

# Martin Way Methodist Church

Newsletter – May 2003

Minister – Rev Anne Rusbridge

Dear friends,

As usual preparing for Easter was very busy, and I would like to thank all the people who helped in preparing and leading worship during Holy Week and Easter. I would also like to thank the members of Martin Way who so willingly joined others in worship so that we could cope with staff shortages. The Easter message is about resurrection and new life. This always involves change, sometimes quite dramatic change. I felt that joining together with others enriched our worship, and perhaps the situation we encountered this year might prompt us to make some changes in the way we worship at festival times? You may like to think about it!

The Lent series 'Walking with Jesus' held on Thursday afternoons was very well supported and I enjoyed it tremendously. After the Easter break the 'Seekers' group will return to their regular meeting times on the first and third Thursday afternoons of each month at 2.30 pm. We shall be doing the 'Essence' course during May, June and July, which is about exploring our faith using similar activities to the Lent series. If you would like to join us on a Thursday afternoon you will be made very welcome.

My best wishes to you all

Anne

'ESSENCE' course: Seekers Group

- 1 May            The journey so far
- 15 May          The journey within
- 5 June           The journey to a better world
- 19 June         The journey to wholeness
- 3 July            The journey to spirituality
- 17 July          The journey to the future

## Letter From The District Chairman

This year marks a significant anniversary for us as we celebrate the tercentenary of the birth of John Wesley in 1703. There has already been a special Songs of Praise recorded at the Albert Hall. The four London Districts will be holding their own celebration at St. Paul's Cathedral on 25 May; and there will be a national service at Lincoln Cathedral on 17 June. In addition, circuits and churches are planning events to commemorate the man who founded the Methodist movement and has profoundly shaped our identity as a Church.

Now part of me - in the spirit of Sellar and Yeatmans' 1066 and All That - thinks that this is 'a good thing'. Ever since I was a child, I have enjoyed learning about history, and Church history continues to fascinate me. At Christmas I was given a copy of Roy Hattersley's new biography of Wesley, 'A Brand from the Burning'. Hattersley writes from the viewpoint of a secular historian, more interested in the social impact of Methodism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than in what he dismissed in a recent radio programme as 'all the mystical stuff'. His is the view of an outsider. And although I found Hattersley's emphases on Wesley's disastrous relationships with women and his perceived doctrinal instability rather tendentious after a while, I had to concede that he had made a fair point about the former, but had not given Wesley enough credit for his intellectual readiness to wrestle with theological ideas throughout his life - not a bad quality in a preacher and pastor, all things considered.

The book is now back on the shelf - along with other books about Wesley and the history of Methodism, nationally and locally. We are one of the most documented of all Christian Churches! This leads the other part of me to think that too much of this is 'a bad thing'. I am not saying that our history is not important; the point is that we should not be imprisoned by it. The 'rock from which we were hewn' should not become a millstone around our necks. There is always the danger that we could misuse the tercentenary celebrations to indulge in a feast of retrospective nostalgia - a hankering after the good old days. What matters now is our present context for the mission of the Church. After all, that was Wesley's prime concern in the eighteenth century. He speaks to us across three hundred years about the timelessness of the gospel - supremely about the grace of God in Christ; he encourages us to create communities which nurture

people and enable them to flourish; he challenges us robustly about God's demands for social justice and how we are to live together humanely; he provokes us to be flexible and pragmatic about the inevitable structures we put in place to enable those things to happen. All these are 'a good thing' - they are about our calling now.

There is another aspect of this tercentenary year, which for me touches on our present context: and that is the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. This rather prim, proper and buttoned Anglican priest never intended to found a separate Church, but after his death in 1791, separation was all but inevitable. The history of nineteenth century Methodism - as it splintered into more and more 'disconnexions' - is not very edifying. Seventy years ago, with Methodist union, we repaired some of our own internal relationships. I believe that the Covenant offers us an opportunity to heal memories and undertake some further repairs to the external relationship between our two churches. Over the last year we have discussed the Covenant at local church and circuit level, at the Joint Synod between the Surrey circuits in our District and the Anglican Diocese of Guildford on 29 March, and most recently at our District Synod on 12 April. We now await the outcome of the debates at the Methodist Conference and the General Synod of the Church of England in the summer. I hope and pray that together we shall be able to embark on the next stage of the ecumenical journey. This is not to pretend that for both Churches there are not still significant obstacles to be overcome. But if, as the Covenant affirmations state, we affirm each other wholeheartedly as authentic churches - something we have never been able to do until now - then that cannot be unsaid. Our histories will have changed; and so will the future pattern of our relationship. I believe that will also be 'a good thing'.

*Best wishes*  
*John Swarbrick*

## **Wheels For The World Update**

On the evening of our Supper Club Service we raised the magnificent total of £525. With money previously donated, that brought our total to £632.30, so we have already raised the cost of twenty-one wheelchairs.

