

MINISTER'S LETTER

Life is fragile. We all know this of course, but if we were ever in any danger of forgetting it, even for a moment, 2014 has reminded us just how fragile it can be.



The Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa has already claimed thousands of lives this year and is claiming them still. Over 4,000 people have died in Ukraine, where territorial struggles with Russia continue to be deeply concerning. Who knows how many people have been killed in the Syrian civil war this year but the UN estimates that over 200,000 lives have been lost in the conflict thus far and that startling figure continues to rise daily. Hundreds have died at the hands of Boko Haram militants in Nigeria and, lest we forget, the UN concluded that, in August alone, ISIL militants killed thousands of Yazidis in Iraq. And then there have been the barbaric executions carried out by the same people. No one can forget the images brought to us from Gaza following the Israeli ground offensive. This most recent episode in the story of this troubled plot of land is reported to have claimed over two thousand lives, most of them Palestinian.

If any of these deaths seem remote to us, surely those who have ever boarded an aeroplane with a sense of excitement and anticipation will have felt some kind of connection with those who did the same this year only never to reach their chosen destinations. I am referring, of course, to the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and the crash of Air Algérie Flight 5017 in Mali.

All of these stories have featured prominently in our newspapers and dominated television news programmes. Behind all these big stories are the stories of thousands of individual women and men, girls and boys and the devastating impact of their deaths on countless family members and friends. The feelings of pain and loss that they have experienced are no less than our own when someone we love has died.

Life is fragile and, when its fragility is exposed, so too is our

vulnerability and pain. At such times, when we are at our most despairing, it can seem as if there is no light, only darkness.

This is why the Christmas story is still so powerful today for, however we understand it or seek to make sense of it, this is a story that tells us that God chooses to enter into this world in a special way through the pain of childbirth, to take perhaps the most vulnerable form possible. Not only that but, born in the bleakest of surroundings, this baby will soon become a refugee as his parents, fearing for their child's life, cross borders in search of the relative safety that a foreign land can provide.

Not only is this a story for 2014, this is the story of a God who more than understands the fragility of human life and yet embraces it, declares it precious and seeks to redeem it when all hope seems lost. This is a God whose light shines in the darkness still and the darkness will never overcome it.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a hopeful New Year.

With every blessing

Paul

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Wimbledon foodbank need volunteers to help at supermarket collections on Saturday 13th December. They will be collecting at the Waitrose in Wimbledon between 6pm-8pm and the Waitrose in Raynes Park between 1pm-3pm and 3pm-5pm.

If you are available to help for an hour or two at either site please contact the Wimbledon Foodbank by emailing them your details and times available at wimbledonfoodbank@gmail.com

To find out more about the Wimbledon Foodbank visit their website at [www.http://wimbledon.foodbank.org.uk](http://wimbledon.foodbank.org.uk)



**CHRISTIAN
SOLIDARITY
WORLDWIDE**
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

It's been another extraordinary year at CSW - and as usual, we're very aware of the fact that it's only been made possible through the power of prayer. Huge challenges still remain in countries from Syria to Nigeria to Pakistan; yet, during the Advent season and in the lead up to Christmas, we hold onto the extraordinary promises of hope in Isaiah 9.

The prophet spoke of the Messiah whose arrival on this dark and desperate earth would herald peace and joy: *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.* Isaiah 9:2

Advent 1 : Peace in a peaceless world

This year our TV screens have been filled with news of religious violence devastating countries around the world - from Syria to Nigeria to Pakistan. As the international community continues to try to find appropriate ways to deal with the underlying issues as well as the immediate need, please continue to lift up in prayer all the affected individuals and communities. Ask God to pour out his peace on the peaceless regions and people.

Advent 2 : Justice in an unjust world

As you read this, across the world thousands of Christians are in prison on unjust charges. In Iran false political charges are used to silence Christians leading growing churches. In Cuba, Christian human rights activists are regularly arrested on their way to church, and released only when the service is over. In Eritrea thousands of Christians are imprisoned in appalling conditions, without charge or trial.

On 10th December the world will mark the annual UN Human Rights Day. This week pray that our God of justice would end unjust situations worldwide.

Advent 3 : Righteous Rulers

Much of the hostility and harassment directed at religious communities worldwide comes from the governments of their own countries. Together with our supporters, we work to overturn unjust laws, and change policies and attitudes that lead to religious freedom violations.

The Bible tells us to pray for those in authority, and for just and fair governments. As we approach Christmas, ask God to bless the world with righteous rulers.

