

Sabbatical Report

The Revd Dr Michael Hopkins – Hillary Term 2022

Introduction

I am very grateful to my family for their support, to my churches for making arrangements to enable me to take this time, to various colleagues for providing cover, and to the United Reformed Church and the Coward Trust for their financial support. I had a number of separate projects under an overall umbrella topic of ministry that I wished to explore. This report may be briefer than is usual, for reasons that will become obvious.

- **Objective one:** *to research the use of scripture in worship, with particular attention to the way that scripture is actually used in our churches, as opposed to the theory, various aspects of dissatisfaction with the Revised Common Lectionary, and to explore alternative lectionaries and their flaws.*

I am grateful to the Revd Dr Elaine Colechin and the Revd Dr John Bradbury, who advised me on the design and analysis of an appropriate questionnaire, and to colleagues who road-tested it. The questionnaire was circulated throughout the United Reformed Church, and online to other denominations, and generated significantly in excess of 1000 responses. This was ten times greater rate of response than I had expected. I am also grateful to the Revd John Proctor, who suggested a number of books to read, and approaches to consider. This is been written up, and has now been submitted to a potential publisher as a book proposal. As such, I cannot publish the work myself unless it is rejected by the publisher.

- **Objective two:** *to research the possibility of a proposal for an up-to-date book on the nature and work of ministry from a Free Church perspective, and to write the proposal if the research supports that.*

This became a little diffuse and at times, and took more work to pin down than I had hoped. I am grateful to a number of colleagues who offered various pieces of advice and acted as sounding boards. In particular, I am grateful to the Revd Dr Paul Beasley Murray, a baptist minister and a prolific author, who helped me to focus my ideas and refine my thinking. A proposal for a book has been submitted to a publisher.

- **Objective three:** *to research the possibility of a proposal for an up-to-date book on pastoral care, and to write the proposal if the research supports that.*

I undertook a full range of research, and identified a significant gap in the market for a book as I had hoped. I submitted a proposal to Canterbury Press, which was accepted. As a consequence, I have signed a contract with them, and the book will be published in 2023. It is a volume likely to be of primary use to all lay people involved in pastoral care and for ministers leading, supervising, and training such work.

- **Objective four:** *to research the possibility of a proposal for an up-to-date book on preaching, and to write the proposal if the research supports that.*

I found two current books, of which I was previously unaware, and which cover this area. There is no need of, or market for, another book in this area.

- **Objective five:** *to research more on Mary Anning and her links to Congregationalism, with a view to a possible article for the Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society.*

I am particularly grateful to Professor Hugh Torrens of Keele University, and the Revd Tom Goodhue, a Methodist minister in New York, who are both scholars of Mary Anning and kindly pointed me in the direction of various publications and resources. This research was undertaken in a variety of libraries, and a paper has been submitted for possible publication to the Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society.

- **Objective six:** *attending a conference on Leading Your Church Into Growth, and applying that to my pastorate.*

I attended the conference and I was deeply impressed both by the calibre of the material and of the people leading the course. I had been somewhat sceptical, as I had not been impressed by an introductory webinar, but was encouraged by a number of colleagues who had attended the actual course. I am glad I took their advice, because it is perhaps the most significant training that I have undertaken since ordination. On that basis, I would heartily recommend it to everyone.

I had been expecting to prepare a report for the pastorate on how this might be taken forwards. However, I now understand a report in itself is pointless. People need to understand at least something of what it's about, decide whether to explore it further, and then probably run the 'local' version of the course for people. Telling people won't work – we need to think it through together and work it out between us.

To that end, I intend to use some material in worship, and in a Church Meeting for the purposes of a conversation, with the hope of enough people being interested and enthused for me to run the 'local' version of the course. My sense is that the Farnham congregation in particular is actually ready and ripe for this.

- **Personal growth**

I was delighted to step 'off the hamster wheel', and rest from normal activities. I have enjoyed attending church with Rosie and Joanna, and also the wonderful opportunity to join the congregation in a number of local churches, and to see the reality of those churches rather than my preconceptions of them. I have had the time to start the IAM advanced driving course, which was held over from 2021 because of Covid. I have found the headspace and inspiration to come up with a suggestion for managing pastoral care within the Spire Church. I have benefitted enormously from a number of special trips, namely a week at Keld, and time at Gladstone's Library. Both trips felt like a drop in the ocean, and I shall need to return to both very special places again. Above all, although I have worked hard, it has been different from my usual work, and a glad opportunity to re-engage with a significant backlog of reading, and to once more exercise critical thinking. I feel that I have re-gained a perspective on what is "work" and what is "hobby", and an opportunity to reflect upon work-life balance.

SABBATICAL LOG

Day one – 10 January 2022

Brunch with friends. Blood donors. *Books completed:*

Richardson, Neil, *Minding Our Language: Images of Atonement in Preaching and Worship* (Methodist Sacramental Fellowship, 2021).

