

MARTIN WAY METHODIST CHURCH

Newsletter - May 2002

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Dear friends,

I am writing this letter having just returned from Easter People in Torquay. Easter People is always good, but this year was the best ever. The theme this year was 'global vision', and at every seminar and worship event we heard from people around the world of the Christian work they are involved in. Stories of large numbers being converted and tremendous church growth, stories of people working in very difficult situations and experiencing persecution, stories of people faithfully working in areas where there seems to be little response. We were told of the large numbers of people in our world who still have never heard the name of Jesus. We heard of places where many people commit suicide because they cannot see any way of surviving, because they have no food, no heat, no prospect of employment or benefits, and the work of the church in trying to provide a sense of hope in the lives of these people.

During the week three young women went out from Easter People to Kazakhstan to visit some Tear Fund projects and arrived back in the United Kingdom to tell us of their experiences. They told us of tremendous work being done with drug addicts and homeless people, but work which is threatened due to lack of funds and lack of resources.

We also heard of the work of a group of young people from Manchester called 'The Tribe'. Before telling us of the very successful work they are doing in the schools in Manchester and the youth clubs they are setting up on housing estates in Manchester, they had everyone - of all ages - jumping up and down in the house of God!

Emma was helping with the children's work throughout the week and was thrilled to be interviewed on Premier Radio on the Sunday morning show. We saw 'Key Witness' again, the excellent presentation of the Easter story by New Creations Theatre Company and also saw the preview of 'Here and Now', the new musical by the Rob Frost Team which will be touring the country in the autumn. Look out for details of this production coming to Wimbledon on 20th October - lots of good music, dance and drama in this production.

The morning bible studies were based on the book of Isaiah. Painful and hard-hitting as we saw how relevant these passages are to our current situation within the church. The need for us to burst out of the time-warp in which we have been living for a

number of years and proclaim the love of God in ways that are relevant to life in 2002.

It was a week filled with both pain and hope, a real sense of glory and power in the Christian message and the hope of resurrection, and this was reflected in the worship which was more prayerful than I have ever known it. It was an inspirational week and a very challenging week. There was a clear message to the churches in the United Kingdom that we need to recover a sense of being missionary congregations, that the gospel needs to be proclaimed here as well as abroad, and that there is a real need for us to unite in prayer to bring a sense of renewal to the people of this country.

I came away from Easter People with such an enriched awareness of what it means to be a part of the body of Christ, and in particular of the amazing diversity of this body and the need for all the parts of the body to communicate, support and encourage each other. Mike and I have already booked our hotel accommodation for next year. Why don't you think about joining us and experiencing the fun and the fellowship, the challenge and the choice of activities. Next year the theme is 'Essence', exploring Christian spirituality.

Immediately after Easter People I had to attend a specially convened meeting of the District Probationers' Committee in order that Synod could recommend my being ordained - which thankfully they did! Preparations are now well in hand for my Service of Public Testimony on 9th June, here at Martin Way at 6.30pm, and I hope you will all come and share in this important occasion as I prepare for ordination in Wolverhampton on 30th June.

*With best wishes,
Anne*

Circuit News

A specially convened meeting of the District Probationers Committee took place at Central Hall on Monday 8th April. You will recall, this was necessary as Anne was unable to attend in March because of ill health.

Following her 'examination' by the committee members, her ministry was commended and her name passed to Synod. Synod has since voted and recommended her for Ordination. Her Testimony Service will take place as planned on June 9th at Martin Way and her name added to the list of those to be Ordained on June 30th at Darlington Street Methodist Church in Wolverhampton at the Methodist Conference.

Anne is at the start of her journey towards recovery. The Circuit Leadership Team have therefore made changes to her responsibilities which are described below. The reference to 'days' is notional, that is to say they are generally not fixed with the exception of her day off on Friday and worship on Sunday, referring rather to an allocation of time to be spent on aspects of ministry.

Anne's remaining 5 days are allocated as follows:-

- Days 1 and 2 to include all meetings, training, pastoral work, worship preparation and other requirements related to pastoral charge responsibilities at Martin Way and in the Circuit.
- Day 3 to continue Probationers Studies research - this will include developing the role of Chaplain to the Morden Branch of Arthritis Care.
- Day 4 to focus on the development of a Community Project at Raynes Park. This will continue as part of her responsibilities in September.
- Day 5 allocated in support of Anne's recovery of health. This will include regular therapy sessions etc.

Please keep Anne, Mike and their family in your prayers in the coming weeks and months.

Jenny Jackson
Circuit Steward

Bible Course

Reaching the parts that haven't been reached!

Have you ever wondered what it means to be a member of the Methodist Church?

The LIFE BIBLE COURSE is both for those who wish to explore their Christian Faith, and for those who are considering membership.

We will be holding a six-week course during the Summer months (at a time which is convenient for those who wish to come), and invite you to consider joining us.

