

MINISTER'S LETTER



One of the most distinctive memories that I have of childhood is of watching *Jim'll Fix It* on television. From the moment I saw another little boy get to meet his heroes - the manager and players of Nottingham Forest Football Club - I dreamt of having one of my letters answered. Like many children, I was to be disappointed. I never did receive a reply from Jim. Nor did I get to visit Broadcasting House. My father did though fix it for me to attend a Wolves training session and meet the players and that was more than good enough for me.

Now, and with the benefit of hindsight, it seems that those who did not come into contact with Jimmy Savile were the lucky ones. With accusations being made a year after his death, he is unable to offer any defence. But as each day passes, more and more stories are being told of the abuses carried out over many years by the late disc jockey, television presenter and media personality. Under the weight of these allegations, a reputation that took a lifetime to create has collapsed in a matter of days, two charities closely associated with Mr Savile have taken the decision to close and the BBC finds itself engulfed in scandal.

For all this, however, the greatest tragedy is surely not that reputations lie in tatters but rather that lives and relationships have been damaged, sometimes beyond repair. Whilst the source of this damage lies in the abuse suffered at the hands of an abuser, a great deal of additional pain has undoubtedly been caused by others - when stories have not been believed and voices have been ignored and/or silenced.

Throughout my time as a minister within it, the Methodist Church has sought to take child protection very seriously indeed. There haven't been too many Church Council meetings that I have attended that have not discussed *Safeguarding* policy matters. And yet whenever policy decisions have been made by Conference that have subsequently called upon people to take some action themselves e.g. obtain an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau or attend a training

session etc., people across the Connexion have thrown up their hands in horror and complained - witness the letter's page of the Methodist Recorder over the last twelve months for evidence of this. Complaints usually fall into one of two categories: either people feel that their character and/or integrity is being called into question or else they feel that for some reason they do not need to undergo any training, that it will be a waste of their time.

If we learn nothing else from the stories that have emerged in recent days, however, surely we now know that allowing people's characters or integrity to go unchecked simply because we like them, think we know them and/or don't want to cause offence can have disastrous consequences. And surely we can now also see that any training that will help us to gain a greater awareness of the issues - so that we know what to look out for, what to do if we have suspicions that abuse (of whatever kind) is taking place or how to respond if someone plucks up enough courage to share with us what has happened or is happening to them - can only be a good thing.

Our task as a church community is absolutely not to create a climate of fear and mistrust. But if we are to take seriously our duty to care for and nurture all those who come through our doors, then commit ourselves to creating a safer space we must - a safer space in which people encounter 'a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse'. Please, whether you are an officeholder in the church or not, take whatever opportunities that the church provides for training in this area. It doesn't represent unnecessary red-tape. It is the work of Christ.

With every blessing

Paul

————— < 0 > —————

The vocation of every man and woman
is to serve other people.

Count Leo Tolstoy

Churches Together in Merton Park

The committee of the Churches Together in Merton Park (CTiMP) which includes representatives from Merton Park Baptist, St Mary the Virgin, St James Merton, St John Fisher RC and Martin Way Methodist churches have actively met 4 times throughout the past year. Since last year's report Shirley Morse stepped down as a committee member representing St James' church and was thanked for her contribution to CTiMP over the years. Rev Tom Kavanagh is the Chairman, Father Graham Derriman the secretary and Neville Squires treasurer.

The celebration to commemorate the **400th Anniversary of the King James Bible**, CTiMP presented this special service at St James' church on Sunday the 23rd October 2011. Gillian Thick introduced 'The Good Book' and the service was well attended with participation from St James and St Mary choirs and Raynes Park Taize group. Those who attended were blessed both from hearing aloud readings from the KJV Bible's rich flowing language and prose to the discussions that followed during refreshments, a very positive response. £200 was collected for the Bible Society.

The **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** is motivated by the wish to fulfil God's desire "that all may be one" (John 17:21) and that "there might be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:16). The service this year took place at St Mary's church on the 23rd January. In the form of Evensong, the music of the choir at St Mary's enhanced the worship and the Rev Paul Timmis preached the sermon.

A Healing & Reconciliation Service was held at Martin Way Methodist church on the 26th February. It is hoped that these meditative services will be held three times a year.

