

MARTIN WAY METHODIST CHURCH

Newsletter - February 2002

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Dear friends, Happy New Year!

January at Martin Way has been 'covenant' month. We have used the theme of covenant for our morning worship and our Bible Study groups. The Methodist Covenant originated in a time when it was common practice for believers to write their own personal covenant, then make it with God in their particular ways, and keep a record of it in a special place known only to them. New Year's resolutions could be said to be a development of that practice. I wonder how many new year resolutions are still being kept? It is significant that within the Methodist Church we begin each new year with the Covenant Service, a time to think afresh about our calling to faith and our commitment to the church. 2002 is going to be a year of significant changes at Martin Way, as in September I will also be taking responsibility for Raynes Park Church for one year. The Methodist Church is a 'priesthood of all believers', which means that ministry is shared by all the people. As my workload will need to be shared more, we used the Covenant Service this year to encourage people to consider taking on more responsibility in the life of the church to prepare for September. We also had a very encouraging meeting with the Circuit Leadership Team when we shared together the important areas of work for Martin Way church and identified the support we need for this work. I feel very excited at the way ministry at Martin Way is becoming much more of a shared experience, and thank you for responding so willingly.

The President of Conference wrote in the Methodist Recorder in January that she sensed a shift away from the 'minister takes all' model of ministry. This is challenging not only for the church membership, but for ministers too as they adjust to working more in harmony with lay people. I know that change is very unsettling for some people, but remember that these changes herald new ways of working, that once we have adjusted to them could bring a new sense of vitality into the life of the church. When something is new we often treasure it, take great care of it, and gain a great deal of pleasure from it. I used to love having a new exercise book at school and wrote very neatly in the first half of the book, but gradually my writing became more untidy towards the end. Let us embrace our new patterns of ministry here with the same sense of love and joy, tenderness and care.

May 2002 be an enriching year for us all.

With love, Anne

A Glimpse Of The Healing Service

Having just returned from a very enjoyable and blessed eight weeks in Canada I wasn't anticipating more blessing so soon, but as I attended the Healing Service on 11 November I knew that God was with us. The service had been well prepared in advance with much prayer by the leadership team and printed information. The hymns and prayers as well as the message made us all ready for what God was desiring to do amongst us.

God was asking us to come home. That was the message taken from Luke chapter 15 verses 11-32, the story of the son who squandered his inheritance and the forgiving, compassionate father waiting to receive his wayward son. We were reminded of our inheritance from God, His love as shown to us in Jesus Christ. The question to consider was what we had done with our inheritance. We looked at the things that cause us to wander from God, that distance us from Him and, like the lost son, the invitation to return to God, the loving Father, bringing our need, our sin, our hurts and receive a welcome home, forgiveness and wholeness. As a burn to the flesh won't heal till all the infection is removed, this isn't without pain and discomfort. So we need to expose our true deep needs, the things that fester often leading to hurts and bitterness and offer these to God for healing to commence.

There was an invitation to go forward to receive prayer/anointing with oil for healing - physical and inner - and wholeness. Greater than personal blessing as I yielded my needs was the blessing of seeing others touched by the power and presence of Jesus. The service concluded with an invitation to the table of bread and wine where we remembered with thanksgiving the blood of Jesus shed for us and the body broken for us giving us the opportunity to have a relationship with God. What a service, what a blessing!

To quote one person: "At the healing service I received the wonderful blessing of being released from the feelings of the past and being filled with the Holy Spirit".

Healing is often a process that continues as we come to God in prayer, while our transformed life continues to grow through the support of fellowship and ministry. Time for Prayer on Tuesday evenings provides an opportunity to experience this.

Will you share in the next Healing Service on 17 February?

Moir Bailey

Living water - a "quiet day" at St. Michael's convent

It was the notice 'Living Water' that caught my eye. Water - whether the sea, a lake, a river or a tumbling brook fascinates, calms and soothes me, it always has.

