

# THE BRIDGE



May and June 2024



## Winchmore Hill United Reformed Church

**“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13 35)**

As a student being introduced to the philosophy of religion, I learned about philosophical arguments for the existence of God. This simple chart merely scratches the surface of debate.

**Philosophical Arguments**

- Design/Teleological Argument**  
**William Paley**  
*"The world is so perfect there must be a designer and maker."*  
Just as the function of a watch requires a watchmaker, the world and everything in it must have a creator. Like a watch, the world is so perfectly designed and formed that it could not be the result of chance or accident. The only being powerful enough to create such perfection is God.
- Cosmological Argument**  
**Thomas Aquinas**  
*"God does exist. God is the "uncaused cause"."*  
Nothing happens in this world without something causing it to happen. However, at some point there must have been a first cause, which has existed since that time. The only thing that would need no cause is an ultimate power. Reason tells us that this ultimate power must be God.
- Pascal's Wager**  
**Blaise Pascal**  
*"God's existence can not be proved or disproved."*  
The belief in God is a gamble, but it is a gamble worth taking as you will have nothing to lose. If you do believe in God and God does exist, you will be rewarded with heaven and eternal life. If you do believe in God and God does not exist, there will be no afterlife and you lose nothing. If you do not believe in God and God exists, then you will not gain eternal life and heaven. If you do not believe in God and God does not exist, you win or lose nothing and simply end up in the grave.

Recently I was introduced to the hagiological argument for the existence of God. This term was coined by Professor Robert MacSwain in a study published in 2017. It drew on a number of 20th century Christian thinkers to propose that exemplary human lives motivated by religious belief ('saints') provide evidence for the existence of God, and indeed perhaps even the best evidence.<sup>1</sup>

I am not a philosopher by nature and always wanted to move swiftly on to the business of responding to the call of God on my life. This proposition provides a sense of relief.

The Greek ἅγιος means 'saint' and hagiology is 'study of the saints' and, like many ministers, 'The Lives of the Saints' is a book to which I am sometimes drawn for inspiration. Some of us may reflect, too, on saintly characters and their direct influence on our spiritual lives, with thanksgiving.

MacSwain, has been exploring the idea that the best proof-points for God are living, breathing people right in front of us. We may understand this if we have felt the presence of God when we have been with a person who radiates qualities such as joy, peace and love. If we run with it, there's something about engaging with saints in this way that is challenging to us as individuals.

<sup>1</sup>[https://cswr.hds.harvard.edu/cswr.hds.harvard.edu/news/2017/02/03/The\\_Hagiological\\_Argument\\_for\\_the\\_Existence\\_of\\_God%20](https://cswr.hds.harvard.edu/cswr.hds.harvard.edu/news/2017/02/03/The_Hagiological_Argument_for_the_Existence_of_God%20)

“This isn’t just an abstract intellectual question. It goes to the foundation of what it means to be human and what our obligations are to our fellow humans. One reason I think we’re fascinated by saintly people is that, as unusual as they are, there still seems to be something about them that is right. And, while they may make us feel uncomfortable, we still feel that somehow in them we’re seeing how humans should be. It’s not that they’re self-righteous. But their righteousness challenges us and calls us to become better.”<sup>2</sup>

Isn’t this what we are about in making common cause together in the ministry and mission of the Church of Christ? Should we try ever harder to cultivate our lifestyles so that others may reflect on our influence on their spiritual lives, with thanksgiving?

Here is a prayer from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021.<sup>3</sup>

God of love, through Christ You said to us: “You did not choose me but I chose you.” You seek us, You invite us to receive Your friendship and abide in it. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation, and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

**The joy of our heart is in God.**

God of life, You call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to welcome one another as a gift of Your grace. May Your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, open us to receive each other just as we are. **The joy of our heart is in God.**

God who gathers, You knit us together in Your son Jesus. May Your loving Spirit abide in us at local church and ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we might celebrate You with joy. **The joy of our heart is in God.**

God of the one vineyard, You call us to abide in Your love in all we do and say. Touched by Your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our everyday places. May we pave the way for bridging rivalries and overcoming tensions.

