

# THE FRIENDS OF JULIAN OF NORWICH

## Christmas Newsletter 2022

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*A message from the Chair, Shirley Buxton CJN*

**Dear Friends & Companions,**

**'In all this I was greatly stirred in love for all my fellow Christians, for I wanted them to know and see the same as I saw, so it would comfort them. For this sight was shown for all the world.'** RDL Ch. 8.

These words of Julian are at the heart of the Friends of Julian. Julian felt her calling was to share her 'shewings' with her 'even' Christians. As we approach the 650th year since Julian received her 'shewings', plans are underway to further Julian's desire to make known the endless love of God.

Much of this newsletter is dedicated to outlining Julian events for 2023. The Julian Partnership, together with the Friends of Julian aim to have a more detailed programme to share with you by Spring 2023. Events early in next year include an online retreat organized by the Companions and the 2023 online Lent Book Group. Please note that the **Julian Festival will be on Saturday 13th May** (changed from 6th May due to the Coronation of King Charles III), with events in the preceding week.

There is good news from Josiah about the opening of All Hallows House and the refurbished Julian Centre. It was a joy to use the Julian Centre during a half day retreat with Revd Robert Fruehwirth in November. Other events have included: the prestigious New Visions of Julian Conference held in Oxford; the Julian Autumn Retreat lead by Gill Butterworth; and Julian featuring in the Parish Flower Festival.

I wish to thank all those who are working so hard to create a truly wonderful Julian 650 celebration and, to the Christmas Message from Fr. Richard, I would like to add my prayer and greetings to you all.





# LIFE AT ST JULIAN'S

From Josiah English, Resident Steward, All Hallows Guest House & Julian Shrine

On 1st October, we hosted the Bishop of Norwich at the Julian Shrine, followed by a blessing of All Hallows Guesthouse and a drinks reception in the Julian Centre to celebrate the hard work of all those involved in the project. This was followed by an open afternoon at All Hallows.

The rejuvenation of the Julian Shrine campus continues steadily. At the end of July, All Hallows Guesthouse opened for bookings, and we were astonished to host more than seventy different guests in August and September, with the vast majority having no prior connection to Lady Julian. I am pleased we are spreading knowledge and appreciation of Julian to those in our city and beyond.

In addition to being open for guests, the chapel at All Hallows has once again sprung into life, with compline said on Fridays and a mass (usually) on the first Wednesday of each month. It was delightful to fill the chapel on 16th September for the first mass after reopening, and the first in over four years, which was followed by celebratory refreshments.

When I came to All Hallows House last September to interview for

the position of Resident Steward, I confess to great excitement at the sight of the fireplace in the sitting room. The comfort of a roaring fire on a chilled autumn evening has already brought great joy to the house and all who are in it. To join us, bookings can be made at [allhallowsnorwich.co.uk](http://allhallowsnorwich.co.uk)

It is with great relief that I announce that the works at the Julian Centre have been completed with bright lighting and efficient heating. It was open for refreshments on 12th November when Robert Fruehwirth hosted a Quiet Half-Day in St Julian's Church. We have had multiple enquiries about hiring the centre, in addition to the plans being made for using the centre as part of our service to the local community. We are now preparing for the shop and visitor centre to reopen, and are recruiting volunteers. For everyone who has already expressed their interest, thank you - we will be in touch soon! For anyone local considering renewing or beginning an involvement at the Julian Shrine and in the Julian Centre shop in particular, we would love to hear from you!

[josiah.english@julianofnorwich.org](mailto:josiah.english@julianofnorwich.org)



# THE CLOTH OF KINDNESS

From Sally-Anne Lomas, Trustee

**The original Cloth of Kindness was made for the Exhibition Julian of Norwich: Creativity and Compassion in 2015. Stories and words of kindness and compassion were stitched onto soft fabric and made into a quilt so that people could snuggle underneath it and be 'enfolded in love'.**

Since then, the Cloth of Kindness has become a community-based textile art and well-being project making Cloths of Kindness for hospitals, care homes, cancer centres, and mental health institutions. Sewing uplifting words in the company of others is soothing and enhances well-being. The finished Cloth becomes a legacy gifted by participants to those who come after them. Find out more at our website [www.clothofkindness.co.uk](http://www.clothofkindness.co.uk)

It seemed fitting that for 2023 the Cloth of Kindness project should return to its origins. We are making a Cloth of Kindness to celebrate the 650th anniversary of the writing of Revelations of Divine Love. The finished Cloth will be kept in the Julian Centre to enfold visiting pilgrims in words of compassion and comfort.