**Jesus said "I have come in order that you might have life -
life in all its fullness"**

Come and find out how! If you think you may be interested, please speak to Anne or one of the stewards **by the first weekend in May** so that dates can be planned

The Wider Church

There's much talk about the necessity of teaching Christian values: so that, hopefully, violence, vandalism, robbery etc. may decline. Listening to politicians and others, it seems to me that there is a tendency to equate Christianity with basic morality: this reduces the Faith merely to a code of behaviour and is offensive to adherents of other religions, who have high standards of morality.

The commandments in the Decalogue are generally taken as the basis for a harmonious society. We have inherited them from Judaism.... By the time of Jesus, rabbis had lifted from the multiplicity of regulations in Leviticus the precept "Love

your neighbour as yourself" and linked it with "Love God". The second is the outcome of the first. There are similar commandments in other faiths. In

- Sikhism "Love God and all humanity"
- Buddhism "Practice the attitude of living kindness to all human beings- respect the human race as an entity"
- Hindu "Joy comes to him...who is one with Brahman ..in the oneness of love"
- Islam "He is not a believer [in God] who does not wish for his brother what he would wish for himself"

What a wonderful society it would be if we all lived out our ideals! We all know that any religion may be distorted for political ends, by fanatics who blind themselves to everything but their own conclusions, by ordinary people like ourselves. There are many outgoing unselfish people, examples to us, who cannot accept a religious belief.

What binds us with all those who hold a religious faith is the belief that we humans are spiritual beings as well as material. We are all on a journey towards ultimate truth and love: a journey that will not be completed in this life.

[Peggy Hunt in St. Mary Merton's parish magazine December 2001]

Sometimes we fail to reach out to other people in their need because we somehow feel that we are unqualified. We feel that we do not know enough or have not been good enough to qualify to help somebody else.

Conversely, this is also seen in our rejection of help because we do not feel we are good enough to be helped. If we wait to be helped until we are completely adequate, we will always be waiting. Some of the best help is given by those who are up to their ankles in trouble reaching out to those who are up to their armpits in trouble.

You may be surprised to realise this, but perfect people are seldom helpful. In the first place they are hard to find, and when you do find them, they are often self-proclaimed... More often than not, it is the imperfect people who save us.

[Rev D Ceri Lewis in >Trinity News' January 2002]

Banners

I wonder why so many of our churches have banners now? Rosemary asked us to write this article and I began to wonder.

Banners were originally flags, flown as rallying points on the field of battle. The standard-bearer of a Roman legion was the most important figure in the fight. He held aloft the symbol of the authority of the emperor and it was a point of honour that it should never fall. The banner of a regiment of the modern army is a symbol of unity, teamwork, and tradition. I have seen regimental banners and flags which were

so old that they had to be mounted on muslin to display them, but they were still treasured for what they depicted and the values they enshrined.

It is fitting then, that the army of Christ, the people who serve the King who is over all emperors, should carry their own banners, and from this starting point, banner design began to grow. At first, banners simply proclaimed information - the name of the church, the existence of a Sunday School or club. Our uniformed organisations carry this kind of banner and when they come to church, their banner is paraded with them.

More recently, the idea that banners can actually aid worship, by focusing our attention on specific points of faith has led to an explosion of creativity and exciting design. In the same way that our ancestors produced stained glass windows and tapestries to tell the stories of our faith, the modern church has turned to banners. Here at Martin Way, our first banner was made with children in a creche for an afternoon covenant service. It was simple, fun and a good memory of a happy afternoon. Since then we have moved on from strength to strength. The big banners in the church have each grown from a celebration or an experience and have a significance.

The kind of banners we have made are not intended to be kept until they need muslin to hold them together! They are intended to reflect a thought and inspire our worship. When fresh inspiration strikes - and our faith gives infinite opportunities - a fresh banner can be made.

Banner making is not just a means to an end. We have worked as a group each time a banner has been made. Ideas are shared, content discussed, designs and fabrics suggested. Then there is the team effort of actually creating the finished article. When you are working on something like this, sharing of experiences and ideas comes easily and we have all learned a little more about our faith and each other.

If you have an idea, or would like to work as part of a banner-making group, have a word with one of us. We're waiting for inspiration to strike for the next one!

Joan Arnold and Janet Hamblin

The Elizabethan Floral Arrangement Society (Merton)

The Elizabethan Floral Arrangement Society started life in the spring of 1966 in Dudley Hall, Tudor Drive, Morden - hence its name 'Elizabethan'.

True to the spirit of the 60's it was a lively club in its youth, holding regular dances with a band and all the trimmings.

Over the years we have become a little more sedate and after 'moving house' several times we are now meeting at Martin Way Methodist Church. We are a small Club of

about 30 members and meet on the first Tuesday of every month, at 7.30pm in the coffee lounge.

