

**Nov-Dec
2023**

St John's
United Reformed Church

Record

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

THE OVERVIEW EFFECT

IN THE BOOK OF JOB in the Old Testament Satan tests him with all manner of terrible afflictions and losses; to Satan's annoyance Job refuses to curse God, but he does lament his birth, longs for death and disputes the claims of his 'comforters' that he is being punished for his sins; he also protests his faithfulness and righteousness before God and demands that God gives him an answer for his suffering. God does answer him, but not in the way Job expected.



*The Lord answering Job from the whirlwind, 1803, William Blake
NATIONAL GALLERIES SCOTLAND - Creative Commons CC by NC*

"Who is it that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me if you have understanding.
Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who shut in the sea with doors ... and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped'?
Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness ... surely you know ..."

Question after question he puts to Job which point to God's omnipotence and sovereignty over all creation. One really needs to read the whole of chapters 38 to 41 to feel the colossal impact of God's answer. ➡

Contents

- 2-3 The Overview Effect
- 3 True Life Church
- 4 Spymaster:
Barnet Connections
- 5 Prayer Handbook
Recycle/Reuse
Christmas Lunch
- 6-7 Asylum Seekers
Winter Shelter
- 7 Good Samaritan
School for the Deaf
- 8-9 Towards Greener
Healthcare
- 9 Christmas Services
- 10 Calendar
- 11 Fellowship:
Christmas Celebration
- 12 Harvest Thanks

Trusting God by:

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

Contacts

Website: www.stjohnsnewbarnet.org.uk

Record Editors: Richard & Janet Harvey, Email: churchrecord2023@gmail.com

Church Secretary: Alison Bond, Tel: 020 8440 1941 Email: aegbond@hotmail.co.uk

Church Administrator: Alison Cousins, Tel: 07816 115 817 Email: info.stjohnsurc@gmail.com

We have a great advantage over Job in that, thanks to modern technology of telescopes and space exploration, we can actually see the vastness of the universe. To say it takes the breath away would be an utter understatement. The numbers are so gigantic that they almost cease to have any meaning. Our own Milky Way galaxy contains between one hundred and four hundred billion stars like our own sun; and recent estimates suggest that there could be as many as two trillion galaxies in the observable universe.



Earthrise, taken on December 24, 1968, by Apollo 8 astronaut William Anders

On Christmas Eve 1968, astronauts Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and Bill Anders on board Apollo 8 were the first humans to travel to the Moon. Bill Anders was taking photographs of the lunar surface when he suddenly exclaimed, "Oh my God! Look at that picture over there! There's the Earth coming up. Wow, that's pretty."

Astronauts since have said that, although it left people in awe to see the photograph of Earth from space for the first time, it is nothing like seeing it with one's own eyes.

Michael Collins, who flew in Apollo 11 said, "The thing that really surprised me was that [the Earth] projected an air of fragility. And why, I don't know. I don't know to this day. I had a feeling it's tiny, it's shiny, it's beautiful, it's home, and it's fragile."

Edgar Mitchell on the Apollo 14 mission, while walking on the Moon, stared at the Earth floating in the vastness of space and felt an "overwhelming sense of oneness and connectedness ... accompanied by an ecstasy ... an epiphany".

This transcendental experience that accompanies seeing Earth from space has become known as the 'Overview Effect', first described in 1987 by Frank White, a space philosopher.

There are many examples of astronauts seeing the Earth and humanity in a different light. Soviet cosmonaut, Yuri Artyuskin, said, "The feeling of unity is not simply an observation. With it comes a strong sense of compassion and concern for the state of our planet and the effect humans are having on it. It isn't important in which sea or lake you observe a slick of pollution, or in the forests of which country a fire breaks out, or on which continent a hurricane arises. You are standing guard over the whole of our Earth."

Edgar Mitchell, in another quote, said, "You develop an instant global consciousness, a people orientation, an intense dissatisfaction with the state of the world, and a compulsion to do something about it. From out there on the moon, international politics look so petty. You want to grab a politician by the scruff of the neck and drag him a quarter of a million miles out and say, 'Look at that ...'"

