

THE REVIEW

AUGUST 2023



East Gill Force waterfall, near the village of Keld, Swaledale. (Photo by Ray Anglesea)

**WADDINGTON STREET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,
DURHAM CITY DH1 4BG**

Church Website: www.durhamurc.org.uk



Dear Friends,

For a change, I've been reading some classic science fiction recently. What is apparent is that the likes of HG Wells, Arthur C. Clark and, the author I read, Ursula Le Guin didn't do a good job of predicting the future with any accuracy. Of course, it is said that prediction is not the point of science fiction—these stories address issues current to the time they are written, using futuristic settings to explore timeless themes.

The same could be said of Biblical prophecy. In common understanding, prophets predict the future. However, in reality, prophets are those who explore timeless themes and, in doing so, communicate to us the nature of God for today. They are messengers rooted in wisdom, not fortune-tellers staring into a crystal ball.

The ability to discern what the Spirit of God is saying to the spirit of this age is the essence of prophecy. I have a problem with the moral relativism that says all views and beliefs are valid and should not be challenged; and I suspect that this post-modernism is on its way out anyway, as people get wise to the limitations and contradictions of this view. I also have a problem with the rush to judgement that claims that 'we' are right, whoever 'we' are and that 'others' are not just wrong but are dangerous. The spirit of this age is both rudderless, with no strong moral compass, and also judgemental—with everyone asserting and defending their views, usually on social media where reason takes second place to insults. Words have been devalued.

Into this world steps the prophet whose message matters just as much as it always has—only, maybe, at this time what matters is how we live rather than what we say.

But this has always been the case. James writes, "What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?" (James 2: 14) It's just that now—more than ever, where words (including these) pepper the internet—character counts and our words have to be backed up by action if they are to be at all credible.

Prophets also tell a good story. Just as Jesus spoke in parables, so too today's prophets don't just tell it like it is, but set out a compelling story of how things could be—not to predict that future but to show how today can make tomorrow.

Another feature of life today, more so than life yesteryear, is the power of imagery. Words are all over cyberspace; images are even more so. No credible website is without pictures. Moving imagery is the currency of communication today and this challenges our book-based expressions of faith—readings, sermons, hymns. I am keen to address this, without getting rid of words entirely. Everything has a place in communicating God in this and every age.

The starting point to understanding what God is saying to us is always prayer—not just wordy monologues but stillness into which the Spirit of God can get a word in edgewise. We may not have the luxury of time or ideal circumstances, but stillness is a frame of mind. We can be still and know God even in the midst of a cacophony of chaos if we are well practiced. I've tried this in the very loud environments of childrens' birthday parties in indoor playgrounds. Silence has eluded me, but peace has prevailed.

Anyone can therefore be a prophet because everyone can (and should) pray. We might not all write science fiction, but we all can tell a compelling story that communicates God for today and tomorrow.

Regards,

Marcus

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY AND CHURCH NEWS

Ministerial Services – Revd. Marcus Hargis is contactable in the following ways:-

Phone: 0776 949 2629 and 0191 366 4930 (messages can be left on either).

Email: marcushargis@outlook.com For routine pastoral matters, please first approach your Elder.

Time of Sunday Services – 10.45 a.m. To Zoom into the service remotely please use

Meeting ID: 766 703 2324. Password: DurhamURC.

COPY DATE FOR THE SEPTEMBER REVIEW IS SUNDAY 27TH AUGUST 2023.

Please be aware when submitting articles that our Church Magazine goes on the website and is available for anyone anywhere in the world to read.



Bedding –

sheets, pillow cases and bedspreads are required to help Ukrainian Refugees. We responded well to the request for new pants for the Ukrainian Refugees and it would be good if we could now respond to this latest request. Any donations can be brought to Church and will be passed on to the group co-ordinating this collection.

Janet Sarsfield

Coffee & Conversation

An opportunity to get to know each other better. Charles and Alison Jolly invite you and friends to drop in at Brillig, 11 Bell Avenue, Bowburn DH6 5PE between 10.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. on **MONDAY 14th AUGUST.**



Church Thursdays – Meeting up with Jesus

Our Bible study sessions continue this month looking at characters we meet in John's Gospel: on the 3rd Nicodemus, and on the 17th the woman at the well.

On the 10th it is Fellowship time from 1.30 onwards.

There's time for tea and conversation every week, and for Scrabble on the 24th. And on the 31st we're asked to think about our leisure time reading: see Yvonne Melville's three questions below.

We meet every Thursday afternoon from 1.30.



‘Time to chat’ - Thursday 31st August 1.30-2.30.