Thank you most sincerely if you have already donated a wheelchair. I'm sure that it will be greatly needed and greatly appreciated wherever it is

sent. Our fund-raising goes on until the end of the year so will you please consider donating another one? Simply by setting aside one pound each week you will have another £30 saved by December. Please support the Men's Supper Club in this very worthy effort. You will provide a wheel chair for someone you will never know or never meet and that person won't be able to give you anything in return. Come to think of it, isn't that what Christian giving is all about?

*Bill Cox*

## **Note of Thanks**

I would like to thank you all on behalf of Hetty Fincham for your kind thoughts in sending her birthday cards for her 94th birthday.

*Christine [Fincham]*

## **Congratulations**

Many congratulations to Freda and Ken Hagon who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 4 April

## **News From Our Neighbours**

Saturday 31 May      St. James' Summer Fair 11am-2 pm

Saturday 7 June      St. Mary Merton Summer Fair: from 11 am on the Glebe field

## **Alexander House**

From 1 April Alexander House, the home in Clifton Road formerly run by the Free Church Federal Council, will be managed by Keychange, a Christian organisation with much experience in the running of residential homes. The retiring committee is delighted - and most relieved - that the home will continue to provide loving care for the residents.

The committee intend to reorganise into the Friends of Alexander House in order to support the residents by continuing to organise events and outings, and by raising extra funds. They look forward to continued support at the events and would encourage you to consider enrolling as individual Friends.

*For more information see John or Jean Butland.*

## **Church Anniversary Concert With 'Sweet And Low'**

'Sweet and Low and Friends' will be returning to Martin Way to help support Christian Aid and celebrate our anniversary with an evening of popular music, on Saturday 10th May at 7 pm. This will be preceded by a light supper served from 5.30 pm onwards and included in the programme price of £6 (children half price). There will also be some refreshment at the break.

The music will include songs by Rogers and Hammerstein, Ivor Novello, and Lehar sung by Josie Hinchey, whose radio work with the BBC has included 'Melodies for You' with David Jacobs. Most of the programme will be new, and 'Sweet and Low' have lots of unusual arrangements of music for your delight such as 'Yesterday' and 'When I'm Sixty Four' by Lennon and McCartney. We think you will also have fun listening to 'She didn't say Yes' by Jerome Kern and several familiar spirituals and old favourites in unusual guise. We have included some instrumental items and a lively piano duo. The concert will end just after 8.30 pm.

Programmes are available from Valerie and Graham Currie, Lesley Mortley and Mike Rusbridge. Please book quickly to help with the catering. Bring along all your friends too!

*Graham Currie*

## **Christian Aid Week: 11-18 May**

World poverty is such a huge problem that sometimes we're tempted to despair and think nothing can be done, But there are things we can do.

As a result of campaigning by individuals and groups over the past few years more than, 18.5 billion of poor countries' debt has been cancelled, leading to a 70 per cent rise in spending on health care; sales of fairly traded products by supermarkets have increased more than 15-fold; seven of the UK's largest supermarkets have committed themselves to working for better standards for producers in developing countries.

The campaign for trade justice was launched in 2001 and action by individual campaigners has helped it grow in an exciting way:- in the UK 54 organisations have joined the Trade Justice Movement; supporters have sent 57,000 postcards to the Department of Trade and Industry; more than 12,000 people turned up for last year's mass lobby of Parliament at Westminster, lobbying over half the MPs.

Thanks to ordinary people who take the time to write a postcard or come to rally, or who simply wear a badge, trade rules are becoming news. Politicians have been shown in no uncertain manner that people want to see change

The Christian Aid walk is on 18 May and is called 'Circle the City'. It starts and finishes at Wesley's Chapel. Mike Rusbridge and Gwen Wildman are walking. They would be glad to hear from others who might like to join them - and they need sponsors, the more the merrier!

## **Circuit Notice**

Following a recent interview Rev Stan Brown has been appointed as full time ecumenical chaplain to Kingston University with effect from September 2003. This is an exciting opportunity for him to work in the university on behalf of all the Christian churches. It does mean, however, that Stan will be leaving the Wimbledon Circuit one year earlier than we had expected and approval has now been given by a Connexional Committee for this to happen. We will now be saying good-bye to both Anne and Stan this summer as well as looking forward to welcoming Faith and John Nyota. Barrie Tabraham of course remains with us as Superintendent Minister with pastoral charge responsibilities at Christ Church with St. Philips, Worcester Park

The Circuit Stewards have already begun work with our Ruxley and Stoneleigh churches and the Chairman of the District to seek a new minister to come to our circuit in September 2003. Although there isn't very much time we are hopeful that someone will be found.

Please pray for everyone involved in the process of stationing ministers, for our Circuit Leadership Team, for all ministers moving to new appointments this summer and for all churches welcoming new ministers.

