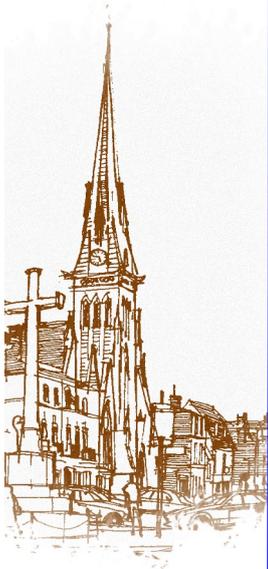


February/March 2020

Inspire



THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE FREE CHURCH
(UNITED REFORMED)
SAINT IVES



View from the Manse

As we enter the season of spring and the days lengthen, when the sun shines, we begin to feel its warmth and light and our spirits are raised. It is the season of new life in which we see buds form on trees and shrubs and new shoots of daffodil and hyacinth bulbs poke up through the ground.

During these months in the Church Calendar we celebrate Shrove Tuesday 25th Feb and then begin Lent with service of Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday 26th February in our Porch Chapel as part of our daily prayers at 10 am. We will also begin Lent with a Quiet Day at Little Gidding. I hope as many as can will come to take part in these opportunities for prayer, reflection and meditation as we follow the stories of the Lord Jesus, his life in first century Palestine, his ministry to bring healing and wholeness, and the giving of his life for the salvation of the world.

I would be easy to become discouraged as we look around the world with its tensions and divisions, but the message of Christ is that despite appearances, we may have hope. There are also signs of God's coming kingdom in acts of kindness and goodness, of actions by people to show care for each other and our environment. As we persevere in our Christian witness and service to this town, we do see people who find a sense of belonging in our faith community and find support and friendship in our coffee shop and our groups and pastoral visits.

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Downing Church
Cambridge

**Deadline for April/May
Inspire
Sunday 15th March 2020**

Inspire Editorial Team

February/March Editor:
Val Bush ☎469189

April/May Editor:
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Christine Curtis ☎350787

*Copy preferably by email please to
office@stivesfreechurch.org*

Our weekly worship provides an opportunity for sharing as we encourage each other in the faith. On 23rd February some of our number will lead a hospital service at Hinchingsbrooke, where we can include those neighbours who are unwell in our fellowship.

During these months we take part in Fairtrade fortnight. This year we focus on the delights of smooth, melt-in-the mouth chocolate. We support this foundation as it continues its mission to ensure that all farmers are paid fairly for their work and are able to earn a living income, starting with cocoa farmers in West Africa.

May we all do our part to bring peace, justice and hope in our world. And as we do, we will find a smile on our faces and gain new optimism and expectation of what God can do in our midst. May it be so!

Every blessing,
Catherine

Why Fairtrade certification?

Fairtrade isn't the only ethical certification, so why continue to support it over other certification schemes? And what's the difference between Fairtrade and the others?

Fairtrade certification is the gold standard because it allows the farmers and workers the greatest say in how the organisation is run and a say in the decisions that affect them, rather than being dictated to by multinational corporations.

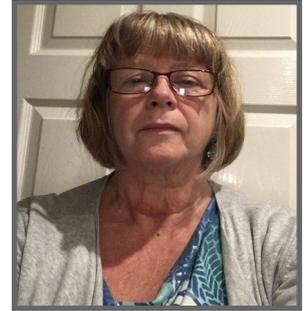
Fairtrade also guarantees a minimum price and gives extra money into a communal fund (the Fairtrade Premium), which they can use as they see fit to improve their social, economic and environmental conditions.

Fairtrade remains the best and the only major independent global sustainability standard that puts people, price and power at the heart of what it does.

Gail Wase

It is with pleasure that we announce the arrival of our new Office Administrator Gail Wase.

As of January 2020 Gail has accepted the position and has started in the post, we wish her well.



She is a local girl and knows St Ives and many of its people well which is a great advantage.

Gail has spent the last few months as our temporary Office Administrator during Gill's absence so may already be known to you. She is also getting to know the people involved in the running of the Church and in the Organisations that frequently use the building.

