



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

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

2 May

## Welcome to our weekly newsletter

### Sunday Service – 2<sup>nd</sup> May

Worship Online at 10:30 a.m.

Led by Roy Fowler

Reflection by Rev. Stuart Veitch

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

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.

Photo of Rev. Lythan Nevard, courtesy of Eastern Synod website



### New Synod Moderator Nominated

At our recent Church Meeting our Secretary Val Bowtle confirmed that a new moderator for Eastern Synod has been nominated and named her as Rev. Lythan Nevard. The following biography has been posted on the Eastern Synod website: “Rev. Lythan Nevard, a United Reformed Church minister (URC) currently serving at the Cornerstone ecumenical project in Cranbrook, Exeter, and previously a minister in Hartlepool, Romford, Brixham and Babbacombe, has been nominated to be the next Moderator of Eastern Synod.

Lythan Nevard was a member of the URC’s Ginger Group in the 1980s, a group of young people that visited churches around the country, leading a variety of church related projects, based at Yardley Hastings. She grew up in the United Reformed Church – her father is the Revd Ivor Rees, a URC minister who served at Clapham, Ewell, Swansea and Bamford.

Her husband, the Revd Phil Nevard, is a URC Minister currently serving Kingsteignton and the South Western Synod who has accepted a call to serve three churches in the Eastern Synod - Castle Camps, Whittlesford and Sawston. Lythan and Phil met while serving together on the URC’s Ginger Group.

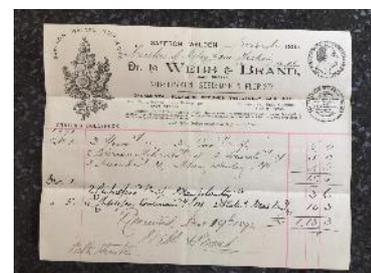
Lythan said: ‘The Holy Spirit has led me on many adventures, and I am both delighted and awed that the next one is as Moderator of Eastern Synod. I’m really looking forward to working with the churches and Ministers of the Synod and finding out how we can grow in discipleship and serve God’s kingdom together.’

Eastern Synod Clerk, Keir Hounsome, said: ‘Lythan impressed us all on the interview panel with her spirituality, integrity, vision and leadership qualities and we are looking forward with excitement to her joining us.’” We also welcome Rev. Nevard as she comes to serve with us in Eastern Synod

### Psalm 100: 2

“Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.”

Photo from Stephen Rapkin from ancient church accounts!



**Remembering** those grieving, including the Royal Family as they complete their official mourning, but particularly holding in our hearts the situation in India with the rapid spread of Covid-19 here is a passage Caroline Vodden shared earlier this year:

### Always Reason to Hope – Henri Nouwen

I am increasingly impressed by the Christian possibility of celebrating not only moments of joy but also moments of pain, thus affirming God’s real presence in the thick of our lives. A true Christian always affirms life because God is the God of life, a life stronger than death and destruction. In him we find no reason to

Ministers	
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



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despair. There is always reason to hope, even when our eyes are filled with tears.

## Scouts succeed in challenge



Over 250 young people and leaders helped complete the 23,337.03km virtual hike from Cape Town to Magadan (Russia) by end of

March. Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Leaders from the 5<sup>th</sup> Saffron Walden (Free Church) made a great contribution to the total km. Special mention goes to Leo (Beavers) and Rory (Scouts) who both came 2<sup>nd</sup> in their respective sections and helped the Beavers reach 717km and the Scouts 1,201. Alison managed a respectable 307km.

Having got into practice by doing the WILD Walkabout, Alison has signed up for the Christian Aid 300,000 steps challenge, which she has to complete during May. If you would like to sponsor her, please go to <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ajiggins-christianaid2021>



## Dates for your Diary

**1<sup>st</sup> May** - Private prayer 10am – noon at Abbey Lane

**6<sup>th</sup> May** - Local government elections for Essex County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Essex

**9<sup>th</sup> May** at 6.30pm: Service to mark 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Christian Aid, co-hosted by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and Christian Aid. Register at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/join/75-anniversary-service-sign>

**10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> May** – Christian Aid Week (information as per last week; contact Elfreda on 528325)

**15<sup>th</sup> May** - Private prayer 10am - noon at Abbey Lane

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May** - Service for Pentecost at Abbey Lane, streamed via Zoom and YouTube. Booking to attend on site will be via Eventbrite. More details soon.

