

MINISTER'S LETTER



If asked to think of someone being born into royalty, my guess is that most of us would imagine a person who will live a life of great privilege and enormous wealth. We would, I think, picture someone set apart, sheltered from many of the storms of life that most other people have no choice but experience.

We don't, for example, tend to envisage a person born into royalty having to fret about an increase in the price of gas, electricity, petrol or food. We don't suppose that he or she will be forced to make a decision between heating the home or putting a meal on the table.

This Christmas we will gather together to hear once again the story of a child born in the humblest of surroundings, the story of a child who holds on precariously to life, saved only by the courage, determination and inventiveness of parents who'll do anything for the one they have brought into the world. On the face of it, this does not sound much like the story of one born into royalty. And yet, in the light of this story and in our carol singing, we will undoubtedly at some point join the 'herald-angels' as they 'sing glory to the new-born King'. Indeed, if we keep reading the over-arching story of which the Christmas story is a part, we will eventually find the assertion made that the child in this story is not just any king but the 'King of kings' (1 Timothy 6: 15).

But if the language of kingship isn't something with which we can readily identify - and let's face it, it is difficult to square our understandings of kingship and royalty with this story of humble origins - let us focus instead on something else. Let us hold onto the promise proclaimed by this story that it is through this child that God comes alongside each and every one of us, offering light and life, love and hope. And who couldn't do with a bit of light and life, love and hope in their lives right now?

It may be an old story - one that has become over sentimentalised with time, one that some have dismissed as make-believe long ago - and not everything may have happened as the gospel writers describe. None of this matters. At the heart of this story lie great and deep truths. Some of

them challenge us to rethink some of our understandings of the world, others offer us the reassurance, comfort and peace that we so desperately need.

So, this Christmas, go on, why not pick up the story and spend some time with it or come to church to hear it told once again?

Wishing you and yours a joyful and peaceful Christmas.

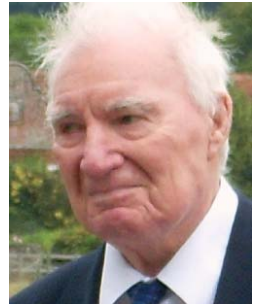
Paul

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Last month we said goodbye to two dear friends - Douglas Gear on 7th November and Delia (Dee) Baldie on 1st November. Here we remember them and their lives.

Douglas Gear
12/12/1919 - 7/11/2012

Douglas Arthur Gear was born on 12th December 1919 in Lambeth, London. He was one of eleven children born to Harriet Florence and George Thomas Gear, though only seven of these children lived to any age. Douglas knew two brothers and four sisters, the eldest of which, Hetty, played a large part in his upbringing. It was though his sister May that Douglas was closest to.



Douglas' parents were strict Primitive Methodists whose world revolved around the Bible and Church. Douglas rarely if ever talked about childhood. We do know however that much of it was spent in Tooting, that schooling began at least at Franciscan Road School, that he enjoyed cricket and music from an early age and that some of Douglas' happiest childhood memories were of holiday fishing trips.

When the family moved to Kenley Road, Morden life was to change in

a number of ways for Douglas. Not only would he find employment - as a clerk at The Dean's Rag Book Company (Britain's oldest Teddy Bear manufacturer) - he would also find a social world at Martin Way Methodist Church.

Life was interrupted for Douglas by the outbreak of war and in July 1940 he enlisted with the Royal Navy, training at Greenock. Douglas celebrated his 21st birthday in Navy fashion, drinking tots of Rum. Being raised in a teetotal household wasn't the best preparation for a night of heavy drinking and he fared rather badly. He wouldn't drink Rum again. Being introduced to cigarettes was another matter entirely. Douglas would go on to smoke them for much of his life. For much of the war, Douglas served as a Signaller on HMS Suffolk which was most notably involved in the Battle of the Denmark Strait and the sinking of the German battleship Bismarck. During this battle HMS Hood was hit and sunk. Watching it go down with his own eyes affected Douglas greatly. No wonder then that he preferred not to talk about his time at sea.

When the war was over, Douglas, returned to civilian life with only his de-mob suit and two pairs of underpants. He quickly obtained a place on a one year emergency teacher training course established by the Government to meet post war requirements for teaching and then took up a position at Shaftesbury Park School, Battersea. In the years that followed, and with this being a Primary School, Douglas taught all subjects. It was though games, especially cricket, and, of course, music that he specialised in. Musical concerts and productions soon became his domain. Douglas would work at this school - and be a highly respected, valued and much-loved member of staff here - for over thirty years. Indeed, by the time he retired through ill health at the age of sixty, he had served under five head teachers.