The Office hours remain Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9a.m. – 1.p.m. and, although the office will be manned all week, at present Tuesdays and Thursdays remain closed days to allow work to be done that requires no interruption.

Since September 2019, the world has watched with shock and horror as bushfires have torn across parts of Australia, leaving a trail of destruction in their wake.

More than 2,000 homes have been razed to the ground, and according to reports, at least 25 people and millions of animals have died.

The statistics are so huge that it's often hard to visualise and understand this truly awful event that still continues.

Please keep all of those involved in the emergency services, families, friends from all over the country who are helping in your prayers.



Uplift Project - Ensuring Disabled and Mobility Access by Upgrading the Lift

The Free Church is pleased to let readers know of the decision by the Mick George Community Fund to provide a grant of £10,000 towards the cost of repairing the lift. The grants are administered by Grantscape.

It was found in late summer last year that the lift needed a specially engineered part to provide a robust repair that would last many years. With the success of the grant application, the part was then commissioned in December and fitted in early January this year.



Modifications to the Free Church structure in the 1980s included installing a floor to divide downstairs from upstairs, so creating almost double the usable space. Access to the upper floor is by two staircases. For access by elderly or disabled people or to transfer heavy or bulky equipment, a lift was installed. This lift is now over forty years old and prior to this repair was in urgent need of modernisation. A statutory assessment by Lift Management Ltd had shown there was a need for a major overhaul. This company suggested 'Replacement of hydraulic power unit and main controller, supplying and fitting a new GMV hydraulic power unit in place of the existing unit, removal of all old valves and pipework, supplying and fitting a new main lift control panel in place of the existing, supplying and fitting a new tape shaft positioning system compatible with the new controller, rewiring as necessary to suit the new equipment and draining the old oil and refilling the new system with eco-oil.

This repair should give at least 20 years of reliable service. It would also mean removal of all the leaking shaft valves and pipework as the modern systems don't need them and are much cleaner. This price would include servicing for one year.

The repair would be guaranteed and we have been assured that the lift will be 'as good as new' for the foreseeable future.

Repair to the lift, made possible with this grant, is essential for access by elderly and disabled people to the upper rooms of the church. Using the upper rooms of the church underpins the financial viability of the church as a community centre and helps secure several part-time jobs. Hundreds of people access the church each month, with thousands of visitors over the year. Having a working lift, enabled by the grant from the Mick George Community Fund, allows access by elderly and disabled people to the many social inclusion activities on the upper floor.

Sally Runham

The Free Church Compassion Group

Back in September 2016, after a visit to the Free Church by a speaker from Compassion UK, a group of church members got together to sponsor a child through that organisation. We thought you would like to know what has happened since then.

The first child we first sponsored was Shima in Bangladesh who was 13 years old. We were able to sponsor Shima until last year when for reasons unknown, Shima's parents decided to withdraw her from the scheme.

But it wasn't long before Compassion passed on the name and details of a different child, from Tanzania. His name is Lameck and he goes to school in Monduli Lutheran Parish Church and he is eight years old. We get regular letters from him, fortunately translated from his language of Swahili. On the map of Tanzania, Moduli looks near to Arusha and the Serengeti, but we think it unlikely that Lameck would be able to make that long journey.

Last October we wrote to him in a Christmas card about our own Christmas traditions (it takes that long for Christmas cards to arrive) and next time we write we shall include a picture of some of the Compassion group members beside our church Christmas tree (shown here).

We are now a group of eleven. If you would like to swell that number, and join us in supporting Lameck do get in touch with me, Mary Cox (mary@jmcox.co.uk tel. 01480300103).



Some of the Free Church Compassion Group taken beside this year's Christmas tree and which will be included in our next letter to Lameck.

Compassion is a leading children's charity whose approach is a personal one. They take action for children and provide them with the future they deserve. Working in partnership with local churches in developing countries, they link a child in critical need with a caring sponsor. Each sponsor enables them to provide exceptional care for their sponsored child through every stage of their childhood.

