



outlook

Newsletter of **Pond Square Chapel** | Highgate United Reformed Church | **April 2022 - July 2022**



Minister:

Rev'd David Currie

Tel: 020 8444 9594

Email: davidepcurrie@gmail.com

Administrator:

Patricia Judd

Tel: 020 8341 5463

Email: admin@pondsquarechapel.org.uk

Treasurer:

Robert Gorrie:

10 Wood Lane, Highgate N6 5UB

Joint Editors:

Dietrich Hauptmeier

Michelle Swer

Email: dietrichh@gmail.com

Email: michelleswer@aol.com

Website:

www.pondsquarechapel.org.uk



What Next?

The main thrust of our Outlook magazine at this time of year is the Easter message of good news that the Lord is risen! Of course, the teaching and ministry of Jesus comes to a sudden and brutal end with his trial on trumped-up charges, his torture and his death by crucifixion. And his disciples must have been asking the question - "What next?"

Now, there are many points in our human journey which prompt us to ask this same question - What next?

Family life

Gwen and I have been reminded of this again over the past year or so as we've watched our latest grandson, Jackson, slowly making the usual progress in the early stages of life. At 2 months or so - 'Was that a wee smile?' Then, a couple of months later - 'Ouch! Is that a tooth?' What next? 'Are you clapping your hands?' What next? 'Is that him crawling?' What next? Nothing but trouble when they start to walk!

Bible

It even seems like a crucial and pivotal question in many of the Bible stories.

Genesis 37: Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children, so his brothers are full of jealousy and dump him in a pit, expecting him to die. What next?

Exodus 5 - 14: Moses and Aaron eventually summon up courage in Egypt to go to Pharaoh and demand freedom for their people. No chance! What next? ... the first of ten plagues. Then they eventually escape to the desert! What next?

Daniel 6: King Darius has been tricked into making a declaration that for 30 days no-one should make a petition to any god, or they will be punished. But the faithful Daniel refuses to break his prayerful routine, and is thrown into a den of lions. What next?

Easter: We have the benefit of hindsight when reading and contemplating the Easter story, but just imagine what it would have been like for Jesus himself and for his little band of disciples. Through that first couple of years of the ministry of Jesus, the crowds were growing to such an extent that the religious leaders too were growing more uneasy, more jealous, more concerned about where all this was going. Who could believe that after receiving such a joyful reception as he entered Jerusalem, only a few days later he would be betrayed, arrested, put on trial, dragged before Pontius Pilate and King Herod, then nailed to a cross to die. And the disciples must have been thinking - What next? Is this the end? Was it all for nothing? Back to our old routine? Back to the fishing boats?

No such thing. There was an empty tomb. Then it is recorded that the Lord Jesus made some appearances. This was not the end, this was a turning point. With renewed strength and enthusiasm, having received Christ's promised gift of the Spirit, the disciples took the good news of God's love to everyone. That was the 'what next', even if they couldn't see it at first.

Gwen and I

We are going through a period of mixed emotions at this time in our lives as we approach retirement. And sometimes in the past we didn't know the answer to the question 'What next?' For Gwen, it was a career in nursing, bringing up a family, then into a career in teaching. For me, it was the Metallurgy Lab and then engineering in Rolls Royce; what next? ... minister of East Kilbride West Kirk (1983 - 2000); Senior Adviser in Mission for the Church of Scotland (2000 - 2011); The Scots' Church in Melbourne (2011 - 2016); and then here in Highgate URC (2017 - 2022). I just love that photo of me with Gwen and Helen (see front cover), which reminds me of the warm welcome I received as the new minister of Pond Square Chapel on Sunday 21st May 2017.

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So as I celebrate my 5th anniversary, and just before I step into an unknown future, I'm faced once again with this same question - What next? Who knows? Hopefully time to be with the family and grandchildren. Perhaps climbing a few more hills? But we place ourselves in God's hands, confident that he knows 'what next'.

Pond Square Chapel

The congregation I've got to know and love over these 5 years are, of course, asking the same question at this time as they consider a call to a new minister - What next?

Times of change, either for individuals or for organisations, can understandably be times of real concern and anxiety - what does the future hold? ... how is this change going to affect me? What next?