Advent 4 :The Christmas Gift

The Iranian government steps up its campaign of repression of Christians every year at Christmas. Some Iranian Christians describe this ruefully as the government's 'Christmas gift'. Elsewhere, violent groups regularly time their attacks on local Christian communities to coincide with Christmas celebrations.

As you celebrate the birth of Christ this year, pray especially for those Christians who are particularly vulnerable at Christmas.

“For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6

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Help Wanted

We need people to help prepare for our Christmas Tree Festival and Aslan’s World presentation.

Please let Sue know if you can help with:

A leaflet drop promoting the events in the local area
Set up/put down on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights
Preparing Cakes for the day
Help with Refreshments

Please let Jane know if you can help with:

Cutting out templates for Swords, Shields and Crowns
Help with children’s activities on Saturday



**MARTIN WAY
GIFT SERVICE
14TH DECEMBER 2014**

**CHRISTIAN CARE
ASSOCIATION**

We would like presents – new or as good as new – to give to the **boys and girls** aged between **6 months and 11 years** who attend the Christian Care Association New Year Party on 31st January 2015. They do not need to be wrapped.

For babies and toddlers – rattles, bath toys, pull-along toys, puzzles, anything from Thomas the Tank Engine/Bob the Builder ranges, phones, baby dolls, building blocks, etc.

Cars, trucks, trains, Lego, games – appropriate for different ages
{*Note: We cannot give toys and games with expensive batteries which have to be replaced. We cannot use jigsaws and games with small pieces that are easily lost*}

War games, Monopoly and Scrabble are not suitable.

Dolls, anything from Action Man, Spider Man and Superman
{*Note: We do not require soft toys*}

Outdoor Games - footballs, skittles etc.

Stationery – crayons, gel pens, pencils, pencil cases, drawing books, photo album, disposable camera.

Books – fun activity and story books for all ages, but appropriate for children where English is not their first language
{*Note: Not dictionaries, encyclopaedias*}

Clothes etc – hats, scarves, gloves, pretty tights, backpacks, bags, umbrellas, jewellery.

We are often short of gifts for girls and boys aged 8-11 years, so anything particularly appropriate for this age range would be most appreciated.

CHRISTMAS PUZZLE TIME

'An angel of the Lord appeared to them' Luke 2:9

Join the dots and then colour the angel.



Step through the magical wardrobe
and celebrate Christmas with us in
our Narnia themed weekend

Christmas Tree Festival

Saturday 13th December 2014
2pm – 5pm

Music

Stalls

Food

Face painting

Crafts



Sigma's Musical Production

Aslan's World

Sunday 14th December 2014
5pm

Martin Way Methodist Buckleigh Avenue London, SW20 9JZ

Extreme Christmas Story

Taken from: Extreme devotion, the voice of the martyrs from the co-authors of Jesus freaks. Serious followers of Jesus pay a price, and extreme followers often pay the ultimate price. Each story is true.

ROMANIA : ARISTAR - "Have you ever smelled fresh hay?"

Aristar, the farming lad, began his story. "It's like someone captured the essence of Spring and bundled it before it could lose its newness. Mary and Joseph must have smelled it when they arrived at the manger after their long journey."

The other prisoners listened intently as Aristar spoke naturally of the nativity. "The horse's ears would have turned towards the Saviour's cry as soon as he was born. They are great listeners, as we should be when Jesus speaks."

Outside the Romanian prison of Tirgul-Ocna, the snow was six feet deep on a bitterly cold Christmas Eve. The prisoners had few clothes, little food, and barely one blanket each. They all missed their families and turned to listen to Aristar's story of Christ's birth for comfort.

He continued, "The light of the star must have been brighter than the moon. It may have shone through the stable's doorway and made the rooster crow announcing Christ's birth." The prisoners listened and wept. After the story, someone began to sing, gradually swelling to echo in the clear, crisp air. Everyone stopped to listen to the beautiful sound.

Even in the harsh prison, the story of Christ's gift warmed the hearts of many. Because Christ is the foundation, one can never lock out the spirit of Christmas.

Sure, Christmas is an annual celebration. Christmas is much more than that, however; it happens in the hearts of all people who stop to celebrate the magic of Christ's entry into the world -- regardless of the season. The Christmas spirit of warmth shines into our darkest circumstances and reminds us of our hope in Christ. Regardless of whether or not we see snow on the ground, coloured lights, and a decorated tree, we can celebrate Christmas. Whatever you're going through, Christ was born to help you in your time of need. His mercy extends all year long. When was the last time you felt the hope of Christ alive in your soul? Take time today to celebrate the birth of Christ-- into your world and into your heart.

Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (Luke 2:11)

Greetings from around the world

The Methodist Church in Britain is part of a worldwide movement with a total membership of over 70 million. In some of our many languages, we wish you...

Feliz Navidad

Afi nhyia pa

Nadolig Llawen

E ku odun o, emi a so po e

**Nimalaj Quicotemal
ri Alaxbal**

Joyeux Noël

শুভ বড়দিন

Fröhliche Weihnachten

Barka da Kirsimatikuma

Vasel Koleda



Happy Christmas



Jwaye Nowè!

**Krismas Njema Na Heri
Za Mwaka Mpya**

Nollaig chridheil huibh

Wadho Diyan Mubbarik

Nollaig Shona Duit

ब्रीष्टमसको शुभकामना

**恭祝聖誕
新年蒙恩**

Prettige Kerstdagen

Feliz Natal

Bara Dinn Mubarik Ho

Ashamsakal



The Christingle service

Many churches hold Christingle services at Christmas - Christingle means 'Christ's Light'. The custom of giving out lighted candles in these services originates from the Moravian Church in Germany in 1747 but wasn't introduced to the United Kingdom until the late 1960's.



The orange represents the world and the candle is Jesus - the light of the world. The red ribbon goes all round the 'world' and reminds us of the blood Jesus shed when he died for us. The four cocktail sticks could have either of two meanings: the four seasons or the four corners of the world and the sweets (or sometimes dried fruit) remind us of God's gifts to the world including kindness and love.



Round orange, round orange, you serve as a sign
That God made the round world with purpose divine.
Red ribbon, you tell of the bloodshed and pain
Which led to forgiveness when Jesus was slain.
Ripe fruits, freely given, this truth you recall,
When God hands out presents they're meant for us all
Bright candle, the message you carry is clear,
The true light from God found a home with us here.
Christingle, christingle, shine out in the night
To kindle among us that marvellous light.

Elizabeth Cosnett

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Lantern Arts Centre - Raynes Park
Presents



Miracle on 34th Street – the Musical

on

10th, 11th, 12th and 13th December

at

Tolverne Road, Raynes Park, London, SW20 8RA

A Christmas experience for the whole family: clowns, fun, princesses, Santa, love and laughter – what more could you want?

**Tickets can be booked by calling 020 8944 5794
or by emailing to lac@lanernarts.org**

The Lantern Arts Centre exist to promote the advancement of the arts and culture for the benefit of the public, particularly but not exclusively within the Raynes Park community of south west London. Having a strong Christian ethos, and working in a mutually beneficial partnership with Raynes Park Methodist Church, it seeks to include members of the local community, of all ages and abilities, as cast, crew and audience members in theatre, music, film, dance, exhibitions and other forms of artistic expression.



In last year's December/January Newsletter we featured a story from Bill Pollock. He was the Minister in the central, mountainous part of the Island of Mull from 1987 until 2002 and was a good friend of Derek and Mary Heaton. We are delighted to feature another story from his 'Advent Anecdote - Mishaps of a Minister on Mull'.

The Commander had no fear

It was Christmas Eve: Mull was blanketed in snow and it was freezing hard. My phone rang. It was the Commander. "How are you getting to Lochbuie Church tomorrow?", he demanded. "I'll drive" I replied, "and if I can't get the car over Ardura Hill, I'll walk across it and someone from Lochbuie will collect me on the other side". "Nonsense", he declared. "I'll take you in the four wheel drive car. Be at the road end at two o'clock."And he was gone. But half an hour later he was back on the phone. "Just to let you know the four wheel drive car is in the ditch at Gruline: we'll go in the four wheel van." ... And he was off again, leaving me rather less confident.

And so at two o'clock on Christmas Day I was standing in the snow at an isolated junction on a deserted road And I heard a tractor coming, "Good Heavens!", I thought, "We're surely not going in that!" As it drew level with me I noticed it was driven by one of the Commander's staff. He greeted me, and without a hint of complaint



explained he had been summoned (from his Christmas dinner perhaps?) and told to take a rope and try to take the tractor up Ardura Hill. If he got to the top he was to wait and be prepared to haul us up if we could only slide. My confidence slid further as he drove away.