The Anglican and Roman Catholic representatives took part in the **Act of Witness** at the Civic Centre which was led by the Churches Together in Morden. The Morden, Merton Park and Morden Park Baptist churches joined Martin Way Methodist church in an ecumenical **Good Friday** service which was well attended. The Easter Sunrise service on Cannon Hill Common is also an ecumenical event although this year, because of the rain, was held in Martin Way church.

Pentecost Service: Members of the churches got together to organise this event which was held at the bandstand in John Innes Park on a warm afternoon in May. The enactment of Acts 2 'That's the Spirit' by the drama group recounted

the events of the first Pentecost in a humorous way. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. The CTiMP committee is unanimous that these events be held every year to celebrate the birthday of the church.

The Christmas leaflets: Members of the committee met recently to discuss the future distribution of the Christmas leaflets. This street list has not been reviewed for a number of years and many felt the need to visit the streets adjacent to their churches to maintain the pastoral contact. A new list will be issued and the distribution shared between the 5 churches geographically as far as possible, according to person power and who is available to distribute. St Mary's and St John Fisher churches have taken many more streets as both cover a large parish. The leaflets will be ready for collection by the end of November.

At each meeting Gillian Thick gives an update on the activities of **Christian CARE** and the needs that arise. As a response to the increased number of families in need of subsistence at the beginning of the year, each of the Churches collected food items to distribute to these families in the borough and was greatly appreciated. The churches will again be collecting next year which helps the even distribution throughout the year. Most of the churches are involved in Christian CARE in many ways and the committee is happy that the organisation will be back in Merton when the office moves to Martin Way Methodist Church before the end of the year.

Future Plans and Dates for your diaries

3rd Ecumenical Service will be held at Merton Park Baptist church on **4th November at 6.30pm**. Speaker will be **Rev. David Shosanya**, Regional Minister (Mission) for the London Baptist Association. The service will include participation from representatives of each of our churches and aims to reflect our rich diversity in worship. The **offering** will be given to **Love Life UK**, a prison outreach ministry championed by our speaker.

The next **Church Unity Service** will be held at Martin Way Methodist church on **20th January 2013 at 6.30pm**

Dates for the next **Taize** meetings held at **St John Fisher Church at 8pm**: Autumn term: 8th Oct; 12 Nov and 10th Dec (shared meal at 22 Aylward Road). A warm welcome to all.

Dennis Clark and Gwen Wildman are currently the representatives from Martin Way but please feel free to join us. The next meeting will be on Thursday 22nd November 2012



Christmas Shoebox Appeal

Platform 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ are intending to take part in Operation Christmas Child again this year. Choosing gifts to put in the shoeboxes are fun part of getting involved in Operation Christmas Child. There is something very rewarding about giving to a child you will probably never meet in this world – especially when you know your simple act of kindness will be felt and appreciated in more ways than you can ever imagine. Once you have decided whether to give the shoebox to a boy or girl, you need to think carefully about gifts that would be most appropriate for the age group.

There will be a box in the store cupboard to place your items into. Platform 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ will put the shoeboxes together on Sunday 4th November. If you are unsure of what to get, but would like to make a monetary donation towards the shoebox appeal please do as we are required to send £2.50 per box made. There will be a collection plate in which to put your donation after the morning service on 4th November.

- Small Toys; bears, soft toys, tennis ball, finger puppets, small jigsaws, yo-yo's, building blocks, small musical instrument, trucks or cars, dolls, etc.
- Educational Supplies; felt pens, pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, erasers, colouring book, notepad, picture or puzzle books, chalk, pencil case, stickers, etc
- Hygiene Items; toothpaste, toothbrush, hairbrush, comb, hair clips, bar of soap, flannel, etc
- Other Items; sweets (sell by date to be at least March 2010), gloves, scarf, sunglasses, cap, hat, bangles, necklace, clip-on earrings, etc.
- Knitted Items; hats, scarves, hand puppets (patterns can be found at www.operationchristmaschild.org.uk or in the Church Newsletter over the last few months)

Please do not put in;

Food - especially chocolate

Medicine or Vitamins of any kind

Any books with writing in

Clothing (other than listed above)

Fragile items - such as glass containers, mirrors

Hand knitted stuffed toys without the CE mark

Liquids

Dangerous Items

War related items

Anything of a political nature

My visit to Kenya

Whenever I tell people that I'm going to visit Kenya, the usual response is; 'which resort, will it be the Maasai Mara or a safari and which elephant orphanage will you see', but mostly 'how wonderful'. And it is wonderful to be back in this magical place and with friends that are so dear to me whose warm hospitality exceeds our western neighbours. It was life enriching friends like my travelling companion Joyce, and brothers and sisters in Kijabe, Kimende and Kaamba that drew me to revisit Kenya for the 6th time. Not the resorts or the safaris, but the Children's orphanages.