Join me, Yvonne Melville, to chat about Books - do you read? Why do you read?

What do you read? Chat along with a cuppa - see you there.

Yvonne

SCAFFOLDING: the repairs to the exterior stone work of the church and steeple are scheduled to begin w/c 21st August, with the scaffolding being erected the previous week. Access to all points of the premises will be unaffected and the work will take between 4 and 6 weeks. **Sandy Ogilvie**



Don't forget that for just a 50p donation, which goes to Church funds, you can select a book from the bookcase at the foot of the stairs as you go through to the Church Hall. If you are donating a book, paper backs are preferred.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY AND CHURCH NEWS



Some news regarding the Writer in Residence at Josephine Butler College, Dr. Louise Powell (featured in the July Review). We have heard that Louise has won the prestigious Sid Chaplin Award at the Northern Writers Awards and in addition has a play due to premiere in the Customs House South Shields in September 2023.

Ray Anglesea.



Zachary Edward Anglesea, son of Jamie and Gemma Anglesea, grandson of Ray and Ki Anglesea was baptised on Sunday 25th June at St. Mark's Church, Battersea, London by the Revd. Martyn Layzell.

A reception was later held at Beatrix Potter Community Primary School, Earlsfield, London.

Picture shows Zach with his parents and grandparents together with his sisters Gracie and Imogen.

Ray Anglesea



Pun intended! "No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery".

"I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness".

"I saw an ad for burial plots, but that's the last thing I need".

"Police were summoned to a day-care centre where a three-year old was resisting a rest".

"A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail".

"England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool".

"French pancakes give me the crepes".

"Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who could not control her pupils?"

"I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me".

"I was wondering why that frisbee was getting bigger. Then it hit me."



A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend.

The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him.

Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

"Reverend," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business."

EDITOR'S LETTER

DEAR READERS,



I bought one of the Olive wood carvings mentioned in Alison's Commitment for Life article on page 16. The carving is small and intended to hang on a Christmas tree. It depicts the Wise Men bringing gifts to baby Jesus, with the star shining above. It would make a nice stocking filler later in the year and I am very pleased with it.

When I was in my younger days,
I weighed a few pounds less,
I needn't hold my tummy in
to wear a belted dress.
But now that I am older,
I've set my body free:
There's the comfort of elastic
where once my waist would be.
Inventor of those high-heeled shoes
my feet have not forgiven:
I have to wear a nine now,
but used to wear a seven.
And how about those pantyhose -
They're sized by weight, you see,
so how come when I put them on
the crotch is at my knee?
I need to wear these glasses
as the print's been getting smaller:
And it wasn't very long ago
I know that I was taller.
Though my hair has turned to gray
And my skin no longer fits;
On the inside, I'm the same old me,
It's the outside's changed a bit.

The observations on the left made me laugh out loud until I realised just how many of the points could refer to me! Be honest now, how many would you rack up?

What a pity that, once again, our summer started too early and just as we were getting used to it, even looking out the seat pads for the garden chairs, it has now deteriorated weather-wise. Why are we always surprised when this happens?

Our great-grandson, Vinnie, is obviously destined to be a leader of men as he has already mastered the art of delegation. He is not yet 3 years old but when his Dad was helping him to bake chocolate cookies, Vinnie decided it was taking too long and he would rather watch some cartoons. He marched off and called over his shoulder, "Daddy make!" The story made us laugh so I am sharing it with you now.

It was nice to have our Minister, Marcus, taking the service on 30th July. It was great to see him looking so well and in good spirits. As always there was a very clear message and excellent hymns, although a different tune played for one of them took me by surprise! We are so lucky to have such an accomplished Organist in Peter. Also, what a delight it is to have flowers in Church every Sunday. It is such a colourful reminder of God's amazing world.

After all the rainfall and intermittent sunshine, our rear garden in particular has become rather jungle-like with Japanese Anemones encroaching on the rose bushes which have literally about 100 tiny buds on each of the two bushes. Sadly, the rain has rotted some of them before they even opened.

I am very grateful to everyone who has contributed to this issue of The Review and I hope you will enjoy reading it. I would just ask that, if you can, you send items in as early as possible as that makes my job a lot easier and I don't have to disappoint anyone by saying there is no room left for their article. I would also appreciate any really good, clear photographs you have of scenery that might be suitable for the front page of The Review. There is a lot of material on the Internet but much of it is copyright and so can not be used without permission.

Lucille Thomson

The next issue of The Review will be published on
Sunday 3rd September 2023.