So far we have given out over 300 sewing packs to participants as far away as the US, Canada, and Australia. If you'd like to contribute a patch, please request a pack from

[clothofkindness@gmail.com](mailto:clothofkindness@gmail.com). It includes everything you need and how-to instructions. We have also been holding Sewing with Compassion workshops at the Julian Centre with participants coming from as far afield as Birmingham and Belgium.

Perhaps the most rewarding part of this project has been working with very vulnerable groups of local women. Our workshops with female sex workers at the Doorway Project have been very popular. The young women have found them to be a source of comfort in their often chaotic lives. As part of the legacy of Julian 650 we are hoping to extend this part of the project. We plan to spend more time with these young women next year and help them to make their own Cloth of Kindness for their fellow service users. We have also had workshops with staff at the nearby Sue Lambert Trust who work with survivors of domestic abuse.

No more than very basic sewing skills are needed. Everyone can contribute. We love best the awkwardly stitched wonky patches. It's together that we make something beautiful. We are all stitched together by love. Have a go - sew your story of compassion - get stitched into a legacy of Julian's understanding of love.



## 650th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS MARKING JULIAN'S SHEWINGS IN 1373

From Howard Green, Secretary of Friends of Julian and Partnership Representative

Next year is a special anniversary of that long spring night when a young woman nearly died in Norwich and, in her extremis, experienced visions of God, alarming and comforting in equal measure. Of course, then followed the amazing story of her writing her book, *The Revelations of Divine Love*, and of the text surviving against all the odds into the 21st century. Equally amazing, I'm sure to Julian as well as to us, is the flowering of interest in her insights into God and the Christian life, coinciding as it does with an unprecedented rise in atheism, and agnosticism, and scepticism in the developed world.

### **The Julian of Norwich Partnership.**

We're very pleased that in 2023 Norwich Cathedral, the Diocese of Norwich, the Parish of St John the Baptist, Timberhill with St Julian's Norwich, the Community of All Hallows, and the Friends of Julian are able to pull together a fitting celebration of this event: Julian650.

**Near you!** Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see a warm welcome to join with marking 2023 where you live so that the programme truly represents the worldwide interest in Julian's distinctive wisdom. In and around Norwich, though, we have a few things that are coming together in time for publishing the actual programme by the end of February 2023.

**Conference and Retreat delivered by the Companions of Julian.** Our programme kicks off with a three-part, two-day, online retreat: *What Does Julian Presence Mean Today?* This will happen at Candlemas on

2nd and 3rd February 2023 – the first event in the Julian650 celebrations. More details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

**Julian Lectures.** Normally we have just one Julian Lecture a year; next year we are planning half a dozen, one a month from May to October. These will originate mostly in Norwich, but not exclusively. All will be recorded in one form or another and published on our YouTube channel. The invited speakers are:

*Juliana Dresvina*, freelance academic who has translated Julian into Russian

*Veronica Mary Rolf*, American author and podcaster

*Dr Sarah Salih*, Co-Director of the Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies at King's College, London

*Mary Sharratt*, novelist, now living in Portugal, "writing women back into history"

**Professor Philip Sheldrake**, FRSA FRHistS, religious historian and theologian.

**Dwelling Longer Book Group.** We will be inviting people afresh to join our online Julian Book Group, *Dwelling Longer*, which will be following guided readings from Lisa Dahill's 40-Day Journey with Julian Norwich from the beginning of the anniversary year through until July.

**Marking Lent 2023.** In addition to the above, we shall also be hosting a Lent Book Group focussing on Sister Elizabeth Ruth Obbard's book *Through Julian's Window*. This will run from Ash Wednesday to Holy Week, and will be delivered, like *Dwelling Longer*, via Zoom. Give thought to marking Lent with Julian next year and joining others who are doing the same.

**In-person Reading of Julian, Shewing by Shewing.** Some of you may remember that, before COVID-19 there was a monthly in-person book group which read through the Revelations of Divine Love, one at a time (though we scheduled another one for the parable of the Servant and his Lord). Well, we got half way through before it became impossible to meet, so we are going to be resurrecting this gathering in the Julian Centre in Norwich and pick up where we left off!

**Responding to Julian's Shewings in Art.** Linked to the above was an Art Group, which will also restart, meeting monthly in the Julian Centre. We plan to meet two weeks before the scheduled Reading of Julian, with art materials and time set aside to express yourself and your response to the forthcoming section of Julian's writing.

