

Martin Way Methodist Church

Newsletter - April 2003

Minister - Rev Anne Rusbridge

Dear friends,

There were two purchases of lemons in our house ready for Pancake Day - just to make sure I didn't forget! Consequently, we've had several 'pancake days' this year to use them up. This tradition, which began a very long time ago, has been maintained far more seriously than the practice of fasting throughout Lent for which it was originally designed. In fact, today we are far more likely to go out and purchase the ingredients specially in order to make pancakes rather than using up store-cupboard items. This year the supermarkets were selling ready-made batter in tubs together with sugar and lemons or ready-made pancakes with a variety of toppings. Instead of preparing for a fast, we make a celebration of feeding ourselves well.

I came across a poem recently by Robert Herrick, written in the 1600's, which is a very clear reminder of what Lent is about. It questions whether a true Lent is to keep the larder clean or fast from strife, old debate and hate? Lent is about cleansing our lives and preparing to make a new start in our Christian journey. It is not about starving ourselves of food, but starving ourselves of sin. It is a reminder of the danger of ritually saying words in worship without a change of heart. If we fast properly we will be hungry for God. Any fasting of food, such as chocolates and biscuits, only has merit if we give what we would have spent to feed others.

Isaiah chapter 58 is a helpful passage to read to reflect on the purpose of fasting. Lent is an opportunity for us to re-assess the state of our soul, and as we fast from all indulgences, gossip, anger, apathy, bitterness, we are cleansing our bodies and minds so that it is God who is at the centre of our lives. It can be painful to admit that there are things wrong in our lives that are preventing us from being the people God created us to be, but the joy of the resurrection is before us and should encourage us to persevere.

At the end of this month we will be celebrating Easter. As we reflect on all the stories of the resurrection appearances, I pray that the joy of the risen Lord will give you a sense of excitement, new-beginnings, and encourage you to walk even more confidently with the Lord during this next year. With every blessing,

Anne

Pastoral Care

Valerie Currie and Bill Goodrum have decided that the time has come for them to step down from their responsibilities as class leaders and we thank them for all the work they have done over the years in being a part of our pastoral care team.

As you know we welcomed eight new members to our church in the autumn, and two new groups have been set up for them and others to learn and share together, the LIFE Bible Course meeting on Wednesday evenings and The Seekers Group, meeting on Thursday afternoons. These developments have involved a slight revision of the class groups lists.

At the Church Council we welcomed and accepted some new group leaders, Tim and Caroline Johnson, Rosemary Keen and Gwen Wildman, and we thank them for taking on this responsibility.

A copy of the new class lists will be placed on the notice-board in the corridor. If you are not a member but would like to be included in a class group, please will you let me know. And if you would like to consider membership, then please speak to me about that too.

Anne

Church Council News

We had a very long Church Council meeting on 13th March, as there were several very important issues to discuss. Here is a summary of some of them.

Worship Leader: Tony Loft has trained to become a Worship Leader, which means that he will be available to help preachers with every aspect of preparing and leading worship, except preaching. We wish Tony God's blessing as he begins this new work in the church.

Safeguarding children and young people: Since 1993 the churches have had to ask everyone working with children and young people in the church

to sign a declaration that they have not had any convictions for sexual offences. The legislation has now become more complex and we have been advised to look at the much broader issues relating to the safety of children on our premises. In line with this, the Church Council has agreed that we will now extend the signing of a simple declaration to all members of the Church Council, all key holders, all door stewards, and anyone who helps with activities where children are present. This is not just 'red tape' but ensuring that we take seriously the safety of everyone who uses our church premises.