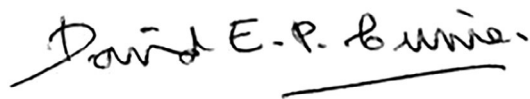
But I am convinced there is a bright future ahead for our church family here. Now, of course, the months and years ahead will not be without their challenges, so I encourage you to hold onto God's promise in Psalm 32: 8 - "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you."

What Next?

My main priority while I was here was to share the core of the Easter message and the good news of God's love. Thanks to all who have faithfully supported me during my time here and have helped bring others closer to Jesus. Among other things, we thank God that we've seen our church family grow by about 25% (from a membership of around 28 to 35 as at March 2022).

What next? We can't be sure. But the message of Easter is clear - this is not the end, this is a new beginning.

Wishing you God's richest blessing in the months and years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David E.P. Currie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath the name.

David E.P. Currie

Minister: Pond Square Chapel

Platinum Jubilee: URC service to celebrate the Queen

A service from the United Reformed Church marking the 70th anniversary of the reign of Her Majesty the Queen is now available.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee will be celebrated over a four-day Bank Holiday from 2-5 June.

The order of service is compiled by the Revd Dr Ana Gobledale, a member of URC's Worship Reference Group, who explained that inspiration for the service arose from parts of the 2012 National Service of Thanksgiving in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.



"I wrote to the Queen to ask if she would like anything in particular included in the service, such as a particular reading or hymn, and if she would like to share any words with the URC on this special occasion.

In response, Annabel Whitehead, the Queen's Lady-in-Waiting, said: "The Queen has been deeply moved by the loyalty and support she has received throughout her long reign from her subjects both at home and within the Commonwealth, and the sentiments you express as you prepare a Service of Thanksgiving to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee next year are greatly appreciated.

"It was kind of you to make Her Majesty aware of your considerate suggestions for this service and The Queen greatly appreciated your kind thought in writing as you did."

Revd Gobledale, who has churches in Salisbury and Andover, added: "I see the service from the URC as an opportunity to highlight URC composers and liturgists, celebrating the vibrant and creative Free Church element of the realm."

The service includes hymns, prayers and psalms written by ministers and members of the URC, and is available on the URC website.

Thanks and Fond Farewell to Dietrich and Family

I want to take this opportunity, before their actual departure, to say just how much it has meant to us to have been able to develop bonds of friendship with Dietrich, his wife Jialu, and their son, Heini.

When I arrived as minister in 2017 Dietrich had already been worshipping at Pond Square Chapel for some time, and Heini was a regular attender at Sunday's Cool. However, it was a real thrill when Dietrich and Heini expressed the wish to be received into membership at a service on 10th February 2019.



Both Dietrich and Heini have an interest in music, and we always enjoy when they participate in one of our Family services as a duet with their cellos - a great father-and-son team!

I think we had all recognised leadership qualities in Dietrich, so I was particularly pleased when he was elected, then ordained as an elder on 11th October 2020. In any discussion group, tapping into his broad range of general knowledge and theology, he always has something useful to share. I am personally so grateful for the support he gave when we set up discussion groups for those who were considering membership of the church.

But it is time to move on, and the family have chosen Hünenberg near Zurich in Switzerland as their new home.

We wish Dietrich, Jialu and Heini very best wishes as they embark on the next stage of their family journey, and God's rich blessings for the future.

David Currie: *Minister*

NOTE - Service on 24th April will include "Thanks to Dietrich"

Sunday's COOL

at Pond Square Chapel

Update

At Sunday's Cool we have been looking at Christian Commitments and Christian Characters. We have heard that Christians commit to going to Church, reading the Bible and spreading God's word and their character is about love, patience and gentleness.

In March we looked at the very important subject, Worldly Issues. We focused on War and Prejudice.



Pray for Ukraine

Dear God,

We pray for the people who are fleeing Ukraine right now and those who have friends and family there. We pray for peace there too.

Amen - Elsa



We will miss you David & Gwen!



After 5 years we will be saying goodbye to David and Gwen. We will all miss you and we thank both of you for all of your hard work to help Pond Square Chapel and Sunday's Cool grow! More thank you's coming your way over the next couple of months!