Whilst Christ's love motivates them, Compassion helps children and families in poverty from all backgrounds regardless of belief or gender. They share God's love in ways that are culturally relevant and non-coercive.

JEREMY BANKS - GENTLE MAN, GENTLE GIANT

Jeremy was born in Huntingdon 9th January 1938 to Francis and George William Banks as one of four children. He had two older sisters and an older brother and one younger sister. He went to Hartford Primary School and then Huntingdon Grammar School. The teachers thought that Jeremy should be sporty because he was so tall, but he wasn't! However, he was well liked as he was always pleasant and polite. He was known throughout his life as a gentle giant, or gentle gentleman.

Jeremy met Sally when he was 18 and Sally 17 years old at a Christmas party in Houghton Thicket Lodge. Jeremy knew Sally's brother and often visited her family's home. Sally was training as a teacher at Hockerill Training College in Bishop's Stortford and lived in student accommodation then. Their friendship grew slowly and then they were parted when he went away to Germany for his two years of National Service when he was 18 – 20 years old

When demobbed he returned to Huntingdon and worked as a Manager for Green and Wrights in the Wine trade. He was very diligent in his work and got on well with all the other staff. Sally started teaching in Peterborough and their friendship picked up again. They became engaged and two years later they were married 10th August 1963. They lived in St Audrey's Lane. They were very much local people and continued their involvement in the community. Jeremy joined Sally in attending the Free Church. Jeremy loved singing and sang in the Hartford Choir and Huntingdon choir. He played bowls in Brampton.

Jeremy changed jobs and bought up an old school in Earith to set up a business with a friend selling freezers when freezers became popular. The family had two more sons, Paul born in 1969 and Christopher in 1970. Sally stayed at home to look after the boys until Christopher was 8. She did some part time teaching at Westfield Primary school.

Jeremy loved children and remembered names of Sally's students. He was quite firm but fair as a father to their boys. He was a very active hands-on father, attending parents' evenings and events activities they were involved in. Yet he was the kind of father who helped the boys' friends including one incident when one of their friends borrowed his father's car and ended up in a ditch. It was Jeremy who helped him out.

They took their boys to the Free Church. Jeremy joined the church Bowls Club in the church and became Treasurer and both helped out with Bank Holiday Snack Bars for many years. Jeremy also became an Elder at the church. They would meet up with their good friends Michael and Liz Benneworth, who went to the Methodist Church in St Neots.

At age 57 Jeremy gave up his shop and described himself as fit and 57 in his CV. He started working for Norry, Laurie, Imray and Wilson who made maps and charts, still on Broadway In St Ives, working until he retired at age 65.

Soon after retirement he became ill with a rare illness Pancreatitis affecting his pancreas and liver. As a very occasional drinker it seemed harsh than he had a liver disease. Many trips followed to London to the University College London Hospital over the next 15 years. When he became weaker his friend Andy from the Bowls Club took him there for appointments.

Family was very important to Jeremy and he and Sally were deeply saddened and supportive when Chris' wife was in an accident and remained in a coma and Sally and Jeremy faithfully visited her when she was in a hospital nearby. They were pleased to become grandparents and Paul's two children and Luke and Hannah often stayed with them at the weekends. They were married for 56 years and enjoyed their Golden wedding anniversary at the Dolphin with all the family present.

They continued to attend the Free Church weekly always sitting at the back right of the church, so as not to sit in front of others who were not as tall as them! Jeremy sat on the Property Group when I came to this church 12 years ago and it was my favourite committee as there was always banter and a sense of humour as part of our meetings.

One time, Jeremy met a chap in the church during the week who asked him about Sunday services and if it was OK if he had to dress up to come to church. Jeremy said no casual dress was suitable. That Sunday the man came to church in jeans and a T-shirt and was surprised to see Jeremy in a suit with a matching shirt and tie. The man said, Oh, I thought you said you would be going to dress casually. Jeremy said, yes, this is my leisure suit.

In 2009 Sally had a stroke and so Jeremy looked after her as she was recovering as much as possible and had visits from friends and family regularly.