Contributions please to Lucille Thomson at church
or BY POST or **Tel. 0191-3861052**

or e-mail lesthomson@talktalk.net no later than noon on Sunday 27th AUGUST 2023.



4 College Lane

Newcastle upon Tyne

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6 July 2023

To Church Secretaries

Dear Church Secretary

The United Reformed Church warmly invites you to the induction service of the Revd Kim Plumptre as Synod Moderator for Northern Synod. Partners are also welcome to attend this happy occasion which marks a step forward in the life of our Synod family, as we look forward to Kim's ministry in our churches and synod.

The service will take place at 3.00 pm on Saturday, 23 September 2023 at St Columba's United Reformed Church, Northumberland Square, North Shields NE30 1PW. The church is an accessible building and we would appreciate it if you could contact us by Friday, 8 September if you have any special requirements.

Ecumenical guests and leaders from other world Faiths and Traditions will be met by our Ecumenical and Inter-faith Officer, Mr Andy Lie, and I will be greeting civic guests.

The service will be followed by a buffet reception in the church hall afterwards; to assist in catering, can you please let Synod Office (wendy.watson@urc-northernsynod.org) know by Friday, 1 September whether you will be able to attend and also if you have any special dietary requirements.

Yours sincerely

Revd Dr Trevor Jamison Synod Clerk trevor.jamison@urc-northernsynod.org

+++++

Being Scottish

**I mind when it wis like this
aw summer in Scotland**

(Reminiscing about a time that didn't exist)

**Get yer flip-flops
oan hen, it's roastin**

(You will need flip-flops on lady,
as it is very hot)



**If it wis always this hot,
ye'd never go oan yer holidays**

(You'd never leave Scotland in the summer
if it was sunny more often)



Notes from Elders' Meeting on Thursday 6th July 2023

The meeting opened with a reading from Psalm 92, verses 1-8, followed by prayer.

1. The meeting received apologies from Janet Thornborrow.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and filed.
3. Matters Arising:
 - a) New AV System - Janet Sarsfield has visited various churches in our local area to look at their AV systems and the associated costs. Some had quite sophisticated set-ups, whilst others were simpler and easier to operate. Janet is currently in the process of organising three quotes for us to consider at our next Church Meeting.
 - b) Green Journey Audit Report - Charles Jolly has been diligently organising quotes for the installation of solar panels on the roof of the church hall.
 - c) Defibrillator – It was confirmed that the Waddington Street Centre are responsible for all administration associated with the defibrillator, including registering it on 'The Circuit'.
4. District Reports were received, and prayers offered.
5. For some time, the Elders have been discussing the possibility of setting up a Pastoral Care Group. To help facilitate this, Marcus is going to arrange an event in the Autumn, for those who might be interested in helping the church in this way.
6. A question about the logistics of Thursday Fellowship was discussed.
7. It was agreed that our church would contribute £100 towards the Moderator, Dave Herbert's retirement gift and Yvonne will organise a card.
8. We have received an invitation to the Ordination and Induction of our new Moderator, Louise Sanders, which will take place at St. Andrews URC in Monkseaton on Saturday 29th July at 2 p.m.
9. The concert we held last Christmas which involved the various groups who use our church premises proved so successful that we would like to repeat it again this year. Friday 8th December was suggested as a suitable date. Marcus will put together a letter of invitation.
10. EcoChurch - As mentioned earlier, Charles Jolly is busy sorting out quotes for solar panels.
11. There were no safeguarding issues to report.
12. There were no changes to the website required.
13. AOB
 - a) Marcus has received a request for a private, adult baptism, which the Elders have supported.
 - b) Work on the church tower will begin week commencing 21st August with the scaffolding being erected beforehand.
 - c) Janet Sarsfield has prepared the half yearly return for the Synod Office which documents the usage of our buildings.
14. Arrangements for the next Elders' Meeting were made. As usual there will be no Elders' meeting in August. The next meeting will be on Thursday 7th September at 7 p.m.

The meeting closed with the saying of the Grace.

Helen Cockburn



Revd. Fiona Bennett, URC General Assembly Moderator 2022/23.

Readers of the church magazine may recall Fiona's visit in June of last year to the church and Waddington Street Centre to kick off the church's 150th anniversary celebrations. Church members and friends may be interested to read Fiona's closing reflection at the end of her term of office given to the URC General Assembly held at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, 30 June to 3 July 2023. Fiona's reflection has been edited by the URC communications team.

