

MARTIN WAY METHODIST CHURCH

NEWSLETTER, FEBRUARY 2001

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MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

One of the highlights for me of the Christmas season was the making of the new banner which has been hanging at the front of the church. This will shortly be put away to come out again next Christmas. In the meantime we hope to make another new banner to celebrate the Women's World Day of Prayer theme for 2001. It is exciting to see people expressing their faith in so many artistic and creative ways. This month we also look forward to the Pantomime, and thank Anne Conquest and her team for all the hard work and energy that has gone into this event.

February promises to be another busy month with the preparations for Lent and Easter, and we need to be mindful to take time to be still with God.

"On the wall of St. Michael le Belfrey, York is written:

'Our Father, which art in heaven, hallo'.

The rest of the word is on the next line down!"

It seems to me that is a good way to begin a conversation with God. As children it is easy to say 'Hallo, God' and then offer our prayers. As we get older we sometimes become embarrassed and reluctant to voice our prayers. Throughout January the Sunday Club have been learning about prayer and they will be sharing with us some of the things they have learned in our Family Service on 4 February. At 7.30pm the same day we begin our series 'Exploring Prayer', which is an opportunity for adults to learn and share together. Do come and join us.

May the words of St.Paul be with you throughout this month: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thess. 5, v.16.

Anne

FLEXIBLE MINISTRY

A Sunday afternoon discussion on "what is a minister for" and "should the Methodist Church be bound to provide an appointment, stipend and manse for every minister in Full Connexion" does not at first sight sound particularly exciting. But on 26 November, when a small group representing the circuit met at Martin Way to discuss the Methodist Council's report to Conference on the future of the Methodist ministry, the afternoon proved both stimulating and thought-provoking and far too short for the task in hand.

We divided into small groups to discuss a variety of topics such as whether all ministers should receive the same stipend and if so should it be based on an allowance or a salary; should the church have to provide a manse for every minister in full connexion (and if so what happens when they retire); should there be some form of contract for ministers, together with self-appraisal (as in current business practice).

As a participant with a working background of the London headquarters of an Anglican mission society I was intrigued to find parallels between ministers and mission partners (both clerical and lay). Both have to give up their independence and be willing to be sent wherever seems best to the church; both are dependent on others for their financial support and for their accommodation. Moreover for both the calling is not just for the individual but for the family. Those of us working in offices, shops or factories expect to be able to decide for ourselves where we should live, and to have freedom of action outside our working hours. We do not necessarily expect our family to be subject to the possibly critical gaze of our employer.

So should the church conform to current business practice or would that result in a shift away from the central instruction of Jesus to follow Him? And - to take it further - how far do the proposals for a more flexible ministry for the ministers apply equally to us the members of the churches? We had heard Rev. Barry Tabraham suggest ten roles for a minister. Casting aside 'leader', 'representative', or even (in some circumstances) 'scapegoat' he chose 'enabler' as the heart of the minister's task. David Eagle had pointed out that while ministers came and went the local churches remained, thus placing responsibility for Christ's presence in the neighbourhood on our shoulders not the minister's. Agreement with either of these speakers affects the part to be played by the minister as a member of the team that leads witness in the locality.

Perhaps these are some of the issues to add to the list for discussion as we at Martin Way discover where God is leading us over the next few years.

Rosemary Keen

BIBLE LANDS

In the Christmas edition of the "Star in the East" magazine (copies still in both vestibules) is a Holy Land Emergency Appeal headed "We're running out of blood and bandages". BibleLands has already sent an initial £39,000 but at least a further £150,000 is needed if children's lives, limbs, and eyesight are to be saved. To respond to this appeal, you can use the form from any "Star in the East" magazine and pay by MasterCard, Visa or CAF Card or give directly to Mary or Derek Heaton for onward transmission to BibleLands.

Please pray that the love of God breaks through the madness and misery of the Holy Land. The Lord Almighty says "Administer true justice, show mercy and compassion to one another". Zechariah 7 verse 9.

The Chief Executive Andy Jong writes in his Editorial:-

"Despite the violence, the oppression, the emotional and physical barriers that our partners in Palestine face, they seem to be blessed with a spirit of courage and hope. It is a privilege and a joy to share with them in their ministry of service and reconciliation...

As the future of Jerusalem is debated in the world's corridors of power, and fought over on the ground, please pray that any future agreement will respect the importance of this city to our Christian faith. Local church leaders fear that the deterioration of the political negotiation process has allowed the situation to develop into a religious or holy war. Apart from the irreparable damage that this will create to the fabric of the community and relationships between the three faiths, Christians themselves are being put under further pressure to leave."