Jason A. Fout, *Learning from London: Church Growth in Unlikely Places*, First edition (Cincinnati, OH: Forward Movement Publications, 2019).

Day two – 11 January 2022

Dr Williams's Trust meeting. Wrote to David Peel. *Books completed:*

Thom S. Rainer, *Anatomy of a Revived Church: Seven Findings of How Congregations Avoided Death* (Rainer Publishing, 2019).

Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2014).

David R. Peel, *Pilgrim's Process: Essays from a Theological Journey* (Place of publication not identified: Resource Publications, 2021).

Bob Jackson, *The Road to Growth: Towards a Thriving Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005).

Day three – 12 January 2022

One hour walk in sunshine. *Books completed:*

David R. Peel, *Crucicentric, Congregational, and Catholic: The Generous Orthodoxy of Alan P. F. Sell* (Pickwick Publications, 2019).

Paul Beasley-Murray, *50 Lessons in Ministry: Reflections after Fifty Years of Ministry* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2020).

Paul Beasley-Murray, *Transform Your Church: 50 Very Practical Steps* (Leicester: IVP, 2005).

Paul Beasley-Murray, *This Is My Story: A Story of Life, Faith, and Ministry*, 1st Edition (Wipf and Stock, 2018).

Day four – 13 January 2022

Half hour walk in sunshine. *Books completed:*

Rachel Mann, *The Gospel of Eve* (Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd, 2020).

Day five – 14 January 2022

Introductory meeting for Advanced Driving Test.

Walk to collect Joanna from school in sunshine. *Books completed:*

Reverend Richard Coles, *Bringing in the Sheaves: Wheat and Chaff from My Years as a Priest*, (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2017).

Byassee, *Following: Embodied Discipleship in a Digital Age* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2021).

Priya Parker, *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters* (London: Penguin, 2019).

Day six – 15 January 2022

Domestic and family day.

Day seven – 16 January 2022

Attend matins at St. Mary's Frensham

Books completed: Victoria Raymer, *The Bible in Worship: Proclamation, Encounter and Response* (London: SCM Press, 2018).

Day eight – 17 January 2022

An hour's walk in the sunshine. Questionnaire compiled, checked, and tested. *Books completed:*

Wilda C. Gafney, *A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church: Year A* (New York, NY: Church Publishing, 2021).

Timothy Matthew Slemmons, *Year D: A Quadrennial Supplement to the Revised Common Lectionary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012).

Day nine – 18 January 2022

Questionnaire distributed and enquiries attended to. Literature reviewing.

Books completed: Wilda C. Gafney, *A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church: Year W* (New York, NY: Church Publishing, 2021).

Day ten – 19 January 2022

Ongoing questionnaire responses. Explored ideas for a historical article. Attended the funeral of a colleague.

Day eleven – 20 January 2022

Ongoing questionnaire responses.

Books completed: Paul Beasley-Murray, *Living Out The Call Book 1: Living For God's Glory* (FeedaRead.com, 2019).

Paul Beasley-Murray, *Living Out The Call Book 3: Reaching Out To God's World* (FeedaRead.com, 2019).

Paul Beasley-Murray, *Living Out The Call Book 4: Serving God's People* (FeedaRead.com, 2019).

BILL MERRINGTON, *Pastoral Care: A Practical Guide* (KEVIN MAYHEW, 2012).

Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care, Revised and Expanded Edition: A Postmodern Approach*, Revised edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015).

Ministry Today, volume 1

Day twelve – 21 January 2022

Walked into town and back (1 hour walking), down time and personal errands.

Books completed: Paul Beasley-Murray, *Living Out The Call Book 2: Leading God's People* (FeedaRead.com, 2016).

Ministry Today, volume 2

Day thirteen – 22 January 2022

Domestic and family day.

Day fourteen – 23 January 2022

Attended St Thomas-on-the-Bourne.

Day fifteen – 24 January 2022

Wrote an article for Ash Wednesday.

Books completed: Ministry Today, volume 3

Ministry Today, volume 4

Day sixteen – 25 January 2022

Books completed: Ministry Today, volume 5

Day seventeen – 26 January 2022

Books completed: Ministry Today, volume 6

Ministry Today, volume 7

Ministry Today, volume 8

Day eighteen – 27 January 2022

Down time day, largely catching up on odds and ends, and meeting a friend not seen for many years.

Day nineteen – 28 January 2022

First lesson for Advanced driving test.

Books completed: Pierce, *Jurassic Mary: Mary Anning and the Primeval Monsters*, Illustrated edition (Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2015).

Tracy Chevalier, *Remarkable Creatures* (London: The Borough Press, 2014).

Day twenty – 29 January 2022

Domestic and family day.