**Pilgrimage.** We are also going to be clarifying and collating a number of pilgrimage options available to everyone, across the county of Norfolk, and across the City of Norwich. Why not consider marking the 650th Anniversary on the move, with your copy of the Revelations in your knapsack to fill your thoughts, and with our leaflets to guide your feet?

**Festal Service at Norwich Cathedral.** On Sunday 7th May, the day after the Coronation, Norwich Cathedral is hosting a special service to mark the anniversary with all the ceremony that it deserves. We have hopes for choral music set to Julian's words to feature during this event and indeed at other times during the year. It's lovely that the unique choral tradition within the Church of England has been enriched in the last few years by quite a number of new Julian compositions.

**'Julian Week'.** The week between and around the first two weekends of May 2023 will form Julian Week. If you're thinking of visiting Norwich, that would be the time to come. Don't forget that you can now stay at All Hallows House, right next door to St Julian's Church and her Cell - but you need to book early! We hope to see many of you.

**Julian Hymns.** The Friends of Julian published a booklet a while ago of hymns reflecting Julian's words. We shall be re-printing these and making them part of a liturgy resource pack for Churches anywhere that wants to avail themselves of it.





# MARGERY KEMPE 1373-1438

*'The anchoress was an expert in such things and could give good advice'* (BMK I: 18)

From Luke Penkett CJN,  
Hon. Sec. Margery Kempe Society,  
Curator of The Margery Kempe Centre

**It is well-known that in about 1416 Margery Kempe made the 40 mile journey from her birthplace of King's Lynn to Norwich, in order to find out from Julian if her own revelations were divine or demonic, because she was 'an expert in such things and could give good advice'.**

Julian assured her that they were indeed divine, and that Margery's soul was the 'seat' of the Holy Spirit. Julian and Margery enjoyed 'much holy conversation through talking about the love of our Lord Jesus Christ for the many days that they were together'.

At our recent Julian Meeting in Julian's Cell, it was appropriate that their meeting was the focus of our meditation and contemplation, since two days earlier had been the Commemoration of Margery Kempe.

King's Lynn witnessed a wonderful celebration in St Margaret's Church (a.k.a. King's Lynn Minster) – where Margery had worshipped – rounded off by riotous scenes from Elizabeth MacDonald's fictionalised life of the mystic, *Skirting Heresy*, a truly empathic novel written with great sensitivity and understanding. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by the large and appreciative audience. In the three weeks leading up to

the evening of November 9th, we had great pleasure in listening to three talks, given by Susan Maddock, Paul Richards, and me. Wednesday marked the launch of the Margery Kempe Centre at St Margaret's, displaying fellow CJN Richard Norton's sculpture inspired by Margery's tears, and a facsimile of the unique manuscript of her Book. There were many leaflets including introductions to Margery, her life, and her prayers, in addition to housing virtually all the books, and chapters in books, on Julian's contemporary, and being the home of the Margery Kempe Society.

The year ahead will see other talks, children's work, book launches, the unveiling of a sculpture of Margery herself, and more in honour of one of Lynn's most fascinating daughters. And might we see, in time, the same journey re-made, from Lynn to Norwich, or to the pre-eminent medieval pilgrimage site of Walsingham?



# COMPANIONS' REPORT

FROM Fr. BRUCE BATSTONE, CJN OboJN.  
Co-ordinator of the Companions

**In 2023, honouring the legacy of Julian of Norwich, we are not simply remembering the visions of a medieval woman writer in a hidden Norwich backstreet 650 years ago!**

Whilst it is easy to focus on The Revelations of Divine Love as a piece of important literature, penned by a very significant icon of English medieval mystical theology, as resonant for today as it ever was, in this Jubilee year, we are celebrating that same revelation of God's love made to each of us throughout our lives.

The Companions of Julian are an international ecumenical group of 40 women and men who seek to be drawn deeper into God's love as they make sense of this revelation of Divine Love for them, in companionship with Mother Julian.

Members of CJN will be marking this Jubilee year by hosting an online conference at Candlemas on 2nd and 3rd February and by gathering in Norwich for a retreat in September. This is as well as promoting the message of Julian in their own ways and in their own places of presence.

