



# Abbey Lane & Newport United Reformed Church incorporating Saffron Walden Methodist Church

Proclaiming the Gospel – Growing in Faith – Reaching out in Service

18 April

Photo by Karen Start of Caroline & Alice setting off, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April, for their new home in Yorkshire



### Welcome to our weekly newsletter

## Sunday Service 18<sup>th</sup> April

Worship Online at 10:30 a.m.

Led by Tina Wilson

Reflection by Rev. Roy Fowler

Zoom meeting and Passcode details are listed on the order of service sent separately, or call our Church Contact on 01799 528325

Please note that our Church Meeting will follow, 12 noon on the same meeting ID.

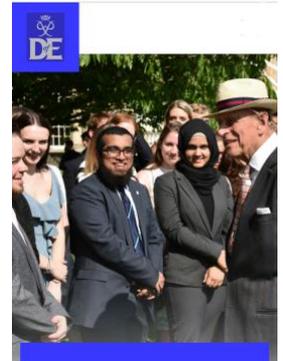
If you prefer to watch live on the website please go to <http://saffronwaldenurc.org.uk/services-recordings> where you will also find a recording of the service to YouTube each week available from Sunday afternoon.

## Reflections at the passing of Prince Philip?

Some of us are wondering if the pandemic has brought an 'end of era' and that 'normal' may never return to some parts of our lives. Reflections put the death of HRH Prince Philip last Friday, on 9<sup>th</sup> April, in similar terms. Australian prime minister Scott Morrison tweeted that the duke "embodied a generation that we will never see again". I was struck by his contribution to the field of conservation before it was widely fashionable, through his work with the World Wildlife Fund and the London Zoological Society. Equally far sighted was his scheme, set up to bridge the gap between school and national service for young men, which eventually became the Duke of Edinburgh

Awards. The Award website refers to helping young people make "the best use of their free time" that they might develop "self-confidence and a sense of purpose that would support them into their future and help them to become well-rounded citizens".

Prince Philip had a troubled start in life, separated from family having been exiled from Greece – "I was a refugee" he said in a famous interview – and was convinced of the benefit to young people of developing that self-reliance coupled with sense of purpose. Conflict exacerbated the split in his family; having settled in the UK he served with distinction in the Royal Navy, while his sisters (married to German families) supported the 'enemy'. The inspiration to establish the Duke of Edinburgh Awards was Kurt Hahn, the head at Gordonstoun where Prince Phillip was schooled. Hahn was also a refugee, a German Jew, and Prince Phillip referred in interviews to the impact of being exiled. Andy Braunston wrote, "He was born in Corfu and baptised into the Orthodox Church. Later received into the Church of England, many who have known the Duke of Edinburgh bear witness to the depth of his faith and his theological knowledge. A regular visitor to Mount Athos, and a keen questioner of preachers, his faith was much more than nominal." Many religious leaders praised Prince Philip's commitment to Inter-Faith dialogue, perhaps inspired by his own cross-cultural experiences.



Prince Philip described himself as pragmatic, and his combination of thoughtfulness and morality with pragmatism marks his legacy: less publicised than "DoE" is "ARC" - The **Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)** a United Kingdom-based secular international organisation founded by Prince Philip in 1995. In 2007 ARC joined with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a significant and innovative programme to address issues of global warming and the natural

Minister	
Revd Roy Fowler	01279 814 809
Church Secretary	
Val Bowtle	01799 526 271
Vestry Phone & Church Contact	01799 528325

Elders	
John Ford	07969 850 109
Stephen Rapkin	07730 393 603
Karen Start	01799 522 096
Elfreda Tealby-Watson	01799 530 175
Margaret Howell & Meg Nettle	Non-serving Elders offered pastoral care



# Abbey Lane & Newport United Reformed Church incorporating Saffron Walden Methodist Church

Proclaiming the Gospel – Growing in Faith – Reaching out in Service

18 April

environment through the development of faith-based “Long Term Commitments for a Living Planet” - pledges of faith action on the environment aimed at achieving generational change.