**The joy of our heart is in God. Amen.**

May the hope of spring time and the empowerment of Pentecost be yours,



### **In memoriam – Andrew Wellbeloved**

We are deeply saddened and send our love to Fiona following Andrew's untimely death. There will be a service of thanksgiving, to celebrate his life, works and achievements. This will be held in St Albans Cathedral, a place very close to his heart, and where he was a lay Canon.

The service will take place on Wednesday 5th June, at 2:00pm, and will be led by the Bishop of Bedford. It would be lovely to see anyone who knew Andrew, or whose lives he touched, there to celebrate with us. The service will be followed by light refreshments in the transept of the Cathedral. There is no parking at the Cathedral so please allow time to use public car parks. A JustGiving page had been set up in Andrew’s memory with donations going to Cancer Research: [justgiving.com/page/andrewwellbeloved](https://www.justgiving.com/page/andrewwellbeloved)

To assist with arrangements we would be grateful if you could email [cliffordwoolley@btinternet.com](mailto:cliffordwoolley@btinternet.com) by 31st May to indicate whether you are able to attend.

<sup>2</sup> [https://templetonreligiontrust.org/explore/the-saint-is-our-evidence/?fbclid=IwAR3fuC3M7M1qKN85LjUywoIz97vwCsnm3SdNUpyfqXvCBW-lfGmgk24CzKo\\_aem\\_AWV8AgMfUfUMoChutR1kCv4Sjw7Aw6w1kdtBs8IExZadzvpkQRv4kQ4AOhmGx9dr\\_xybyaTP4HrBsN75J7ukBrSa](https://templetonreligiontrust.org/explore/the-saint-is-our-evidence/?fbclid=IwAR3fuC3M7M1qKN85LjUywoIz97vwCsnm3SdNUpyfqXvCBW-lfGmgk24CzKo_aem_AWV8AgMfUfUMoChutR1kCv4Sjw7Aw6w1kdtBs8IExZadzvpkQRv4kQ4AOhmGx9dr_xybyaTP4HrBsN75J7ukBrSa)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/global-ecumenical-prayer-for-christian-unity\\_2021](https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/global-ecumenical-prayer-for-christian-unity_2021)



Sunday worship in Church is at 10.30 a.m. on Sundays followed by time to chat over light refreshments.

**5th May** with Tony Davis from Tottenham, High Cross URC.

**12th May Ascension Sunday** service including Holy Communion led by Rev Martin Legg.

### **Christian Aid Week**

**19th May Pentecost** celebration led by Lisa Hamblin from Bush Hill Park URC.

**26th May Trinity Sunday** We will be joined by Palmers Green congregation with Rev Mark Robinson from the North Lea Valley pastorate, but part of 'our' ministry team as part of the Local Area Group.

**2nd June** Arrangements to be confirmed.

**9th June** with Dr Paul Ashitey from Palmers Green URC.

**16th June** with Tony Davis from Tottenham, High Cross URC.

### **Refugee Week**

**23rd June** with Tony Davis from Tottenham, High Cross URC.

**30th June** with Michaela Lawrence from Christ Church URC and Epping Forest Community Church.

**7th July** with Anna Erikson from Palmers Green

**14th July** Arrangements to be confirmed.

**21st July** with Rev Jim Gascoigne.

**28th July** Arrangements to be confirmed.

**Flowers in the Sanctuary** during May and June have been given by Beryl Leach in praise of friendship, by Dawn for June and Gillian, by Cliff and Sally for parents, and by Fiona for her birthday.

### **An afternoon for Serving and Non-Serving Elders on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 2pm to 5pm**

*'Elders as Identifiers and Encouragers of God's gifts in witness and service'*

Trinity Church, Enfield, Methodist/URC, Church Street, Enfield, EN2 6AN

*1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.*

The first function of the Elders Meeting as set by General Assembly:

To foster in the congregation concern for witness and service to the community, evangelism at home and abroad, Christian education, ecumenical action, local inter-church relations and the wider responsibilities of the whole Church.

Sessions led by Rev Dr Julian Templeton, Synod Training Officer,  
and Rev Eddie Boon, Synod Mission Enabler.