Mary Heaton

RED ROSES SAY "I LOVE YOU"

February is St. Valentine's month, the patron saint of lovers, though also highly regarded by florists as they cash in on 14 February. In the language of flowers, red roses say 'I love you'. In the teaching of Jesus there are very few direct commands, but the most emphatic one is 'Love one another'. The best definition of Christian love I've ever come across is this - "to have an active concern for the well-being of all other people" and the key words in that definition are active and all. What a difference there would be in the world today if everybody adopted that attitude! A suitor who gives his girl-friend a rose on St. Valentine's day and leaves it at that will not get very far. We are called to love. As John puts it (1 John Ch3.v18) 'Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth'. There is no room for "cupboard love" in God's kingdom.

Bill Cox

PANTOMIME - JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

**Thursday 22 February to Saturday 24 February inclusive
at 7.30 pm in the Church Hall.**

Book your tickets now from Lesley and Mike Mortley (020-8540-4961)
£5 for adults and £3 for children (16 yrs and under).

Proceeds are being divided between Tadworth Court Children's Hospital
and stage lighting for our church.

Please come and support the budding thespians, musicians and stage-crew who
have been working hard for this event since September last year

EXPLORING PRAYER

Sunday 4th February at 7.30 - 9pm

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his
disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples'."
(Luke 11, v.1). The disciples could see how important prayer was to Jesus. In
this series we shall be thinking about how important prayer is to us - and begin
by looking at 'Adoration'.

We will do some practical activities to explore each theme-

We will look at the relevant scripture passages -

We will have a time of discussion -

We will share our own experiences and our difficulties -

We will worship together -

This group is open to everyone - come to the whole series or to individual
sessions - come to share or come to listen and pray silently.

Future sessions :

- Sunday 4th March 7.30pm - Confession
- Sunday 1 April 7.30pm Intercession and Petition
- Sunday 3 June 7.30pm - Meditation
- Sunday 1 July 7.30pm - contemplation

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Congratulations to

- Ivy and Bill Bass on the birth of their first great-grandson, Kier Alexander Wills on 11 November 2000.
- Alison Ellis on achieving the degree of BA (Hons) in Business Studies awarded by Bristol University at a ceremony in Bristol Cathedral in November.

Thanks to

- **Edie Winrow** who sorted 1430 cards posted in the Christmas Post Box. The money raised for the Methodist Homes for the Aged amounted to £195.
- **The Carol singers** who raised £716.27 for the National Children's Homes Action for Children. Together with the collections from the Christingle service and the Christmas Day and Christmas Eve services the grand total amounted to £890.00
- All who supported the **Happy Wanderers Concert** in December, at which £350 was raised for Christian Care in Merton.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Women's World Day of Prayer - Friday 2 March:-

The women of Samoa have prepared this year's worship based on the theme "Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action."

Martin Way will be hosting the event which is for **everyone**, men, women and children. Anne will be leading the morning service, when the speaker will be Rev Joy Males.

As it is at our own church please do your best to come.

If anyone needs transport, please see Joyce Plant 8540-4221 or Mary Heaton 8395-6130. More details in the next Newsletter

Anniversary Service

The members of the Men's Supper Club will be very pleased to see you if you join them for their Anniversary Service on Tuesday 6th March at 7.30 pm. The collection and any money raised that evening will go to the Children's Trust at Tadworth Court. Your support will be much appreciated.

Bill Cox

CHURCH DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

Sun	4	10.30 am	Family Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		07.30 pm	Prayer series (1)
Mon	5	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Tom Davis)
Tue	6	10.00 am	Ministerial Synod, New Malden
Wed	7	10.30 am	Toddlers Service
		07.45 pm	Midways (New Zealand - Pauline Riley)
Thu	8	08.00 pm	Church Council
Fri	9	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	11	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Jennifer Impey
		06.30 pm	Holy Communion led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
Mon	12	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Derek and Mary Heaton)
Tue	13	08.00 pm	Bible Study and Prayer
Wed	14	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Thu	15	08.00 pm	Local Preachers' Meeting
Sun	18	10.30 am	Holy Communion led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		06.30 pm	Sue Griffiths Recognition Service for Local Preachers
Mon	19	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Linda Rayner and friends entertain)
Wed	21	07.45 pm	Midways (Pantomime - Jack and the Beanstalk)
Thu	22	07.30 pm	Pantomime
Fri	23	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
		07.30 pm	Pantomime
Sat	24	07.30 pm	Pantomime
Sun	25	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Mr Kojo Amoah-Arko
		06.30 pm	Celebration Praise led by Mr Martin Brown
Mon	26	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Bill Cox)
Tue	27	07.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (Members' Evening)
Wed	28	10.30 am	Ash Wednesday, Lent begins

CHURCH DIARY FOR MARCH

Fri	2	10.30 am	Women's World Day of Prayer service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
Sun	4	10.30 am	Family Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		07.30 pm	Sunday Club Anniversary Prayer series (2)

Please refer to the Weekly Notice-sheet for additional information

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter (March) should be with the editor, Rosemary Keen, by **Sunday 11 February** at the latest.