The work His Royal Highness began remains as timely as ever. The pandemic has added new vigour to the debate about globalism; limits on travel coupled with expanding technology have shown new, eco-friendly options for living and working. Conversely a young generation blighted by this pandemic year will benefit from learning the values of self-reliance, belonging in community, and duty that he espoused so powerfully. We should be thankful for the life and work of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and continue to support his initiatives. (Elfreda Tealby-Watson)



## Psalm 107: 23-25, 29-30

Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the mighty waters;

they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea....he made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they had quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.

## Moving forwards

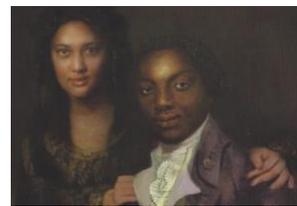
Some businesses have reopened – have you booked your haircut yet? For many of us we will be working under restrictions and experiencing changes – including at church - that will last a long time. But at Abbey Lane on Saturday we will open the church building for private prayer once again. Julian Nettle is also receiving enquiries for future use of our hall. We thank Karen Start for organising **private prayer, starting this Saturday 10-12 noon**, and everyone who is helping us make the first steps back to being able to use our buildings. This includes the good news that a new gas cooker has been fitted in the vestry kitchen thanks to some anonymous donors.



Photo by Karen Start.

## Not to be missed, says Stephen Rapkin! 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 6-7.30pm Equiano's Daughter: A Glimpse of Dissenting England by Professor Clyde Binfield OBE

The Historic Chapels Trust has been arranging a series of lectures – Chapel Talks. The one coming up on 23 April should not be missed. With significant local, indeed WEBS interest, and given by Clyde Binfield, a first rate speaker and Professor Emeritus in History at the University of Sheffield, I cannot recommend it too strongly.



Our WEBS Pastorate has an unusual link with the history of slavery. Henry Bromley, minister of Clavering in the 1820s – 40s married Joanna Vassa, the mixed-race

daughter of Olaudah Equiano. Equiano was a freed slave who came to England and wrote a compelling autobiography - born in Benin, enslaved in the New World, and celebrated- once free-in the England of Clarkson and Wilberforce.

Go to [www.hct.org.uk](http://www.hct.org.uk) to register for this free talk.

## Four Seasons This reflection by Alison Jiggins was inspired by one of her favourite Easter hymns “Now the green blade rises”.

Prior to Easter 2020 I used to attend the Easter Sunday dawn service at St Mary's, Saffron Walden. Having gone through Holy Week and in particular the events of Good Friday, there is something deeply spiritual about walking to church in the early hours of Easter Sunday and as the service progresses witnessing the grey light turn to brightness as the sun rises.



Last year, due to the pandemic, there was no church service. But that did not stop me from getting up and going for an early morning walk. As I walked, I listened to the URC Daily

Devotions Service. When it came to the hymn “Now the green blade rises” I found myself on a path walking beside fields full of new green wheat shoots.. What an appropriate place to sing this beautiful hymn and its wonderful refrain “Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.”



# Abbey Lane & Newport United Reformed Church incorporating Saffron Walden Methodist Church

Proclaiming the Gospel – Growing in Faith – Reaching out in Service

18 April

Since then, I have spent many an hour walking those same paths, watching as the wheat grew, ripened, was harvested and the ground prepared for the process to start all over again. I also found myself taking photos, chronicling the changing seasons, from Spring to Summer to Autumn and finally to Winter.

Which reminded me of a Donna Summer album I once owned called “Four Seasons of Love” and its four songs about the different stages of love. It starts with “Spring Affair” being hopeful at the start of a new relationship; “Summer Fever” seeing a deepening of that relationship; the ending of the relationship is heard in “Autumn Changes” and “Winter Melody” acknowledges pain and loss.



When talking about the seasons, they usually get listed in the order Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. By always ending with Winter, it's as if that's

it, once you get to Winter, it's all over, there is no more. A bit like Donna's “Winter Melody” and its bleak outlook on life. But what I love about this album, is that it does not end with “Winter Melody”. The final track is “Spring reprise”, which gives the listener a sense of hope for the future, as love is found again.



In dealing with the pandemic, we have all gone through or are still experiencing our own emotional “Winter Melody”, but there are signs of hope.

