

## MINISTER'S LETTER



In the face of a disaster of the scale that struck Haiti last week and all the unimaginable and untold suffering caused as a result, we can find ourselves feeling helpless. We can and should, of course, give as generously of our money as we possibly can and we should, of course, pray. But what else can we say or do? As in so many situations, plenty of questions come to mind but not too many answers.

As I prepared for the *Service of prayer for healing for the people of Haiti* that we held at our church on Sunday evening, I, like most others no doubt, found myself somewhat lost for words: what could I possibly say that would make any sense or difference at a time like this?

As I surfed the web looking to see what words had been offered up by others, I found a sermon that had been preached in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva on Friday 15th January. From what Jane Stranz (the minister who preached the sermon) said, it was clear that both she and her community knew people in Haiti. She preached on the gospel words, ‘Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.”’ (Luke 15: 8-9)

I found her words so helpful that I amended them ever so slightly - just to remove personal references, in fact - and offered them as a reflection on these gospel words to those who subsequently gathered for worship. Since many of you were unable to join with us for that service, I thought that I would take this opportunity to share (the amended version of) Jane’s words with you in the hope that you find them as helpful and insightful as I have done and do.

Understanding disaster is impossible. God may just about manage such understanding but for we human beings even attempting to understand leads us to be caught in a strange place between rage, distress and grief, a

place where there are few words, a lot of doubt and an emptiness of feeling, a lostness. There is no easy way through these powerful feelings.

As we face the disaster of the earthquake in Haiti, as we ask "Why O Lord?" our lamentations and questions have as much to do with the pre-existing abject poverty of so many of the people of Haiti as they have to do with the reasons for natural disaster. Haiti was in need of an earthquake of justice and mercy. Not this. The poorest are always disproportionately affected by natural disasters. So much precious, beautiful human life and intelligence lost in the dust and rubble - so much risk of disease as the living receive basic treatment outdoors next to the dead. So much to do ... so much chaos... And just how long do people continue to hope for news of family and loved ones, colleagues, aid workers? Even as we give thanks that some people - children, women and men - have miraculously been found in the rubble, we know also of tragic news.

How many 100s, 1000s, 10,000s, 100,000s?  
Each precious and loved by someone and by God.  
Lost.

Understanding disaster is impossible. Yet God does just about manage such understanding. And God's understanding begins with a broom and a lamp. Jesus offers us a powerful image in Luke's gospel of God bringing light and sweeping in the dust, searching and searching until that which is lost is found. It is a beautiful picture, a feminine picture, speaking of the compassion and effort of a loving God for those who are lost in whatever way - those lost in fear and grief for news of loved ones; those lost in the dust of resignation, rage or distress; those lost in real dust and rubble; those lost in a nearly destroyed civil society.

This parable of grace can speak to all of us faced with lostness, it speaks of a God taking very practical action - a broom, a light, some hard work - to restore and redeem that which is lost. Very ordinary and necessary practical work, work often done by the least valued in our societies; migrant workers, women. God's hands get dirty in this painstaking work. This dusty work speaks to us as we seek to support and mobilise the practical action and commitment of our churches and their aid agencies in

Haiti. It speaks also of the work that lies in the years ahead to rebuild Haiti in so many ways.

Understanding disaster is impossible. Yet God calls us to take up broom and lamp and bear witness to the love and compassion of Christ in all situations. In a world facing so many disasters, both natural and human in origin, let us pray that God will continue to come in grace with lamp and broom to redeem our lostness and grief, and search out the lost coin of global and local solidarity.

(You can read Jane's original sermon at <http://stranzblog.blogspot.com/2010/01/sweeping-in-dust-praying-and-acting-for.html>)

I leave you with a prayer that was also offered at the service in Geneva and pray that we might make it our own.

*Loving God of creation,  
at this time of devastation  
when the damage is unimaginable,  
and the suffering seems overwhelming,  
remind us that every person affected  
is loved, honoured and precious in your sight.  
We remember all those who have been hurt;  
all who have lost their homes, livelihoods and loved ones.  
Work through us to bring healing  
to broken and distorted lives,  
peace to those who have been thrown into despair,  
light to those in darkness,  
and hope to those who fear.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus  
in whom all life and grace is found.*

With every blessing,

*Paul*

## **A WARNING FOR DRIVERS**

Just last weekend on Friday night we parked in a public car park. As we drove away I noticed a sticker on the rear window of the car. When I took it off after I got home, it was a receipt for petrol. Luckily my friend told me not to stop as it could be someone waiting for me to get out of the car. Then we received this email yesterday.