Moderator's reflection

"As she prepared to hand over to her successor, the Revd. Dr. Tessa Henry-Robinson, the outgoing Moderator of the General Assembly the Revd. Fiona Bennett shared some reflections on her year in the role. Ms. Bennett said she had discovered in a new way a great community of disciples. She had also encountered a wide range of mixed feelings, from acceptance and belonging within the URC to tiredness and a sense of deflation; compounded by the uncertainty facing our planet and institutions. But she felt that she could trust the people she met right across the denomination – not because they were perfect "but because we are whole".

Ms Bennett had met a community of disciples who, though diverse and eclectic, she perceived as kin. She spoke about three discernible "family features" – which arise out of mission, shared leadership ("we're a mucking in Church"), and connection.

She said that a call to mission locally and globally is a strong feature of URC kinship. However, though we can articulate why we do mission together, she didn't think we're very good at articulating why we worship together, and we need to learn how to do this better. How do we find the words to share our faith story that honestly share our experiences of living as disciples?

Speaking of "shared leadership", Ms. Bennett had developed a strong sense that local churches and individual post holders often believe themselves to be powerless. She said we need to make systems in just and healthy ways work for us to enable flourishing, and not simply feel suffocated by them. "I want to say to every local URC, we have the resources, we have the ability, we have the opportunity and we really and truly do have the permission and the power."

There is "uncovered treasure" within the URC, she said, which she'd not previously appreciated: creativity, wisdom, compassion, skill, profound insight, a thirst for justice, astounding generosity, and a deep faith in the God we know in Jesus.

But for a "mucking-in Church", she said, as much as we are conciliar, we are not often very connected. We need to be attentive to each other, but it takes effort to do that. In local churches, and within our wider ecumenical relationships, Ms. Bennett said we need to get to know each other much better and get to know what resources and opportunities exist throughout the Church, "so that in humility and grace and joy, we can trust and depend on each other to be the interdependent body of Christ, growing and reaching out in the world".

In closing, Ms. Bennett offered thanks to many individuals who have supported her during the year.

Her newly appointed successor is the Revd. Dr. Tessa Henry-Robinson, (Minister of Wanstead URC, Trinity Walthamstow URC, Grange Park URC, and Gants Hill URC in the Thames North Synod) a practical theologian and published author.

Submitted by Revd. Ray Anglesea



History was made at the 2023 United Reformed Church (URC) General Assembly when its first black and ethnically-minoritised Moderator was inducted today 4th July 2023.

Ordained in 2018, the Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson was inducted into the role of Moderator at the annual meeting held from 30 June to July 3 at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire. Dr Henry-Robinson has responsibility for four congregations in the East London Group, a multi-culturally diverse constituency.

Tessa's induction, as the first Black/ethnically-minoritised

woman in the role, is a proud moment in the life of the denomination. "This is a huge step for the URC," Tessa said: "I will take the opportunity to assist the leadership and the membership to bring the denomination into its true identity – one that is constantly seeking justice, that regards God's Word in the Bible as the highest authority, and as a place where all God's people are one. I will do my very best to serve God in this role and listen to what the denomination is saying and transfer that listening into action and progress."

Dr Henry-Robinson's career spans over 30 years engaging diverse groups through teaching, mentoring, and ministering. She started teaching in the 1990s in Trinidad and Tobago and continued in Brazil and the UK working with students in primary, secondary and further education, before being ordained.

Tessa is a womanist practical theologian with a deep interest in the empowerment of women with particular focus on uplifting ethnically-minoritised women and communities.

She became a member of the URC in 2001 and serves on groups such as the Church Life Review and the Faith and Order Committee. In 2011, Tessa became a founding member of Cascades of Grace, a group set up through the URC's Global and Intercultural Ministries, to network and empower Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women in the churches.

Tessa stands for empowering such women to be present and audible in the Church and is not afraid to be a voice crying out for justice and dignity for all excluded and marginalised communities. In this regard, Dr Henry-Robinson has presented and published numerous papers, opinions, and features that highlight her academic interests in womanist practical theology, her passion for racial and gender justice, and the inclusion of diverse voices and ideas within the Church.

Tessa sits on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Practical Theology* and the *International Journal of Black Theology* and has served on the Council for World Mission think tank for its formation of legacies of slavery work. She is also a published author.

Of Tessa's appointment, the Revd Dr John Bradbury, URC General Secretary, said: "I'm delighted that we will benefit from the gifts and graces Tessa brings to the role of Moderator of the General Assembly. An astute theologian, a passionate advocate for justice, and a wise pastor, Tessa will challenge, upbuild and inspire during her term of office." (From URC NEWS UPDATE)

Exploring From Gunnerside in Swaledale.

Following the “main” road past colourful gardens, down the valley for a short distance, we turned up a side road, then up a gravel and stone track, lined with stone walls and Hawthorn trees in full bloom.