Next along was the Commander in an elderly four wheel drive van. The seat

beside him was empty and I thought at first he was alone but as I opened the door I realised that his wife and several of their grandchildren were in the cargo space behind. I couldn't imagine how they'd get out in an emergency but they obviously trusted their granddad and seemed unperturbed. I climbed into the seat and we were off.

We breezed over Ardura Hill with little obvious difficulty. The real problem was Loch Uisg. The lochside road runs on a ledge above a steep drop into deep water. Slight ridges run down the hill and form little promontories in the water: the road might have gone over or round these outcrops but, in fact, it compromises. Thus at frequent intervals it swings out, up, round, down and back to its original course. The Commander tackled these convolutions at speed to ensure he got up the inclines and from the passenger seat I got memorable views of the waters awaiting us below as we spun giddily round the tops. Even so, we reached Lochbuie safely and as the Commander parked the van we heard him yell, "Now I know why that was so difficult - I hadn't engaged the four wheel drive!"

The journey home was much better organised - though less exciting! The Commander sent the younger men ahead of us with shovels to spread salted grit from the council's grit piles and this had effect for most of the way before we passed along. I had feared the boys might resent being put to physical labour on Christmas day. But I needn't have worried - their warm wave as we passed them reminds me even now of a respectful salute.

The Commander had been decorated for bravery in war and was renowned on Mull for his daring exploits. Many of his contemporaries would have commended him for never knowing (or giving way to) fear. That afternoon by Loch Uisg I wasn't so sure - but that same afternoon I saw people who knew him willing working unsociable hours, travelling trustingly with him through danger and doing every task he set. Might the capacity to evoke such loyalty be a better measure of a person than his or her bravery yet one we hope and pray we'll show?

Bill Pollock



WINTERSHALL

**CHRISTMAS
NATIVITY
PLAY 2014**



The Wintershall Nativity is an entertaining all inclusive play for everyone, and a gentle reminder of the lovely Christian principles on which we are meant to run our lives: love; kindness, care for all, patience and forgiveness.

For the second time, the play will be performed in two venues; for one day the story will be told in London and for four days at it's home, Wintershall.

The London performance will be on Wednesday 17th December at the BBC Broadcasting House Piazza at 4.00pm and All Souls Church, Lanham Place at 6.30pm. The cost of tickets for the All Saint's performance are - Adults £20.50, Children £10.50, the BBC performance will be free.

The performances at Holly Barn at Wintershall will be at 4.45 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th and at 2.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st December. The cost of tickets are - Adults £16.00, Children £8.00

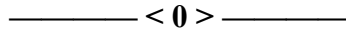
For further information or to book tickets, visit our website at www.wintershall-estate.com or contact the box office via email at boxoffice@Biblesociety.org.uk or by phone on 01793 418299 during office hours.



MORDEN CAROL SINGING

It's that time of the year that we serenade the commuters of Morden. We will be raising money for Action for Children and would welcome as many people to come along and join in the singing of carols at Morden Underground Station. We will be meeting at the Station on Friday 19th and Monday 22nd December and plan to start singing at 5.00pm and finish about 7.00pm both of these nights.

All welcome to come along - singer, players, collectors. Or if you are just passing by, say hello and drop some money in the collection buckets.



CHRISTMAS POST BOX AND CARDS

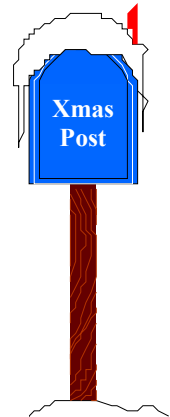
As it has been our tradition over the years, we will again place our Christmas post box. The church Christmas post box will be outside the vestry from Tuesday 2nd December to Friday 19th December for those wishing to send cards to members of the church family.

As in previous years, you are invited to make a donation which will go to Methodist Homes for the Aged. (In doing so you may wish to remember that you are saving 53p for each card posted in the church post box rather than using the Post Office!)

Please address all cards clearly using surnames and initials or forenames to avoid confusion.

If you prefer, you are welcome to post a single card addressed to the whole church family. Such cards will be placed on display panels in the vestibule.

The cards will be available for collection on
Sunday 21st December.





Cinderella and the Beanstalk **The Three Man Family Pantomime**

at **THEATRE 503**

2nd December - 10th January

£15/£12, with a £10 under 16 ticket.
Pay what you can Sundays.

Cinderella and the Beanstalk:
A festive treat for those who like their
Christmas pantos with a twist.

