

MINISTER'S LETTER

As Paul is away on a Sabbatical, a number of our Leadership Team have offered to write in Paul's place for the Newsletter. This month's contributor is Tony Loft.



Do you like going on journeys?

It may be one where you have always wanted to go. Or perhaps it is one that you're not keen on taking, because you suffer from travel sickness, or it's not where you want to go, it's too long, it doesn't have interesting scenery on the way, it's... I think you see what I mean!

Well let me tell you about a journey that some people took just the other week! It all started back in the late spring of 2010, when they were invited to journey along 'Route 66', not the interstate road in America, but one nearer home, one we could all visit. So they prepared for what they thought would be an interesting journey and as the time approached the excitement increased for some if not for all of them. What will they see, what will happen, what will they learn, were some of the thoughts going through their minds.

Finally the day came to begin the journey, the journey to be with a larger community than their own, and once with that community they were invited to look into the library - it only had 66 books [talk about cuts, but seriously, these books were enough for them], covering all they would need to live their lives to the full with help and guidance, with a story of love running through them, where the characters in the books get things wrong and are given another chance, where a hero comes and sometimes has a go at the leaders of the people who don't like him and plot to kill him. But that doesn't stop him and is still determined to save the ordinary people by showing them how they should live, so that they can find complete happiness at the end of the journey – find that completeness, that everlasting love that they long for, that same love that the hero's father offers to every one of them.

By now many of you will have guessed that I'm talking about the group

of all ages from this church and circuit who attended Spring Harvest 2011 at Butlins Minehead (25 attended and for 6 of us [including little Elizabeth Turnbull] it was their first time.) to find out what ‘Route 66’ was all about. What they already knew was that there are 66 books in the Bible. [The invitation told them that fact], but apart from that they didn’t know how their time there would go, what they would find, what they would learn, would it be interesting.

During our time there we explored ways of understanding Scripture (another name for the words written in the Bible), ways we had probably not considered before.

Each day we would look at the Scripture as if it were a Sonnet [day 1] – God’s love poem to us.

[day2] That Scripture is like a Symphony – where we are not only the audience, but are part of the orchestra.

Scripture is a Screenplay [day 3] – it has a beginning, middle and an end.

The final day we looked at Scripture as a Streetmap – where the information given if interpreted correctly would keep you on the right road, the road God has mapped out for each of you.

For most of us we don’t know the Bible well and only read it [or have it read] on Sundays at church, we think it’s boring or because it was written thousands of years ago it’s irrelevant to us today. But in fact it’s an amazing collection of books, each with a gripping story to tell, [2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is God breathed and it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness*] and each book being part of a wonderful story of love that has pointers that tell us – show us how to live, each book stands on it’s own but also is part of the bigger picture.

From the moment we arrived we were invited to take part in worship, prayer, study groups, seminars and much more. Along with the fellowship encountered and the great times of sharing with each other over food or a cup of coffee we all received something from our own journeys on ‘Route 66’.

I can only speak for myself but it was a journey that has opened up the Bible to me in new ways – ways I had not thought of before, ways that help me to travel on my road of faith by what I say and do. [*Psalm 119: 105 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path'*]. It does equip us to be the light in this dark world of despair and hurting – so that the God of Abraham – the God of Jesus – the God we walk with will be seen and His love made available through us.

The Bible is like an amazing drama that comes alive to us when it comes alive in us.

Why don't you take a journey on Route 66 and see how amazing the story is – you never know it may change lives – after all as followers of Jesus we are already part of that journey!

I finish with the words from a song we sang with the children this year about how in this day and age we communicate by way of text or email, and what if God did the same?