WARNING FROM POLICE FOR BOTH WOMEN AND MEN,  
BEWARE OF PAPER ON THE BACK WINDOW OF YOUR  
VEHICLE - NEW WAY TO DO CARJACKINGS (NOT A JOKE)

Heads up everyone! Please, keep this circulating .. You walk across the car park, unlock your car and get inside. You start the engine put it into Reverse.

When you look into the rear view mirror to back out of your space, you notice a piece of paper stuck to the middle of the rear window. So, you stop and jump out of your car to remove that paper (or whatever it is) that is obstructing your view.

When you reach the back of your car, that is when the carjackers appear out of nowhere, jump into your car and take off. They practically run you over as they speed off in your car.

And guess what, ladies? I bet your purse is still in the car.

So now the carjacker has your car, your home address, your money, and your keys. Your home and your whole identity are now compromised!

BEWARE OF THIS NEW SCHEME THAT IS NOW BEING USED  
If you see a piece of paper stuck to your back window, lock your doors and just drive away.

Remove the paper later. And be thankful that you read this.  
Please pass on this information to friends and family.

*Courtesy of Ruxley Star – December 2009*

## **THANKS TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED**

Martin Way made donations to Christian Care, Methodist Homes for the Aged and Action for Children this December as follows. Thank you to those who contributed their time and talent as well you who donated money.

### Total of £1126.00 Donation to Action for Children

Carol Singing at Morden Station	£ 500.00
Sigma Presentation of “The Christmas Dream”	£ 300.00
Carols by Candlelight	£ 80.00
Christingle Service	£ 170.00
Collection at Christmas Day Service	£ 76.00

### Total of £150.00 Donation to Christian Care

Retirement Collections	£ 124.35
From the Benevolent Fund	£ 25.65

### Total of £96.00 Donation to Methodist Homes for the Aged

Christmas Post Box	£ 115.95
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*John Butland*

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## **BOYS WILL BE BOYS**

Three boys are in the school playground bragging about their fathers.

The first boy says, ‘My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, and they give him £50.’

The second boys says, ‘That’s nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, and they give him £100.’

The third boy says, ‘I got you beat! My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money!’

## **A Few Smiles From St. Andrew's Church, Gibraltar courtesy of Derek and Mary**

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took baby Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied, 'They couldn't get a baby sitter.'

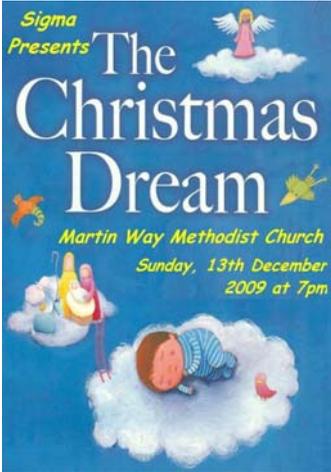
*Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, 'Why is the bride dressed in white?' The mother replied, 'Because white is the colour of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life.' The child thought about this for a moment, then said, 'So why is the groom wearing black?'*

At Sunday School they were being teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down and though he was ill, so she asked him, 'Johnny, what is the matter?' Little Johnny responded, 'I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife!'

*A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible Class. As she ran she prayed, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!' While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again. As she ran she once again began to pray, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late .... But please don't shove me either!'*

An elderly woman died and having never married, she requested no male pallbearers. In her handwritten instruction for her memorial service, she wrote, 'They wouldn't take me out when I was alive; I don't want them taking me out when I'm dead!'

*A police recruit was asked during his entrance examination; 'What would you do if you had to arrest your own Mother?' He answered, 'Call for back-up!'*



## **SIGMA CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION**

The SIGMA presentation “The Christmas Dream” was superb.

All those who attended were thrilled at the standard of singing and acting of all those who took part. The youngest was 9 years old. What joy it was to see young and old(er) working so well and so enthusiastically together.

The technical side was brilliant too and the dramatic finale was awesome. So thank you to all who took part from the different churches around the circuit. I know you have been practising every Sunday since September! Well done. Particular thanks must go to Anne Conquest from Martin Way who was producer and trainer of the presentation.

It was good to have a chat with so many people across the Circuit as we enjoyed coffee and mince pies together after the performance.

We look forward to the next one!

*Margaret Adams*

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## **CAROL SINGING - THANKS**

Once again Thank you to all those who braved the elements and joined together to serenade the commuters of Morden with carols during two nights in December.