Church Stewards: We had a discussion as to how the role of Church Steward has changed over the years in this church, Door Stewards having been introduced to help out with the workload of the Church Steward. The role of Church Steward carries the responsibility of sharing with the minister, leadership over the whole range of the church's life and activity as well as all the practical tasks that you see happening on a Sunday morning. It is this leadership role that many people find rather awesome, and are therefore reluctant to take on the role of Church Steward. As we need to be appointing some new Stewards, the Church Council took this opportunity to make some changes to our current way of working. We will now have two types of steward, Leadership Stewards and Sunday Stewards, and we would like to ask all the current Door Stewards if they would be prepared to become Sunday Stewards. The roles will be as follows:

- **Leadership Steward:** to meet regularly with the minister to discuss leadership of our church community plus vestry duty for all acts of worship. Leadership Stewards are members of the Church Council.
- **Sunday Steward:** preparation of the church for worship, welcoming and tidying of the church after worship. Sunday Stewards would work in teams of three or four, and there will be a clear list of tasks that need to be covered. These stewards would not need to be members of the Church Council.

We hope that these new arrangements will encourage more people to come forward and help.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

We plan to meet on 23 April, 28 May, 25 June and 23 July when we shall be looking at the Letters to Timothy. Everyone is welcome.

Bill Cox

Situations Vacant

We urgently need help with the following:-

- Co-ordinator for Flower Rota
- Communion Stewards
- Leadership Stewards
- Christian Aid Co-ordinator

It would be helpful to have more volunteers for:

- Duplicating the weekly notices
- Sunday Stewards
- Sunday Club

We also need additional members on the Church Council. We are allowed up to 15 people representing all areas of church life, and at present we only have 7. We are also allowed up to 15 members nominated by the General Church Meeting and we only have 8. If you would like to be more involved in the planning and decision making of our church, and you are a church member, please let one of the stewards know.

Please advise Anne or one of the stewards if you would be willing to take on one of these tasks, or would like more information.

Women's Network of the Methodist Church

Report on Wimbledon Circuit day 13 February 2003

We had a very thought provoking morning service about various women's relationships with Jesus. We moved round the church from the home of Mary and Martha, to Jacob's well and the Samaritan woman and then to the dining room and the anointing of Jesus with expensive nard.

We had an excellent three-course meal and then moved back to the church for the presentation on Network by Mrs Jean Plant. We heard a little about Jean's life and how she arrived at where she is today, then

details of Network, and how it was formed 26 years ago by Women's Fellowships and Women's Work joining together.

Women's Network now includes all Methodist women, whether they belong to a group or not. There is a world federation of Methodist and Uniting Church women, which holds a continental conference each year, and a world conference every five years.

Women's Network of the Methodist Church aims to encourage, enable and equip women to participate fully in the life of the Church and society. It does this through:

- Training in specific skills
- Conferences and events on issues and themes
- Different styles of worship and ideas for worship
- Campaigns in which women may be actively involved
- Provision of information about other groups and resources
- Mutual support through all of the above

Jean explained the Network Badge

- n for network
- For a bridge
- For the overarching love of God
- Or for a door, a rainbow, or a magnet
- The bird is a dove of peace, representing the presence of the Holy Spirit
- We then have the empty cross to remind us that Jesus died for us
- The criss-crossed lines indicate social mixing and the outgoing lines of openness, liberty, service and the love of God for us.

Network has worked on a series of two year projects, the most recent being 'Violence against Women' which raised a great deal of awareness in the media when it was presented at the Methodist Conference in 2001.

The current project is 'Racial Justice'. There is to be a London South West District Day here at Martin Way Church on the 27th November. The speaker will be Margaret Sawyer, the Women's Network Connexional Secretary. Please book the date now.

Joyce Plant

Smiles

A smile costs nothing but gives much. It enriches those who receive without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he can get along without it and none is so poor but that he can be made rich by it.

A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in business, and is the countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad and it is nature's best antidote for trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give you a smile; give them one of yours. None needs a smile so much as he who has no more to give.

*Anonymous: found on a church notice board at
Stokenham Parish Church in Devon*

Christian Care Furniture Project

Christian CARE was started twenty-five years ago by a group of people who had come together for an ecumenical Lenten study group. The aim was to fulfil the commandment 'love your neighbour' by practical action. In time it became clear that one group of neighbours needing help were the 'homeless' and, during a relaunch of Christian CARE in 1989, a sub-committee was set up to co-ordinate that help. One task that they saw was the supply of furniture to people whom the council could re-house, but only in bare accommodation. Thus the 'Furniture Project' was born. The present Registered Charity still retains this structure with some of the original members remaining active. All members are Christians, but from a variety of local churches and denominations (currently Methodists, Baptists, Anglicans and Catholics are well represented), the area of work being mainly the Borough of Merton.