After the war, Douglas also returned to Martin Way Methodist Church to resume his duties as deputy organist and deputy choir master. Worshipping in what's now the church hall, the choir would be organised with sopranos and tenors on one side and basses and altos on the other. So it was that Douglas would catch the eye of one Jean Jeffrey. The problem was, Jean already had a boyfriend, Ken. All's

fair in love and war, however, and Douglas invited Jean to a concert regardless. And when, rather conveniently, Ken was then called up for National Service, Douglas took his chance.

With Douglas being ten years older than Jean, their relationship was hardly embraced with open arms by their respective families and, of course, church being church, there were plenty of naysayers prepared to frown upon Douglas and Jean and pronounce that “it won’t last”. Douglas and Jean knew better and married on 29th July 1950 - at Martin Way, of course! Douglas and Jean took the vows they made that day seriously. A wonderful marriage of sixty two years would follow before they would be “parted by death.”

Married life began with a week’s honeymoon in Lyme Regis and was followed by a move to Clareview Road, Tooting Bec where the couple rented three rooms from an elderly lady on the understanding that they’d be in every night! It was whilst here, in December 1951, that Barbara was born. Six months later, needing more space, and with the help of Douglas’ head teacher, the family found and moved into a ground floor flat on Trinity Road, Wandsworth. By now a Poor Steward at the church, Douglas would cycle to church on his bicycle and return home with money in his saddlebags for Jean to take to the bank in the pram.

In December 1954 one child became two when David was born. The following year saw a move to 35 Springfield Avenue, Merton Park. Living in Merton Park had its benefits for Douglas as it meant a shorter bike ride to church. One of the drawbacks was a longer ride to work. Douglas soon learnt to drive and “Bubbly” became the family car.

Springfield Avenue would be home for fifty years. It would also be the birthplace of child number three - Anne being born in September 1957.

Douglas enjoyed family life and embraced parenthood. He was a “hands on” father. He was close to all three children, had no favourites and treated them all the same. And as they grew up, he had them help

with the dishes. He'd always wash but the kids would be allocated two days each per week to dry. On Sundays they'd all help. Of course this taught the children something about the need to help one another etc., but it also created good and regular times for conversation.

Holidays were rarely affordable when the children were young - though days out were enjoyed - but when an insurance policy that Jean held matured, a fortnight at Mrs Hooper's Guest House in Par, Cornwall became possible. It was whilst here that the children famously wrote to the pixies in the garden. Douglas replied under the pseudonym, Fairy Stardust.

When Anne was five, and with the encouragement and support of Douglas, Jean undertook a three year teacher training course at Southlands College. Thereafter life became somewhat easier financially for the family and holidays became a more regular occurrence. Later still, Douglas and Jean would enjoy travelling either on their own or with good friends John and Jean - visiting the US, Israel, Oberammergau twice and Scotland a lot. Indeed, the last holiday that they would embark upon, was a tour of Scottish Castles that, much to their delight, included the unexpected bonus of a night at Gleneagles.

Music always provided a backdrop for family life and, of course, so did Martin Way Methodist Church and frequently these two key elements came together for Douglas. Music has the ability to lift us to a higher place and this was certainly the case for Douglas. In return Douglas used his gifts to help others to experience this for themselves. His gifts were considerable. He possessed a rich, bass voice - "as good a voice as I've sung with" Graham Currie says - and was a good, sensitive organist. It was no surprise then that in time Douglas became the church organist and, some time later, the choir master as well. Over the years *The Martinettes* and *The Music Makers* - who sang to audiences at church and elsewhere - regular pantomimes and, of course, the choir from which everything flowed all became vehicles through which, and alongside others, Douglas brought a great deal of pleasure to many, many people. It was through these activities and in

this place that lifelong friendships were born.

Beyond the church Douglas was additionally a member of Wimbledon Choral Society for many years. And music, unsurprisingly, featured prominently in the home. Douglas loved having friends round for dinner parties, not least because they invariably ended up with music being made.

As the years passed his own children started having children of their own and Douglas became granddad to Darren, Ben and Gemma; Marc, Jonathan (J) and Duncan; and Daniel, Rachael and Lucy. Whether pushing them in trolleys whilst out shopping when they were young, building dolls houses or rabbit hutches for them or sitting at his piano, Douglas became a much-loved granddad. Douglas enjoyed few things in life more than sitting alongside them when they 'played' "Granddad's Piano". It's fitting that Douglas' grandson Ben - who very much inherited and shares Douglas' passion for music - now owns this piano.