Please email with the names of those attending and any dietary requirements by  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May please. [martin.g.legg@btinternet.com](mailto:martin.g.legg@btinternet.com)

## Pastorate Vacancy

At the time of writing, we have received another expression of interest and the 'Pastoral Call Group' will gather to decide if an initial meeting between them and the candidate should take place. The group consists of three representatives of each of the three churches in the pastorate. At this stage, information about the candidate is confidential.

## Elders Meetings if required

In view of the Pastoral Call Group meeting on Wednesday 15th May and Elders Training on Saturday 18th May, we will defer meeting for routine business until Thursdays 13th June and 11th July.



**Praying together** for the churches and the needs of our area.  
**Palmers Green, Winchmore Hill and Grange Park**

Normally first and third Tuesdays:  
7th & 21st May; 4th & 18th June, 2nd & 16th July 10.30-11.15 a.m.

**Forum meeting** at 19.30 on **Tuesday 18th June 2024**  
We are the hosts. Everyone welcome.

**Zoom Link** for prayers (Meeting ID: 746 8020 4904 Passcode: 8zq1F7)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74680204904?pwd=TjJhQnBIYVVuUzNRY3ZXQlJ6MHEzQT09>

## Eco Church (Silver Award)

We are proud to have reached this level which we will strive to maintain. One of the requirements we are keen to observe is to hold services which relate to and promote ecological awareness. With the strapline '**Earth Day Every Day**', Andrea led a service with members of the Common Home group from St. Monica's Catholic Church in Palmers Green.

The group was set up 5 years back, in response to the Pope's Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, published in 2015 and featured in the last edition of *The Bridge*. It calls on every person on our planet *To Care for Our Common Home*. The aim of the group is to draw the attention to the impact of our choices on the environment. "We do this through initiatives like *Recycling for Good Causes*, prayer services like the Walk of Creation and the Creation Mass, and having an annual campaign drawing attention to the effect on the environment, from for example, Fast Fashion. The group also raise funds for CAFOD and the Parish Food Bank."

As well as the sense of solidarity from an ecumenical service, it was also described variously as informative, heartfelt, prayerful and joyous.

The presentations will be included in future editions but it was a slight surprise that only two people present seem to have visited the Refill Shop in Grange Park so here is the advertisement originally featured in 2021. The shop is usually open from 09.00 – 16.00, Tuesdays – Fridays. See <https://www.refillatthegrange.co.uk/>



When we opened our shop in 2020, we were really excited and proud to be introducing plastic free shopping, giving people the choice and opportunity to change their shopping habits.

### So how does refilling work?

Our customers bring their empty bottles and refill with an eco-friendly biodegradable product that is not harmful to us, our pets or our environment. We have personally tested everything we offer and confirm that they are great products and an easy swap. Since our opening, our customers have saved in excess of 4,000 plastic bottles from ending up in landfill and going to recycling. In addition, there have been thousands of plastic packages saved in relation to our dry goods. This makes us really proud to have helped with this significant achievement.

### What's on offer?

Our refill shop offers package free foods such as pasta, rice, cereals, grains, pulses, dried fruit, nuts, coffee, loose leaf tea, chocolate, snacks and baking products together with a large selection of herbs and spices as well as liquid refills of oils and vinegars. In addition, we offer natural cleaning products such as natural bleach, cleaning vinegar, soda crystals and citric acid.

We have loved every moment of starting up our business in Grange Park, in particular our customers who have taken to refilling their containers and spreading the word. In addition to the other shops in the parade, we feel a real sense of community which is so important now more than ever. We have enjoyed meeting and getting to know our customers and made this past year despite all the difficulties, an absolute pleasure.

To ensure we are Covid safe we have adapted quickly and serve all our customers ourselves. We have also set up a Click & Collect/Local Delivery Service to help those with young families, and people working from home, isolating or shielding.

We love talking all things zero waste and if anyone needs any assistance or advice, we are happy to help.