The lockdown is slowly, but surely being lifted and the vaccine appears to be working. And as I walk round the fields these past few weeks, I have seen many signs of Spring including the green wheat shoots that are already putting in an appearance.



Spring is like the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday; the last supper with Jesus' promise of the New Covenant is akin to Summer; things dramatically change for the worse with Jesus' arrest and trial, just as things change in Autumn.



Which leads to the cross and the death of Jesus, a time of desolation just like Winter.

But just as the seasons don't end with Winter, so our Christian experience does not end on Good Friday. For despite all our Good Friday fears and the pain of loss, on Easter Sunday, we can join countless others who through the centuries have celebrated God's sacrifice of love with the joyous cry of “Christ has risen, Hallelujah”.

## Church Family We have received this message

from Olive Newman: Please express my appreciation of the kind attention my 90th birthday on Good Friday elicited from Abbey Lane friends, not least for the basket of flowers from the membership. Since my enforced absence I have been kept ‘in the picture’ by various means, for which I am most grateful.

Looking back over 12 ministries and their accompanying interregna it is plain to me we have been helped along the way by Interim Moderators and flourished. In the coming days, blessed with ‘fresh faces’ and others stepping up to fill the vacant posts, I hope and pray the happy spirit of the church will prevail and take us forward.

## Attention please – help needed!

**CCLI licence reporting** Each week we must report the hymns we have used in our Sunday service, for purpose of performing rights & licences. We do this via the CCLI website. It's a straightforward task for anyone comfortable with accessing websites. Could this be you? If you'd be willing to help, please contact Stephen Rapkin.

**Regular giving – envelope scheme and standing orders** As we enter a new tax year Karen Start will be organising the weekly envelopes scheme for those who wish to give in this way. You can also give on a regular basis with a bank standing order. If you would like to join the envelope scheme or need help setting up a standing order please contact Karen by email or phone her mobile 07785753237.



and from  
**WhatsApp....**

Val's flowers open in the sun

Gill marks second vaccinations



## PASTORAL LETTER for Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021



Dear friends,

Come with me to the Wimpole Hall estate, but not to the house, or to the wonderful gardens, but up into the woods that skirt the park. There you will find a fairly insignificant little stream fed by a spring. It is the water that feeds Capability Brown's lake down below. How many of us have paused on the bridge that crosses the lake on our way up to the folly and admired the wild life on and around the water? When I lived in Solihull, there was another spring on Mosely Bog near my church in Hall Green. I was part of a tour around the Bog once, and shown a spring that oozed into a narrow channel that cut across a footpath and was no more than six inches wide. Within a relatively short distance, that small stream of water fed a mill pond that in turn enabled water to rush through the mill race and turn the water wheel.

It is very easy for us to get spiritually depleted. The demands of the last year have left many of us, including me, feeling drained. Some of us long to be gushing with spiritual energy again. I take hope from considering the small springs of water that eventually become lakes and ponds, or even wide rivers discharging into the sea.

Now of course, you may say that our spiritual energy comes from a great overflowing source of life that is God. The flow of life that we believe comes to us in Christ. In the encounter of Jesus with the woman at the well in Samaria, recorded in John Ch4, the gospel writer has Jesus speaking of this overflowing life like this: 'The water that I give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' (v14) A great renewal of spiritual life is what we celebrate with alleluias at Easter. It is the promise that spurs us on and renews us spiritually. After death comes life. Yet, if someone is de-hydrated, they need to be re-hydrated slowly. Sometimes, we need to let ourselves be spiritually refreshed by God one drop at a time, letting the spiritual water flow gently into us and revive us. 'He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.' (Psalm 23 vv 2 and 3) There is always the temptation to seek herculean sources of spiritual renewal. Sometimes, it is best to let God gently revive us.

Whatever the cause of our spiritual tiredness – bereavement, stress, too many responsibilities – I hope and pray for you, and for me, that God will gently restore us.

My one real connection with Prince Philip was through attending a clergy in-service course at St George's House, Windsor. St George's House was set up as a place where people from many different walks of life could meet safely and confidentially to openly share and was a suggestion to the Dean of Windsor made by the Prince. We give thanks to God for the Duke of Edinburgh's life of service and pray for the Queen and her family in their loss.

God bless you all,

Handwritten signature of the author.