The other thing that appealed to me was the idea of a 'quiet day'. Our world these days seems to be spinning faster and faster, especially at the time of year leading up to Christmas. Every year that frenetic search for ever more expensive toys and

gadgets, gifts and food seems overwhelming. For several years now I've tried to extricate myself from this great money-grabbing maelstrom, but inevitably I get sucked in - so this opportunity to join a group of like minded people and actually spend some time being calm and still seemed too good to miss. But for me it was going to be a totally new experience.

The day dawned dry, but grey and overcast. My son drove me through Richmond Park to Ham Common and as he drove away leaving me at the side of the road, the sun came out. It was as though someone had thrown a switch illuminating a stunning world of gold and amber. After all, I thought, this is going to be a great day!

I found the big open gates and walked up the gravelled path to the Convent. The rambling red brick building was calm and silent in the sunshine, a pretty conservatory to one side softened the rather formidable facade. I went up the steps and rang the bell by the side of the green front door. It was opened almost immediately by a small grey haired woman who smiled and invited me in. As she led the way along a maze of highly polished narrow corridors I was transported back through the years. I had been educated in a convent and the faint smell of beeswax polish, the deep enveloping silence, the hushed voice of my guide took me right back to my school days...

I was shown into the sunny room. Anne immediately left the group sitting round a low table and came forward, smiling, to welcome me. I was introduced to everyone and took my place. I was delighted to hear soft music and the sound of water and birdsong - very warm and peaceful. I had no idea what to expect but our leader Val Hancock guided us all gently through the day. For me it was a complete revelation.

There were twelve of us sitting round that low table with a deep blue candle in the centre, pretty glass pebbles reflecting its light and delicate leaf skeletons creating a calm oasis. As we introduced ourselves, Val quietly prompting and encouraging us, my thoughts kept wandering to the sunshine outside the windows and the pull of those four acres of garden waiting to be explored!

And what a garden! Later we had a short break and I strolled around in the warm sunshine, following tempting vistas and discovering little secret overgrown corners - a wooden seat by a tiny pool almost hidden under a tangle of undergrowth, a swing swaying gently from a high branch of an ancient sweet chestnut, a garden of contemplation and healing sown with herbs, statues hidden under brambles and tangles of rambling roses and then - the kitchen garden. More than an acre of ground, enclosed in mellow old protecting walls, planted with winter greens, leeks and onions all expertly dug over...How I marvelled at this little community of sisters keeping a house and garden of that size so immaculate!

The lovely day quietly drew to a close. Val invited us all to pour a tiny glass of water into a pitcher on the table to give back a little of what we had each taken from the day. As we lit a tiny candle we pondered on what the day had given us. For me it was a deep, overwhelming sense of love, support and friendship. I'd gone to St. Michael's

Convent with a completely open mind, not knowing what to expect, even prepared to sneak away if things were uncomfortable, and yet here I was, drawn into this amazing fellowship surrounded by so much love and the promise of more to come.

We gathered round for a last hot drink and delicious buttered fruit tea bread which had miraculously appeared and agreed that we must do this again - very soon.

Valerie Jureidini

On a most beautiful sunny autumn morning a group of about a dozen of us met at St. Michael's Convent, Ham. Coming with different hopes, expectations or not even knowing what to expect, we were welcomed by Val Hancock our leader.

After a brief introduction from each of us we listened to a piece of music and then each read a paragraph from a modern form of the passage 'The woman at the well'. A time in silence followed for reflecting on this on our own, either in the garden or in a quiet area in several available rooms. We then met in small groups to discuss the points, phrases or word that was of relevance or importance to us. Returning as one group we shared our findings, but only if we felt we wanted to. There was no pressure on anyone at any time to do anything they were not comfortable with.

Our lunch was eaten as a group and we enjoyed chatting together. Afterwards several of us visited the chapel. For me the impact of a small bubbling water feature in one corner brought a much fuller meaning to the bubbling over of the Samaritan woman having just met and talked to Jesus at the well.