*If God had a mobile phone and He sent you a text, what would He say?
Guess what? We already know – He's written it down, page after page.
It's called the Bible – an amazing book, it's called the Bible – take another look.*

*We'll open the pages, Lord we love to read Your story
We'll open the pages, Singing loud we'll give You glory.*

*If God sent you an email, typing away, what would it say?
Guess what? We already know – He's written it down, page after page.
It's called the Bible – an amazing book, it's called the Bible – take another look.*

*God Your Word is like a great big hug,
when I'm sad or scared it cheers me up,
Your Word is like a light that leads me home.*

*We'll open the pages, Lord we love to read Your story
We'll open the pages, Singing loud we'll give You glory.*

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Next year Spring Harvest 2012 will be looking at Church Actually - *God's brilliant idea!* Why not join us and share in a refreshing and often challenging time, but more than that soak up the experience of the whole event – If you are interested speak to me or any of the group who experienced for themselves the love and presence of God.

Blessing to you,

Tony Loft

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AN EXPLANATION OF GOD

Written by an 8-year-old named Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, CA. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment, to 'explain God.' I wonder if any of us could have done as well?

EXPLANATION OF GOD:

'One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.'

'God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.'

'God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.'

'Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church.'

'Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who

didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said OK'

'His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.'

'You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.'

'You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God!

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.'

'If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.'

'But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases...

And...that's why I believe in God.'

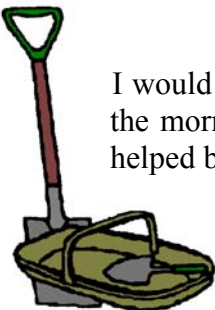
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TO ALL THE GARDENERS

I would like to thank all those who helped with the garden on the morning of 16th April. Everyone did an amazing job, not helped by poor, dry soil and the overgrown shrubs.

It is wonderful what can be achieved by a few willing helpers.

Pauline Riley





All Change at St Mary's the Virgin, Merton Park

The April issue of the St. Mary's Parish Magazine was the last which Alan Morris was the Editor. Alan has done sterling work for more years than he would care to remember in Editing St Mary's magazine and he is now stepping down to make way to new blood. From May the Editorship is to be handed over to Chris Abbott, in whose very capable hands the magazine is expected to go from strength to strength. Please send all contributions in future to Chris at chris.abbott@kcl.ac.uk

For those who may have missed any issues or articles from St Mary's Magazines, copies and excerpts from the magazine can be found online at <http://www.stmarysmerton.org.uk/parishonline/archive.htm>

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SPONSORED WALK

Maralyn and Tony Loft together with Mike and Lesley Mortley are preparing for a Sponsored Walk once again this year and if anyone else would like to join them they would be very welcome.

The walk is a circular walk of 5.5 miles which starts and finishes at St Mary-le-Bow Church, Cheapside, London. The walk takes in several of the lesser know churches in the City of London and is an enjoyable walk where one can visit some historic buildings at the same time as raising money for a good cause.

The walk is in aid of Christian Aid and takes place on 22nd May, the last Sunday of Christian Aid week. They we would love people to sign their sponsor form/s and pledge money to what is a very worth while charity who's aim is to 'FIGHT POVERTY step by step'.

If people would like any more information about the walk or Christian Aid please to speak to Tony.



Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of this years Holy Week saw a few of us attend the quiet meditative theme so beautifully put together by Brenda and Tony.

If you were not there you really did miss a treat, but we sincerely thank them both for all their devoted work in leading us at this special time.

Mary and Derek Heaton

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CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

In 2005 the report Time to Talk of God was enthusiastically received by the Methodist Conference. An expanded version was published a few months later and many local churches eagerly adopted its contents.



The desire to continue the conversation has now produced a new training course – Talking of God. Its aim is to give people more confidence when it comes to sharing the stories of their faith in everyday life. It does this by facilitating conversations about conversations, and rooting it all in the Gospels.