The track gradually climbed up the hillside, narrowing to a tight lane in places. On a stone wall by a gate, someone had left a tiny ceramic, comical sheep ornament.



As we neared the moor, we could hear the haunting call of a Curlew and watched the amazing aerobatics of Lapwings. Far away, there was a small tarn with Black Headed Gulls circling overhead. There were patches of Cotton Grass and a very strange scarecrow, with torn clothing flapping in the wind.



There were calls from Oystercatchers and a few Skylarks rose gradually into the air, singing as they flew, but no sight or sound of grouse.

We followed the gravel road over the moors, past old lead mining waste heaps and into the top of the next valley. From there we could see signs of further mining, with huge deep scars dug into the valley side opposite. The moors are covered in areas of past moor-burn and more recent mowing gave a patchwork effect.



Looking for a path (marked on the map) to lead us into the valley, we ended up trying a too-steep gravelly path where we retreated, before stopping at a remote estate hut where we turned back. When we paused for a drink, we heard a rustling sound and turned just in time to see a “dust devil” crossing the track. (A Dust Devil is a mini tornado or whirlwind. It forms depending on conditions and, in our case, on the moor, and moves erratically across the ground spinning and picking up dust and grass. Ours was probably no more than 20ft across. They fade away just as quickly as they appear.)



After retreating from various uncomfortable situations, we were forced to retreat the way we had come. Along the way, we saw a Golden Plover on the wall of a derelict building. Eventually we reached the valley and took a shortcut down a very steep and bendy road, back to the car park in Gunnerside.



Our planned 8-mile walk had increased to 11 miles and the tearooms in Gunnerside we had hoped to try were long since closed for the day.

Angus and Jan Robson.

Keld Resource Centre



Representatives from Church attended Keld URC Church and Manse (Grade II listed) on Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th July. The buildings are located in upper Swaledale, set in the very beautiful and stunning Yorkshire Dales National Park. The days were hosted by the week's minister-in-residence Fliss Barker (CRCW, Wooler URC Northumberland) together with her husband Carl.

Wednesday afternoon took the form of a drop in for friends to come together to catch up with church and family news and reminisce about former youth weekends spent in the manse, church and institute. On Thursday a Study Day was planned entitled 'Finding God in Pilgrimage,' with particular references to the current tensions between Israeli Palestinians and Jews.



The Manse, the former Minister's house, adjoining Keld URC church was refurbished in 2009. It is now available to let as a holiday cottage. Around the church is a well being, quiet garden and community orchard. Over recent years the Keld Resource Centre, a community based charitable organisation has restored not only the Listed Grade II manse and provided a quiet garden and orchard but restored other listed buildings in the vicinity too. These include the Literary Institute and stables (1861). The building has been converted to a small visitor and interpretation centre. It was opened in May 2011. (Below left – Keld Institute)



The former school, (above right) now called 'The Old School Living Heritage Centre' opened in May last year.

13.

The manse and chapel are located adjacent to the Pennine Way. The small Keld hamlet daily attracts walkers and tourists to its many beauty spots.



(Above right - Wednesday Pop in Group)

A very big thank you to Fliss for arranging these two days and for Fliss and Carl's kindness and hospitality. A great team!

Ray Anglesea 7th July 2023.

(Below - Thursday Study Day Group)



THE OUTER HEBRIDES – LEWIS TO BARRA



This was a holiday we'd had to wait for. Back in the first weeks of 2020 we'd planned our own itinerary – but then other things happened, and like all decent people we had to cope with lockdown instead. When we finally felt ready to try again, we found everything booked up: clearly we weren't the only ones hoping for a re-run. But in our searching we found a firm that was ready to do the heavy lifting for us, and relying on them to book ferries and accommodation, we made the Outer Hebrides our holiday destination for 2023.

CalMac took us from Ullapool to Stornoway – welcoming us on board first of all in Gaelic. First port of call after landing was the Castle and Museum on the edge of town, exhibiting just half a dozen of the Lewis chessmen that the English authorities had generously lent back. And also giving plenty of lively information about the islanders and their way of life. The voice of the continental lass who'd married in was heart-rending: Don't ever be seen hanging out washing on the Sabbath.

Our first weekend we spent near the Butt of Lewis, the most north-westerly point of the island, and indeed of the country. We worshipped with the Wee Frees (Free Church of Scotland) and were bowled over by the one Gaelic Psalm in the service. Would that there had been more! And thankfully our B&B hosts provided us that night with an excellent evening meal: there would be as little hope of eating out, as finding petrol should you have neglected to fill up before the Sabbath.