Last year he became ill with pains in his abdomen and eventually had his appendix removed in Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. He became poorly with heart disease as well with Jeremy always calm and patient with his illnesses. Sadly, he experienced such pain the last few weeks of his life he was transferred to Addenbrookes hospital where they treated him and thereafter let the family know that he needed palliative care and was placed in a sideward. Sally and his sons took turns to visit Jeremy and family were with him when he slipped away.

Jeremy was a lovely, gentle, morally upright, kind committed Christian. Always thoughtful and kind. May we learn from his example. Our Scripture reading speaks of the most excellent way, of love, which Jeremy lived in his life with his family, neighbours, friends, church friends and colleagues. After his long-suffering patience, through it all, may he be at peace in loving God's presence.

See Page 11 for a personal tribute to Jeremy

Church Activities

Wed	10.00 - 11.30	Tots and Carers
Mon	19:00	Bowls Club
Wed - 3rd in each month	10:00 - 11:30	Poetry Group in Tookeys
Tues - 2nd in each month	2.30 pm to 3.30pm	Meditation at Fenstanton Church

Christian Aid Roadshow

Christian Aid in Cambridge invites you to a **Roadshow**.

Date: Saturday March 14th

Time: 10 a.m. – 12 noon

Place: Emmanuel Church, home of Downing Place United Reformed Church, Trumpington Street (opposite Pembroke College), Cambridge, CB2 3EL

Come to hear **Malcolm Guite**, poet and priest and CA Supporter, and **Pam Richardson**, Cambridge Co-ordinator. Hear about Pam's visit to Ethiopia. Find out what will be the focus of Christian Aid Week, what the current campaigns are, and what the latest Christian Aid news is. Meet other Christian Aid supporters and exchange ideas.

Tea and coffee provided. Lunch together in the Graduate Centre for those who would like to stay – no need to tell us in advance.

All welcome – RSVP if you can to Sheila Porrer (Secretary, Cambridge Christian Aid Committee)

sheila.porrer@virginmedia.com

01223 560066 07772 695229

64, Holbrook Road, Cambridge. CB1 7ST

Or just turn up on the day. We look forward to meeting you.

The Cambridge Christian Aid Committee.

Community Activities

Mon	10:00	CRUSE
Tues	19:30	St Ives Photographic Club
Wed	14:00	Senior Citizens Club
Thu	09:30	Sunny Steps
Sat 1st Feb	09:30 - 15:30	Saints Crafters Fair
Thu 6th Feb	19:00	WI
Tue 18th Feb	10:00	Alzheimers Support Drop-in Cafe
Wed 19th Feb	19:30	Gardening Club
Fri 21st Feb	19:30	St Ives Civic Society: Hope Farm - RSPB nature friendly farm
Wed 26th Feb	19:00	RSPB
Sun 1st Mar	14:30	DBMT Spring Concert
Thu 5th Mar	19:00	WI
Sat 7th Mar	09:30 - 15:30	Saint Crafters Fair
Tue 17th Mar	10:00	Alzheimers Support Drop-in Cafe
Wed 18th Mar	19:00	Gardening Club
Fri 20th Mar	19:30	St Ives Civic Soc: Motorbike volunteers - blood transporters
Wed 25th Mar	19:00	RSPB
Wed 25th Mar	19:45	Poetry Group in Tookeys

BANK HOLIDAY SNACK BARS 2020

Help will be needed on the following bank holidays:

Monday 13th April

Friday 8th May

(Changed nationally from Monday because of VE day on 8th.)

Monday 25th May

The bank holiday snack bars are a good source of income for the church and I wouldn't like them to be cancelled because of a lack of volunteers.

Look out for the volunteer lists on the landing table nearer the time and please help whenever you are able.

Thank you, Mavis.