The main assets of the furniture project are a 15-year old, ex-BT, Sherpa van, leases on two lock-up garages, three people who are prepared to give time to organise movements and drive the van and some others who can be called on to help load and unload. Income is mainly by voluntary donation but there is a modest grant from Merton Council to help with the running

costs of the van and lock-ups. No charges are made for any service provided or furniture delivered. A significant part of the work is to collect furniture from people who have more than they want, store it if necessary and deliver it to those who do not have enough. If specialist technology is required, e.g. gas cooker disconnection and connection, we can arrange for this to be done at our expense. The other main task is to move people and their, often meagre, possessions from one accommodation to another.

All offers and requests come by word of mouth. Sometimes Church Newsletters will carry requests for specific items such as beds or washing machines. Both of the local MPs have recommended needy people to us as have the local Council and voluntary bodies such as Asylum Welcome. Over the past year we have supplied beds, wardrobes, chests of drawers, dining tables, chairs, curtains, carpets, coffee tables, a bicycle, a sewing machine, washing machines, cookers, crockery, a pressure cooker, desks, a TV (much in demand), sofas and a high-chair. As at January 2003 we are aware of needs for a piano, automatic washing machines, and a TV. (Most recipients are in 'social housing' and often-specific provision is made for a washer of the automatic, front-loading type but there is no space for a twin-tub or a top-loader).

If anyone would like to make contact, offering furniture or help, or knows of anyone in need, please ring Bert Hyde via the church.

*John Golden,
Furniture Project Co-ordinator*

The Return of the Swedes!

Eight years ago this summer, Martin Way hosted a visit from a young people's choir from Sweden. The leader was put in touch with us by the Methodist Youth Department because the profile of this choir matched that of what was the Wimbledon Circuit Youth Choir - now Sigma. Twenty-two youngsters, aged between 14 and 21, and their leaders, were welcomed into people's homes for bed, breakfast and an evening meal, and were piloted round the London sights during the day by our (then) sixteen year old son with an A-Z in his hand! On the Saturday, Bob and Tony climbed them up Box Hill, and in the evening we shared in a Swedish Mid-Summer Festival in the church hall. On Sunday morning they had to be at

Liverpool Street station for 12:00 noon, but insisted on coming to the first half-hour of worship first! It was a really memorable time for us all, and the blue Swedish glass vase that they presented to the church is a visible reminder!

We have kept in touch with the leaders of that choir, and have met with them several times since (though Bob has yet to persuade me to fly to Sweden!). They have asked if it would be possible for us to host another group this year in June. This is a Youth Fellowship - not a choir - and the age range is slightly lower, but their request is similar. They will be visiting London from Thursday 12th to Monday 16th June. In addition they would like to worship with an English congregation, and to meet some English Methodists. Can you help?

All the youngsters will speak English to some extent, and if necessary, they will bring sleeping bags and sleep on your floors, but we are asking for offers of hospitality. They will each be asked to contribute •20 towards their food because we do not want anyone to be prevented from offering hospitality for financial reasons. However, if you do not wish to accept this, we shall forward it straight to NCH Action for Children. Last time we were able to send most of the money given, and it was gratefully received!

We are asking you to consider taking two young people together, (more if you wish!!) so that no one is alone with a strange family. This will be much easier for them, and also will comply with the church's 'Safe from Harm' policy. (In order to explain this more fully, we will have a short meeting nearer the time for those who have offered hospitality.)

We would be very grateful for your help. You will enjoy it! Please contact us as soon as possible if you can be involved.