Darren says,

"There are so many great things you could say about granddad but a couple of things always stick in my mind. He wasn't one for talking much on the phone. Whenever you called grandma and granddad's house granddad would always answer. The first thing he would do is tell you his phone number. I've no idea if it was right or not to this day! Then before you could ask how he was he would say "I'll just pass you to grandma."

He liked to snooze a lot too. We would all be chatting while granddad slept in the corner. Then he would open his eyes, come out with a cracking one-liner then go back to sleep.

My best memories though are from when we were really little. Granddad always seemed so big. Always laid back, happy and welcoming, playing the piano with his huge hands while we played his xylophone. He really was a proper granddad like how you always picture the best granddad to be and I'm going to really miss him.

Over the years, Douglas and Jean celebrated a number of milestones with the family. In 1990 came their Ruby Wedding Anniversary and, ten years later, of course, came their Golden Wedding. By the time of their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in 2010 they were great-great-grandparents five times over - to Mason, Thomas, William, Aiden and Jamie. This male monopoly was finally broken in November last year when Tabitha was born, becoming great-grandchild number 6.

Some years ago, Douglas and Jean downsized and moved to Flat 36 Lavender Court, Sutton. Here Douglas made something of a name for himself playing Scrabble. Years of challenging Jean's mother - who was equally as good and competitive as Douglas - saw to it that he could take on and beat all-comers. An audible groan would go up from other residents when he entered the communal area. They'd invariably have been hoping that Douglas wouldn't come down and they'd have a chance of winning. Scrabble aside, it took a long time for Douglas to be able to call Lavender Court "home". By the time he did his body was failing. Jean, of course, did all she could to keep Douglas with her, caring for him around the clock, day in, day out, for month after month. Even with the support of family this was never going to be sustainable for the long term. Eventually Douglas and Jean came to a point where, with great reluctance, they bowed to the inevitable and sought full time care for Douglas.

So it was that Douglas moved into nearby Crossways Nursing Home. Here Douglas was well cared for and struck up a good relationship with his carer, Alex. But, despite this and daily visits from Jean and other family members, he was lonely. Life had lost too many of its joys and had become too much of a struggle and Douglas had had enough. Douglas died on Wednesday 7th November 2012, aged 92.

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The final heartbeat for a Christian is not the mysterious conclusion to a meaningless existence. It is, rather, the grand beginning to a life that will never end.

James Dobson

Delia (Dee) Baldie

16/7/1943 - 1/11/2012

Delia Hackman was born in Epsom Hospital on 16th July 1943, the first of two children born to Ethel and Harry Hackman - Delia's sister Jenny being born some five years later. Childhood wasn't always easy for Delia and her family. Money was frequently hard to find and with the family home being bombed, Dee lived in a number of places in the years that followed. Schooling for Dee largely took place in Surbiton at Hollyfield School though she even had to give this up at an early age in order to help her family.



So it was that Dee found employment as a sales assistant in Dolcis shoe shop on Oxford Street. It was during this time in her life that she caught the eye of Harry Baldie who was newly arrived in England from Jamaica and working as a porter at Waterloo Station. Harry would look out for Dee each day and even save a seat for her if he could. Dee though resisted his overtures and stood him up four times. In the end she relented and the couple enjoyed a trip to the Isle of Wight for a drink.

Back in 1961 a mixed race relationship was not something that people entered into lightly, frowned upon as they were by so many. When Dee and Harry announced that they were now an item, Dee's family didn't take the news well. Indeed, during the period of conflict that followed, Dee moved out - joining Harry in his rented room in Brixton. It was whilst here that Dee and Harry were married, at Lambeth Registry Office on 3rd February 1962. The reception was a modest affair, celebrated as it was with a few family members in Harry's sister Rose's home, and, money being incredibly tight, a honeymoon wasn't possible. Life was not without its joys, however. Sandra was born on 16th July 1962, Dee's 19th birthday - the best birthday present she ever received, Dee would say - and, of course, Dee and Harry's marriage would overcome all obstacles that came its way and stand the test of time.

With a growing family, Dee and Harry began to look for somewhere bigger to live. Again they were to face prejudice. Signs reading, 'No Irish. No blacks. No dogs.' greeted them at every turn and made their search far from pleasurable. In the end they took a one bedroom flat on Lambeth Road and it was whilst here that Richard was born on 21st December 1963. Another child on the premises was more than the landlady could bear and the family was asked to leave.

Home became 16 Leander Road, Brixton Hill, living with Harry's aunt, until Dee and Harry could get a mortgage and buy a place of their own. In 1971 the dream became a reality and home became 46 Chesterfield Grove, Dulwich. The fact that they had managed to obtain a mortgage was to a large extent because of Dee's hard work over a number of years. Having attended night school at Norwood College to obtain secretarial skills and qualifications, Dee worked as a secretary for Securicor near the Oval, Kennington before obtaining employment at Midland Bank on Pall Mall.

For many years Dee's mother struggled with ill health and Dee did what she could to help, frequently making the journey to Surbiton to see her, whilst still juggling those other demands on her time - work and family life. Dee, a selfless person who'd always put others first, did so gladly - frequently going without herself in order to provide for others. And whilst she was out at work a lot, and the children cared for by a child minder, Sandra and Richard always knew that they had a loving, supportive mum and looked forward both to the weekends when they could spend more time in her company and to the little treats she would sometimes bring home for them. During her children's teenage years, Dee enjoyed family day trips to the coast. When in time Sandra started work herself, one of the first things she did was to take her mum on holiday to Jersey. It was a wonderful time. In the years that followed, Dee - with Harry and/or other family members - visited such places as Malta, Gran Canaria, some Greek islands, Cyprus, Florida and Las Vegas. Dee enjoyed her holidays - especially if there were slot machines to play on!

In 1990, with the children having by now left home, Dee and Harry

moved to 122 Ashridge Way, Morden. Soon afterwards, Dee began worshipping at Martin Way Methodist Church.

In 1995 Dee was made redundant by HSBC. The following year she obtained work at an insurance brokers on Stonecot Hill. By now Dee was a grandmother to Richard's children Lauren and Lewis. Living as they did in Bromley, Dee wasn't able to see them every day but delighted in the times that she had with them. When Sandra's first child, Natalie, was born in 2003, Dee gave up work to look after her full time. Within a few years Dee would be looking after Natalie's sister, Rachel, as well. Dee loved all her grandchildren. They became her world, her life and she both enjoyed and cherished times spent with them. For several years life followed a familiar pattern: attending church, going shopping with her sister, doing a bit of gardening, looking after the girls and, of course, spending time with Harry.

For much of her life Dee enjoyed good health. For the last 19 months or so, however, she struggled greatly with her hips which were becoming so increasingly painful that Harry would often wake in the night to hear her crying. Dee and Harry were therefore greatly relieved when a hip operation in October was successful. She appeared to be doing well back at home. On the morning of Thursday 1st November 2012, however, Dee did not wake up. She had, it was later determined, suffered a heart attack and had died peacefully in her sleep. She'd been born, it transpired, with such narrow arteries that her life was in many ways always a fragile one. Not that it'd have ever been easy to draw that conclusion over her 69 years. For although life was frequently hard for her, Dee faced adversity with such resolve, courage and determination and lived her life with great love, kindness and selfless generosity.

Derek Heaton, Dee's pastoral leader throughout her time at the church, has described Dee as a good and faithful friend who will be greatly missed. I know from conversations with Harry and Sandra that Dee's grandchildren thought the world of their nanny, their nanna; that she was also a loving mother, a wonderful best friend and a gorgeous, perfect, perfect wife. The world is a poorer place without Dee in it.

CHRISTMAS COLOURING TIME

The wise men arrive with presents, but Jesus' crib is missing, can you draw one and then colour the picture?



Christmas Table Top Market

We are holding a Charity Christmas Table Top Market on Saturday 15th December at Martin Way Methodist Church.

In July 2013, myself, Richard Herring, Rachael & Anne Conquest are going to trek the Inca Trail in Peru. There have been articles about our trek in previous Newsletters.



We are supporting the following charities:

Alzheimer's Society
International Glaucoma Association (IGA)
Sense
South West Kidney Fund

We would like to invite you to our Table top sale, the charge for a table is £12 - where you can sell on that table whatever you wish and the sale will last from 10am-1pm. (set up from 9am). We already have a number of tables selling a variety of items from general home ware, homemade cakes, Jams & Chutney, Christmas Crafts, Jewellery, pampered chef.... Refreshments will also be available and lots of Christmas fun with a special appearance from Father Christmas!

If you are interested in a table or would like further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

To reserve your table please contact one of us letting us know your name, address and what you are planning to sell.

If you won't be interested in having a table please put the date in your diary and think about coming to join us. With a huge range of different items on sale, why not come and visit our Christmas Market and finish your Christmas shopping, £1 entry per person (all monies raised going to charity). Thank you for all your support.

Abby Herring



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Over the last year there have been a number of knitting patterns for Operation Christmas Child in the Newsletter. Last month it was time to box up all the gifts donated. We would like to say a big

Thank You to everyone who donated

money, gifts or time to help us make this year's Operation Christmas child a successful year for Martin Way. In the end we sent 26 full shoeboxes and donated £78 to this worthwhile appeal.



**Happy Christmas and
Best Wishes for 2013
From all
The Platform 10 ¾ Group**

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CAROL SINGERS NEEDED FOR MCW RAFIKI TRUST

We are carol singing again this year at **Colliers Wood tube station on Thursday 20th December** from 5-7pm. We need volunteers to help us raise money for Rafiki Trust by cheering up commuters with enthusiastic carol singing. We can help with transport if needed. It would be useful to have an idea of numbers in advance, so please contact Rachel Ellis on rachelellis03@gmail.com or 020 8337 3489 if you are able to help. We know this is a busy time of year for everyone, but your support would be very gratefully received.

Christmas Table

FOOD AVAILABLE:
BACON OR SAUSAGE BAPS
SOUP & A ROLL

AT MARTIN WAY ME
SW20

10AM UNT

SATURDAY 15TH

CHRISTMAS CRAFTS

PAMPERED CHEF

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

£1 en
In aid

Alzheimer's
Society | Leading the
fight against
dementia

iga THE CHARITY
FOR PEOPLE
WITH GLAUCOMA

the Top Market

SANTA'S GROTTTO
11.30AM-12.30PM
£4 PER CHILD

THODIST CHURCH
9JZ

TIL 1PM

1 DECEMBER

HOMEMADE CAKES, JAMS
& CHUTNEY

STELLA & DOT JEWELRY

CHILDREN'S TOYS

try
of:-



Riding Lights Christmas Play

Out on the hills, under a sky full of stars, it is most bitterly cold. The twinkling lights of the town look very inviting. But no such luck for the shepherds who must keep an eye out for all kinds of unusual predators at winter lambing time...

The Lamb Chop Inn is full to bursting. Worst still, they've nothing to serve for Sunday roast. Mak, who runs the place, has put up a sign, 'NO VACANCIES AT ALL'. Another underneath says: 'NOT EVEN THE TEENSIEST ONE', but a young couple whose car is stranded in the snow knock on the door anyway...



With puppetry, hilarity and extraordinary story-telling, 'Give It Back, Mak!' is the quintessential Riding Lights Christmas Experience.

The production lasts approximately one hour and is suitable for age five and up.

Give It Back Mak! will be at:

Christ Church with St Philip

Ruskin Drive
Worcester Park
KT4 8LG

on

Friday 7th December at 7pm

Tickets are only £3 each, so to book your place contact the Box Office on 020 8337 2348



WINTERSHALL

**CHRISTMAS
NATIVITY
PLAY**



The Wintershall Nativity is an entertaining play for everyone as well as 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 - all these are brought out in some measure in our play.

The Wintershall Nativity will run at Holly Barn from Wednesday 19th - Sunday 23rd December 2012 and will have a cast of over 70 together with real animals and outstanding sound, music and effects.

Due to popular demand we have changed the times of some performances which this year will be at 4.45 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday 19th, Thursday 20th, & Friday 21st and at 2.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd December.

The cost of tickets are -
Adults £15
Children £7.50

For further information or to book tickets, visit our website at www.wintershall-estate.com or contact the box office via email at boxoffice@hutleygroup.com or by phone on 01483 892167 during office hours.

*Peter Hutley MBE KSG
Wintershall*

An Extended Thank You

Around the end of October I was thinking of putting a “Thank You” in the Newsletter for all the kind thoughts, words and prayers that have come my way these last 10 months. This time was leading up to my final seven weeks of Radio Therapy to see off my Scar Tissue Cancer.

It was not going to be that easy! Having just ordered tea a pot of tea and two lovely cakes at our favourite garden centre in Chessington, I became aware of a slightly dull but unusual ache across the top of my chest, so much so, I mentioned it to Mary. Against all my training as a Police Officer I still drove home. Getting near Grand Drive, feeling no worse but still not quite right I decided to carry on to my Doctor to see what it might have been. The rest is now history as they say.

A very quick ambulance trip, with flashing lights and sirens, to A&E at St.Georges, where after many tests I was admitted and all wired up. Next day I was transferred to the Cardiac Wing of Atkinson Morley, where they have the state of the art procedures.

Whilst enjoying lots of good food over the days of observations, I soon learnt that all my veins were working, but they were not suitable for shunts nor did they have much ‘ware’ left. Still feeling very well I was recommended for By-pass Surgery in the next few days.

On November 7th, I was wheeled into the operating room for a Quadruple-by-pass, I then lost 24-36 hours due to the anaesthetics. On November 12th, obviously because I was enjoying their food to much, I was sent home, weak, shaky and uncomfortable. As I write they restart my Marsden treatment, so we are now looking towards the restart of my Radio Therapy in about three months.

Please keep the Prayers and kind thoughts coming my family’s way, especially for our dear daughter-in-law, Clare, who is very poorly with her Chemotherapy.

With Love, Blessings and Thanks

Derek Heaton

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 Monday 17th and Wednesday 19th December and plan to start singing at 5.00pm and finish about 7.00pm both of these days.

In previous years Tony has always had some remarkable headwear, so come along and see if he (and others) will continue the tradition and either join in with the singing or make a donation.

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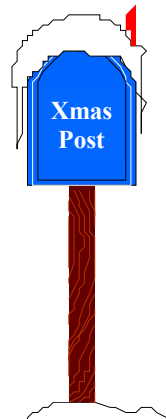
CHRISTMAS POST BOX AND CARDS

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 Sunday 2nd December until Friday 14th December for those sending Christmas cards to members of the church community.

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 50p 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 16th December.

MARTIN WAY TOY SERVICE

16TH DECEMBER 2012

CHRISTIAN CARE ASSOCIATION



We would like presents – new or as good as new – to give to the boys and girls aged between 1 month and 11 years who attend the Christian Care Association New Year Party in January 2013.

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.

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.

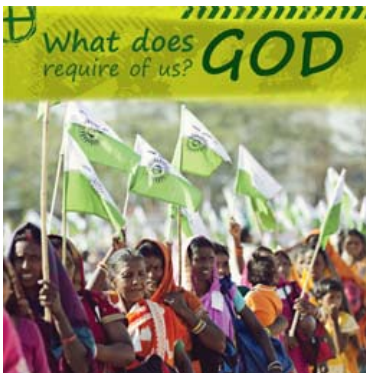


Buy a Brick

As you may be aware, Ruxley Church, an ecumenical partnership of Ruxley Methodist Church and St Francis of Assisi Anglican Church is building a new church and community centre on the former St Francis site with the present Methodist site being used for affordable housing and a ministerial residence. The picture is an artists impression of how it will look when it is finished. The cost will be in excess of £3m. If anyone would like to support this project within our Circuit by 'buying a brick' or two for £5 each, I would be pleased to pass on your contribution. The list of sponsors will be included in a time capsule to be built into the foundations of the new church.

Roy Ellis

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What does God require of us?

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2013 comes to us from an ecumenical group in South India. They have reflected upon their own context and offer to us a theme that calls us to respond to the obligations to act justly in the world. The text is taken from Micah 6.6-8.

This year the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland are continuing with their partnership with Christian Aid, have participated in the preparation of materials pointing to the vital work in the relief of poverty and advocacy of justice in changing our world.

Please support the next **Church Unity Service** as it will be held at Martin Way Methodist church on **20th January 2013 at 6.30pm**. During the service the new Christian CARE office will be dedicated and blessed.

Gwen Wildman

Extreme Willingness

Taken from: Extreme devotion, the voice of the martyrs from the co-authors of Jesus freaks.

*"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."
Luke 1:38*

Bethlehem: Mary the mother of Jesus

"This isn't how I envisioned us having our first baby," said the young woman between contractions. "Are you sure this is clean enough?" she asked her fiancé, Joseph.

"I don't know, honey," he said, concerned. "But it's what we've got. We know God's going to protect this baby. He must have some plan in us having it *here*."

As another painful contraction came, her fiancé advised, "Try to breathe through it," and wiped her face with a damp rag. "Hang on.....should be just a few more minutes."

She said through gritted teeth, "I wanted to have the baby in my own house. I wanted my mother to be there to help me."

"I'm here to help you," Joseph said, so we'll just have to get along by ourselves. And we both know God's here, too." Then he weakly joked, "If we need more help, we've always got the cows and the sheep next door."

The contractions passed, and Mary smiled at her new fiancé. At the next contraction, Mary began to push. Soon, her son entered the world. They named him Jesus, just as the angel instructed.

We sometimes forget the hardship that Joseph and Mary endured to deliver the King of kings: a stable for a delivery room, exile into Egypt, poverty and scandal. Yet they endured everything willingly out of love for God.

As we read the Bible, we may think that believing God's promises would be easier if he packaged them with some definitive sign, like an angelic messenger. Yet even Mary, who received such a sign, had her doubts. When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to God's Son, it probably sounded like the unthinkable. She asked Gabriel, "How will this be.....since I am a virgin?" Despite her concerns, Mary chose to willingly believe God's promise and obey him. Her simple willingness brought God's plan of salvation to the world. Is God calling you to willingness despite your doubts? Like Mary, your willingness to obey could have an eternal impact in God's kingdom.

The Cost of Christmas

An article in the Metro Newspaper recently highlighted the cost of Christmas based on The Twelve Days of Christmas. The research was conducted by the American Bank PNC. By their reckoning the cost has risen by about 6.1 per cent from \$101,260 (£63,172) in 2011 to \$107,445 (£67,032) in 2012. The problem with this is that they have based their prices on American costs.

This then got me wondering, just how much would it cost if we were to try and buy everything in the carol from the UK. I managed to find a wonderful article on the internet by Paul Denton, a radio presenter from Yorkshire. I reproduce a modified version of his article, the full version can be found on his website at www.pauldenton.co.uk/12days.htm

The 12 Days of Christmas...

"On the first day of Christmas..."

The first gift was a partridge in a pear tree.

A supplier in South Gloucestershire offer day old partridge chicks from £3.20 each. Obviously we have to wait until the bird had got its wings, so to speak, but we were convinced we could get it into a pear tree.

As for the pear tree, a Nursery in Maidstone have three-year-old Bergamotte d'Esperen pear bushes available for £26. So although we would have to wait for nature to take its course with both our partridge and our pear tree we could get the two together.

(PNC cost £128, for fully grown Partridge and Pear Tree)

Paul's Total cost so far: £29.20

"On the second day of Christmas..."

Next on the list is two turtle doves. Now, turtle doves aren't available in the local high street. In fact, numbers are falling in the UK. So, in the interest of preserving wildlife, we decided to go for an inanimate equivalent. Looking at a well known online auction site, there's a whole range of turtle dove ornaments, we've plumped for a Royal Grafton plate at £4.99.

(PNC cost £78, for live birds)

Paul's Total cost so far: £34.19

"On the third day of Christmas..."

The next on the list is three French hens. Another Internet search led us to a Poultry Centre in Oban, Scotland where you can buy day-old Marans hens for £2.50.

(PNC cost £103 for 3 unspecified type of French Hen)

Paul's Total cost so far: £41.69

"On the fourth day of Christmas..."

What exactly is a calling bird? We decided if we wanted a tuneful bird it would have to be a parrot (as they often call out unexpected phrases). So, four parrots.

Another online search led us to a site selling baby African Grey parrots for £575 each. A tad more than we were looking to spend perhaps, but hey it's Christmas. So four parrots at £575 is £2,300.

(PNC cost - £324 for 4 unspecified type of Calling Bird)

Paul's Total cost so far: £2,341.69

"On the fifth day of Christmas..."

At last, we've moved on from birds. Five gold rings presents a somewhat easier purchase. We found five mood gold rings at £17.99 each, £89.95 in all.

(PNC cost - £468 for 5 gold rings)

Paul's Total cost so far: £2,431.64

"On the sixth day of Christmas..."

Back to the birds, and six geese a-laying.

Not many live Geese for sale, but the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust allows you to adopt birds. There, you can adopt a duck, sponsor a swan and guard a goose. I presume for £15 per goose per year you get visiting rights So six (adopted) geese at £15 each is £120.

(PNC cost - £131 for 6 laying geese)

Paul's Total cost so far: £2,551.64

"On the seventh day of Christmas..."

Ah, seven swans a-swimming. Well, the cheapest option would be to go to the local river and try and grab them. But as well as being a criminal offence, no one fancied the idea of subduing an irate swan.

A Swan Rescue Centre in Dorset offer the opportunity to sponsor a swan for £10 per year and we can go and watch them swim there any time. So another small cheat of a solution sets us back £70.

(PNC cost - £4,371 for 7 swans, apparently swans are very expensive in America!)

Paul's Total cost so far: £2,621.64

"On the eighth day of Christmas..."

Now, this is even more of a challenge. Eight maids a-milking. So we're going to be somewhat lateral.

Assuming that the ladies you found were between the ages of 18 and 21, you could pay them the minimum wage of £3.80 per hour. So, for our purposes, we'll assume we're only going to need them for an hour, that's 8 x £3.80. Which is £30.40. Hypothetical, yes, but there seems to be a drought of milk maids advertising their services online.

(PNC cost - £36 to hire the milking maids)

Paul's Total cost so far: £2,652.04

"On the ninth day of Christmas..."

Next, we need nine ladies dancing. The song doesn't state the dance to be performed so we've gone for some very modium podium dancers. These can be hired from an Agency in Bristol for £135 each, so 9 x £135 is £1,215.