### For more information, help or advice email

[refill@thegrange.shop](mailto:refill@thegrange.shop)

 @refill\_at\_the\_grange

22 The Grangeway, Grange Park,  
London N21 2HG • 020 8374 4076

## Look Forward

### Thames North Eco Day on 8th June 2024

#### Progressing our buildings to Net Zero around the Synod

Are you wondering what you can do with your church buildings to reduce their Carbon Footprint? Why not come along to the Synod Eco Day and hear Andrew Mills of St Johns New Barnet URC, holders of a Silver Eco Church Award, in conversation with Sacha McArdle, Thames North Synod's Assistant Property Officer, on the work that has been done at St John's New Barnet URC. In addition, you will be able to see the work that has been done at The Vine URC as a Thames North Synod Pilot Project. You will also be able to pick up a few tips on applying for an Eco Grant.

#### Talking Climate, Poverty and the General Election

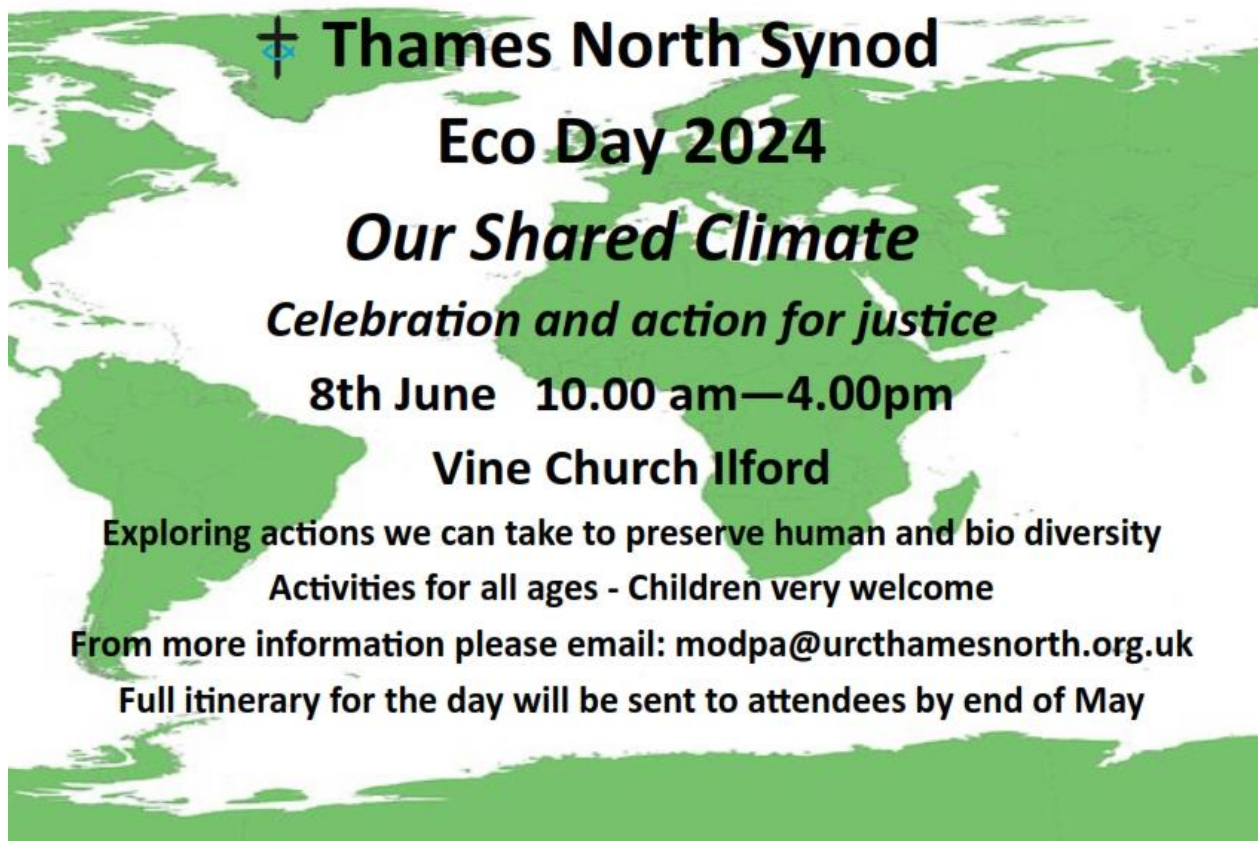
With a general election looming, it's a great time to let your candidates know what you care about. This session will cover tips and tools to start building a relationship with your future MP and getting their commitment to act for climate justice in their first 100 days and beyond. With Jess Hall, Campaigns and Organising Officer, Christian Aid.

