular updates of your gardening or post on social media and tag us @ageukbarnet – we would love to see your progress!

For more information, please contact:

Abbie Davies

E: abbie.davies@ageukbarnet.org.uk

T: 07927768574

The following events will be in hybrid format, both in-person in the Sanctuary and streamed via Zoom remotely, unless stated otherwise in italics, or unless Government restrictions are paused or reimposed.

Calendar

May		
Sunday 2	11:00 am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton
Wednesday 5	8:00 pm	Bible Discussion and Prayer <i>via Zoom</i>
Sunday 9	11:00 am	Worship led from <i>home via Zoom</i> by Helen Snider and Andrew Summers <i>and streamed into the Sanctuary</i>
Monday 10	7:30 pm	Screening of film 'Thank you for the rain' in aid of Christian Aid <i>via Zoom</i>
Tuesday 11	7:45 pm	Elders' Meeting <i>via Zoom</i>
Sunday 16	11:00 am	Shorter Worship led by Julian Templeton, followed immediately by Shorter Church Meeting
Wednesday 19	8:00 pm	Fellowship, 'The Art of Trickery' – Ian Keable
Saturday 22	10:30 am	Green Christian Barnet
Sunday 23	11:00 am	Pentecost Worship led by David Paul and Richard Harvey
Wednesday 26	8:00 pm	Social Gathering <i>via Zoom</i>
Thursday 27	8:00 pm	Introduction to Karl Barth's theology and to Affect, Julian Templeton <i>via Zoom</i>
Sunday 30	11:00 am	Trinity Sunday Worship led by Alison Bond and Laura Templeton
June		
Tuesday 1	7:45 pm	Elders' Meeting <i>via Zoom</i>
Sunday 6	11:00 am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton
Wednesday 9	8:00 pm	Bible Discussion and Prayer led <i>via Zoom</i>
Sunday 13	11:00 am	Worship led by Tony Alderman
Saturday 19	10:30 am	Green Christian Barnet
Sunday 20	11:00 am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon
Wednesday 23	PM	Fellowship Outing to De Havilland Aircraft Museum, Salisbury Hall, Shenley, London Colney, AL 2 1BU, details of visit to be advised
Sunday 27	11:00 am	Worship led by Alison Bond
Wednesday 30	10:00 am	Pastoral Team <i>via Zoom</i>
	8:00 pm	Social Gathering <i>via Zoom</i>
July		
Sunday 4	11:00 am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton