

MARTIN WAY METHODIST CHURCH

Newsletter - June 2001

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Dear Friends,

I am sitting in the manse garden enjoying the May sunshine as I write this letter. It is a lovely place to sit and listen to the sounds of the birds and enjoy the beauty of flowers and trees. I find it a place of inspiration and take my work outside as often as possible. Fiona has great plans for the garden - decking, stones, a water feature, barbecue - and some very imaginative ideas for planting. Michael, on the other hand, wishes to grow vegetables, so there is a lot of negotiating over space! So long as they leave me my seat in the sun I shall be happy.

What are your hopes and plans for this summer? Perhaps a holiday or the opportunity to spend more time in the garden. We are planning a family holiday in the Lake District this year and looking forward to re-visiting many favourite beauty spots and places of interest. You will know by now that my embroidery accompanies me everywhere I go. For the last year I have been working on a Millennium sampler of The Life of Christ. My challenge for the summer holiday is to finish it!

Even if you are unable to get away, do take the opportunity to find some time to be still, to enjoy the world around you, and reflect on God's wonderful provision of life with all its colour and variety.

This month we are drawing together our thoughts and ideas on "Our Calling", identifying those areas of worship, learning and caring, community involvement and evangelism that we want to focus on and develop during the next year, and creating targets to aim for. Do come along on June 10th to a fun afternoon using a variety of creative ideas to explore our calling to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. We shall be fed first at lunchtime by our superb catering team.

With best wishes

Anne

CONTAINERS OF HOPE

Friends of Rose Smith will remember her knitting little vests which were to be sent to Africa for premature babies. The charity which organises this began after the Rwandan Civil War of 1994 when a group of people in Essex decided to fill a container lorry with the blankets, medicine and all sorts of aid desperately needed by the refugees and drive it out to them. On their arrival the aid was distributed and the container itself was left for use as a house or office. The success of this and other projects enabled Rwanda Aid as it was then called to increase its scope and it changed its name to Containers of Hope. It has always worked closely with Mid-Africa Ministry, the Mothers' Union and with the churches in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

It is a Christian-based aid agency and where possible works through the Christian church in the country it is serving. Its aim is "to send aid to peoples in need in the name of our Lord and to Glorify Him". This year it has sent a container to Tanzania for a project run by the Salvation Army and another to Burundi to the African Revival Ministries. Others are planned for Burundi, Rwanda and Mozambique.

It costs around £5,000 to purchase a container, fill it and send it out to the centre of Africa and so far over 9 containers have been sent. Although it is mainly working in Africa it has more recently extended its work to India where it is aiming to supply medicines and drugs to the church in Ahmedabad diocese following the terrible earthquake. It helps with other medical aid too, for example by donating a mobile clinic for work in Burundi and neighbouring DR Congo. At the moment it is preparing containers for the refugee camps in Kigoma Tanzania (to go in July) and for the Church in Kigali Rwanda (to go in September). These will include, as always, boxes of babies' vests, booties and bonnets knitted by people in Britain amongst whom Rose was one.

MERTON PRIORY ECUMENICAL SERVICE

The Savacentre car park is an incongruous introduction to the site of Merton Priory chapter house, where we met to commemorate the opening of the Priory on 3 May 1117. The service was simple and moving - we sang unaccompanied -and it was easy to imagine oneself back in time and continuing the monastic tradition. There were about 30 of us, some from as far afield as Chester, but mainly local, including including friends from St. Mary Merton and St. John Fisher as well as others from St.Mary Balham and members of the Salvation Army. Afterwards we learned more of the priory's history from the special displays arranged for us. It was a memorable afternoon.

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

The annual church meeting is usually very formal. This year was different. Instead of rows of chairs facing a table with chairman and secretary, we were greeted by a large circle with coffee and biscuits on tables and Anne, the chairman, sitting as part of the circle. The meeting itself was in two parts, informal and formal.

We began by considering all our church activities. We divided them into the things that are going well (which we listed on green paper) the things which are all right but might be developed (on orange paper) and those (on red) which are not as successful as we would like or are, perhaps, preventing us from serving the community as well as God might want us to do. We had compiled these lists while in very small groups, but then after open discussion, they were all combined as a kind of summary report which would be considered and acted on by the church council.

The meeting then became more formal. John Butland presented the financial report (copies of which are available in the church vestibules) and the stewards and other officers were appointed.

The new style of meeting was unexpected for some of us, but led to a livelier discussion and more people took part. Perhaps sitting in a circle is less inhibiting. If next year's meeting is to be like this more of us should want to come. It is, after all, one of the best opportunities in the church's year for all of us to contribute opinions and ideas about what Martin Way should do and be in the local community.

SUMMER'S COMING!

It's the time of year again when we take trips down to the nurseries, to pick up the bedding plants to make our gardens look nice for the summer. Please spare a thought for our church gardens. They also would like a little new life for the summer. A tray, or one or two plants donated will help to keep the beds looking as if someone owns them. If you don't know what to get, ask me, or help out with a small donation and I will buy the plants needed. Thank you. *Ted Ashwood*

SUMMER FAIR 16TH JUNE

Combine having fun, supporting a good cause and admiring the church garden! See details inside back cover.

EDITOR CALLING!

To anyone going on holiday, particularly over the summer - would you like to help the Editor by bringing back a Newsletter/Magazine from your holiday church? A series of "holiday postcards" will brighten the contents of the Newsletter in the winter months but it can't be done without your help. If you felt inspired to describe your visit and the beauties of the surrounding countryside etc. that would be even better, but I'm not expecting all of us to be budding writers!

STOP PRESS !!!

BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER

Some exciting developments have taken place in the Bible Study and Prayer group. At the May meeting a suggestion was made that there is a need for more opportunities for prayer within our church. At the time of writing specific details have not been finalised, but it is hoped that there will be people meeting for prayer in the church every Tuesday evening. Some people may like to come and sit quietly to pray, others may wish to share in prayer, If you would like someone to pray with you, come along to the church any Tuesday at 8 pm.

We also hope to offer a choice of Bible Studies in the autumn, either short series or the possibility of both day and evening groups. Some Tuesday evenings will include Bible Study and details will be announced shortly.

Our Sunday evening prayer series has two remaining sessions. On 3rd June we look at meditative prayer and on 1st July, contemplative prayer. This introductory series has been very successful and if people are interested, this can be followed by a more in-depth look at prayer during the autumn and winter.

Please pray for these events and come along and participate whenever you are able.

Anne

WIMBLEDON CIRCUIT YOUTH CHOIR - A TRIBUTE

The recent production of 'Exodus' marked the final performance by the Wimbledon Circuit Youth Choir and the birth of the creative arts group Sigma. At this milestone in the group's existence I would like to pay a personal tribute to all that the choir has achieved and to wish Sigma every success for the future.

The Wimbledon Circuit Youth Choir was never in my experience just a choir and I doubt that Sigma will be just a creative arts group. For me the choir was the catalyst to becoming a committed Christian and being received into membership of the Methodist Church. The music, drama and Christian witness had a lot to do with it, but in particular it was the quiet moments of prayer both after rehearsals and before performances that really had an impact on me. Rehearsals often became riotous, confused and chaotic (not to mention hilarious), but after the clamour came the calm and I have been privileged to witness those young (and some now not so young) people sharing a moment of quiet prayer. The contrast between the noisy good-humoured rehearsal and that time of peace and prayer highlighted the context in which the choir was working and revealed the faith of those concerned. We can learn much from those who are younger than ourselves and, as an initially uncommitted individual, it was this Christian witness that caused me to question my own beliefs and take that leap of faith - a leap I have never regretted.

Roy Ellis

'EXODUS' - AN APPRECIATION

Congratulations to everyone involved in the Circuit Youth Choir/Sigma production of 'Exodus'. All the hard work was very worthwhile and well received. I, and everyone I have spoken to, thoroughly enjoyed the performance. It made one believe that God had wanted the people to move on and experience many things during their journey. This, I feel, is just like today. God wants us to move forward but we have many things to experience on our way. In 'Exodus', Miriam and Reuben, the 'happily married couple' had a few disagreements but came through these with God's help. The Jews had many a mishap but came through with God's help. I believe 'Exodus' showed us that we may all have the odd mishap or misunderstanding in our lives and in the life of the church but He is there, speaking to us and helping us to realise that we are moving forward for Him and with Him. Thank you Sigma for showing us the continuing relevance of the Bible today in such an enjoyable way.

Geraldine Ellis

YOUNG FAMILIES' GROUP: MEETING 2 JUNE

This note is to invite you to a meeting to consider setting up a group for young families at Martin Way.