Oh that we could all experience the 'Overview Effect', especially at this time, when there seems to be no end to conflict, war, poverty and the desecration of our world. Oh that we could see the fragility of our Earth as Michael Collins described it; to see the countries and continents of our Earth with no borders; to see the fragility of its ecosystem; but, despite all the above, so that we could really appreciate the providence of God in the way he upholds, guides, and cares for his creation.

Fred Pratt Green, in his hymn "God in his love for us lent us this planet", wrote the verse:

*Long have our human wars ruined its harvest;
long has earth bowed to the terror of force;
long have we wasted what others have need of,
poisoned the fountain of life at its source.*

But he also wrote:

*Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty,
life that sustains us in body and mind:
plenty for all, if we learn how to share it,
riches undreamed of to fathom and find.*

May our prayers and our actions demonstrate our love for each other and our world.

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great thou art!

Editors

AS YOU MAY KNOW, the London True Life Church hire our premises on a Sunday afternoon for their worship services. Several weeks ago three of our Elders were made very welcome at one of their services; then, on a Monday in October, five of our Elders joined with six of their congregation, including the Pastor and his wife, for a lunchtime Chinese meal at Wing Tai Restaurant, Cricklewood. It was a great time of sharing (and eating!). They are keen to join us in some of our outreach activities.



This is a message from Pastor Wang's wife, Daphne:

"We used to pastor a Chinese church in central London for fifteen years. Then in April 2017, we planted this church in north London, and in 2018, we planted another church in Kingston, focusing on serving people locally. Thank you so much for allowing us to use your church, and thank you so much for your nice and warm acceptance, [for] which we are very grateful. Thank you for your blessing. We are looking forward to working together in God's Kingdom."

Richard Harvey

Fellowship:**SPYMASTER****Barnet Connections****Dr Helen Fry**

Folk who attended the October Fellowship meeting were treated to a most entertaining and informative talk by Dr Helen Fry – historian and author. Helen had previously spoken to the Fellowship a few years ago about the use of Trent Park during the 2nd World War, where Senior German Officers were housed as Prisoners of War, unaware that all conversations were bugged and vital information was obtained by British Secret Service officers.

Her talk this time featured Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Kendrick who became known as the Spymaster (the man who saved MI6). He operated as a British Intelligence Officer under the code name 'Colonel Wallace'

Born in November 1881 in Capetown, he spent his early years in Cape Colony and fought in the 2nd Boer War and later served as a field intelligence officer in the 1st World War.

In the early 1920s he continued his spying activities, tracking Communist agents around Europe and later, in the 1930s, Nazi spies. He entered the dangerous world of double-agents as in 1925 he was posted to the British Consulate in Vienna as 'Passport Control Officer' which was cover for his undercover work for MI6 as 'Head of Station' Vienna. During his time at the Passport Office, he issued up to 200 passports a day to Jewish people fleeing from the encroaching German occupation of Austria. It is estimated over 10,000 people were able to leave Austria and he has been named as 'Vienna's Oskar Schindler'. Besides his 'Day Job' at the Consulate he was running his network of undercover 'spies' – in the increasingly dangerous times leading up to the 2nd World War, watching the Danube for arms delivery, tracking Russian and Nazi movements. He was called the 'the elusive Englishman' by Hitler's Secret Service but he was eventually betrayed by a double-agent. He was arrested for espionage on 17th August 1938, imprisoned and interrogated at the Hotel Metropole (Vienna HQ of the German SS & Gestapo). Following intervention by British Foreign Office he was released on 20th August and expelled from Austria. His expulsion led to the collapse of his intelligence network.