The online conference asks the question 'What Does Julian Presence Mean Today?'. Or put another way, 'How can we be like Julian today, as contemplative people of compassion, service and prayer?'. Hosted by the Companions of Julian, this conference is for anyone who wants to take seriously the truth that this revelation of the Divine Love continues, and dearly desires to be responded to in the hidden roads and streets of our own cities, towns and villages today. Our speakers include:

The Bishop of Norwich Bp  
Graham Usher

The Bishop of Wakefield Bp. Tony  
Robinson

Mother Hilary, Guardian of OJN  
Sister Pamela CAH

Sister Elizabeth Ruth Obbard  
OCD

Fr Colin, Community for the  
Servants of the Will of God



## ‘Comfort & Curtesie’ October Retreat

**It was a delight and privilege to welcome Canon Gill Butterworth CJN to lead our in-person retreat during October at St John the Baptist Church in Norwich.** Gill has been living, praying, and working with Julian’s Revelations of Divine Love for many years.

She helped us to look at, and reflect upon, the themes of Comfort, Courtesy, Homeliness and Hospitality in the Revelations, considering how Julian experienced these qualities encompassed within God.

Spread out over one and a half days, there was plenty of time for prayer and reflection using Gill’s excellent handouts, as well as the

opportunity to share with others in the Eucharist services at St Julian’s and St John’s.

I offer you a flavour of how the retreat was received by some of the other participants:

*“The generosity and grace of God are encapsulated within Julian’s words.”*

*“The quote that’s firmly in my mind is ‘Let us move from hostility to hospitality.’”*

*“The quiet periods gave me a precious space to meditate on my own journey and have encouraged me to revisit the Revelations of Divine Love.”*

**Lesley Mitchell, Trustee**

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## A CONFERENCE IN OXFORD: WOMEN MAKING MEMORIES

REFLECTION BY GILL BUTTERWORTH CJN

*New Visions of Julian of Norwich* describes itself as ‘the first international hybrid conference to focus solely on Julian’s writing, life contexts and influence long after her death’. It was held over two days in July at Somerville College, Oxford. I was told that there were over 60 delegates who attended in-person and a similar number who participated on-line, 40 contributors on wide-ranging aspects of Julian Studies. I consider myself privileged to have been there in person.

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There was a Welcoming Performance of some of Julian's texts set to music by modern women composers, performed by members of Somerville College Choir. This was the idea of Dr Alison Daniell and Louise Stewart of Multitude of Voyces. It was beautiful and meditative, with words sung in Middle English and in modern translation. The Friends of Julian of Norwich were among the sponsors of this event.

Dr Godelinde Gertrude Perk said in her opening remarks, 'Julian is always just around the next corner, beckoning us on'. I am already looking forward to the next conference. The full programme has been published on the Reflections page of the Julian of Norwich website: [julianofnorwich.org](http://julianofnorwich.org)

## THE NEWS IS ATWITTER

It feels somewhat odd to be sending a social media update this week (18 November), just as the world is alight with the news that following its acquisition by Elon Musk we will soon see #TwitterDown for good.

However, we currently have a thriving network of nearly 600 followers, and a further 894 on Facebook.

One of the things that we'll miss most, if we are witnessing the death of Twitter, is the way it has allowed us to interact with people outside our immediate groups. While @JuliansShowings gives us a base to post our events, links and quotations, Twitter as a whole allows us to discover literally anyone in the world who posts something mentioning Julian of Norwich. I retweet (share) a lot of those posts, and in some ways the ad hoc connections are as important as the more permanent ones.

One very exciting thing that was announced just this week is that a work based on *Revelations of Divine Love* has just been awarded an Ivor Novello! On 16 November, Dr Michelle Castelletti shared:

"I AM BURSTING WITH PRIDE! Huge congratulations @ORAsingers @suzidigby @JoMarshComposer ... and Julian of Norwich! ALL SHALL BE WELL. Indeed, all \*shall\* be well."

She was referring to Joanna Marsh's well-deserved Ivors Composer Choral Award.

So, if we are indeed living through the end times of Twitter, I shall hope to see you soon on Facebook instead, and will leave you with a link to Marsh's prize-winning piece, *All Shall Be Well*: [joannamarsh.co.uk/product/all-shall-be-well](http://joannamarsh.co.uk/product/all-shall-be-well)

Anne Welsh, Social Media Lead E: [anne.welsh@julianofnorwich.org](mailto:anne.welsh@julianofnorwich.org)



@JuliansShowings



@JuliansShowings



## JULIAN ABROAD

Note from the Trustees of the Friends of Julian in Norwich

We'd love to help promote Julian650 events across the world. If you are organising an event and would like help please get in touch - we can assist with publicity and design, and also promote your event on our website and social media platforms. Email [contact@julianofnorwich.org](mailto:contact@julianofnorwich.org)

## FROM A FRIEND IN THE U.S.

Father Bruce asked in an email about ways the 650th anniversary might be used to celebrate Julian's wisdom and to share information so I thought I would update you on my efforts in the US.