In all, £500.00 was raised for Action for Children.



## MERTON ARTS SOCIETY

Merton Art Society established 45 years is a thriving art society for those amateur artists who wish to meet with other local artists, to exchange ideas, information and generally encourage the pursuit of this relaxing and rewarding hobby. During the monthly meetings at Martin Way Methodist Church, members



enjoy two hours of demonstrations and lectures from professional artists. These demonstrations enable members to see how other successful artists achieve their results and inspire them to employ the hints and tips on how it's done, in their own painting. The demonstrations vary in subject and medium. The years programme aims to include a good variety of subjects and mediums. On some occasions the demonstration will also be a led workshop, with the members following the demonstrator using their own painting materials.

There are also still life and life drawing workshops, when members will get advice and help from a local art teacher in attendance.

Twice a year the society exhibits at the Wimbledon Library Gallery.



Members usually produce collectively over one hundred paintings for sale. The exhibition always starts with a private viewing, for those members of the public that have purchased in the past, and also others who have visited previous exhibitions. The private viewing is in the evening and

always great fun and well attended. The exhibitions run for one week.

We also exhibited a number of our members paintings during the church's 75 year celebration.

The society is unique in Merton, as there are no restrictions to one's ability. Completer beginners are welcome, to more advanced artists. Help and advice can be offered to those who need it. The society welcomes new members. We are sponsored by Fielders art shop on Wimbledon Hill. Members receive a 10% discount on art materials purchased there.

We meet once a month, on second Tuesday evenings at 7.15 pm until 9.15pm.

Membership is only £30 per year. Guests are also welcome at £5 per evening. Further information may be obtained by visiting our website at <http://sites.google.com/site/mertonartsociety> or from the Chairman on 0208 648 1911.

*Julia Griffiths. Chairman*

Benet Northcote will give a talk on  
**'Climate Change after Copenhagen:  
where do we go from here?'**

On Saturday, 6th February, 10.30 - 12.30.

Come by 10.15 for coffee and cake.

The church is St Andrew's, Garrett Lane, Earlsfield, SW18

Park in Waynflete Street (Next to the church - it's free parking.)

All Welcome!

Don't miss this chance to hear our local expert  
on the issue of the century!

# WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



***Friday 5th March 2010***

**'LET EVERYTHING THAT HAS BREATH PRAISE GOD'**

**11.00am** Sacred Heart Church, Edge Hill, Wimbledon SW19 4LU  
**Speaker: Louisa Nkehkuo**

**8.00pm** Holy Trinity Church, 234 Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1SB  
**Guided Meditation**

On Friday 5th March over 3 million people world wide will be praying and worshipping together during an annual day of prayer, using a service prepared by Christian women in Cameroon.



The Republic of Cameroon is said to be

'Africa in miniature'. It is a country of great cultural diversity with more than 240 ethnic groups and languages. The constitution promotes equality between men and women but traditional rights and attitudes discriminate against women in many areas of life. However giant steps have been taken towards assuring women's rights and women are involved in the struggle for peace, justice and integrity.

Cameroon faces many challenges as its people seek to move forward into a modern age without losing their distinctive characteristics. But at all times, in all circumstances, Cameroonians are able to praise God with joy and exuberance and the service reflects this.

## The Martin Way Methodist Church Treasure Hunt

Last month I looked back at the history of our church that can be found in our own archives. This time I want to describe my search for what the area looked like before the church was built.



What was the best way to begin? The obvious answer was Morden Library with its Local Studies Centre. I began with a set of street directories for Wimbledon and Merton. C h e c k i n g through the north side of Martin

Way (which ran from 96 Crown Lane to Bushey Road) I found the first mention of the Methodist Church was in 1935. Arriving at South Merton Station then and turning towards the church there was the same slope down towards Springfield Avenue (called Springfield Road in 1932) with Unwins the off-licence on the west corner, and then our Methodist church. Further along the road the only building listed is St. James Church Hall, then comes Cannon Hill Lane.

There must have been a very large amount of building going on because by 1937 there's a whole parade of shops, much as it is now, though the type of shop has changed considerably. In those days there was a kiosk tucked into the side of the station entrance, which was once a tobacconist and later became a taxi-hire office. On the corner of Springfield Avenue there was a baker/Post Office (Truslove) and a newsagent (Lycett and Bance). Unwin's neighbour was a fruiterer and then came a butcher, Quick's Library, a lady's hairdresser, cooked

meat shop and Job the dairyman. It's no wonder that people in the area felt that they were well catered for!