**25<sup>th</sup> May** - Recorded service to mark the anniversary of the death of George Floyd to be broadcast at 7pm via YouTube and on BBC Radio 4 at 8.10am on 30<sup>th</sup> May for its Sunday Worship programme.

**For Pentecost** we would like to have the Church grounds looking spick and span. If you are able to help with some gardening that would be great. We plan to meet on **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May** between 11.00 and 1.00pm. A number of us can work safely at the same time as there will be nothing else going on in the hall or church. Please bring your own bags and tools. We particularly need to clear weeds, and daffodils require dead-heading in the following areas:

- Borders along wall and behind Vestry
- Round gravestones
- Front of church
- Paths up to the Hall and Salvation Army
- Gravel areas

It would be helpful to know who will be coming so please let Val know (01799 526271 or 07747857460). If you cannot manage those suggested dates, just turn up when you like.

## Then Sings My Soul – or ‘why music matters’ (Elfreda Tealby-Watson)

Over the last year I have counted myself lucky that I live in a house with singers. I love live music and I love to sing, and it has been a real comfort that as a family we have been kept making music. When John Luke first suggested the idea of a virtual choir last year it seemed a bit ambitious to be honest, and it took several weeks before I agreed to add my voice to my three much better trained family members. As we approach the return to worship on church premises there is still a lot to work out about singing – we know that congregational singing is not likely to return initially – and as I reflect on that and the thanks we have regularly received for the WEBS virtual choir, I have been prompted to ask why does this matter so much to so many of us? I suspect people have enjoyed the choir



because we sound like a reasonably well tuned small congregation, and that gives folk at home the confidence to sing along, where they might not do so if we had used professional ‘performance’ tracks or just an instrumental track. But why is music in church such a ‘hot topic’ to some of us?

*Photo of Abbey Lane by Mary Duxbury*

This week I was looking for some background watching while I did a dull clerical job and came across a documentary called “Then Sings My Soul”. It is available on BBC iPlayer, was made several years ago by BBC



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Northern Ireland and is in three parts each 30 minutes long. I recommend it heartily. The presenter starts with the history of the earliest Biblical inspired singing – the Psalms – through to plainsong chant. Then the programme moves to the congregational hymns of Watts and Wesley, and onto the evangelical meetings of Moody and Sankey – (as in the Abbey Lane “Sankey Service”). The final programme looked at contemporary worship music, from Christian performers such as Keith and Krystin Getty (who work with Stuart Townend) and ‘celebration’ bands like Rend Collective to gospel choirs and worship revival projects including that led by Rev. John Bell at the Iona Community.

But did the programme answer whether music matters in worship? In the concluding section a Theology Professor remarks simply that the music has “got to be beneficial to the worshippers”. I hear that as a challenge: perhaps we should be braver with each other sharing different sorts of worship music? However, the final comments from the Rev. Dr. Ian Bradley were truly thought-provoking: he suggested that if scientists propose that matter originated in vibration and sound is vibration then in a sense music brought forth creation. “If sound and vibrating matter are at the heart of our existence, then perhaps music is at the heart of God.” That really is encouragement to sing out our souls. *If you don't have time for the whole series, then try the following pieces:*

- Cistercian monks singing plainsong psalms at <https://youtu.be/ZZmmEfxUuaM>
- Katharine Jenkins leading Songs of Praise in How Great Thou Art at <https://youtu.be/PLJs1zni6UY>
- The official Keith Getty music video for In Christ Alone at <https://youtu.be/16KYvflc2bE>
- John Bell teaching South American and African songs at <https://youtu.be/d8W5lzB5VG8>
- Rend Collective <https://youtu.be/EF84v-oOhp0>
- Marie Louise Muir presents the series at [BBC iPlayer - Then Sings My Soul](https://www.bbc.com/iplayer/series/1/then-sings-my-soul)