Day twenty-one – 30 January 2022

Attended St Peter's, Wrecchehsam.

Day twenty-two – 31 January 2022

Day disrupted by electrical inspection

Day twenty-three – 1 February 2022

Visited Wellcome Collection library and British Library.

Books completed: Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Zwingli and Bullinger*(Westminster John Knox Press, 1953).

Wallace M. Jr Alston and Michael Welker, eds., *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2003).

Leanne Van Dyk, *A More Profound Alleluia: Theology and Worship in Harmony* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004).

Donald Gray, ed., *The Word in Season: The Use of the Bible in Liturgy* (Norwich: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2012).

Crispin Tickell, *Mary Anning of Lyme Regis* (Lyme Regis: Lyme Regis Philpot Museum, 1996).

H. A. Forde, *The Heroine of Lyme Regis : The Story of Mary Anning, the Celebrated Geologist* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co, 1926).

Journal articles read: W.D. Lang, 'Mary Anning of Lyme, Collector and Vendor of Fossils, 1799-1847', *Natural History Magazine* V, no. 34 (April 1935): 64-81.

Thomas W. Goodhue 'Mary Anning: the fossilist as exegete', *Endeavour* March 2005

Thomas W. Goodhue 'The faith of a fossilist', *Anglican & Episcopal History* 20 (March 2001), 80-100

Thomas W. Goodhue 'Mary Anning's Commonplace Book', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* 138 (2017), 64-66.

Torrens, H. 'Mary Anning (1799-1847) of Lyme; 'the greatest fossilist the world ever knew' ', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 28(3) (1995)., 257-284.

Day twenty-four – 2 February 2022

Questionnaire closed, methodology discussed, and results tidied up for analysis.

Day twenty-five – 3 February 2022

Books completed: Shelley Emling, *The Fossil Hunter* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
Elliot Vernon, *London Presbyterians and the British Revolutions, 1638-64* (Manchester University Press, 2021).

Day twenty-six – 4 February 2022

Second advanced driving lesson

Books completed: G. Tellini, ed., *A Four Year Lectionary* (Norwich: Canterbury Press Norwich, 1990).

Day twenty-seven – 5 February 2022

Domestic and family day.

Day twenty-eight – 6 February 2022

Attended 8 am Holy Communion at St Thomas-on-the Bourne, and 11 am livestream from Priesthill URC, Glasgow.

Day twenty-nine – 7 February 2022

Various odds and ends.

Day thirty – 8 February 2022

Visited the Bodleian Library, Oxford

Books completed: Tom Sharpe, *The Fossil Woman: A Life of Mary Anning* (S.I.: The Dovecote Press, 2021).

Christopher Powell, *Lyme Regis Monographs* (United Kingdom: FeedARead.com Publishing, 2018).

William Densham, *The Story of the Congregational Churches of Dorset, by W. Densham and J. Ogle.* (Bournemouth, 1899).

Day thirty-one – 9 February 2022

Thinking and writing

Day thirty-two – 10 February 2022

Books completed: Christopher J. Cocksworth and Rosalind Brown, *Being a Priest Today: Exploring Priestly Identity* (Norwich: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2006).

Frederick Levison, *God to Glorify, A: Notes on Being a Parish Minister* (Haddington: St Bernard Press, 2000).

Robert S Paul, *Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965).

PEEL D. R., *Ministry for Mission* (Northern College, 2003).

Alan P. F. Sell, *One Ministry, Many Ministers: A Case Study from the Reformed Tradition* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

Tony Tucker, *Reformed Ministry: Traditions of Ministry and Ordination in the United Reformed Church* (London: United Reformed Church, 2003).

Richard Baxter, *Reformed Pastor* (Banner of Truth, 2020).

Andrew Pratt, *SCM Studyguide: Practical Skills for Ministry*, Stg edition (London: SCM Press, 2010).

Michael Ramsey, *The Christian Priest Today*, 2nd edition (London: SPCK Publishing, 1999).

Hubert Cunliffe Jones, *The Congregational Ministry in the Modern World. An Interpretation by Past Students and Present Staff of the Yorkshire United Independent College, Bradford. Edited by ... H. Cunliffe-Jones, Etc* (London: Independent Press, 1955).

John Pritchard, *The Life and Work of a Priest*, First Edition (SPCK Publishing, 2007).

Eugene H. Peterson, *The Pastor: A Memoir*, Reprint edition (HarperOne, 2011).

Emma Percy, *What Clergy Do: Especially When It Looks Like Nothing* (SPCK Publishing, 2014).

Journal articles completed: "Reverend John Gleed (1785–1870), Independent minister and fossil trader of Lyme Regis," *Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society Proceedings* 142 (2021). Pp. 79-90

Day thirty-three – 11 February 2022

Third advanced driving lesson.

Preparing for trip to Keld.