Josh, John and James (Smith) have written a pantomime. It's a riotous adventure with a whole host of exciting characters. They have fashioned the props, hired the costumes, booked the venue and rigged the lights; the stage is set. But on arriving at the theatre they realise they have forgotten one vital component: a cast.

A glorious cocktail of your favourite pantomimes! Follow Cinderella on a perilous adventure as the scheming Rumpel Stiltskin blackmails the would-be princess into retrieving the coveted golden eggs from the top of the beanstalk.

Cinderella must complete her quest in order to recover her glass slipper, but with Prince Charming, the Fairy Godmother and Jack's pregnant cow all doing their best to get in the way, these delicious, oversized eggs may not be so easily sought out...

Join these three performers as they recreate every character you'd expect to find in a Pantomime, as well as some you might not... whilst still doing their best to sing, dance and fight their way through ninety minutes of panto pandemonium.

For more information speak to Karen Smith or visit Theatre503 website at www.theatre503.com where you can also book tickets.

Christian Aid - A Gospel Christmas 2014



Join Christian Aid and lift your voice at this amazing evening of Gospel Music, Poetry, Readings and Christmas Carols!

Featuring and hosted by Multi-award winners
& MOBO Awards nominees

John Fisher & IDMC Gospel Choir

Noel Robinson

(World renowned Gospel Artiste)

Anastasia Baker

(Winner of Time to Shine 2013)

Lewes Sings Gospel

(Winner of BBC's Songs of Praise Choir of the Year 2014)

Reapers Choir

(BBC's Songs Of Praise Choir of the Year Finalist)

When: 13 December 2014, 7-10pm

Where: City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, London, EC1A 2DE

Nearest tube: Chancery Lane exit 3 and Farringdon

Tickets - Adults: £15 before 12 December and £18 on the door

Children (6-12 years): £10 before 12 December and £12 on the door

Family ticket (Two adults and two children or one adult and three children):

£42 before 12 December and £50 on the door

For further ticket information please contact
Lorraine Reimmer-Okonkwo on 0207 523 2159 or

lreimmer-okonkwo@christian-aid.org

All ticket proceeds go to Christian Aid. All additional donations will go to our Christmas appeal, and will be matched pound for pound by UK AID, so we can double the difference this Christmas

CHURCH DIARY



Tue	2	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	7	10.30am	All Age Worship led by Mark Williamson
Tue	9	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	12	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	13	2pm-5pm	Christmas Tree Festival
Sun	14	10.30am	Gift Service with Communion led by Rev Paul Timmis
		5.00pm	SIGMA performance - <i>Aslan's World</i>
Tue	16	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Members evening with guests</i>
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	19	5pm-7pm	Carol Singing for Action For Children at Morden Underground Station
Sun	21	10.30am	Nativity Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
		5.30pm	Carol Service with Tony and Brenda
Mon	22	5pm-7pm	Carol Singing for Action For Children at Morden Underground Station
Wed	24	5.30pm	Christingle Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Thur	25	10.30am	Christmas Day Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Sun	28	10.30am	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft

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

CHURCH DIARY



Sun	4	10.30am	All Age Worship led by Brenda Cannon
		6.30pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	6	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	11	10.30am	Covenant Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	13	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	16	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	17	10.30am	Big Brunch
Sun	18	10.30am	Morning Service led by Andy Frost
		6.30pm	Healing Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	20	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Musical Evening -</i> Graham & Friends
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
		8.00pm	Church Council Meeting
Sun	25	10.30am	Morning Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	27	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	30	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	31		Christian Care Association New Year Party

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 either December or January a very

Happy Birthday

and especially to:

Natalie Johnson on 2nd December

Zandile Sepanya on 16th December

Kutloano Sepanya on 19th December

Floyd Sepanya on 24th December

Christopher Sweby on 23rd January

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Care for Uganda and Operation Christmas Child Update

Following the Harvest Lunch where I gave a talk on my trip to Uganda. Members of our church have between them sponsored 4 Children and also the lunch made an unintentional profit on the day so together with donations I received I was able to sent £220.00 as well, I also gave a talk at the Mens Supper Club and following that I have been able to send a further £130.00.

Also Platform filled 20 Shoeboxes with items donated by the church and after the benevolent collect on Sunday (together with donations) we have been able to send £115.00 to Operation Christmas Child.

I think the Church fellowship and friends should give themselves a pat on the back for all the support they have shown to Care for Uganda and Operation Christmas Child.

Tony Loft

Items for the **February Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox,
(email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 18th January** at the latest