Bob and Janet Hamblin

Wheels For The World

At the February meeting of the Men's Supper Club, Richard Polley gave us a stimulating and thought-provoking introduction to 'Wheels for the World', a Christian disability charity that restores and distributes previously used wheelchairs and other mobility aids to hundreds of people in Africa and countries in Eastern Europe. Even for those of us for whom

mobility is becoming an increasing problem, we know that help is available through the much-maligned NHS. But to imagine living in a country where there is no health service and no available help for those who need it (both young and old) is beyond us. We saw a video showing people who could only get about by struggling on all fours. A wheel chair for such people would be a godsend but would cost at least half a year's wages. This is a brief extract from a publicity leaflet for 'Wheels for the World'.

Imagine you have lived in one room for many years, unable to go outside. Think of a husband pushing his wife down a rutted road in a wheelbarrow. Picture a man who needs to walk on hands and feet with flip-flops on his hands to protect them. Consider a ten-year-old boy who has never run or stood unaided, dependent on his parents to carry him everywhere. What these people have in common with eighteen million others worldwide is that they need a wheelchair and have no hope of purchasing one.

What have we done to deserve living in a country such as ours with all its advantages that we take so much for granted?

So what does 'Wheels for the World' do? Wheelchairs no longer required by the NHS are collected and taken to one of a dozen UK prisons for restoration to a high standard in the prison workshops. Prisoners find great satisfaction in this work that helps to restore their self-worth and dignity. They recognise that immobile people are, in a sense, prisoners too.

It costs just £30 to refurbish and distribute a wheelchair.

At our meeting I suggested that there were six weeks before our Annual Service on 1 April. If those who could afford it got an envelope and put £5 a week in it, their envelope containing 'a wheelchair' could be put in the collection on that evening. I invite anyone reading this to join us in this very worthwhile enterprise. I am well aware that not everyone could set aside £5 a week, but, alternatively, putting £1 a week away would enable you to save £30 well before Christmas. Why Christmas? Because the men of the Supper Club are aiming to raise the money for fifty wheelchairs by then. That means we need to raise £1,500. We hope to arrange a coffee morning or perhaps even a fair in support of this project, so we hope that you will give us your backing. If any organisation linked with the Church would like to contribute a wheelchair or two, I shall be very grateful. If

you have any excess Bibles at home, they too can be distributed and will be highly prized by those who receive them.

Please come to our service on Tuesday 1 April at 7.30 pm. All proceeds from that evening will go to 'Wheels for the World'.

PS. We now only need 47 more wheelchairs to reach our target. A retiring collection after our February meeting realised a staggering £92.30!

Bill Cox

Charities Fayre - 5th April (for local and national charities)

Come and support the BibleLands stall, manned by our own Mary and Derek Heaton.

When? Saturday 5 April, 10am to 1 pm.

Where? St Mary Merton's parish hall in Church Path, off Mostyn Road.

The aim? To raise funds for local and national charities.

As well as BibleLands there will be other charities such as Christian Care, Mothers Union, Traidcraft and many more. Light refreshments will also be available.

For those who cannot get to Church Path on the Saturday the BibleLands stall will be at Martin Way on the Sunday, 6 April.

Hasidic story

A rabbi assembled ten men to chant psalms for the recovery of a sick man. When they entered, a friend of the rabbi exclaimed 'I see among them notorious thieves.' 'Excellent' retorted the rabbi. 'When all the Heavenly Gates of mercy are closed, it requires experts to open them.'

Quote - Unquote

'Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of himself'

Mother Teresa

Dear Lord

So far today I am doing all right.

*I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been
greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self-indulgent.*

*I have not whined, complained, cursed or
eaten any chocolate.*

I have charged nothing on my credit card.

*But I will be getting out of bed in a minute, and I think
that I will really need your help then.*

*Lorraine - Vestry Hall staff member
[Winter Newsletter Victim Support Merton]*

Women's World Day of Prayer - Thank You

Three wonderful services were held on 7 March, under the title 'Holy Spirit Fill Us'.(put together by the Christian women of Lebanon). Thank you to Lesley at the morning service at Mansel Road United Reformed Church for singing the Lebanese hymn, accompanied by Ted on the flute, which sounded beautiful together; and to Karen for her reading. Thanks also to Anne for leading the Alexander House afternoon service and giving the address; and to the readers Bill Cox, Valerie and her friend Doreen, and Derek. Finally thank you to all from our church who kindly supported the morning and evening services and to Derek for showing the Lebanese films at the start of each of the services.

