

March – April  
2020

**St John's**  
United Reformed Church

# Record

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

## The Church in Testing Times



### "Founded in 948 AD"

**S**o states the noticeboard of St Stephen's Church on Watling Street near St Albans. I glanced this as I was approaching an intersection by car, on my way to visit someone. At the time I thought

I had misread the date. Surely this little parish Church could not have been in continuous existence for over a thousand years? But when I returned home and consulted the church website, I discovered that the date is correct; at least within

*Continued on page 2*

## Contents

**2** Svitavy Twinning visit

**3** Full Organ Concert

**4** March Calendar

**5** April Calendar

**6** Fellowship Evening

"A Murder Most Profitable"

**7** Quiz Night

Green Christian Barnet Group

**8** Film Night "Hidden Figures"



**HAPPY  
EASTER**



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10 years or so (which makes it even older than the Church of St Mary the Virgin, East Barnet, founded 1080). Apparently, there is a small window in the Parish Centre deep-set in rough masonry that has been dated to the mid-tenth century. That made me think about what the many generations of worshippers in that little Parish Church had witnessed, and, in particular, what difficulties and challenges they would have faced and endured. Here's a select list:

The Norman Invasion and Conquest from 1066. The Bubonic Plague Pandemic from 1346. Henry VIII's and Thomas Cranmer's reforms of the Church in the 1530's would have had a direct impact on church life. The Great Civil War of 1642-51 may have set Royalists against Parliamentarians within the congregation! There was a succession of wars between Britain and France. The First World War 1914-18 that killed many young men. The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-20 that killed many more people than the war did. The Second World War 1939-45. The gradual drift away from Christianity in British culture in the 20th and 21st centuries. I'm assuming that the generations of worshippers in that little Parish Church could not have been unaffected by these events and factors. And yet that Church has managed, I assume, to maintain a continuous witness to Jesus Christ for over a thousand years.

At the time of writing this article, the UK Government has warned us to prepare for an increase in the transmission of the coronavirus Covid-19. None of us knows how widely the virus will spread and the extent of the risk it might present, but the experience of China and Italy ought to make us cautious. If the outbreak becomes an epidemic it may be a severe test of whether we are willing to accept stringent limits on our way of life for the common good. Currently, like many, I'm adopting an approach that I hope is neither complacent on the one hand nor panicked on the other. But that is easier said than done!

It may be salutary to compare our situation

today to 100 years ago when, in 1920, the influenza epidemic had caused an estimated 50 million deaths worldwide. Back then the UK had neither an NHS nor the medical expertise to treat infectious diseases that we have today. We also have today a Civil Service and Government and News Media that is comparatively transparent in its sharing of information. This means that we should be able to find reliable information as required.

St John's Church offers the following advice to those who attend our services and meetings:

1. If you are feeling unwell, stay at home; if symptoms persist, call your GP or 111
2. A reminder of best-hygiene practices that will help to protect you and others: wash your hands frequently, and catch any coughs or sneezes in a disposable paper tissue.
3. On Sunday morning the Door Elder will welcome you with a friendly greeting but not a handshake
4. There is an alcohol-based hand sanitiser near the entrance
5. We will exchange the Peace verbally but not physically following the Lord's Supper

At present we can continue to meet with these precautions. However, St John's Church will also monitor official advice about public gatherings if the virus becomes more widespread. In the event of a ban on medium-sized public gatherings, we are blessed to have various alternative ways we can continue to communicate and support one another. Above all, let us remember the affirmation of the psalmist, one that the Church has leaned on during testing times: "The Lord is good and his love is everlasting, his faithfulness endures to all generations." (Psalm 100:5)

Julian Templeton

## Svitavy Twinning Visit

**O**n 25 April, 28 members of the Czech Church from Svitavy, along with most of the Keller family, will arrive in New Barnet to spend a week with us, most sleeping in the Large Hall. A small group has met and made the following provisional plan of activities.

- Sat 25:** Arrival and welcome with Fish & Chips supper.  
**Sun 25:** 11:00 Worship together followed by Shared Lunch.  
**Mon 27:** Small groups to be hosted for evening meal at homes.  
**Tues 28:** Evening gathering and meal at the manse.  
**Wed 29:** Meal at Red Lion followed by Mitre or other hostelryes.  
**Thurs 30:** Day trip to Cambridge.  
**Fri 31:** Meal and entertainment from own nations, in Large Hall.

# FULL ORGAN

## RE-OPENING OF THE NEWLY REFURBISHED PETER COLLINS ORGAN

There was standing room only at a concert featuring five organists in St John's Church on Saturday 1st February. The occasion was the re-opening of the Peter Collins organ after a major overhaul and refurbishment costing £42,000, the majority of which was raised by church members. The audience were thrilled by the varied programme of music chosen by the five organists to show off the newly refurbished organ. Richard Harvey said he was absolutely delighted to share the programme with his fellow organists, Terence Atkins, Robin Coxon, Dr. Robert Manning and his own pupil, Drew Sellis, who

is Organ Scholar elect for Jesus College, Cambridge. Also in the concert was local soprano, Àine Cook, who sang beautifully in two airs from Handel's oratorio, Messiah, and opera, Semele. The audience's appreciation of the evening was evidenced by the fact they gave so generously to the two charities, the ON Organ Fund – the only national fund of its kind in this country devoted exclusively to the support of pipe organs – and Help Musicians UK – an independent UK charity for professional musicians of all genres, from starting out through to retirement. A total of £938 was raised.