(PNC cost - £3,930 quoted by a local Philadelphia dance company)

Paul's Total cost so far: £3,867.04

"On the tenth day of Christmas..."

Aside from the fact that it would probably take a great deal of persuasion and a great deal of brandy to get ten Lords to leap, hiring such a distinguished person is not a cheap exercise.

Looking at the JLA Speaker Bureau website, who boast Lord Winston among their clients, hiring the services of such an eminent person will cost in the region of £5,000-£10,000.

The After Dinner Speakers Bureau provided no better news, with Lord Heath's wisdom costing £6,000-£10,000, Lord Lichfield £16,000-£12,000 and Lord Steel £21,000-£25,000. And that's before the leaping is mentioned.

So, say we take the bottom end of their price spectrum and assume they will agree to leap, that's £48,000 already. Now let's pretend that to obtain the services of six other Lords would cost in the region of £50,000. Call it £100,000 and keep the change.

(PNC cost - £2,976 for the leaping lords, but no mention where they found their lords)

Paul's Total cost so far: £103,867.04

"On the eleventh day of Christmas..."

After the huge expense of their Lordships, we were relieved to hear that hiring 11 pipers to do their stuff would be comparatively cheaper. The National Piping Centre in Glasgow hires pipers out at £100 + VAT each for three hours.

So 11 x £100 is £1,100 plus £192.50 VAT, which comes to a total of £1,292.50.

(PNC cost - £1,600 for the pipers)

Paul's Total cost so far: £105,159.54

"On the twelfth day of Christmas..."

The final hurdle. To add to the general cacophany of Lords leaping, maids milking and pipers piping we add 12 drummers drumming. So, to keep the pipe band theme going, we found a Scottish Scout Group offering their services for £1,200 per day.

(PNC cost £1,733 for the drummers)

So Paul's grand total is: £106,359.54 - over £39,300 more than PNC's costings!

As you can see, getting hold of these gifts in the UK is not as easy as it might once have been, even with the aid of modern technology such as the internet, nor as cheap as in America!

Happy Christmas everyone!

Andrew Fox

CHURCH DIARY



Sun	2	10.30am	Morning Service led by David Eagle
		6.30pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	4	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	7	7.00pm	Riding Lights Christmas Play at Worcester Park
Sun	9	10.30am	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft
		12.30pm	Big Lunch
Tue	11	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Music from 'Sweet & Low'</i>
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Thur	13	8.00pm	Leadership Meeting
Fri	14	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	15	10am-1pm	Christmas Tabletop Market
Sun	16	10.30am	Toy/Gift & Parade Service led by Rev Paul Timmis with Nativity Play by The Sunday Club
Mon	17	5.00-7.00pm	Carol Singing for AFC at Morden Station
Tue	18	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	19	5.00-7.00pm	Carol Singing for AFC at Morden Station
Thur	20	5.00-7.00pm	Carol Singing for Rafiki at Colliers Wood Station
Sun	23	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion led by Rev Paul Timmis
		5.30pm	Carols by Candlelight with SIGMA
Mon	24	5.30pm	Christingle Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
		11.30pm	Midnight Communion at Christ Church with St Philip or Raynes Park Methodist Church
Tues	25	10.30am	Christmas Day Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Sun	30	10.30am	Morning Service led by David Eagle

CHURCH DIARY



Sun	6	10.30am	All Age Worship led by Mark Williamson
Tue	8	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	9	8.00pm	Worship Leaders Course
Fri	11	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	13	10.30am	Covenant Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	15	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Member's Evening</i>
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
Sat	19	10.00am	Big Brunch
Sun	20	10.30am	Morning Service led by Brenda Cannon
		6.30pm	CTiMP United Service
Tue	22	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer
		8.00pm	Finance and Property meeting
Fri	25	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	27	10.30am	Morning Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	29	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00pm	Time for Prayer

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

Please note the change of time for the Men's Supper Club. Starting in December the new start time will be at 7.00pm and not 7.30pm

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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Christmas Midnight Services

Please note that there will be no Midnight Communion Service at Martin Way on 24th December but you are invited to join with the congregations of:

Raynes Park Methodist Church (Rev Margaret Adams)

or

Christ Church with St Philip, Worcester Park (Rev Paul Timmis)

Both services start at 11.30pm.

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THE BIG LUNCH

Sunday, 9th December - The Big Lunch at 12.30pm - a two course carvery with all the trimmings. Tickets are £6.50.

All profits will go towards the cost of taking our young people to Spring Harvest in April 2013.

Items for the **February Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox,
(email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 20th January** at the latest