Free Church Worship

Sun 2nd Feb	11:00	Worship: Revd Dr Catherine Ball Holy Communion
Sun 9th Feb	11:00	Yvonne Law
Sun 16th Feb	18:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 23rd Feb	11:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Weds 26th Feb	10:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball Ash Wed
Sun 1st Mar	11:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball: Holy Communion
Sun 8th Mar	11:00	Revd Roy Muttram
Sun 15th Mar	11:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 22nd Mar	11:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball Caf�- style Mothering Sunday
Sun 29th Mar	11:00	Peter Davies

Fenstanton Worship

Sun 2nd Feb	09:30	Revd Derek Newton
Sun 9th Feb	09:30	Revd Dr Catherine Ball Holy Communion
Sun 16th Feb	09:30	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 23rd Feb	09:30	Roy Muttram
Sun 1st Mar	09:30	Revd Derek Newton
Sun 8th Mar	09:30	Revd Dr Catherine Ball Holy Communion
Sun 15th Mar	09:30	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 22nd Mar	09:30	Geraldine Swain
Sun 29th Mar	09:30	

ECO CORNER

It's Spring very soon and you're probably thinking about spring cleaning, sorting, renewing, decorating or any amount of jobs in and around your home and environment!

It is said that a good clear-out frees the mind and eases the stresses of everyday life. A couple of pointers to give you a start:-

- ◆ Furniture - bedroom, kitchen, sitting room. Check online or with the local council to Find the best way to dispose of any Items whatever their size. The Countryside is full of fly tipping areas - Not a pretty site!!
- ◆ Clothes, make-up—give thought to where these items go. It's all about sustainability.
- ◆ Garden and household appliances—if these things are truly broken, most area recycling centres will take them.
- ◆ Litter - form a group of friends and neighbours to get out and about and get into the habit of doing a regular litter pick. We so often drive around and see such stuff don't we?
- ◆ Most of all enjoy yourself, be safe and know that you're doing your bit around your own area.

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION at Fenstanton:

PLEASE NOTE: The February and March meditation sessions will be on **Tuesday 11th February and Tuesday 10th March at 2:30 pm**, at Fenstanton URC*.

All are welcome to these sessions, even if you have not been before* you are most welcome.

We will be using meditations and prayers from mostly Christian authors in all our sessions

as well as short bible readings. At the end of each session there will be the usual refreshments.

Contact:-

John Williams,
<jlec.williams44@yahoo.co.uk> or
'phone 01480 463 117.

(*The URC church is on the green in Chequer's Lane opposite Ron's greengrocer's shop.)

Faith, Hope & Poetry

I was recently trawling through old emails and found one giving notice of the inaugural meeting of the Free Church Poetry reading group - on the 24th January 2007.

From time to time you will have seen notices giving our theme or topic for the forthcoming meetings and wondered, given some subjects, what they had to do with faith or hope. Faith, Hope and Poetry was originally the title of a poetry course which Mary Cox and I had attended at Huntingdon Regional College a few years previously.

The tutor was Rev Dr Malcolm Guite, then vicar of Hartford Parish Church. Malcolm rediscovered his childhood faith while studying English at Cambridge University and for him life, faith and poetry were inextricably linked. For Malcolm, teaching the course in Huntingdon was, at the time, a 'toe-dipping' exercise. He was already writing poetry but could he teach? The class was meant to run for one term. On the evening of the first class, Malcolm held aloft a rain stick, upended it and read Seamus Heaney's poem 'The Rain Stick'.

From that moment, it is fair to say, Malcolm had found himself a roomful of groupies. The class kept him going for 18 months: he could teach! And that poem - to me it speaks of the possibilities and beauty in others, ourselves and life that we don't always recognise; it is deeply spiritual. Malcolm continues to teach; is a prolific writer; a charismatic speaker and broadcaster, and Chaplain of Girton College Cambridge.

When Malcolm moved on from Hartford, two self-confessed groupies couldn't manage without a regular fix of poetry and exploration of all that it offers. Bill Mahood gave us his blessing to start this Free Church group.

We've laughed with Roger McGough; wrestled with TS Elliot; been brought up short by the pithy insights of U A Fanthorpe. There are always new poets to discover and old favourites to wrap around and comfort us. The possibilities are endless as Mary and I realised when we met recently to set out a programme for the 10 meetings in 2020. Even after 13 years, we have in no way exhausted the possibilities of reflecting on all that makes us human, or celebrating our beautiful, yet increasingly fragile, natural world.