Ste Rainford: *Children's Worker*

Letter to the Congregation from Kathleen and Sandy Thom

For the past two years, despite living several hundred miles away from London, we have been privileged to have been able to join the congregation of Pond Square Chapel at their regular Sunday services, initially via Zoom at the start of lockdown in 2020, and more recently via the Youtube live streaming facility. Besides the weekly services, we have also appreciated being included in the online discussion groups, and even a social evening.

During this time we moved house to a totally new area leaving behind our church family of forty-two years. We have been in Kirriemuir for almost a year now and feel that, as covid restrictions have all but disappeared, we are now comfortable and ready to look around with a view to becoming involved with one of the local churches.

Your friendship and welcome have been extremely important in what has been a challenging time for us. We feel Pond Square has been a Noah's Ark for us to which we could return until the 'floods' receded! But now, like the dove, we see the floods receding and the time has come for us to look for the dry land.

We have become very well aware that "behind the blue doors in Pond Square, Highgate lies a small, friendly church with a big heart".

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all and wish you well as you move forward as an active church under new leadership. We will pray for the continued growth of your ministry as you share God's message of love.

God bless you all.

Kathleen and Sandy Thom.

You know who your friends are

We're all familiar with that saying - 'You know who your friends are when you're struggling a bit and they step in to help out.'

Well, that's exactly what happened towards the end of 2018 when the elders were reviewing how best to communicate in a variety of ways to the congregation. I had been considering the format known as "mailchimp" but had no idea how to get

it going, open an account, fill the template with text, photos, etc. And I think it was Peter's wife, Daphne, who shared 'Oh, I think Peter knows how to do that!'

Once Peter knew my quandary, he willingly volunteered to take on this task, and so it was that we were able to use this effective means of communication from the end of 2018 right through to about May 2020. My workload took on a whole new direction during the coronavirus pandemic, and a more comprehensive magazine covers most of the issues we raised regularly via mailchimp, but I had always meant to offer thanks to Peter for being prepared to help out in my time of need.

And that should be a word of thanks to Peter and Daphne both. Daphne has been most conscientious about her regular duties as a Steward - setting up the sanctuary for worship, reading the Bible lesson, etc..

Many thanks for all your help and support Peter and Daphne.

David Currie: *Minister*



In Memorium: Susan Berry Chinn

(1st April 1936 - 19th January 2022)

It was a great sadness for our congregation when the family announced that Sue, our very good friend, and long-time member of our church, had died on Wednesday 19th January. Others in the congregation knew Sue a lot better than I did, so the words I shared at the crematorium service, and now share here, are a mix of theirs and mine, and I thought I should also include parts of the fascinating family tribute.

As I took up the post of new minister at Highgate URC in 2017, I'll never forget a couple of the very first things Sue said to me -



- Are you free on Wednesday night to attend the “Keep our Local Library Open” meeting?
- I’m the Editor of the church magazine ... it would be great to get an article from you for next week!

I believe Sue’s connection with Highgate URC goes back to the 1970’s ... and for most of that time (from the 90’s), she was an elder - a pillar of our church fellowship.

Our local church historian, John Thompson, shares - “One thing which should be mentioned was Sue’s willingness to lead worship - the only member of the congregation prepared to take the whole service two or three times a year; and this only ended about ten years ago when her coughing fits became less controllable. Her prayers were said, not read; she wrote out her sermons though did not read them. Her services were easy to follow and personally felt.”

On behalf of his father, Richard, and brother and sister, Pete and Kerrie, the following is a summary of her son, Dan’s family tribute -

“From America she came, bringing her heritage with her - upper white-collar WASP stock; Wellesley College; a tradition of strong, smart, effective women. She could have had the standard life for someone of her background - country clubs, tennis matches, Manhattans at five, marriage to some suitable young suburban American

of her caste. Instead, she took a left turn. Inner-city social work with Jewish youth groups in New York and London, a permanent transatlantic move, and finally marriage to my very different, very English father.

At the start of the 1970's, mum left paid work in favour of motherhood. In no way did she let this slow her down. From the start of her arrival in Highgate, she was out knocking on doors to set up a neighbourhood association, to find out which local concerns might use her efforts. Over the years she became a neighbourhood leader and a libraries champion. She was a church elder, a PTA stalwart, and a fierce campaigner protecting local amenities. She fought for child literacy and involvement, for the wider world, and for human decency. She was tireless. Over time her hair silvered, her lungs worsened, her walking faltered, but she'd never quit. Anonymous monuments to her activism and her efforts are everywhere. I can walk up the Archway Road, which she helped to protect from aggressive road-widening schemes; past the Jacksons Lane church whose transition into a hugely successful art centre was pieced together in our family living room. I can drop into her home-from-home - the library perched over Highgate tube station - knowing that she helped to save and improve it countless times.

Mum quilted, sketched, sewed toys, reclaimed and restored furniture, and sang in choirs. She loved her grandchildren and got thoroughly involved with them, passing on her books and her crafting skills with vigour and enthusiasm.

I put an earlier version of this tribute on Facebook in January and this is one of the comments which were posted - "Your wonderful Mama actually did what many only dream of: she made the world a better place."

I think that the memory of my mother, and her legacy, will reverberate for a long time yet. We move on, because we have to. She moves on with us; because, after all of this - even after the separation of death - there's no way that she wouldn't."

Our Organist, Robert Manning, fondly recalls - "Sue was a good friend and always a great supporter of my music. We owe her a lot, and we will miss her a great deal."

During my time as minister I discovered for myself why Sue was such a very highly-respected member of our church - passionately caring, thoughtful, a tough advocate for local community issues, as well as a regular attender and faithful member of Highgate URC.

We give thanks for Sue's life, our family member and friend - we will remember her always. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband, Richard, her daughter Kerrie, her sons Dan and Peter, and all family and friends.

David Currie: *Minister*

Pond Square Chapel ECO-CHURCH Award

Gwynneth, David and Rowena's contributions to the Outlook Winter edition make reference to environmental matters - it seems to be part of Pond Square Chapel DNA. Environmental issues are often raised at the Managers meetings when discussing solutions to issues. Recognising this shared concern, the Managers wanted to find a place that Pond Square Chapel's environmental awareness and interest could belong and be developed together with others on a similar path. A Rocha ECO-CHURCH, fitted the bill. Started by A Rocha (Portuguese for 'the rock'), and founded in Portugal in 1983 as an international network of environmental organisations with Christian ethos, ECO-Church is supported by the URC, Methodists, Church of England, Christian Aid, Tear fund and Allchurches Trust Ltd - organisations we can identify with.

ECO-CHURCH works through a point system, being relatively easy to obtain a bronze award, getting progressively more demanding to achieve silver and finally the much prized gold award. Pop to St James Piccadilly to experience a Gold Award church. Account is taken of the age of the building and facilities provided. Pond Square Chapel is progressing well, has achieved a Bronze and is close to a Silver Award.

A simple questionnaire is completed at the start of the process, during which it becomes clear if there are any areas the church should consider working on. Subjects covered include 'Worship and Teaching', when we are encouraged



to embody caring for the environment in teaching across all ages. ‘Church buildings’ are considered from the main energy supplier contract, to energy and water use, building fabric, recycling, the outdoor planting and wildlife and outdoor use by the local community. ‘Community and Global Engagement’ is an area which needs further exploration together, as it encourages wider participation, enquiring how much we engage with other groups on environmental actions locally and nationally and praying for or supporting international projects.

Managers have found the ECO-CHURCH checklist a thoughtful, comprehensive guide into areas we had not previously discussed together and the absence of prescriptive answers gives scope for original thinking and interpretation. Most decisions fall within the Managers remit, although as ideas progress and inspiration comes, some may necessitate discussion

with the Elders and the Church meeting. It feels good for Pond Square Chapel to be part of this network of other like minded Christians.

Helen Roe: *Managers Convenor*



Update on new minister project

We are all sorry to be losing David Currie, who has now served us for five years. His induction was in May 2017. And in May 2022 it will be his 5th anniversary. At the end of May there will be a “Farewell to David” service which we hope you will all attend. So please put this date into your diaries now.