The Long Island, as it is termed, consists of Lewis and Harris, which are divided by the mountain range which was part of the imposing view to the south on each of our trips out of Stornoway. One afternoon we marvelled at the dazzling Sands of Uig as we sat quietly in the sunshine for a couple of hours, secretly resentful when another human being or even a dog presumed to enter our field of view. The next day we worked our way up the west coast, starting at Calanais, where the standing stones are reckoned to pre-date Stonehenge and the Pyramids of Giza. We ended up that afternoon at Arnol, where Historic Scotland helped us appreciate what black houses were really like: not rural slums as some detractors claimed, but a sensible way of living in a place and time of scarce resources. Better to have your animals under the same roof, helping you keep warm, than build a separate barn. And we overheard an interesting conversation at the desk with a tourist from deepest Surrey who was hoping to purchase peat for his log burner back home. No way: only crofters are allowed to cut peat, and strictly for their own use.

Travelling south we took the road through the mountains, and explored Harris from our base on the island of Scalpay – now connected to the main island by a modern bridge. The sign at the end of the bridge warned of otters crossing, but sadly none to be seen as we passed. The island boasts a bistro that ticks all the online boxes. Frankly we were amazed to be able to book a table and be allowed into the place: let's say it was an experience, and recall that we enjoyed the chowder starter rather more than the main course with various blobs and juses. But here and everywhere we ate, the fish was great!

South Harris boasts some of the finest beaches in the Islands, all bright and dazzling on the west coast where the machair is fertile and green. But early in the 19th century clearances most of the crofters were forcibly evicted and told to make a home for themselves on the rocky east coast. We spent a whole morning following the single track road that threads through the most delightful scenery – but not a place to try and live off the land. Some families learned to make a living from the sea, but more took the offer of a new life in Canada.

The ferry journey across the Sound of Harris is reckoned to be one of the best in the country. The ship zigzags its way between hidden reefs, giving ever changing views of the mountains and islands. Nearly everyone is headed for North Uist and beyond, but we land on the island of Berneray, which is linked to the Uists by a causeway. And which, needless to say, has one of the best beaches in the Islands! It was a bit of a trek by our standards, but we were glad not to miss it.



Again our B&B on North Uist couldn't be bettered: the seafood platter our hostess served as a starter was all local fare, and honestly would have made an excellent main course. Next morning John sat outside for a while, listening to the Gaelic conversation between our hostess and a tradesman who had just arrived, with two dogs demanding attention. On being asked what language he spoke in to the dogs he was uncertain. No wonder they're confused! he admitted. We visited the RSPB reserve on the coast: not much to see that morning. But we were more than happy when nearly every day we heard the cuckoo, and even saw one once, and time after time heard (but never saw) the elusive corncrake. It's good to know how much worthwhile effort has been made to prevent their loss. North Uist also has its ancient monuments, and when John climbed a hill to examine a now collapsing burial cairn he met up with a couple with Jersey connections. Nothing like La Hougue Bie they all agreed.

Driving ever southwards we passed through Benbecula and came to South Uist, where roadside shrines reminiscent of holidays in France reminded us that we'd moved beyond the austere Protestantism of the North. Towering above the main road is Our Lady of the Isles, at 9 metres the largest religious statue in Britain, and unusual in that the infant Christ is lifted up to the shoulder of Mary rather than cradled in her arms. And the siting seems deliberately provocative, as the hillside above is an MOD range which has been used for testing nuclear and ground-to-air missiles.



But in the midst of this strongly Catholic island we discovered a Church of Scotland! The church is one of only three in the country still retaining a long communion table running front to back down the centre of the building. Its notice boards referred to the heritage funds from which they had benefitted, but omitted to tell the visitor the time of Sunday services! Somehow we got it right, and enjoyed the service and the conversation over coffee afterwards. South Uist Protestants seem to live very happily as a religious minority: many of them are in mixed marriages. And the views and attitudes of their

religious compatriots in Lewis seemed as strange to them as to us!

Our last crossing within the islands was from Eriskay (of Whisky Galore fame) to Barra, where the planes still land on the beach, and where a causeway takes you as far south as you can drive, to the island of Vatersay. Again wonderful beaches – one to the east, one to the west, and one to the south. Here, we were told, Britannia used to moor up. Not the first such location we'd heard about over the previous two weeks. She moored, it seems, in as many places in the Hebrides as Good Queen Bess slept back in England! But our ferry was already waiting for us early next morning in Castlebay – and four hours later we found ourselves back on the mainland in the noisy bustling streets of Oban.