This is an open group and we are always pleased to welcome old friends and new. You are welcome to come and simply sit with us or bring something to read on the theme for the evening. We meet on the last Wednesday of the month (except August & December) in Tookey's Coffee Shop; always start with coffee/tea at 7:45 and finish by 9:15pm.

Lin Fleming

The Faith Hope and Poetry programme for 2020

January 29 th	Midwinter: ice and snow
February 26 th	A look at the works of contemporary poet Liz Berry & 20 th Century American poet Elizabeth Bishop
March 25 th	All creatures great and small
April 29 th	Friends & Neighbours
May 27 th	Hills & Mountains
June 24 th	Memories and looking back
July 29 th	The poetry of Malcolm Guite
September 30 th	Sleep and dreams
October 28 th	Poems of places
November 25 th	Advent & Christmas



MARION MUTTRAM
9th February 1936 - 5th December 2019

Roy and family would like to thank all who sent emails, messages of sympathy or cards following Marion's death on 5th December. Thanks too to those who helped to fill the church for her thanksgiving service and all who made donations to our chosen charities.

Just under £500 has been shared between Dementia Research UK and Hardwick Dene Residential Home.

She will be remembered with love by all who knew her.

Marion was born on 9th February 1936 to James and Harriet Ellery in Talskiddy in North Cornwall. She was a middle child, with two older brothers who predeceased her and three younger sisters. Life on the farm was centred around 110 acres of land run jointly by her father James and her uncle Samuel.

When Marion was three years old, in 1939, at the beginning of the Second World War, their community expanded as three airfield forces were built up in St Eval. This brought an influx of evacuees mostly wives and families of airmen who came to live near their husbands.

Marion went to the primary school in St Columb Major and, after successfully completing the 11 plus exam went to the Newquay Girls' Grammar School. So, she was quite bright.

At the age of 15 she was taken out of school on the birth of her youngest sister, and helped in the home. Over time she became a very good cook and baker (her Victoria sponges were delicious) as well as assisting in a pharmacy in St Columb.

Her world broadened beyond the River Tamar when the local Methodist minister encouraged Marion to attend the evening service in St Columb and the social hour afterwards with airmen from St Eval and met and became friends with the airman Roy, who was to become her husband.

Roy asked her father's hand in marriage, and although he never actually answered, he did not object and they were married on 27th June 1956 when Marion was 20 years old. The next 17 years of her life took on new directions, punctuated Roy's successive RAF postings. They had two sons, James born in 1957 and Charles in 1960 and she made a lovely home for them.

Early postings to RAF stations in Wiltshire were a challenge for the young family but active in her community, had a gift of hospitality and led the local women's meeting. The Bahrain posting, with the boys age three and six months old for two years plus several other postings when Roy's duties took him away for several days at a time including being seconded to the Met Office. During this period it was a blessing that the RAF families among whom they lived, supported each other. They finally returned to the UK. Roy was posted to RAF Colerne on the Wiltshire/Gloucestershire border. Marion continued

being a loving and caring for her boys who described her simply, as full of love. Marion was able to go out more as she passed her driving test and she could drive to different events and activities. Their association with Tabernacle Congregational Church in Chippenham was renewed. She developed her love of music and sang with a choir whilst Roy became a lay preacher. The next move was in 1965 to RAF Wyton and enjoyed social life in married Quarters and became involved with the Free Church at St Ives. Marion joined the Women's Institute, acted in the drama group and continued choral singing, both in the Church Choir and the early St Ives Choral Society. A highlight of this period for Marion was joining with other choirs at Kings' College, Cambridge and to sing an oratorio under the baton of Sir David Wilcocks.

In 1968 they bought their own home in St Ives and settled in the town. After retiring from the RAF Roy did a term at Westminster College, and in 1973 he was ordained as a minister of the United Reformed Church and they moved to Little Waltham in Essex where Roy had charge of three village churches.

By 1980, with both boys having left home, they moved again to Norwich which became their home for the next 17 years, while Roy served as Industrial Chaplain and became a British Legion Chaplain. Marion was able to enjoy the social life of a city, with theatre visits and membership of the Gilbert and Sullivan Appreciation Society.