Days thirty-four to forty – 12-19 February 2022

"Down time" – resting at the Old Manse, Keld, Swaledale.

Day forty-one – 20 February 2022

Attended service at Spire Church Farnham, as longstanding member was leaving the area.

Day forty-two – 21 February 2022

Process and sorting information.

Day forty-three – 22 February 2022

Visited Natural history Museum Library.

Books completed: James Small, *A Voice from the Tomb. A Sermon [on Heb. Xi. 4] Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. J. Wheaton ... to Which Is Added a Short Memoir of His Life* (Axminster: J. Conder, 1818).

Thomas W. Goodhue, *Fossil Hunter: The Life and Times of Mary Anning (1799-1847)* (Bethesda: Academica Press, 2004).

Day forty-four – 23 February 2022

Books completed: Bryan D Spinks, *Scottish Presbyterian Worship: Proposals for Organic Change 1843 to the Present Day* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 2020).

John Adair, *101 Great Ideas for Growing Healthy Churches* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2012).

Day forty-five – 24 February 2022

Thinking and reading.

Day forty-six – 25 February 2022

Thinking and reading.

Day forty-seven – 26 February 2022

Domestic and family day. Isolated by Covid.

Day forty-eight – 27 February 2022

Isolated by Covid, listened to Daily Devotions service.

Day forty-nine – 28 February 2022

Isolated by Covid. Resting and thinking.

Day fifty – 1 March 2022

Isolated by Covid. Book completed: Fritz West, *Scripture and Memory: The Ecumenical Hermeneutic of the Three-Year Lectionaries* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1997).

Day fifty-one – 2 March 2022

Isolated by Covid. Resting and thinking.

Day fifty-two – 3 March 2022

Isolated by Covid. Books completed: Christopher H. B. Byworth, ed., *Using the Bible in Worship: 11* (Bramcote: Grove Books Ltd, 1977).

Trevor Lloyd et al., *Introducing the New Lectionary: Getting the Bible into Worship*, 1st edition (Cambridge: Grove Books Ltd, 1997).

Day fifty-three – 4 March 2022

Isolated by Covid. Books completed: Laurence Hull Stookey, *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

Adrian Nocent, *A Rereading of the Renewed Liturgy*, trans. Mary M. Misrahi (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1994).

Day fifty-four – 5 March 2022

Domestic and family day. Isolated by Covid.

Day fifty-five – 6 March 2022

Domestic and family day. Isolated by Covid,

Day fifty-six – 7 March 2022

Thinking, processing, and writing.

Day fifty-seven – 8 March 2022

Visited the Library of the Institute of Historical Research.

Book completed: Michael Vasey, *Reading the Bible at the Eucharist* (Bramcote, Notts.: Grove Books Ltd, 1986).

Day fifty-eight – 9 March 2022

Thinking, processing, and writing.

Day fifty-nine– 10 March 2022

Thinking, processing, and writing.
Advanced Driving lesson four.

Day sixty– 11 March 2022

Book completed: James Robertson, *The Testament of Gideon Mack*, (London: Penguin, 2007).

Day sixty-one– 12 March 2022

Domestic and family day.

Day sixty-two– 13 March 2022

Attended eucharist at St. John's Hale.

Day sixty-three– 14 March 2022

Visited John Rylands Library.
Reading and writing at Gladstone's Library.

Day sixty-four– 15 March 2022

Reading and writing at Gladstone's Library.

Day sixty-five– 16 March 2022

Reading and writing at Gladstone's Library.

Day sixty-six– 17 March 2022

Writing up. Appointed as a Research Associate at Westminster College. Fifth Advanced Driving lesson.

Day sixty-seven– 18 March 2022

Writing up.

Day sixty-eight– 19 March 2022

Domestic and family day.

Day sixty-nine– 20 March 2022

Attended Book of Common prayer Holy Communion at St. Andrew's church.

Day seventy – 21 March 2022

Attended Leading Your Church Into Growth course.

Day seventy-one – 22 March 2022

Attended Leading Your Church Into Growth course.

Day seventy-two – 23 March 2022

Attended Leading Your Church Into Growth course.

Day seventy-three – 24 March 2022

Processing and writing up.
Zoom meeting to discuss ministry with the Revd Dr Paul Beasley-Murray.

Day seventy-four – 25 March 2022

Processing and writing up.

Day seventy-five – 26 March 2022

Domestic and family day.

Day seventy-six – 27 March 2022

Attended 9.15 am service at St James's Church Rowledge.

Day seventy-seven – 28 March 2022

Processing and writing up. Walking.

Day seventy-eight – 29 March 2022
Processing and writing up. Walking.

Day seventy-nine – 30 March 2022
Processing and writing up. Walking.

Day eighty – 31 March 2022
Processing and writing up.

Day eighty-one – 1 April 2022
Processing and writing up.