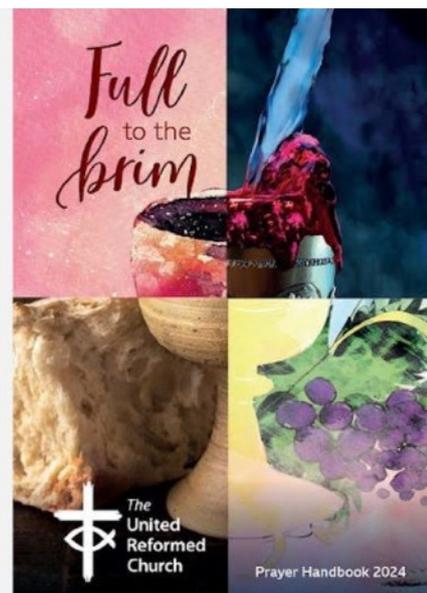
During the 2nd World War he was responsible for the setting up M-Rooms (mike rooms) where Intelligence Officers listened in on German prisoners-of-war in their bugged rooms. Prisoners were housed at Trent Park, Latimer House and Wilton Park; all three houses were fitted with M-Rooms and the information retrieved by officers proved invaluable in the British war effort.

Kendrick retired from MI6 in 1948, his incredible work unrecognised and when he died aged 90 in 1972 no obituaries were recorded for this man who had worked for forty years in the shadows of British Secret Service. Only the men in trench coats and trilby hats sitting in the back row at his funeral gave an indication.

Helen Fry spoke so enthusiastically about Kendrick and his secret life that the time went too quickly. I think many would have liked another hour of her fascinating research into such an important man in our history.

Jean Davies

Full to the Brim – The 2024 URC Prayer Handbook



Next year's Prayer Handbook is edited by the Revd Stephen Ansa-Addo and the Revd Sue McCoan, who provide the following introduction to the book:

Themes of fullness and emptiness run throughout the Bible. The prayers gathered in this book speak of different kinds of fullness – fullness of blessing, fullness of being too busy – and of the need, sometimes, to empty ourselves, in order to be filled afresh.

The first section follows the lectionary, with a prayer based on one or more of the set readings for each week. For the second section, we invited people to interpret the idea of 'full to the brim' in whatever way resonated with them.

We have subdivided this section into prayers that could be used in public worship, and those that seem more suited to personal devotion. It is our hope that, in reading these prayers, you might make connections with your own need for fullness, and what you might need to let go to make space. Above all, we hope that you will find yourself refreshed and nourished.

The cost of the Prayer Handbook is £5.99 – please let me know as soon as possible if you would like me to order one for you. Payment is not required until you receive the book.

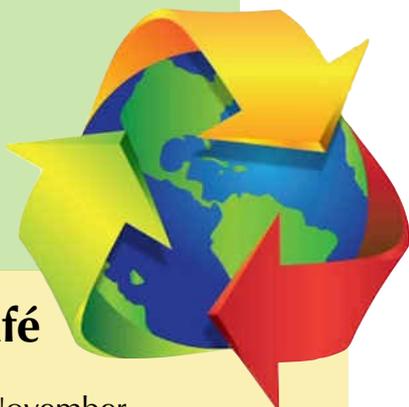
Alison Bond

Stamps and Inkjet recycling

With Christmas fast approaching, over the coming months, you may receive more stamps than usual, so please continue to pass any used stamps and inkjet cartridges to me, or put them in my pigeonhole, or in the box downstairs.

Thank you for your support.

Malcolm Bond



Repair Café

Saturday 18th November
10.00-12.00 at Wesley Hall
9 Stapylton Road, opp. Spires car park

Our volunteers are happy to help with repairs to:

- electrical goods
- clothing
- bicycles
- jewellery
- small furniture items
- and tackle software problems

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

12.30pm Wednesday 29th November

The Women's Daytime Group invite men from the church and Fellowship members to a Christmas lunch at the Queen's Arms, next to the Everyman Cinema, Barnet.

There is a choice of 4 starters, 4 mains and 4 desserts.

- Two courses cost £19.25 incl. £5 deposit. On day pay £14.25, with drinks on top and tip.
- Three courses cost £24.75 incl. £5 deposit. On day pay £19.75, with drinks on top and tip.

Book with me by Sunday 12th November giving me £5 nonreturnable deposit and your menu choice.

On the day pay the balance after your meal by cash or card at the bar. (They will have list of your menus.) Don't pay me.