In 1982 and early 1983 Roy had a pastoral exchange for four months in New Zealand renting their house in St Ives. There they contacted distant cousins forming the basis of three further visits to NZ. They reciprocated by welcoming family and friends from New Zealand to their home, both in Norwich and when they retired to St Ives. At St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Birkenhead in the North Island of New Zealand Marion sang with the Christmas choir and was a fine soprano soloist for the opening verse of Once in Royal David's City in a King's College style service of lessons and carols.

Roy retired at the beginning of 1998 and they returned to St Ives and the house that they had bought in 1968. They returned to their involvement with the Free Church, the Choral Society, and the Women's Institute. They remained active in retirement and continuing to travel, with a couple of holidays a year over the next fifteen years at home and abroad in Lanzarote and Madeira where they made new friends. ➡

⇒ The holidays came to an end when Marion developed the onset of dementia and had an increasing need for personal care. Roy cared for her for several years and continued to lead some worship services for the Free Church and Fenstanton. He is grateful for the support from friends at the Free Church as well as carers who came to the house who enabled her to keep as active and involved as possible. I remember when she came to one of our Autumn retreat days at Little Gidding supported by Geraldine and others. In April 2016 she went into Hardwick Dene, Buckden where she was lovingly cared for by the staff and who will remember her for her smile.

She was able to come home for their Diamond Wedding anniversary in June 2016. For the past three years Roy continued to visit her at the Care Home regularly and also her sons and their families.

Our Scripture reading today speaks something of the rhythms of life, the different seasons of a year and different seasons of life itself from birth through adulthood to death, and the different contrasts in life and how they fit in different times. We learn that life is a mystery, varied and complex. It has some joyous moments and some difficult, even harsh times. Yet all experiences provide the rich tapestry of life and give meaning, purpose and belonging. It declares that even though we have gained much knowledge about the world, we cannot fully fathom all its ways, but God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the world does know, and all of life is held God's good and loving hands. May we continue to learn to trust God with our lives and loved ones, In Jesus' name AMEN.

Meditation



On 15th of December we held our Candle-Lit Carol service. The service is made up of carols, readings and meditations. The final meditation was written by Catherine and a number of people commented on how appropriate it was. So, although it relates back to the Christmas story, we thought we would print it in this Inspire for you.

Meditation for Today

Many people think that it is simply fantastic – this amazing story of Christ's birth: God the Eternal Word, becoming flesh and living among us on Earth. Yet for those who have faith it does make sense.

We know that there is truth and goodness and beauty in the world, but we know also that there is deceit and wickedness and harshness as well. We see and experience love and kindness, but we observe cruelty and hatred as well. There is a sense of community and belonging to be found, but also the reality of conflict and division in our society and our world.

Scientific and technological advances improve our ability to travel and communicate across the world, but can they bring peace and a sense of community? They help medically, but they cannot eradicate disease and death. They can even help us offset our exploitation and pollution of our world, but mechanisation and industrial achievements also increase the speed of our despoiling of our environment.

Although we as human beings are amazing creatures with intelligence and strength and ingenuity, we are in other ways weak and frail, limited in our knowledge and ability. We cannot of our own accord, even with great ideas and all kinds of attempts: by the welfare state, by charitable giving, by seeking to reduce our carbon footprints, finally bring peace and wholeness to our world. Our efforts will always be incomplete, unsatisfactory and inadequate. Not to say that we shouldn't keep trying!!!

No. Ultimately, we need something or someone, beyond our ability, beyond our earthly, mortal limitations to break through the suffering and sorrow of our world, to transform human hearts, minds and wills and bring new life to our earth, and peace and wholeness for all. We believe that God has achieved this by coming among us in Christ, showing a different way of life - a way of love - giving his life for all, so that all may find new life in him.

It may be fantastic, but the mystery of the incarnation is fantastic in more ways than one!