Robin Coxon, Terence Atkins, Robert Manning, Richard Harvey, Drew Sellis, Àine Cook



# Calendar

## March 2020

MARCH	Sunday 8	11:00am	Lent 2, Worship led by Valerie and Andrew Mills	MARCH
	Tuesday 10	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting	
	Wednesday 11	4:00 pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
		8:00pm	Lent Group: Session 2 – Brookside Methodist Church	
	Thursday 12	9:30am	Mainly Music, Sanctuary	
		2:30pm	Lent Group: Session 2 –St. John's Church	
	Sunday 15	11:00am	Lent 2, Worship led by Julian Templeton	
		12:30pm	<b>Shared Lunch</b> , Large Hall	
		1:30pm	<b>Church AGM</b>	
	Wednesday 18	4:00 pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
		8:00pm	Lent Group: Session 3 – Brookside Methodist Church	
		8:00pm	St. John's Fellowship –Grey Matters–Retirement Financial Planning by Caroline Romero in Sanctuary.	
	Thursday 19	9:30am	Mainly Music, Sanctuary	
		2:30pm	Lent Group: Session 3 – St. John's Church	
	Friday 20	7:30pm	Film Night - Hidden Figures	
	Saturday 21		Thames North Synod Meeting – Bunyan Meeting House, Mill St, Bedford	
		9:45am	Green Christian – Barnet Group	
	Sunday 22	11:00am	Lent 3, Worship led by Tony Alderman	
	Tuesday 24	8:00pm	Justice and Peace Group Meeting	
	Wednesday 25	10:00am	Pastoral Team Meeting	
		4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
		8:00pm	Lent Group: Session 4 – Brookside Methodist Church	
	Thursday 26	9:30am	Mainly Music, Sanctuary	
		2:30pm	Lent Group: Session 4 –St. John's Church	
		8:00pm	Men's Group Curry Evening, Railway Bell, East Barnet Road	
	Saturday 28	2:30pm	Christ Church at Whetstone Closing Service	
	Sunday 29		British Summer Time begins- clocks go forward 1 hour	
		11:00am	Lent 4, Worship led by Sarah Beaumont	
		3:00pm	Causeway, Small Hall	
	Tuesday 31	2:00pm	Dementia Club	

# Calendar

## April 2020

APRIL	Wed 1	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	APRIL
		8:00pm	Lent Group: Session 5 – Brookside Methodist Church	
	Thursday 2	9:30am	Mainly Music, Sanctuary	
		2:30pm	Lent Group: Session 5 - St. John's Church	
	Saturday 4	6:30pm	Fellowship Quiz in Large Hall - doors open 6.30pm, 7pm light supper, 7.45pm Start of quiz.	
	Sunday 5	11:00am	Lent 6, <b>Palm Sunday</b> Worship led by David Paul and Richard Harvey	
	Tuesday 7	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting	
	Thursday 9	8:00pm	<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	
			Guild Players Holy Week Play - Judas Tale- followed by short <b>Lord's Supper</b> led by Julian Templeton	
	Friday 10	2:00pm	<b>Good Friday Service</b> led by Julian Templeton	
	Sunday 12	10:00am	Informal Prayer in Memorial Room	
		10:30am	Elders' Meeting, Vestry	
		11:00am	<b>Easter Day Worship</b> with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton	
	Monday 13		Easter Pilgrimage to St. Albans Abbey (St Mary's Church, East Barnet)	
	Wed 15	8:00pm	St. John's Fellowship -Jubilee Sailing Trust by Julia Ladds in Sanctuary	
	Friday 17		Copy Deadline for the next edition of Church Record	
	Sunday 19	11:00am	Worship led by Alison Bond	
	Tuesday 21	8:00pm	Prayer & Discussion Group at 37 Greenhill Park	
	Wed 22	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	Thursday 23	9:30am	Mainly Music, Sanctuary	
		7:30pm	North London Local Area Group at Trinity Church, Mill Hill	
	Friday 24	2:30pm	Community Café and Short Service	
	Saturday 25		<b>Arrival of Svitavy Church Twinning Visit</b> (see page 2 for details)	
	Sunday 26	11:00am	Worship led by Julian Templeton and Filip Keller	
		12:30pm	Shared Lunch, Large Hall	
		3:00pm	Causeway, Small Hall	
	Wed 29	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
		8:30pm	Men's Group, Ye Olde Mitre Inne in High Barnet	
	Thursday 30	9:30am	Mainly Music, Sanctuary	
MAY	Sunday 3	10:00am	Informal Prayer in Memorial Room	MAY
		10:30am	Elders' Meeting, Vestry	
		11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton	
	Wednesday	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	Thursday 7	9:30am	Mainly Music, Sanctuary	
	4:00pm	Finance and Managers Committee, Vestry		

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# Fellowship



## A Murder Most “Profitable” Geoff Bowden

The Fellowship members who braved the cold and rain to join their friends at Fellowship, were treated to a fascinating and amusing talk by Geoff Bowden, who turned out to be a bit of a Agatha Christie nut!