Marjorie O'Connor
208 445 6580 or 07515 910514

N.B. If you are sick on day let me have apologies asap and all you will forfeit is the deposit and hopefully if we let the chef know in time we won't be liable for the cost of the meal.

Asylum Seekers



THE NEW CITIZENS GATEWAY is a charity that we at St. John's have supported for many years with our donations of toys at Christmas. Formerly known as the Barnet Refugee Service, it is an independent registered charity working in partnership with other organisations to improve the quality of life and promote the physical, social and mental well-being of refugees and asylum seekers, helping to reduce health inequalities, social exclusion and poverty and enabling integration. They support over 2,000 refugees and asylum seekers each year.

They offer a range of services from activity and homework youth clubs to participation on their allotment. They help with counselling and advice to navigate the UK legal and financial systems, provide English classes and access to health care.

NCG has recently been awarded the pharmaceutical company GSK and The Kings Fund IMPACT award. These awards are a mark of excellence in the charity sector to recognise the outstanding work of small and medium-sized charities working to improve people's health and well-being in the UK. One of the local groups that NCG works with is the Barnet Refugee Welcoming Board which is a small local multi faith group that was originally set up in 2016 to support the arrival of Syrian refugees in Barnet, and is now supporting asylum seekers and refugees living in hotels across Barnet as their asylum claims are processed. Our New Barnet Justice and Peace Group has been part of BRWB since its formation.

Barnet Council currently houses over 800 people including families with young children in hotels across the borough. As you can imagine living in a hotel for a long period of time can bring many challenges, both for the hotel and the residents. NCG and BRWB have recently held a Listening Project where they have held meetings at the hotels across Barnet that house asylum seekers to hear how life could be made easier for them. The provision of food seems to be a major problem as the quality appears to be extremely low and there are no facilities for residents to prepare their own food. This is impacting particularly on the children's health. Laundry is also an issue as there no facilities for residents to wash their own clothes, so laundry is collected once a week and often returned still damp or with items missing. NCG and BRWB will now work to encourage and support Barnet Council to address these issues. Although life is very difficult for the hotel residents all were grateful for the support they receive from the local communities and feel that however hard life is at least they are now safe.



Winter Shelter

THE NIGHT SHELTER offering overnight accommodation to those in need in Barnet will again run this winter starting on 30th October. This season will mark the twentieth anniversary of the first night shelter in Barnet when seven

churches in Finchley got together to offer accommodation for a few weeks in January and February. Since then the shelter has grown to cover five months involving more than thirty inter faith communities. It became a charity, *Together in Barnet*, in 2014, and has always worked in close partnership with the day centre *Homeless Action in Barnet* to identify guests suitable for the shelter, and to support the volunteers at each venue. ➡

Winter Shelter contd.

Now the two separate organisations TIB and HAB have decided to merge, but this will not yet have an impact on how the shelter is run. All guests are identified and referred each day by HAB and the venues will continue to be run in separate venues supported by a coordinator who knows all the guests.

St John's together with St Peter's started to host the shelter in January 2012 and we will host again this winter, offering Saturday night accommodation for the first six weeks in January and February 2024. If you can help in any way to support the nights that we host I'd be glad to hear from you.

TIB and HAB are always in need of donations, both monetary and items, so if you have any of the following that you no longer need then please do take them to HAB at 36^b Woodhouse Road, North Finchley, N12 ORG, or let me know and I can organise delivery: sleeping bags, single bed sheets, pillows. Please make sure all items are freshly laundered.

Thank you,
Lesley Calder

Report from Rosemary at the Good Samaritan School for the Deaf in Uganda

THE USUAL ONE MONTH school holiday has come to an end. It has been a busy time for us and the twelve children who stayed with us during the holiday. With help of extra labour, we have cleared all the allotted land for the school and had it ready for the new rainy season. It has been a difficult time for the village residents as the community borehole broke down and, until today, not enough funds have been collected to repair it. However, the local leadership thinks that it is best the whole old hand pump be replaced with a new one instead of making repairs. We are thankful for the donation we received and filled up three tanks, dedicated one for the community residents to use. This has helped us all through this period.