There are four easy-to-use sessions, complete with group members' notes, interactive activities, and PowerPoint slides. All available to download for free at the Methodist Church website at www.methodist.org. The full link to all the downloads is:

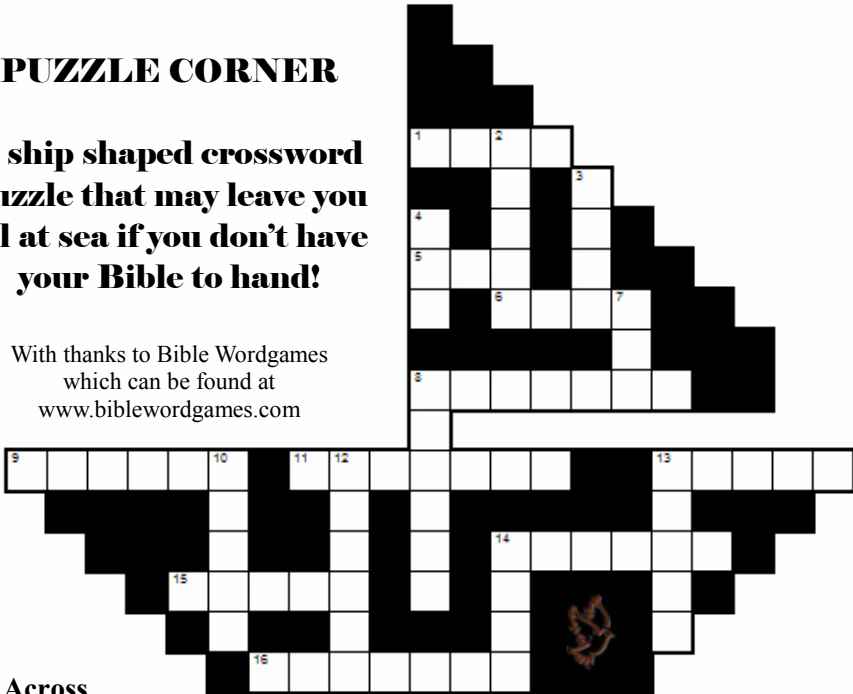
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=3400>

Joanne Cox, Evangelism in Contemporary Culture Officer, said: "We have so many opportunities to talk about how Jesus continues to transform our lives. This resource is an exciting development in helping each of us to talk of God wherever we are."

PUZZLE CORNER

A ship shaped crossword puzzle that may leave you all at sea if you don't have your Bible to hand!

With thanks to Bible Wordgames which can be found at www.biblewordgames.com



Across

- 1 We have here only five loaves of bread and two ___ (Matt 14:17)
- 5 And all that handle the ____, the mariners (Ezek 27:29)
- 6 fishermen's gear (Mark 1:18)
- 8 the ship struck a ___ and ran aground (Acts 27:41)
- 9 One of his disciples, ____, Simon Peters brother (John 6:8)
- 11 Jesus left there and went along the Sea of ___ (Matt 15:29)
- 13 "I'm going out to fish," ___ Peter told them (John 21:3)
- 14 A safe place to anchor ships (Acts 27:12)
- 15 they saw a bay with a sandy ___ Acts 27:39
- 16 they decided to run the ship ___ if they could (Acts 27:39)

Down

- 2 rear part of a ship (Acts 27:29-30)
- 3 where he found a ship bound for that ___ (Jonah 1:3)
- 4 the men did their best to ___ back to land (Jonah 1:13)
- 7 the God of heaven, who made the ___ and the land (Jonah 1:9)
- 8 weighed anchor and ___ along the shore of Crete (Acts 27:13)
- 10 roaring of the seas, the roaring of their ___ (Ps 65:7)
- 12 they lowered the sea ___ and let the ship be driven along (Acts 27:17)
- 13 Jesus crossed to the far ___ of the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1)
- 14 Your hand will lay ___ on all your enemies (Ps 21:8)

DRAKE HOUSE CLUB

Run by the Wimbledon Guild

A special May Programme being held at Drake House, which is open to everyone.

5th May - **Rosemary Evans** - Wimbledon Museum

Rosemary Evans describes the history of Wimbledon from the iron age to the present day, and explores the development of a small village on the hill to a socially desirable location in the 17th century, and the emergence of "New Wimbledon" with the coming of the railway.

12th May - **Zulema Dene** - Wimbledon at War 1939-1945

Zulema Dene reflects on her thespian role as the midwife in Willow, a 1988 American fantasy film directed by Ron Howard and produced/co-written by George Lucas.