C. Ball/ August 2019

St Ives Gardening Club (SIGC) visit to RHS Wisley Gardens Saturday 6th June 2020

Our Garden visit this year will be held on Saturday 6th June 2020 visiting the RHS GARDENS Wisley in Surrey at a cost of **£13.00** per participating person. We will depart **St Ives, Marley Road** bus stop adjacent to the Burleigh Hill Centre/Co-op Car Park at **8.00 am prompt** and leave Wisley at 4.15 pm to arrive back in St Ives at 6.30 pm subject to traffic and road conditions. I will make up a waiting list based on a first come first served basis for those wishing to attend and **who are not** members of the SIGC. The list will be activated after 31st January 2020 when SIGC members will have had the opportunity to reserve their place(s) Check out the RHS Web site for more details at: <https://www.rhs.org.uk> click on gardens on the header menu, then click Wisley Gardens

To be placed on our waiting list for this visit please e mail me at:

robin.bletsoe@yahoo.com indicating how many places you wish to take. I will confirm reservations but once our quota of 53 has been reached I will not be able to accept any further requests.

The Free Church Bowls and Social Club

As you will all be aware of by now, dear Jeremy Banks has passed away. For about 25 years or more Jeremy was the mainstay of the Monday night Bowls club meetings. Over those years he had become a very good friend to so many people in the Free Church and beyond. When Hazel and I came to St.Ives over 21years ago now, we wanted to get to know as many people as possible. Having been a Minister almost 50 years at that time, we were suddenly no longer up front thus we were looking for new ways to integrate. In a church magazine we saw that among every thing else going on, there was the Bowls club meeting on Mondays. Neither of us had ever played this game before but we decided to give it a go. And it was dear Jeremy who took us under his wing so to speak. He lent to us some bowls and was patient with us teaching us the elements of the sport. One of his great disappointments in the latter years was that there were fewer and fewer "church" people playing and this he thought gave a wrong balance to the meetings. I and others have tried to recruit with various responses such as: "I'll think about it" but no new members. The most common response would be along the lines: "I could never manage playing bowls."

The accompanying photo shows the trophies won by my dear Hazel over the past 20 years or so. Hazel isn't keen on sport of any kind but together we joined for good Christian social benefit. So you can understand I'm very pleased at her wonderful achievements (I won't say anything about mine!!). But you can see the potential for anyone who would come along and give a boost to the number of church participants. Dear Jeremy would be so thrilled to see the numbers pick up again. Do give it some thought and make an effort to turn up on Mondays at 6-45p.m. and you will discover a great deal of fun, friendship and healthy, but not too serious, competition.



Derek Newton

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Vacant

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Open 9am - 1pm Mon/Wed/Fri

Room Bookings should be made through the Church Office

The Free Church is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

A Renewed Church in the heart of Cambridge

Downing Place URC is a community of people who seek to take God seriously through worship, study and service that are responses to the living, dying and rising of Jesus Christ and rooted in his teaching.

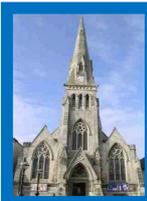
Major redevelopment work began at our St Columba's building on Downing Place in September 2019. This follows the merger of the congregations of St Columba's URC and Emmanuel URC, and the subsequent sale of the Emmanuel building on Trumpington Street to Pembroke College, which has released some capital to spend on redevelopment.

People, not buildings

Worship is at the heart of our life as a congregation, but the God whom we worship also calls us to live out our Christian faith through mission. We see this as a pivotal moment in the life of Downing Place URC – a moment in which we collectively catch a vision of what the future might look like, listening to what it is that God is calling us to do and to be in the centre of Cambridge, and then using the resources available to us to bring that vision to life. Although any planning application, by necessity, focuses on architecture, this is a vision which has people, not buildings, at its heart.

From the Downing Place website

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A PART-TIME JOB?



The Free Church
(United Reformed) St Ives has a
vacancy for a
CARETAKER

This is a part time post with
flexible hours;
minimum of 30—40 hours per
month



For an information pack please contact
the Church
Office on:

01480 468535 (Mon to Fri 9am - 1pm)

or email:

office@stivesfreechurch.org