Truck delivering water to the school



On the 18th September the children started reporting back and we are very excited to have them back. This school term is rather a short one, only seventy-five days and there's a lot of activities. We have six Primary Seven candidates (four girls and two boys) waiting to write their national exams on 7th, 8th and 9th November. We also plan on going for the school trip we missed during term two and lots of other activities. Please do say some prayers for us as this is an advancement year to the next class. We appreciate any and all support we have received for this school term.

A school quarterly record is yet to be produced. Please do subscribe to our newsletter over our website: <https://goodsamaritanschoolforthe deaf.com>

May God continue blessing you all.
Rosemary Nakasiita,
Director, Good Samaritan School for the Deaf



**GREEN CHRISTIAN
BARNET**

Towards Greener Healthcare

EARLIER THIS YEAR the Barnet Green Christian group turned its attention to the topic of healthcare, and how the delivery of healthcare impacts the environment. We considered what can be done to minimise the effects on the environment. Some examples of innovative practice were presented. As ever there was an interesting and lively discussion after the presentation.

If the global healthcare industry was a country, it would be the fifth largest carbon emitter on the planet, as it collectively produces 4.4% of the world's greenhouse emissions. The NHS in England is responsible for 4 – 5% of the country's carbon footprint.

Healthcare needs many resources and produces a huge amount of waste. Examples of waste include: food; packaging; used PPE; wound dressings; theatre swabs; drugs and medicines including cytotoxic drugs; radioactive waste; plastic single use items; chemicals; needles and other sharps.

Over the last few years there has within the NHS been a growing awareness of the need to reduce greenhouse emissions and to live more sustainably and in harmony with nature. In 2020 it became the first healthcare organisation in the world to commit to reaching carbon net zero and there is now a legal duty on it to reach this goal by 2040.



There are many areas which are being addressed, to reach net zero. These are some examples:

- Staff delivering care in different ways where possible, such as: video/telephone appointments; hospital at home; telemedicine.
- Making the supply chain more efficient.
- Upgrading NHS vehicles to those which are less polluting, such as electric cars and ambulances.
- Patients/service users accessing care closer to home where possible, for example greater use of pharmacies.
- Ensuring existing buildings are as well insulated as possible, and new buildings being built to a high "green" specification.
- Using renewable energy as much as possible in hospitals, clinics, GP practices, and careful use of this energy for example by using low energy lightbulbs; lights and computers etc being switched off when not needed; efficient use of heating.
- Minimising wastage of medicines through efficient and appropriate prescribing; patients being knowledgeable about what they have been prescribed and why.
- Food and catering, including sourcing food locally; providing seasonal food; allowing patient choice as much as possible to avoid wastage of unwanted food.
- Some specific examples of innovative practice were mentioned:
- St George's Hospital in south-west London has a combined heat and power plant which provides excess renewable energy back into the National Grid.
- Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust runs a virtual glaucoma clinic.
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust has removed hundreds of thousands single use plastic items from its waste stream in recent years.



There are many initiatives like these, and the culture within the NHS is gradually changing to focus more on minimising the impact on the environment. Trusts now need to have a Green Plan and a director responsible for sustainability. Staff can put themselves forward to become 'Green Champions' where they can take a lead on green issues within their team or department.

We finished by looking at the ways we as members of the public can make a difference:

- By using greener travel options to get to appointments, or by using services closer to home if possible;
- By working in partnership with health professionals around management of long-term conditions, for example asthma, diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure etc.
- By exploring recycling/refurbishment possibilities of aids and equipment which are no longer needed.
- By lobbying national and local politicians, and by raising queries directly with organisations, for example: if the local hospital is serving strawberries at Christmas, we could ask 'why'!
- And finally: by staying as active and healthy as we can, to reduce our need for health care.

If you are interested in green issues, do join us at a gathering, held once a month during most months at St John's Church at 10.30 on a Saturday morning. They are open to everyone, churchgoers or not. We have links with other like-minded groups locally.