The country is gearing up for the elections in March 2013 and there is understandably some tension after the last post-election violence that erupted in 2007/8. The teachers, university lecturers, doctors and nurses were all on strike at various times during our stay thereby affecting children and adult education as well as the health service. Thus the morale of our host friends was at an all time low but did not dampen their spirits in welcoming us enthusiastically.

The 'welcoming' in true Kenyan style was the family get-together including the extended community singing and dancing for our benefit. After the traditional meal of goat, nyama choma, mukimo, githeri, chipatis and chai, there were speeches extolling our generosity and gifts of appreciation, though it was our hosts who gave us far more. It was worthy of the comment that was expressed in one of the speeches; "we have more understanding of the white people now that we have come to really know you".

Many positive things come to mind on this visit. When I left in January 2008, the number of people in refugee camps were increasing every day and I was involved along with the A.I.C. church in helping with the distribution of foods for the Internally displaced people who had to

flee their homes. I had also visited people in slum conditions near the railway in Uplands who were going to be homeless because the rail company were reclaiming their land. It was heartening to visit the IDPs who have now settled in Maai Mahiu where 'Habitat for Humanity' built, with local partners, new homes for families including a sizeable shamba - where they are able to grow vegetables and fruit to sustain them and their families.

The New Hope Children's Centre in Uplands, currently houses 130 orphaned children and is supported by the British charity Hand-in-hand. Set in 10 acres overlooking the Rift valley, the centre employs 34 local people. Joyce and I were welcomed like long lost friends and had an



unhurried tour of the centre including a walk to the villages nearby built to accommodate the grandmothers who are bringing up their orphaned relatives. We met Jane, now in College who had been brought up and educated in 'Little Stars' before they moved to the present 'New Hope' and considers New Hope her home. She introduced us to her



grandmother who lives contentedly in one of the villages. Some of these 1-2 bed-roomed dwellings also house those whom I had met in the railway slums five years ago and were so happy with their new environment. A few of them have chosen to keep their 'slum' home to keep their tools and grain etc.



Life is by no means easy especially in the rural areas that we visited. It is a daily struggle to get work and earn enough to buy food for the family. We saw evidence of children who were hungry, because the schools were closed and parents out looking for work. Some churches were responding to the needs of

these children by setting up feeding programmes. More and more orphanages are being built as more children are orphaned or destitute as a result of HIV Aids and becoming displaced. During our time in Kijabe we stayed with Simon and Margaret King'ori in their busy thoroughfare manse with endless visitors, thus never a dull moment! Simon is Pastor of the A.I.Church and Margaret (who spent the summer of 2009 in Britain) both felt called by God and responded in such a way. Their orphanage in Naivasha due to be opened in January have 12 children from IDPs' families who will be moving there and many more on the waiting list.



I am so blessed to have such friends who live out their faith and emulate Christ in the way they minister to the needy, when they themselves have so little material wealth. The sacrifices they make to expand His kingdom makes me realise my offerings to God amount to little in comparison. Friends like these make Kenya a sanctuary for the soul.

Gwen Wildman

Quiz Evening



In aid of MCW Rafiki Trust

Saturday 17th November 2012

At Wimbledon Methodist Church

*6.30pm for 7.00pm start
(park free on local streets from 6.30pm)*

*Tickets £7 including supper
(vegetarian option available) and a raffle*

*Bring a team of up to 6 people
or just come and join a team on the night*

Please let us know numbers by 11th Nov at the latest

Dawn Downes 020 8543 4774

Angela Linton-Smith amls62@yahoo.co.uk

*Or by post to Angela or Dawn at
Wimbledon Methodist Church,
Griffiths Road, Wimbledon SW19 1SP*



Machu-Picchu Charity Trek



In September there was an article in the Newsletter about Richard Herring (the comedian) discovering that Richard Herring (Abby's husband) was planning a Machu-Picchu Trek for charity. This month we focus on the other team members and the charities they are supporting.