The afternoon session began with more music followed by a most beneficial exercise in relaxation and imagining ourselves at the Wedding at Cana, while Val read the account from John's Gospel. This I found so helpful in understanding implications of this miracle for the various people, from the servants who filled the enormous water jars to Mary who pointed out the situation to Jesus.

Again, after another short time of quiet individual contemplation on this reading, we formed small groups to discuss our thoughts on the reading, then joined together to share our findings. A short time of prayer followed. A most impressive and moving time for me was when we each in turn poured a small amount of water into a large stone jug, lit a candle, and said a short prayer either silently or out loud. Such a significant moment. The time ended with us all joining in the Grace.

It was the most uplifting, inspiring, helpful and valuable experience, one that I can reflect on to help with my own Bible study, and prayer times. The Lord really was at work. Thank you Anne for arranging the day and thank you Val for your leadership. If another day like that is arranged I urge you to consider going. You will never forget it!

Joan Harding

The Flower Rota

Joyce Plant has worked extremely hard over many years co-ordinating the flower ministry in our church. This has involved ensuring we always have flowers in church each Sunday, and for festivals the whole church has been filled with flowers. Joyce has worked with a very willing and gifted team of flower arrangers and another team of volunteers who deliver flowers to those who are unwell or have a special occasion to celebrate. She has done a superb job, but has now decided to stand down. We thank her for all she has done for the church through this ministry.

Marie Randall has now taken over this role. She has produced a new rota, and the ministry will continue in the same way except that because of her work commitments, we have to re-think the preparation of flowers for distribution. We are therefore asking people to sign up and be responsible for preparing the flowers for delivery. Everyone appreciates the gift of flowers and I get many telephone calls thanking us for flowers. Flowers given to a friend or neighbour are a witness to our faith; flowers at time of loneliness, sickness or sadness are a great comfort; flowers on special occasions are a great joy; flowers for no special reason at all make us feel special. This is a valuable ministry of the church and I hope and pray that we can continue to enhance our worship and spread the love of God in this way.

If you have never had the courage to arrange flowers in church before, Marie will help you. We hope to hold a few flower arranging sessions where you can learn a few tips. Men and women are welcome in this ministry. Look out for the dates in the weekly notices.

Anne Rusbridge

Women's World Day Of Prayer : 1 March

Morning Service: 10.30am St. John Fisher Church Cannon Hill Lane: Address on 'Challenged to Reconcile' by Major Rosemary Randall of the Salvation Army.

Evening Service: 8pm Holy Cross Church Motspur Park. Please see Mary Heaton if you need a lift or want more details.

Church Stewards

Would you like to become involved in the leadership of the church? We need at least three new church stewards this year to enable our team to work effectively. If you know someone who would be interested, or if you would like to be nominated yourself, please let me know.

What is involved?

A very brief summary of the official role is: The church stewards are corporately responsible with the minister for giving leadership and help over the whole range of the church's life and activity. They are particularly charged to hold together in unity the variety of concerns that are contained within the one ministry of the Church. To this end it is their responsibility to uphold and act upon the decisions and policies of the Church Council. They have very specific responsibilities for worship, money and baptism.

How does this work out in practice?

The Sunday tasks are divided into 'Church Steward who ensures the church is prepared for worship, and 'Vestry Steward who looks after the minister or visiting preacher and leads prayers. At Martin Way we function as a team ministry. Each steward has an area of overall responsibility. At present Brenda is prayer co-ordinator, Moira is pastoral care co-ordinator, Gwen is responsible for education and resources, Tony for communication and Peter for technology. This will change as new people join the team and have other gifts to offer.

What is the time commitment?

We meet monthly for worship and prayer, to discuss ministry and mission, and to attend to business matters.

Each steward has 2 or 3 Sunday duties each month.