The sessions are informal and friendly, starting with coffee and pastries and then moving onto the topic for the month. If you have any ideas for future meetings please contact Tony Shepherd tonios2@btinternet.com

Sonal Lea

Christmas Services in December

Gift Service Gifts for Local Refugees & Asylum Seekers **Sunday 10th at 11am**

Candlelit Carol Service
Sunday 17th at 6pm

Christmas Eve Service with Carols
Sunday 24th at 11am

Christmas Day Service
Monday 25th
at 10.30am



Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

Sunday 5	11:00am	Memorial Sunday. Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Rev Maggie Hindley
Thursday 9	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 12	10:45am	Remembrance Sunday. Worship led by Rev Jenny Robinson
Tuesday 14	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Wednesday 15	8:00pm	Fellowship: 'Lieutenancy and the Monarch' Speaker: Stuart Nagler, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire
Thursday 16	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 18	10:30am	Green Christian Barnet: 'Reducing the effect of Climate Change: What can we do?' Terry Over (N.B. No GCB event in December)
Sunday 19	11:00am	Worship led by Valerie and Andrew Mills followed by a Church Meeting
Thursday 23	9:30am	Mainly Music
	8:00pm	Joint Men & Women's Meeting. Supper Evening at <i>The Railway Bell</i>
Friday 24	8:00pm	Fellowship Concert: Katie's Jumping Fleas Ukulele Band
Sunday 26	11:00am	Worship led by Alison Bond
Wednesday 29	12:30pm	Church Christmas Lunch at <i>The Queen's Arms</i> (see p.5)
Thursday 30	9:30am	Mainly Music

DECEMBER

Sunday 3	11:00am	1st Sunday of Advent: Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Rev Eddie Boon followed by a shared sandwich lunch and discussion
Thursday 7	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 10	11:00am	Gift Service: Worship led by Roz Douglas
Tuesday 12	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Wednesday 13	8:00pm	Fellowship: 'Crime and Punishment in London' Speaker: Dianne Burstein, London Blue Guide
Thursday 14	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 17	11:00am	Worship led by Rev Roger Orme
	6:00pm	Candlit Carol Service
Monday 18	2:30pm	Carol Singing at Cedars Care Home with Holy Trinity & St James' Churches
Sunday 24	11:00am	Christmas Eve: Worship led by Jean Davies with URC sermon

DECEMBER contd.

Monday 25	10:30am	Christmas Day: Worship led by Alison Bond
Friday 29	11:00am	Women's Group at <i>Whetstone Café</i>
Sunday 31	11:00am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon

JANUARY 2024

Sunday 7	11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Tony Alderman
Tuesday 9	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Thursday 11	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 14	11:00am	Worship led by Helen Snider and Andrew Summers

Copy for the January/February edition of *Church Record* to be with the editors
by Friday 29th December.

churchrecord2023@gmail.com

We are grateful to the following people who provided the church flowers:
Meg Hardie - 3rd September; Lesley Calder - 10th September;
Marjorie O'Connor and the Flower Committee - 8th October, Harvest;
Marion Hopwood - 22nd October.

Fellowship Christmas Celebration - Friday 24th November at 8pm



Katie's Jumping Fleas Ukulele Band

In addition to an evening of music and sing-along Christmas fun, there will be a selection of Christmas snacks, wine and other refreshments.

Proceeds will go to St John's Fellowship, the church and its charities.

Everyone is welcome.

Tickets £12 incl. refreshments from Marjorie O'Connor 07515 910514

Harvest Festival Thanks

Thanks to all the flower arrangers for the wonderful displays at our Harvest Festival.



Our support for the Foodbank this Harvest was really appreciated, especially at a time when stock levels were so low and demand for the Foodbank so high.

A Big **THANK YOU**

St John's URC

for supporting Chipping Barnet Foodbank this Harvest

Your donations will make a **HUGE** difference to local people in crisis.

Registered Charity Number: 1163042 | Registered in England and Wales

Chipping Barnet foodbank