#### Food served on the day will be vegetarian

To help us with catering please let Colleen [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk) know whether you prefer Vegetable Curry or Vegetable Pasta Bake.

Please register here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/3wc6zQqPOC>



**✝ Thames North Synod**  
**Eco Day 2024**  
***Our Shared Climate***  
***Celebration and action for justice***  
**8th June 10.00 am—4.00pm**  
**Vine Church Ilford**  
Exploring actions we can take to preserve human and bio diversity  
Activities for all ages - Children very welcome  
From more information please email: [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)  
Full itinerary for the day will be sent to attendees by end of May

## Christian Aid Week 12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2024

The United Reformed Church supports 'Christian Aid' and the campaigning organisation 'Global Justice Now' through its Commitment for Life programme. We have chosen to take a particular interest in Zimbabwe.

# Moving Stories

Commitment  
for Life

May-June 2024

### GAZA APPEAL

**Events in Gaza are deeply distressing. It is difficult know how to respond.**

In addition to the excellent work of the Mission Team and Commitment for Life, the URC has a wonderful, URC-wide team that works to highlight issues in Palestine. The URC Sabeel-Kairos Action Group can suggest useful resources for helpful actions. You can link up with them at [sabeelkairos.urch@gmail.com](mailto:sabeelkairos.urch@gmail.com).

Thank you to everyone who has already so generously supported the Commitment for Life Gaza appeal. These funds are being used to assist people in Gaza and Gaza residents stuck on the West Bank obtain food and water.

#### Prayer

God of Justice and Peace; we are utterly heartbroken by the destruction, mayhem, and death in Gaza. We struggle understand how any government can try to justify genocide, theft of land and ethnic cleansing, as though past horrors might excuse present injustices.

Only You can soften hearts and change minds. Help us become agents of love, equity, and a just peace, not only in the Holy Land but in our own lands too. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

### Meet the Team: Grace Mugebe



Image: ©Kevin Snyman

On the recent Commitment for Life trip to Zimbabwe, we met up with the wonderful Grace, the Programme Manager for the Zimbabwe team. Grace was very welcoming and eager to let us know how much she appreciated the support of Commitment for Life.

Grace has over 20 years' experience in governance programmes, gender equality, public health, organisation development, operations management, and communications. Grace manages the Zimbabwe country programme portfolio covering social, economic, humanitarian and climate justice projects.

Grace holds several degrees, including a Master of Science in Development Studies. Without the gifts of skilled people like Grace, our work in Zimbabwe would be severely curtailed. Grace speaks about her appreciation for all that Commitment for Life does for Zimbabwe. Thank you for all you do too, Grace!

**SAFEGUARDING**

**Advance Notice**

**Saturday 3rd August**

Martin has arranged with Belinda Herbert, Synod Safeguarding Officer, to run two training sessions at Lancaster Road URC. This is open to anyone in the Synod but very convenient for us.



**Timings: Foundation 10.00 – 12.00 Intermediate 13.00 – 15.30**

**Easy Fund Raising**

Our church has been registered with 'easyfundraising.org' for a few years. I assume most of us have linked our online shopping to one of its registered charities. Or have we? The amounts paid are small but from little acorns ... and occasionally we might receive a donation!

Check it out, sign up and click on Winchmore Hill URC.  
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/how-it-works/>

Please!

**It's Donation Day, let's celebrate!**

Thousands of good causes have been paid!

Winchmore Hill United Reformed Church has received

**£25.09**

easyfundraising has paid out over £1.5 million in donations this quarter.

**Church Secretary:** All enquiries should be made either by telephone to the Vestry answering service on 020 8882 4776 or by e-mail to [WHURC@btconnect.com](mailto:WHURC@btconnect.com)

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