Some of you know that for 33 years I have been performing Janda's script JULIAN which I actually filmed in the cell in Norwich. Now, as a Companion I am trying to create interest and collaboration for performances around the country to mark this 650th year.

I work with Episcopalians (who are mostly crazy about J!!) seminaries, universities and Presbyterian churches, since that has been where my ministry has lived since my ordination in 1985. I just gave a performance here in Santa Fe to a 'full house' - which shows that interest is stirring for this anniversary year. I have already booked Minneapolis MN and Seattle WA for 2023 and am in conversations with Princeton NJ, Washington DC, Louisville KY, Chicago IL, Madison WI, Naples FL, Asheville NC. We will see what kinds of creative ideas come for expanding upon the performance so that the sponsoring organizations create a JULIAN FESTIVAL 2023 including special worship, classes, ecumenical gatherings or retreats.

If you have US connections/ideas to suggest, I would welcome them. I am still savoring the joy of being with you all at my induction as a Companion in May. Blessings to all.

**Linda Loving CJN**



## REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

Greetings from Australia where we respectfully acknowledge our First Nations people who belong to the oldest continuous culture in the world. We thank them for their care of our country and may we learn from their wisdom.

Australian Friends of Julian met on the 7th November, the first Monday of the month being our usual meeting time and began a conversation as to the best way to celebrate the 650th Anniversary of Julian's Revelations in May next year, a most significant milestone indeed.

We are going to pursue the idea of having a Quiet Day with Julian in each of the capital cities of our states, at least on the mainland for now. We are all feeling very enthusiastic about this so all I can say is, 'Watch this space'.

This year we have enjoyed the reflections and insights of Friends at our monthly meetings. This, I might add has included two Friends from the UK, Glenis Lucas and Shirley Buxton. This connection with UK Friends is important to us and we are thankful to them. In September, we held our first Retreat at the Community of the Holy Name in Melbourne where some of us were able to meet face to face for the first time and benefit from the gentle ministry of the Reverend Catherine Eaton.

Some of our members have also been affected significantly by the terrible floods that have occurred in eastern Australia as climate change continues to impact our fragile planet.

Recovery is taking a very long time.

On behalf of Australian and New Zealand Friends of Julian, we wish you a Joyful Advent and Happy Christmas.

**Barbara Lumley CJN**

# CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

From the Priest Director, Fr Richard Stanton

Dear Friends,

'The bells of waiting Advent ring' and they find an echo in our hearts and minds as we enter into the experience of God's ancient People who longed for the coming of One who would change everything, who would establish the Lord's justice and righteousness. In one sense I think of the cell in St Julian's as an Advent place, a place of waiting – in R.S. Thomas' memorable phrase, 'waiting for the God to speak; the air a staircase for silence.' Silence is necessary before we can hear the Word which is spoken; St John of the Cross said, 'The Father uttered one Word; that Word is his Son: and he utters him for ever in everlasting silence, and in silence the soul has to hear it.' In the cell's medieval predecessor, Julian of Norwich 'waited upon the Lord' for many years, waited for his Spirit to draw out the love which was his meaning in the Shewings she experienced in May 1373.

That Advent spirit still imbues the cell today, as those who are drawn there to encounter the living God in silence and sacrament can attest. There is

perhaps a paradox here: entering the cell with Julian, we put ourselves into a posture of waiting 'for the God to speak', conscious of our poverty and hoping to be counted among those whom Jesus called blessed because they know their need of God, without whom we will 'always be in want' – and yet we can only be drawn there precisely because he is already at work within us, closer than the air we breathe.

A good prayer for Advent, which we use in the Daily Office, asks: 'Almighty and merciful God, let neither our daily work nor the cares of this life prevent us from hastening to meet your Son.' By responding to those who need our care, by setting ourselves to listen afresh to the message of the Kingdom and to act upon it, by working for peace in our homes and communities, by seeking the promised presence of Christ in the Sacrament of his love, let us go out together with lighted lamps to greet the Bridegroom who (as Julian put it) fell into the Virgin's womb for love of us.

I wish you a joyful Advent and, when it comes, a blessed Christmas.

**Fr Richard**



## MERRY CHRISTMAS!

The Trustees of the Friends of Julian of Norwich would like to thank you for your support during 2022 and to wish you all a safe, healthy and blessed Christmas and New Year.

## THE FRIENDS OF JULIAN OF NORWICH

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