I have chosen to challenge myself next year and trek with a group to Machu Picchu in Peru on 26th July until 4th August 2013. I will be doing this trek with my husband Richard Herring and our friends Anne & Rachael Conquest. We have each chosen charities close to our hearts and I have chosen to support South West Thames Kidney Fund (SWTKF). I have a close friend who has been supported by this charity for a long time. She had a Kidney transplant when she was in her early twenties and although it was predicted that she would require another one after 10 years it is still going after 20 years! I felt it important to help SWTKF to continue their research, support and vital work they do for all their Kidney Patients.

Abby

I decided to fundraise for Alzheimer's society as recently my father has been in a care home and I have seen first hand how this disorder can affect both the sufferer and their families. They do great work in supporting the many people affected by this terrible disorder. I am completing this trek with my daughter Rachael and two close family friends Abby and Richard Herring. We each have a different charity we have chosen to raise money for.

Anne

I am taking on this challenge and decided to raise money for the International Glaucoma Association (IGA) because Glaucoma runs in my family. For as long as I can remember my Grandfather has had Glaucoma. Sadly his eye sight has continued to deteriorate and his lifestyle has slowly changed as his eyesight became worse. Recently, he is now no longer able to live at home with just my Grandmother's support and has spent the last 4 months living in a care home. For this reason I wanted to do something which would help support this charity and help people in the future.

Rachael

They all need support in raising as much as they can before they start the trek in July next year and the easiest way is to go to the Justgiving website. Once you donate, they'll send your money directly to the charity. They'll also make sure Gift Aid (an additional 28%) is reclaimed on every eligible donation by a UK taxpayer, too. That means more money goes to the charity, so if you want to add your donation then please visit the teams' page on the justgiving website at www.justgiving.com/teams/Machu-Picchu-Trek.

————— < 0 > —————

With Thanks

During the past year we have been blessed by legacies from two of our former members. Doreen Warren and Joan Baker both very kindly left the church £1,000 in their wills. We remember both these departed friends and give thanks for the many years of faithful service which they gave this church. It is, perhaps, typical of them that they should remember the church in this generous way and would seek to help its continuing work for God in the local community and beyond.

We miss them both but will remember them with affection.

Roy Ellis

Worship Space Decision



At the General Church Meeting in May, we embarked upon a conversation about our worship space - about what it looks like and feels like and the impact that this might have upon our worship. Over the summer months everyone was invited to make a contribution to this conversation. On behalf of the Leadership Team and the Church Council, I would like to thank people for engaging so fully in this process.

Having analysed the written responses received during the period of consultation, the Leadership Team subsequently discussed its findings. What follows is a list of recommendations presented to and passed by the Church Council.

1. request a variety of chairs for people to try out, make our choice and order some (100/150/180?) - recognising that cost will depend on the type of chair selected and the number of them opted for (100 x £100 = £10,000) and that some people might wish to make a contribution towards this cost.
2. remove the pews and seek to dispose of them
3. move existing blue chairs into the parlour/new vestry for use there
4. carry out some remedial work to the floor
5. use the scaffolding tower to brush the walls ourselves (to remove dust)
6. replace the up-lighters with down-lighters that can carry gels to "colour" the walls
7. experiment in worship with the positioning of the chairs/furniture until we settle on a basic layout that works for us - recognising that things might look and feel "odd" for a while
8. monitor changes in acoustics and explore the need to purchase "panels" if necessary
9. continue to explore possibilities for artwork etc.

Meanwhile, if you would like to see the full recommendations put before the Church Council please visit the church website at www.martinway.org.com and right-click on Worship Space Decision Letter to download Paul's letter. If you would like to see all the responses yourself, please right-click on Summary of Worship Space consultation responses to download them to your computer as a PDF format.

Extreme Places

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

Richard Wurmbrand, a Romanian pastor who suffered in prison for fourteen years, once told a story that he had heard from a fellow prisoner. It had helped him through his most difficult times of torture. The brother told him:

“I once went to a circus and witnessed a most impressive scene. A sharpshooter placed a burning candle on his wife’s head. He then stepped out of the centre of the arena and, from quite a distance, shot the candle off her head.