Agatha Millar was born in Torquay on 15th September 1890, to an American Stockbroker father and an English mother. After an unremarkable childhood, showing little sign of a literary future, Agatha met and fell in love with Archibald Christie, whom she married on the eve of the first world war. She became a nurse during the war, where as an apothecaries' assistant, she picked up her impressive knowledge about drugs and poisons.

She was to use this knowledge to underpin the plot of many of her future books. While her husband was away at war, Agatha began to write, but it was not until the age of thirty in 1920, that her first book "The Mysterious Affair at Styles" was published, this featured Hercule Poirot. However, the publishers, Bodley Head, managed to secure all rights to the book for just twenty five pounds!

In 1926 Agatha became the centre of a mystery herself. By this time, her marriage to Archibald Christie had failed, following his affair with Nancy Neele. After a quarrel on the night of 3rd December Agatha left home in her Morris Cowley, but did not return! The car, along with her fur coat, was found abandoned the following morning, just a few miles away. Her disappearance was headline news and even the Home Secretary got involved.

A week after her disappearance, a reporter spotted her in the Swan Hydropathic Hotel in Harrogate. She was staying under the name of Mrs Neele, the name her husband's lover! Agatha maintained she had suffered from memory loss, but we shall never know what really happened, as she took the mystery to her grave.



Outwardly Agatha was a shy, middle class housewife. However, the real Agatha had a tremendous appetite for a d v e n t u r e , travelling to Bagdad alone on the Orient

Express and to many Far Eastern archeological sites. It was during one of these visits that Agatha met her second husband, Max Mallowan. The marriage in 1927 was a rather scandalous for the time, as Agatha was forty and Max twenty seven.

Agatha continued to produce a book a year throughout the thirties, forties and fifties, with publications like "Murder at the Vicarage", where we first meet Miss Marple, "Murder on the Orient Express", "Ten Little Niggers" (now renamed – "Then there Were None"). In 1952 she wrote "Three Blind Mice", which we now know as "The Mousetrap", which has been on stage in London continuously for sixty eight years.

Many of her books were turned in to films and plays, some more successfully than others. This success brought considerable wealth to Agatha and the family. In 1938 the couple bought the Greenway Estate in Devon, which remained the family home until her death. Greenway is now under the care of the National Trust, where visitors get a glimpse into her life.

She continued to work throughout the sixties and seventies, becoming a Dame in 1971. Agatha wrote two books which were intended to be published posthumously. However, in her last year she did agree to their publication, so in 1975 we found out how Hercule Poirot met his end during his last case in "Curtains" and how Miss Marple ended her very long career with "Sleeping Murder".



Agatha passed away on 12th January 1976

Guinness World Records lists her novels as having sold over 2 billion copies, and her estate claims her works come third in the rankings of the world's most-widely published books, behind only Shakespeare and Bible. Her books have been translated into at least 103 languages. This shy, middle class English lady became the best-selling novelist of all time.

Ron Mobbs

**SOLD OUT**

**St John's**  
United Reformed Church



# ST JOHN'S URC FELLOWSHIP QUIZ NIGHT

**St John's URC Hall – Mowbray Road , New Barnet EN5 1RH**

**Saturday 4th April 2020**

**Open at 6.30 pm for supper at 7.00 pm**

**Quiz starts at 7.45 pm**

**Just £12.00 per person, includes a light supper – bring you own drinks**

**Make up a table of 8 with your friends, or come and meet new people.**

**All money raised will go towards updating our spectacular sanctuary**

**Big raffle, with some great prizes, just £1.00 per ticket.**

**Tickets; [mobbs.ron@gmail.com](mailto:mobbs.ron@gmail.com) Call Sue or Ron on 02084414333**

## Green Christian Barnet Group

*You are invited to the next event*

**Saturday 21 March**

**9.45 – 12 noon**

**Topics being prepared include: “The Future of Fossil Fuels”,  
Plus**

**A report: UK’s Christian Climate Action group on  
“Why we take peaceful direct action”.**

**Full details to follow.**

**All are very welcome - especially if you have not been before.**

**@ St. John’s Church, Somerset Rd., New Barnet, EN5 1RH.**

# FILM NIGHT AT ST JOHN'S

Invite a friend or family member to this  free screening

# HIDDEN FIGURES



**FRIDAY  
20TH  
MARCH**

**7:30PM**

**REFRESHMENTS  
AVAILABLE**

**Donations welcomed to  
support the Twinning Visit  
from our friends in  
Czech Republic**

TARAJI P.  
HENSON

OCTAVIA  
SPENCER

JANELLE  
MONÁE

KEVIN  
COSTNER

KIRSTEN  
DUNST

JIM  
PARSONS

Three female African-American mathematicians play a pivotal role in astronaut John Glenn's launch into orbit.

Meanwhile, they also have to deal with racial and gender discrimination at work.

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