Army, ensuring maximum profitability from sales of donated items whilst taking into account the need to support the community & the Salvation Army's wider mission. You will also be responsible for developing vision, and for recruiting & managing a team of volunteers.” The post pays £10.18 per hour for 24 hours per week (Monday to Saturday, working pattern to be agreed) on a permanent contract. The advert is pictured – if you would like a copy, please call Elfreda on 01799 528325. CLOSING DATE: Sunday 9th May 2021. For further details and to apply please go to: <http://www.salvationarmyorg.uk/jobs>

## On the Dawn Chorus

Linking several items this week the following comes from Michael Ford; he is a specialist in the works of Henri Nouwen (see above), but writing here about the divine music of the dawn chorus. His words seem to match well the lovely spring scenes appearing in photographs. From ‘Prayers to See You Through Each Day’ (editor Sister Catherine Wybourne with BBC Radio 4) he writes: “There’s nothing more spiritually uplifting at this time of year than the sound of the dawn chorus, a mystery of creation that begins in March and reaches a peak in May. Blackbirds, robins, wrens, warblers, thrushes and finches – all take part in an earthly ritual received as heavenly melody... for me, lying in bed and praying with the chorus involves me in a holy communion with creation ... that has the power to heal and transform.”

## and from WhatsApp...



Pictures of spring:  
clockwise from Ruth Fotherfill, Meg Nettle, Yin Rapkin, Elfreda TW, and Lucinda Bell.



## The Salvation Army have sent us this Job Advert – please share!

“We are seeking a dynamic and innovative person to manage our Charity Shop. Previous retail experience in management/supervisory capacity is essential, as is the ability to work well with volunteers, and deal with cash management and financial records.

The key responsibility is to manage the Charity Shop safely and to promote the mission of the Salvation



## Roy's Letter, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021



### Dear Friends

When I join some of my Church of England colleagues in morning prayer, when we use their liturgy, there is a prayer that includes the phrase 'set our hearts on fire with love for you'. I always add in my head 'for all people and for all creation'. For I believe that our prayer is centred upon God, but embraces our living with each other. This to me is the essence of Christian living that our love for God and for each other are wound in together. Most of you will have heard me say in sermons that we love God in our neighbour and we love our neighbour in God. And we have, of course, grown increasingly aware that we also have to include our love for the whole created order within our love of God.

One of the ways that we express our concern for neighbour is through Christian Aid, and Christian Aid Week commences on the 10th May this year. It is still difficult to do the things we often do in Christian Aid Week, but I do hope that you will find some way to remember their work this year again. Christian Aid, throughout the pandemic, has been seeking to support people in poorer countries in their response to the Covid virus. Often this has been through offering training in hygiene measures to help combat the disease.

None of us can remain unmoved by the plight of people where the pandemic is still spreading fast. The pictures from India at present are heart breaking. It is good to see that the international community is beginning to respond to provide the additional oxygen producing machines and ventilators they desperately need as well as trying to free up the production and sharing of vaccines. Australia is sending vaccines to their near neighbour Papua New Guinea, where the virus is very active.

Every life that has been lost during the pandemic has been tragic. Every life that has been restricted in some way because of the virus is deeply to be regretted. In our own country, we are very hopeful that we are moving to a situation where the virus is coming under control and will remain so. How grateful we are to all who have helped to bring this about. It surely is an act of Christian love to desire this same hope to spread around the whole world both for the future well-being of others and for our own well-being too.

Let us pray 'Set our hearts on fire with love for you, for all people, and for all creation.' And may our prayer inspire and renew us to be people of love – alive to God and to the needs of everyone and the whole world.

In hope and love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Roy', written over a horizontal line.