At many of our meetings we have a demonstrator who completes five or six fresh flower arrangements which are then raffled at the end of the evening. Sometimes we have a practical evening where members can learn a new skill i.e. egg decorating, silk roses etc. We have a break halfway though the evening for tea and coffee and finish the meeting about 9.30pm. New members are always welcome and we will be very pleased to see anyone interested.

On Saturday 18th May there will be a special evening meeting in the Church Hall. Christina Wallis, the area demonstrator, will be coming and there will be a plant sale table as well as an opportunity to buy flower arranging equipment, such as oasis etc.. Tickets are ,6.50 and doors open at 6.45 for 7.30pm

Lin Edmonds (Secretary)

Christian Aid Week 12-18 May

This year the week is focusing on how international trade rules affect the lives of the world's poorest people. Instead of bringing prosperity, trade often causes injustice and poverty, making the world's poorest people poorer. The problem is that the rules which govern international trade are shaped by rich governments and companies to their own advantage. With the right rules, trade could bring new products, technology and opportunities that would help countries tackle poverty. It could create income, employment and investment for the world's poorest people. But they have to be the right rules, fully endorsed by those they seek to protect.

If you would like to help with the door to door collection please see Mike Rusbridge. There are about 12 roads allocated for Martin Way, so the more help there is the easier it will be.

On Sunday 19 May, to mark the end of Christian Aid week, there will be a sponsored walk round part of London, covering many churches. Mike will be walking again this year, so if you would like to join him on the walk please let him know and ask for a sponsorship form.

Young Families Group:

- Monday 6 May - Visit to Syon Park. Meet in Syon Park car park at 2pm. Please let Tim and Caroline know if you intend to come
- Saturday 25 May - 4pm in the Coffee Lounge

Family News

Hetty Fincham celebrated her 93rd birthday on 1 April with her family and friends in her new residential Care Home in Norbury. She appears to have settled in very well and is very happy and contented

Well done Steve!

Congratulations to Steve Pallister on running the Marathon in 3 hours 57 minutes! Sponsors can give their money (for the National Meningitis Trust) to him or Annemarie

Dates For Your Diary

- **5 May at 3.00pm** : Annual ecumenical service at the site of the Merton Priory chapter house (situated under Merantun Way and reached via Savacentre car park)
- **14-17 May** : 18th National Christian Resources Exhibition at Sandown Park Esher: Friday 1.30pm seminar on problems facing Christians forced to leave the Bible Lands: for more information see Mary or Derek Heaton
- **19 May** : Christian Aid sponsored walk round some of London's churches. Mike Rusbridge will give you the details and trusts to have companions on his journey!
- **25 May** at 11.00am: St. James' Church Summer Fair
- **15-16 June** : Overseas Missions Weekend: Saturday Garden Party 12 noon to 4.30pm; Sunday Service guest speaker Alan Cranmer formerly working in Mysore India; more details (and tickets for Saturday) see Derek Heaton
- **29 June** : Big Brunch!

Circuit News

- **Friday 17 May at 7 for 7.30pm**: there will be a Circuit Network event at Upper Tooting Methodist Church - an African Evening - refreshments included. Admission by ticket (no charge) available from Doreen Warren. A collection will be taken during the evening for the Gambia
- **Saturday 20 July at 7.00pm**: Farewell Service for Rev Rodney Hill: at Raynes Park Methodist church
- **Sunday 28 July at 6.30pm**: Farewell to Upper Tooting and Rev Jenny Impey

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter (June) should be with the editor, Rosemary Keen, by Sunday 12 May at the latest.

Church Diary For May

Wed	1	10.30 am	Toddler Time in Church
		7.45 pm	Midways (Flower Arranging on May Day-Barbara Meineck)
Thu	2	8.00 pm	Pastoral Committee
Fri	3	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
Sun	5	10.30 am	Family Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
Tue	7	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	8	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Sat	11	10-12 noon	Midways Coffee Morning
Sun	12	10.30 am	Church Anniversary Service led by Mr Bob Hamblin
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
Mon	13	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mr Bankcroft - Blue Cross)
Tue	14	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	15	7.45 pm	Midways (Poems/Readings for Spring)
Fri	17	12.30 pm	Lunch Club
		7.30 pm	Network Event at Upper Tooting
Sat	18		Church Stewards Training Day
Sun	19	10.30 am	Pentecost: Communion Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
		6.30 pm	Healing Service led by Rev Anne Rusbridge
Mon	20	2.45 pm	Fellowship (Mr Tom Davies)
Tue	21	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club (Valerie and Stephen Ashcroft - Clowning)
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	22	10.30 am	Bible Study
Thu	23	8.00 pm	Church Council
Sun	26	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Mr Neville Mynett
Tue	28	10-12 am	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Wed	29	7.45 pm	Midways (Annual General Meeting)
Fri	31	12.30 pm	Lunch Club