“After the show was over, I approached her and asked if she was ever afraid the arrow would strike her. She replied, ‘Why should I be? He was aiming at the candle, not at me.’”

When Pastor Wurmbrand heard this story he thought, “Why should I be afraid of the torturers? They don’t aim at me. They may beat my body but my real being is Christ within. I am seated with him in heavenly places, and therefore they cannot touch my real person. From this incredible viewpoint I can look down and see the futility of their efforts.”

Pastor Wurmbrand lived through years of suffering and had neared death many times. But he was encouraged with this simple lesson and even flourished spiritually because he knew his place with Christ was secure, no matter what happened to his body.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Matthew 5:11

Persecution, though indescribably painful, has its limits. Neither physical torment nor emotional trauma can destroy the deepest parts of who we are. What we carry on the inside is the most valuable part of ourselves – our souls. Christ’s Spirit lives within us and protects our soul from emotional and physical harm. True, our enemies may strike us and even kill our bodies. However, when our enemies take a swipe at us, they are really maligning the name of Christ – the one who lives within. And he can never die again. However personal and pointed the opposition, it is really part of a bigger picture. The battle may involve us, but it concerns an overarching war between good and evil.

CHURCH DIARY



Fri	2	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	4	10.30am	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft
		6.00 pm	Churches Together in Merton Park Joint Service at Merton Park Baptist Church
Tue	6	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	7	8.00 pm	Leadership Meeting
Sun	11	10.30 am	Remembrance Sunday Service with Communion led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	13	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	16	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	17	10am-1pm	Big Brunch
Sun	18	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Brenda Cannon
Tue	20	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Jazz 3</i> - Mike Mortley
Sun	25	10.30am	Morning Service led by Rev Martine Stemerick
		6.30 pm	Healing Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	27	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	30	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club

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

We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday this month a very



Happy Birthday

and especially to:

Megan Sweby on 7th November

Jack Pallister on 9th November

Jacob Passfield on 27th November

————— < 0 > —————



Churches Together United Service

Churches Together in Merton Park would like to invite everyone to a united churches service on the theme ‘**One Mission?**’ We aim to explore further ways in which we can work together to demonstrate the compassion of Christ for the people of our world.

The event takes place at **6:30pm, Sunday 4th November** and is to be held at **Merton Park Baptist Church**. Our guest speaker for the occasion will be **Rev. David Shosanya**, Regional Minister (Mission) for the London Baptist Association. The service will include participation from representatives of each of our churches and aims to reflect our rich diversity in worship.

The **offering** will be given to **Love Life UK**, a prison outreach ministry championed by our speaker.

————— < 0 > —————

THE BIG CARVERY

SUNDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2012

Let Scott and the team cook and serve you your Sunday lunch. Come along anytime from 12.30pm till 2pm and enjoy the food and eth company of others. The cost for Main Course and pudding is only £6.50 for Adults and £3.50 for the Under 10s.

Remember to book your place (so the cooks can cater for everyone), tickets will be on sale at the Big Brunch on Saturday 17th November.

Benevolent Fund

In the past we made small donations from the Benevolent Fund to many charities. However, it seems that those donations, although gratefully received, barely covered the admin cost of processing the donation. From this year on we shall be making larger donations to fewer charities.

This year, a donation of £150 was made to each of the following:

- The Alzheimer's Society
- The Shooting Stars Children's Hospice
- Care for Uganda

————— < 0 > —————

Job Vacancy – Photocopier Manager

If you can subtract two numbers, have a good phone technique, good penmanship then you are an ideal candidate for this important role. A vacancy has arisen for someone to manage our photocopier supplies and billing. Briefly, the job involves the calculating and issuing of monthly bills to users, liaising with IKON regarding toner supplies, booking fault calls as necessary and maintaining stocks of paper. You do not have to handle money as users pay their bills directly to our treasurer. The salary will be commensurate with other jobs within the church i.e. the satisfaction of a job well done!

For further details, please see Tony Loft or Mike Mortley.

————— < 0 > —————

Rota Volunteers Wanted

Recently there have been vacant spaces in this quarter's rota that could not be filled. In particular, there were gaps in the Coffee, Money and Welcome Teams. Unfortunately Mary Heaton has had to give up her duties due to health and family reasons, so she is hoping that someone could take her place. Even if you feel you could help out on occasions on any of the Rotas, please speak to Abby Herring.

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