Mary Heaton

The 2003 London Marathon

Hannah, Jennifer and Rosemary Fernando have places in the Adidas Mini London Marathon. This means they will run the last part of the London Marathon on 13th April and they are hoping for sponsors to help raise money for the JMA TimeTravellers Project. They are running 5km and if you would like to sponsor one or any of them your support will be gratefully received.

Renee Maslin

It is with much sadness that we tell you of the death of Renee Maslin, a very long-standing member of the Midway Group and a very nice lady. She and her friend Marguerite dealt with refreshments at every meeting for years, and she always had a smile on her face. Our thoughts and prayers are with Geoff, her husband, her two daughters, her son and grandchildren.

*You held a very special place in each and every heart,
You gave such gentle wisdom that set you quite apart,
O yes, we'll miss you our dear friend, but now you're with the Lord,
So we give Him praise for knowing you, giving thanks with one accord.*

*You carried on so bravely through much suffering and pain,
So now we say a fond "farewell" until we meet again*

From Jean Butland

I have been overwhelmed by the love and support in the shape of cards, letters, visitors, telephone calls and most of all the prayers of so many friends and people I do not even know, over the past months, and especially during the six weeks I was in hospital.

I was due to have my left leg amputated at the beginning of January but thanks to all the prayers, the skill of two doctors, the kindness and love of so many nurses, cleaning ladies, and the staff who served my meals, it seems that the amputation procedure will hopefully not now be necessary - my legs are so much better and the ulcers showing so much sign of clearing.

My sincere thanks to all friends who have helped in any way and to my dear husband who could not have done more for me.

As King Arthur is credited with saying 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.'

Jean Butland

Red Nose Day

Some weekends I like to make biscuits. Over the months I have made different types from chocolate chips to sprinkles. But then one day an idea popped into my head. I would sell some biscuits somewhere to make some money for a charity and as Red Nose Day was coming up I decided to give the money to them. But where would I sell them? My mum asked Anne Rusbridge if I could sell them at church. She said it would be fine, so the Saturday before Red Nose Day I made 160 biscuits. Then on Sunday we went to church and I sold them all. I raised •31.10

Thank you to everyone who bought them.

Love Jenny [Smith]

[Well done Jenny! A splendid total - and delicious biscuits.]

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Church Diary For April

Tue	1	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	2	11.15 am	Toddler Time in Church
		7.45 pm	Midways (Rev Anne Rusbridge - Ordination)
Thu	3	2.30-3.30	The Seekers - Walking with Jesus
Sun	6	10.30 am	Family Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
Mon	7	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mr R Kasey)
Tue	8	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	9	11.15 am	Communion Service
Thu	10	2.30-3.30	The Seekers - Walking with Jesus
Fri	11	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	13	10.30 am	Morning service led by Mr Bill Cox
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge

Mon	14	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mrs Joan Bogle - Easter customs and traditions)
		8.00 pm	Time of Prayer and Reflection
Tue	15	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (Sister Mary Damien from St. Raphael's Hospice)
		8.00 pm	Time of Prayer and Reflection
Wed	16	07.45 pm	Midways (Bill Cox - Easter meeting)
		8.00 pm	Time of Prayer and Reflection
Thu	17	2.30-3.30	The Seekers - Walking with Jesus
		8.00 pm	Maundy Thursday Holy Communion service (at Raynes Park)
Fri	18	10.30 am	Good Friday service (at Morden Park Baptist church)
Sun	20	8.00 am	Easter Day Communion Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge - followed by an Easter breakfast
		10.30 am	Morning Service led by Bob and Janet Hamblin
Tue	22	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	23	10.30 am	Bible Study
Fri	25	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	27	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Dr Arthur Miller and Andy Frost

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