All the stewards and the minister meet in the vestry at 10.10am on Sundays to pray for the morning's worship and the life of the church.

It is a demanding role, but a tremendous privilege and a great joy to be involved in bringing into effect the decisions of the Church Council.

The nominations for church steward need to be with me by Easter, and the elections take place at the General Church Meeting. If you would be interested to find out more, or have any questions to ask, I will be having an 'enquiry evening' on Wednesday 20th February. All church members are welcome to come to this evening.

Anne Rusbridge

Greetings

Nora Wyeth sends greetings to everyone. "I think of you all at Martin Way and thank you for the fellowship". The Baptist church at Abingdon has made her very welcome

Greetings From Merton Park Baptist Church - Pastor Keith Mitchell sends greetings from all at Bushey Road. He writes "May I wish you and our friends at Martin Way God's richest blessing for 2002"

Christmas Cards

Joyce Plant writes:-

I am a little perturbed at the number and cost of cards exchanged over the Christmas period at our church and mostly to people to whom we could easily say "A Happy Christmas" and usually do!

I send to most members of the congregation and wonder why not all, and feel there could be a better way. I should like to hear other people's thoughts on this.

St. Mary's Merton

There will be a Quiz Night at St. Mary's Church Hall on Saturday 9 February in aid of Save the Children. If you would like more information about Save the Children or any of their future events please phone Chrystine Chalk 8544-0390 or Lyn Jones 8542-9248

Ruxley

On Saturday 9 February at 7.30pm there will be a concert (tickets ,3) in aid of Christian Aid preceded by a talk (free) at 6pm. Contact Margaret McCarthy for details (0208397-4340)

Thanks

Edie sorted 1,320 letters in the Christmas Post Box and the money raised for the MHA came to £ 188.86

NCH Action For Children

The carol singers at Morden station raised £ 715 and the offertories at the Christingle, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day service amounted to £ 182.56 making the grand total of £ 897.56.

Dates for your Diary - Book them now

Friday 1 March Women's World Day of Prayer

Saturday 2 March Young Families Group

Saturday 23 March JMA Day

Thursday 25 April General Church Meeting 8pm

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Items for the next issue of the Newsletter (March) should be with the editor, Rosemary Keen, by **Sunday 17 February** at the latest.

CHURCH DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

Sun	3	10.30 am	Sunday Club Anniversary Family Service led by Ms Gill Hulme
Mon	4	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Mrs Cowie - Victorian Days)
Tue	5	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		08.00 pm	Time for Prayer
		08.00 pm	Worship Leaders Course (Stoneleigh) - Preparation for Leading Worship
Wed	6	10.30 am	Toddler time in Church
		07.45 pm	Midways (George Holland - Epsom Hospital Radio)
Thu	7	08.00 pm	Church Council
Fri	8	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	10	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Mrs Valerie Ashcroft
		06.30 pm	Holy Communion led by Rev Stan Brown
Mon	11	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Mr Furness - Songs from the Shows)
Tue	12	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		08.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	13	10.30 am	Ash Wednesday Holy Communion
Sun	17	10.30 am	Holy Communion led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		06.30 pm	Healing Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
Mon	18	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Mr Brian Kneller)
Tue	19	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		07.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (Members Evening)
		08.00 pm	Time for Prayer
		08.00 pm	Worship Leaders Course (Stoneleigh) -Leading Prayer in Worship
Wed	20	07.45 pm	Midways (Member's Evening)
Fri	22	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	24	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Mr John Sephton
Mon	25	02.45 pm	Fellowship (Derek Heaton - A Day in London)
Tue	26	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		08.00 pm	Time for Prayer
		08.00 pm	Worship Leaders Course (Stoneleigh) - A Miscellany of Aspects
Wed	27	10.30 am	Bible Study

Please refer to the Weekly Notice Sheet for additional information

[web site:- martinwy.webspace.fish.co.uk]