Having found a date for the houses in Martin Way the next thing was to search the maps. The Ordnance Survey 25" edition 4 is dated 1932-34 and although our church building is not marked, some of the houses on the west side of Springfield Avenue are shown and the land on the north side of Martin Way, going towards Cannon Hill Lane, is marked 'Athletic Ground'. There are no houses on the south side of Martin Way beyond Mossville Gardens until the present day roundabout. In the photo that our church archives have for the laying of the foundation stone the view of the houses in Cannon Hill Lane in the distance gives a good idea of the expanse that was built over.



The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey map was made in 1912-13, so has no mention of any buildings in our area (also Martin Way was known as Green Lane back then) and at that point the treasure hunter in me

called off further searching. But for those of you who want to know more, let me tempt you with telling you of the copies of local newspapers, dating from the 1880s (the bulk of them on microfilm, which is easy to use), the collection of photographs, and the many, many books and pamphlets on all aspects of local history.

Some things the library cannot provide. For example it is not possible to find out who owns a specific property (for that you need to refer to the land registry). Some archives that you might need are elsewhere (the Surrey History Centre, for example). But for an introduction to the history of the local area you cannot do better than visit the Heritage and Local Studies Centre on the second floor of Morden Library. It's been great fun to find out a bit more about the area I walk through every day and I, and others, owe a great debt to the willing staff at our Local Studies Centre who provide the facilities for our explorations.

*Rosemary Keen*

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## **BERT HYDE**



Bert Hyde, the founder and chairman of Christian Care, died on Saturday 9 January in St. Helier Hospital after suffering a stroke on Christmas Eve. He will be fondly remembered by everyone who knew him as a wonderful man, a helper and a supporter to many people, and a great member of Merton's voluntary community to the end.

A Service of Thanksgiving and remembrance took place on Thursday 21 January at Merton Park Baptist Church. The family asked for no flowers but have suggested that donations in Bert's honour can be made to the Christian Care Association, St Barnabas Community Centre, Thirsk Road, Mitcham CR4 2BD.

# CHURCH DIARY



Tue	2	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	3	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Mike Mortley</i> - All that Jazz (part 2)
Sun	7	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Tony Loft and Brenda Cannon with Platform 10¾
Tue	9	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	12	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	14	10.30am	Morning Service led by David Eagle
Tue	16	10-12noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.30pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Collette Adam</i> - Two Sisters in Swaziland
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	17	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Roy &amp; Geraldine Ellis</i> - Canada
Sun	21	10.30am	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	23	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	26	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	27	10am-1pm	Big Brunch
Sun	28	10.30am	Morning Service led by Rev Stuart Thomas
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis

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

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

*Happy Birthday*



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## **WELCOME KABELO**

On Sunday, 13th December 2009, at 12.35pm we were blessed with the birth of our daughter and we thank God for her safe arrival.

Her name is Kabelo. She weighed 9lb7oz and length was 52cm. She was natural birth and everything was fine at birth and was feeding immediately and she never looked back, she is forever feeding!!!!



*Zandile and Floyd Sepanya and the children*

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## **Did You Know?**

When you are touch-typing, **stewardesses** is the longest word typed with only the **left hand** and **lollipop** is the longest word typed with your **right hand**.

**Typewriter** is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard.

**Dreamt** is the only English word that ends in the letters **mt**.

# THE GREAT WALL CHALLENGE

*“You are not a man if you have not been to the Great Wall”, so the Chinese saying goes.*

Stretching for 6,000 km (3,750 miles), the Great Wall zigzags its way across China – a true monument to man’s labours.



The Great Wall Challenge is a 9 day event, trekking over watch-towers and battlements, and conquering the 1,000 steps at Mutinayu – not for the faint hearted!

In April myself and three friends will be flying off to the far east to participate in the gruelling 'Charity Challenge China'. We will be trekking The Great Wall of China, covering 63kms of the wall over the 9 days.

To make this challenge possible we each need to raise £3000 in sponsorship for our chosen charities. My chosen charity is 'The Shooting star children's Hospice'. If you would like to support me on this challenge and make a donation please visit [www.justgiving.com/Anne-Conquest](http://www.justgiving.com/Anne-Conquest)

I would also like to thank everyone who has already supported me, whether it was buying cakes or coming to one of the charity fund raising nights, I really do appreciate your support.

Many thanks

*Anne Conquest.*

Items for the **March Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: [roife@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roife@hotmail.co.uk)) by **Sunday 15th February** at the latest