*Jenny Jackson: on behalf of the Circuit Stewards*

## **Letter From The Nyota Family**

Dear Rosemary

You asked me about the kind of ministry we are involved in at St. Peters, Nairobi.

This is a circuit in the Southern part of Nairobi. I am the senior minister as well as the superintendent. I came here three years ago and there have been a number of happenings to celebrate which I have been part of. We have developed a Vision and Mission of the church. We want to become a people changed and matured in Jesus Christ growing in His glory. This we realise can only be achieved through Bible study, prayerful life, fellowship and inspired word. We have sorted out what our potential is and how we can tap it and the real and imaginary blocks which we shall have to confront as we engage on this journey.

We have now started implementing this by setting up three departments: Spiritual nurture, Church life and Administration. Through spiritual nurture we are seeing thriving fellowships, bible study groups, Agape tents, and praise and worship services in the church which are very popular with the youth. We give God all the glory for this is His doing and praise Him for the increase being registered both in spiritual and numerical aspects.

But we are determined not to become another simply inward looking thus irrelevant body. We aim at developing a thriving community church where fellow travellers in this short journey of life can come for at least weekly refuelling. And when they come we want to achieve perhaps in a small way the aspect that multiplied the early church namely 'sharing everything in common...thus no one lacked among them'. We have started implementing this by going out to the slum next to the church and we have a vibrant congregation that meets prior to the main service. We have also moved further to the Rift Valley area where the previous government did some ethnic cleansing. We are helping with the education and rehabilitation of the families. Through contributions from the church some children from the slums are now in school. We give God all the glory!

Faith works in the Eastern part of the city as the senior pastor of a church there. She is excited to have overseen the completion of a new church building there. This became necessary when the old one became too small to accommodate the numbers that were turning up for worship. The opening of this church is now set for August. She is very much involved with the Methodist leadership as a member of the standing committee, the topmost body and also as a secretary to a statutory

committee. Needless to say we lead very busy lives but make time for family and each other.

I have to stop here today as a first volume of what we are doing at St. Peter's. The next phase might have to do with how we came into the ministry and the like.

For the moment our family is on an exchange visit cum furlough in USA in readiness to be used of God together with friends in Wimbledon for the growth of the Kingdom.

How do we end this now? Perhaps with a clause which we love. It is found in the covenant service, the pride of all Wesleyans: - put me to what you will, rank me with whoever you will.

We love you friends and are very much looking forward to being joined with you soon. Sincere thanks to all who have connected with us in prayer, e-mail, thought or even an inquiry. Sincerely

*Kimathi (Kim), Njeri (Cherie), Faith and John Nyota*

We should always remember that there is no one in whom breath remains through whom God is not revealing himself. That is the only really interesting thing about any of us and underlies the unique contribution each of us makes to existence just because we are. Christians understand this as meaning that everyone can reveal something about God that no one else can.

*[Extract from a talk by the bishop of Chichester]*

## **The 300th Anniversary of John Wesley's Birth**

Have you booked Sunday 6 July? Ruxley Church in Ruxley Lane, Ewell have the honour to have been chosen as the hosts for this Circuit event and will hold an open air service in their grounds and car park. (Inside if wet). The Reverend Dr Rob Frost has kindly agreed to speak on 'Wesley and his relevance today'.

A congregation of around 200/250 people are expected to attend. The afternoon starts at 12.30 with a picnic (bring your own) followed by the service at 2pm. As well as Circuit Members, other churches in the area are also being invited as well as some representatives from the local community.

Please pray that this Celebration will be a true rejoicing in our different

Christian traditions, particularly giving thanks for our Wesleyan Heritage; and pray for the preaching of the Word, all practical arrangements and for all those helping, all those invited and especially for our witness to the local community through this event.

### Church Diary For May

Thu	1	2.30-4 pm	The Seekers
Sun	4	10.30 am	Family Service led by Bob Hamblin & Paul Harvey
Tue	6	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	7	11.15 am	Toddler Time in Church
Thu	8	8.00 pm	Mission Service Committee
Fri	9	12.30 pm	Lunch Club

### Church Anniversary weekend

Sat	10	7.00 pm	Concert by 'Sweet and Low' for Christian Aid
Sun	11	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
Mon	12	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Joyce Plant)
Tue	13	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	14	11.15 am	Communion Service
		7.45 pm	Midways (Journey into Gambia - Priscilla Vivian)
Thu	15	2.30-4 pm	The Seekers
Sat	17	10-12 am	Midways' Jumble Sale
Sun	18	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev Stan Brown
Mon	19	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mrs Dorothy Turner)
Tue	20	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - Inspector Sally Peel (Wimbledon Police)
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	23	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	25	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Mr Nevill Mynett
Tue	27	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	28	10.30 am	Bible Study
		7.45 pm	Midways (Annual General Meeting)