Commitment for Life

On Sunday, 27th August the morning service at Waddington Street will include references to the work we support in Israel and the Occupied Territory of Palestine. This will be followed by a simple soup lunch accompanied by traditional Palestinian snacks and Arabic mint tea.

There will be an opportunity to donate to Commitment for Life as well as to purchase, or order, organic olive oil produced in the West Bank and olive wood carvings from the workshop of a Christian family in Bethlehem.

DO JOIN US!

Alison Jolly



Hymns for Professionals (from Judith Ashby, Bethel URC)

DENTIST: Crown Him with many crowns
 CONTRACTORS: The church's one foundation
 OBSTETRICIANS: Come, labour on
 GOLFERS: There is a green hill far away
 POLITICIANS: Standing on the promises
 LIBRARIANS: Let all mortal flesh keep silence
 LAWYERS: In the hour of trial
 DRY CLEANERS: O for a faith that will not shrink
 CREDIT CARD USERS: A charge to keep have I
 CENSUS TAKERS: All people that on earth do dwell
 TAXATION OFFICERS: We give thee but thine own
 TRAFFIC ENGINEERS: Where cross the crowded ways of life.



Waddington Street URC Eco Church Group

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PROTECTING CREATION

green christian has not 3, not 5 but 7 R's for finding joy in God's Creation!

The threats to our planet, which climate and environmental scientists have been warning us of for decades, can now be seen with our own eyes: the plastic in the oceans, the loss of garden insects (notably butterflies) and birds and the extreme weather events and wild-fires, which are increasing in number and ferocity.

This year and next, El Nino (a warming of surface water in the Pacific Ocean) might add significantly to the climate chaos; it is too early to predict how strong El Nino will be or whether global warming will exceed 1.5 degC next year, but some scientists are worried.

As Christians, we commit to lives of loving service, including protecting God's wonderful Creation. And yet on every side we're bombarded by clever advertising, cunningly designed to encourage us to buy more and travel to exciting places. But almost every purchase or distant travel has a carbon footprint, uses up resources and pollutes the earth. We can live more simply and find joy in the free gifts that God gives us. So:

Rejoice	in all that God has given us	(enjoy your local patch of nature)
Refuse	to believe the advertisements	(wait 24 hours before buying something)
Reduce	buy less, travel less, worry less	(ring-fence quality time with family)
Reuse	love & reuse things for years	(check charity shops & Freecycle)
Repair	value sewing & repairing skills	(invest: sewing kit & superglue tube)
Rent	or borrow or share	(and lend something in return)
Recycle	only as a last resort	(and buy recycled items if possible)

ECO TIP FOR AUGUST

Help birds in hot weather. Well, you can mow your lawn now! However, keeping your bird bath clean and topped up with fresh water in warmer weather can be a real life-saver for our feathered friends. Especially if there is a heatwave, get your birds through it when natural supplies, like worms, become scarce, by putting out supplementary food - black sunflower seeds, pinhead oatmeal, soaked sultanas, raisins and currants, waxworms and good seed mixture. The top favourite for our visitors must be mealworms: as they say, the early bird catches the mealworm; if the starling murmuration arrives, they've gone in moments! For many practical ways to enjoy, nurture and defend nature, sign up to A Rocha UK's Wild Christian email at: arocha.org.uk/wild-christian.

ECO PRAYER FOR AUGUST

Father of Creation, God of Compassion, your world is on fire, our home is on fire. Our hearts ache, we struggle to come to terms with what is happening. Lord have mercy.

Father of Creation, God of Compassion, your world is groaning, our hearts are groaning, our hearts ache, we face paralysis, not knowing what to do. Lord have mercy.

Father of Creation, God of Compassion, still our restless souls, calm our frantic thoughts. We look to you For comfort, strength and wisdom. Lord have mercy.

Father of Creation, God of Compassion, empower your church afresh with the gift of your Spirit. Equip us afresh to our priestly and prophetic calling. Lord have mercy.

Father of Creation, God of Compassion, to you be praise, honour and glory. Amen

[From A Rocha, shortened for individual prayer.]

Charles Jolly

IN PRAISE of WEEDS.

“What would the world be once bereft Of wet and of Wildness?
 Let them be left O let them be left, Wildness and Wet;
 Long live the Weeds and the Wilderness yet.”
 Gerard Manley Hopkins. (Inversnaid)

Q. When is a weed not a weed? A. When it is a spontaneous wild flower.

There has been much controversy over the “weeds” that have been displayed at Chelsea Flower Show this year. Someone once said, “If dandelions were rare, people would be buying them from Garden Centres.” Many flowers which grow wild are garden escapes so that flowers such as Columbines, pink “opium” poppies and geraniums are now seen as wild.