When the Highgate URC, now more often referred to as PSC (Pond Square Chapel), decided to step aside from the rest of the URC churches in North London in so far as the others were all given ministers or were put into a group which had oversight from one or two ministers. We knew from our own experience and from hearing about the experience of other churches that this grouping of churches almost always led soon to a decline in numbers and

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not very far down the line to the closure of churches. We have been in this experiment for five years now and PSC is, I would think a more lively and vibrant place than it was. The numbers have not yet grown because there was a large “top” of older people who have since died, and the new people who have come in have not added to the numbers, but have gone to make up the otherwise shrinking congregation. So we have maintained the numbers in most cases. If we can in the next few years, keep on adding new families, without the drain from the top, we hope to see substantial growth in the fellowship.

So we are seeking to appoint a new person who will take on the role of minister to us. As many of you know, we have been advertising during the past year, but the lockdown restrictions make it very difficult to invite someone to come & take a service, or to come for an interview. We have yet to find a satisfactory substitute.

However we have finally decided with the reduction of lockdown restrictions to invite the candidate, (Joseph Deveraj), who is on our current short list of three. He is a minister from Vellore in South India, who in addition to running several of the small country churches in the area, leads the pastoral team in the hospital. His wife Trinita is also committed to helping him in the church, and they have two sons. One who is 20 now & at college in South India & another boy of 9, still at school.

More recently, with a third round of advertising we have added another name to our short list of candidates. He is Johnathan Abernethy and is at present the minister of a congregational church in Oldham (Lancashire). He took the service at PSC on Sunday 20th March.

The third member of the short list is called Forbes Walker. He is a Presbyterian & is at present living in London after a long spell of being a school Chaplain. Forbes has already taken a service at PSC.

Rowena Courtney

• • • • • **Diary Dates 2022** • • • • •

March

Sun 27	10.30 am	Service of Ordination and Induction of New Elders
<i>(note - change of clocks!)</i>		

April

Friday 1	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 3	10.30 am	Passion Sunday, and Sunday's Cool
Friday 8	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 10	10.30 am	Palm Sunday Service
Good Friday 15	9.30 am	from All Saints C of E - Churches Together in Highgate
		Procession, followed by...
	10.40 am (approx.)	Good Friday Service in Pond Square Chapel
	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 17	10.30 am	Easter Sunday Service, incl. Sacrament of Holy Communion, and Sunday's Cool
Friday 22	12.30 pm	No Meditation meeting - recommences 6 May
Sun 24	10.30 am	First Sunday after Easter, and Fun Sunday
Friday 29	12.30 pm	No Meditation meeting - recommences 6 May

May

Sun 1	10.30 am	Second Sunday after Easter, and Sunday's Cool
Friday 6	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 8	10.30 am	Sacrament of Holy Communion, and Sunday's Cool
Friday 13	12.30 pm	Meditation
Saturday 14	7.00 pm	Family Ceilidh, including Supper
Sun 15	10.30 am	Fourth Sunday after Easter, and Sunday's Cool
	6.30 pm	London Gallery Quire Concert
Friday 20	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 22	10.30 am	Fifth Sunday after Easter, and Sunday's Cool
Friday 27	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 29	10.30 am	Sunday after Ascension, and Fun Sunday

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June

Friday 3	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 5	10.30 am	Pentecost Sunday, and Sunday's Cool Queen's Platinum Jubilee
Friday 10	12.30 pm	Meditation
Saturday 11	12.30 - 5.30 pm	Fair in the Square
Sun 12	10.30 am	Sacrament of Holy Communion, and Sunday's Cool
Friday 17	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 19	10.30 am	Second Sunday after Pentecost, and Sunday's Cool
Friday 24	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 26	10.30 am	Bookgiving Service (tbc)

July

Friday 1	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 3	10.30 am	Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, and Sunday's Cool
Friday 8	12.30 pm	Meditation
Sun 10	10.30 am	Sacrament of Holy Communion, and Sunday's Cool

Food Bank Appeal

I know there are huge demands from charities at the moment with the devastating war in Ukraine but I'm hoping that you might be will to donate even a few pounds to Food Bank Aid to help those close to home as well.

The cost of food and fuel has already meant that in the last 6 weeks an additional 1,600 people have presented to the North London Food banks they serve and this number is sadly only likely to rise.

Since April FBA has delivered £2.5m goods to 15 good banks who reach 10,000 people inc. 3,500 children. 40,000 items are now being delivered weekly which is amazing!

If you'd like to donate the link is: <https://www.charityextra.com/fba/60600>