We mentioned to Tony Loft that we would appreciate meeting with other couples with young children in a house-group-type setting and Tony has suggested that we try to set up such a group. The group would probably be similar to the "Friday Group", with regular evening meetings for the adults (as many as could arrange to get away from the children for the evening) and occasional social events for whole families.

We have provisionally booked the church hall for Saturday 2nd June and invite anyone who would be interested in being part of such a group to come for an informal lunch (everyone to bring a dish to share) and to discuss how the group should be organised. Hopefully being in the church hall should allow the children to play and give parents a chance to talk. Things to consider would be, for example:

- How frequently should the group meet (once a week/fortnight/month)?
- What should happen at the meetings (prayer, Bible study, discussion of parenting and childcare issues, discussion of issues of general interest (e.g. crime, homelessness, environmental concerns), consideration of church initiatives, a combination of some or all of these, something else)?
- Would some men only/women only meetings be wanted?
- Who should be involved (i.e. have we missed anyone out)?
- How frequently would social events be wanted? What events?
- Anything else?

Please could you let us know as soon as possible whether you would be interested in being part of such a group and, in particular, whether you will be coming to the meeting on 2nd June.

*Tim and Caroline Johnson
(Tel: 020 8540 3755)*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you very much for the warm welcome I received when I returned to church after my accident. I did appreciate it. I have realised that I cannot manage on my own, so I am selling my house and moving to Abingdon to be near my daughter and her family. Also I shall be near to my son and his family. I do not want to leave Morden, as I have been there since I was married in 1937, but there comes a time when one has to call it a day. When I am settled in a retirement flat in Abingdon I would like you all to come and see me if you possibly can. God bless you all, and thank you for the fellowship I have always received.

*Your sincere friend
Nora Wyeth*

THANKS

Friends of Edie Winrow have rejoiced with her over the success of her recent cataract operation. She sends her thanks to everyone for their care and concern and for the lovely cards she received. It was not until the day after her operation when she saw the colours in her garden flowers that she realised she had been living in a twilight world for a long time.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

21 July: another chance to hear The Harlequins at St. Boniface church Tooting at 7.30 pm. Programmes at the door. They will be raising money for hospices.

DON'T FORGET!

3 June: United Service at Martin Way at 4 pm: come and celebrate the Church's 'birthday' and meet our friends from neighbouring churches

9 June: The Big Brunch: served by top-class chefs from our Senior Youth Club

16 June: Summer Fair: 11am -2pm: please do as much as you can to support this event in aid of the Tadworth Children's Trust which is so dear to Bill Cox's heart: St. Martin's Church and the Hard of Hearing Centre are also involved and Bill's latest target is ,2500!

23 June: Sweet and Low Concert to raise funds for the Church. Programmes ,6.00 (,2.00 children) including refreshments, from Jean Butland or Valerie and Graham Currie (Tel 0208- 542-0415)

Please note that as the Editor is away on holiday in June the next issue of the Newsletter (July/August) will not be available until 1 July. Items should be with the editor, Rosemary Keen, by Sunday 24 June at the latest.

CHURCH DIARY FOR JUNE

Fri	1	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	3	10.30 am	Pentecost: service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		4.00 pm	Churches Together in Merton: Pentecost Service at Martin Way
		6.30 pm	Holy Communion led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		7.30 pm	Prayer Series (4)
Mon	4	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mr J Barrington-Johnson)
Tue	5	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
Wed	6	10.30 am	Toddlers Service
Sun	10	10.30 am	"Our Calling": service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge followed by lunch and afternoon activities
Mon	11	2.45 pm	Fellowship (The Happy Wanderers)
Tue	12	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
Wed	13	10.30 am	Holy Communion
		7.45 pm	Midways (Porcelain Flowers - Audrey Ward)
Thu	14	8.00 pm	"Pastoral Care of the Church Family" - taster session
Fri	15	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	17	10.30 am	Holy Communion led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		6.30 pm	Celebration Praise led by Bob Hamblin
Mon	18	2.45 pm	Fellowship (St. Raphael's Hospice - Mrs. Hilary Finch)
Tue	19	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (Rev Colin Smith - the Bibliomaniac - before he leaves the circuit)
Fri	20	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	24	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Rodney Hill
Mon	25	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Merton Park Baptist Church - Miss Brenda Brisden)
Tue	26	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
Wed	27	7.45 pm	Midways (Fish and Chip Supper)
Fri	29	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Mon	30	2.45 pm	Fellowship (National Children's Homes - David Mason)