Flowers which have ‘spontaneously appeared’ in my garden are Welsh poppies, bluebells, foxgloves, ferns and Violets. They are welcome. A drawback to ‘spontaneous’ flowers is they rampage. A neat and tidy garden is out of the question. I do admit to pulling up some flowers that really do get too big for their roots. Marsh buttercups, Loosestrife, Cleavers (sticky Jacks) and especially Wood Avens (wild geum) really do have to go and Periwinkle, which appeared from nowhere, would engulf everything if it were not cut back. That is why my garden bin is filled to the brim at the end of the week, although to look at my garden, it is hard to believe! **Barbara Tinsley**

Welsh Poppy
geum)



Ferns growing in a damp corner



Foxglove



Wood Avens (wild



Pink flower is Codlins
and Cream – below
Lesser Willow Herb.



* an ancient
arable weed
common in
the Bronze
age but now
almost
extinct in the
wild.
Can be
bought as seed
in wild flower
mixes.

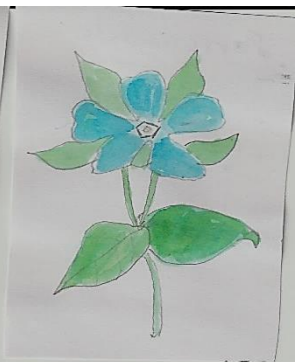
Codlins and
Cream (Lesser
Willow Herb).
A very pretty
“weed”.

Dog Violet
far right.

* Corncockle*



Periwinkle



PREACHERS AUGUST 2023

6th Revd. John Tait
 13th Revd. John Durell
 20th Stan May
 27th Charles and Alison Jolly

AND**SEPTEMBER 2023**

3rd Pauline James
 10th Revd. Marcus Hargis (COMMUNION)
 17th Revd. Alan Middleton
 24th Richard Phua

Date	Elders	Door Duty
August 6th	Mrs. D. Jackson Mr. R. Todd	Mrs. K. Clasper
13th	Mrs. K. Clasper Mrs. V. Hodgson	Mrs. H. Cockburn
20th	Mr. S. Ogilvie Mrs. J. Sarsfield	Mr. and Mrs. R. Todd
27th	Mrs. H. Cockburn Mrs. Y. Melville	Mrs. K. Ogilvie
September 3rd	Mrs. J. Thornborrow Mrs. K. Ogilvie	Mrs. V. Hodgson
10th	Mr. R. Phua Mrs. K. Clasper	Mr. M. Reay
17th	Mrs. D. Jackson Mr. R. Todd	Mrs. Win Surtees
24th	Mr. S. Ogilvie Mrs. V. Hodgson	Mr. and Mrs. R. Todd

Please arrange your own replacement if unable to carry out your duty on the given date.

COFFEE ROTA AUGUST 2023

6th Sylvia and Ian Warburton
 13th Janet and David Thornborrow
 20th Heather Todd, Lucille Thomson
 27th Win Surtees Kath Ogilvie

**AND SEPTEMBER 2023**

3rd Yvonne Melville, Doris Jackson
 10th Helen Cockburn, Val Hodgson
 17th Kathleen Clasper, Barbara Tinsley
 24th Malcom Reay, Anne Cramb

Please arrange your own replacement if unable to carry out your duty on the given date.

FLOWER ROTA AUGUST 2023

6th VACANCY
 13th Mrs. H. Durell
 20th Mrs. K. Clasper
 27th Mrs. S. & Mr. I. Warburton

**AND SEPTEMBER 2023**

3rd John and Hillian Durell
 10th Kath Ogilvie
 17th Margaret Munro
 24th Helen Cockburn

Please arrange your own replacement if unable to carry out your duty on the given date.



COME TO SCOTLAND

Come to Scotland when the heather clads the hills in purple hue,
Come to Scotland where the lochans are so beautifully blue.
Come and **smell** the peat reek rising, from the cottage in the glen,
Come and **hear** the wild bird calling, on the lonely Highland Ben.
Come and **hear** the gentle murmur, of the clear burn tumbling by,
Where the speckled trout are **leaping**, catching the unwinding fly.
Come and **see** the morning breaking, dewy fresh o'er hill-top high,
Or **see** the glory of the sunset, gild again the Western sky.
Come and **feel** the hearty welcome, that comes from a Scottish heart,
Feel the ties of friendship bind you, so that you never want to part.

[From "The Seasons of Life. Poems of Life and Nature" by the late Mrs. Betty Fleming.]

[Used with the kind permission of Lysbeth and Robert Fleming.]