19th May - **Drake House Film Club** - Tommy Cooper:

The Missing Pieces

An absolute treat for Tommy Cooper's fans, with rare performances of the timeless comic.

26th May - **Mark Davie - Changes in Benefits**

Mark Davie, our CAB Adviser, discusses on the changes in benefits in Housing Benefit, Incapacity Benefit and Employment Support Allowance. He may touch on the new Pension proposals which will only apply to people coming up to the new pension age when it starts in 2014.

Every Thursday in Drake House,
44 St George's Road, Wimbledon.
2.00 - 3.30pm

£3.00 entrance fee includes refreshments and a raffle.

For more information contact Helen Marti on 020 8946 0735

CHURCH DIARY



- Sun 1 10.30 am All Age Worship led by David Eagle
- Tue 3 10.30am-noon Coffee and Chat
8.00 pm Time for Prayer
- Fri 6 12.30 pm Luncheon Club
- Sun 7 10.30 am Morning Service led by Rev Liz Richardson
- CRE at Sandown Tuesday 10th - Friday 13th***
- Tue 10 10.30am-noon Coffee and Chat
8.00 pm Time for Prayer
- Christian Aid Week Sunday 15th - Saturday 21st***
- Sun 15 10.30 am Morning Worship led by Mark Williamson
6.30 pm Communion Service led by Rev Faith Nyota
- Tue 17 10.30am-noon Coffee and Chat
7.30 pm Men's Supper Club - *China's Great Wall*
- Anne Conquest
8.00 pm Time for Prayer
- Fri 20 12.30 pm Luncheon Club
- Sun 22 10.30 am Morning Worship led by Tony Loft
- CHRISTIAN AID WALK - Circle the City - please see the weekly notices for how to be a sponsor.***
- Tue 24 10.30am-noon Coffee and Chat
8.00 pm Time for Prayer
- Weds 25 7.45 pm Midways Group - *Annual General Meeting*
- Sun 29 10.30 am Morning Worship led by Valerie Ashcroft
- Tue 31 10.30am-noon Coffee and Chat
8.00 pm Time for Prayer

*Please refer to the Website (www.martinway.org.uk)
or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information*

We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday
in May a very

Happy Birthday

and especially to:



Seleso Sepanya on **3rd May**

Lesedi Sepanya on **17th May**

James Smith on **18th May**

Alex Pallister on **19th May**

Sherie Nyota on **24th May**

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The next
Taize Prayer and Praise

Meet on the 9th May

St John Fisher Church 8pm

All welcome

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READY, STEADY, GO!



International Christian Resources Exhibition
EQUIPPING AND EMPOWERING YOUR CHURCH

CRE
at
Sandown

The Christian Resources Exhibition runs from 10am Tuesday 10th May until 4.30pm Friday 13th May. For more information visit their website at www.creonline.org.uk



Walk the Walk came into being 14 years ago when just 13 women Power Walked the New York City Marathon in their bras to raise money and awareness for breast cancer. What started out as a one-off fundraising event, has blossomed into a thriving multi-million pound charity, raising to date in excess of £65 million for vital breast cancer causes.

Since making quantum leaps year on year, to date they have encouraged over 250,000 people to take on a walking challenge. The MoonWalk in London continues to support Breakthrough Breast Cancer with specific research projects, particularly The Generation Study. This is the largest study of its type and aims to track the health of over 100,000 women over a period of 40 years.

On Saturday 14th May myself and 5 friends (Rachael & Anne Conquest, Liz King, Cheryl Dunne & Jo Doyle) better known at 'The Mad Moonies' are taking on the London Moonwalk Challenge. This will be a 26 mile walk round London starting at Midnight.

I am trying to raise as much money as I can for this great cause. Please visit my own fundraising page to find out all about it - It only takes a few seconds.

http://www.walkthewalkfundraising.org/abby_herring

Thank you very much.

Love

Abby Herring

Items for the **June Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 22nd May** at the latest