

MINISTER'S LETTER

As we continue through Lent and head towards Holy Week and Easter, we will not only be reminded of the incarnational and costly nature of God's love for us in Jesus; we will also be issued with an invitation to somehow become an embodiment of it of ourselves. We approach Easter every year, of course, so this is an invitation that we've received more than once and have long since been trying to respond to.



In recent months, various organisations, including churches, have opened their doors to provide a warm welcome for those struggling to heat their homes across the winter. This warm welcome campaign has been and continues to be a response to the cost-of-living crisis that has plunged 16.4m people into poverty according to the End Fuel Poverty Coalition.

As we head into the spring, and hopefully some warmer weather, there's an argument to say that the need for such spaces will diminish. On one level, there's clearly some truth in that. With any luck, we won't need to be huddling around radiators for very much longer!

But that's not to say that there won't be a need for places where people can rely upon being offered a warm welcome – there will be. There always will be. We have long known that many people live isolated lives. The pandemic gave each of us a taste of what such an existence can be and feel like. We are relational beings and crave interaction with other human beings, yet some people can go from one week to the next with little or no human contact. It's no wonder that so many people are incredibly lonely or that, as a nation, we find ourselves in the midst of a mental health crisis.

If as a church community – the body of Christ in this place – we are to bear witness to the love of God for the world and its people, and address some of these concerns, then it's imperative that we seek to live out our lives in such a way that this love is entered into and shared. If we only talk about God's love but do not embody and live it, we are limiting the possibility of anyone experiencing it as good news, ourselves included. Take the time to be fully present and listen to and chat with someone over a cup of coffee or around the meal table, however, and we both increase the possibility of us being Christ to others, and of us encountering Christ in those we meet.

Coffee and Chat, Lunch Club, and The Open Table are so much more than regular activities that we engage in and offer to others. Alongside the *Community Garden Project*, which we hope will see us go on to grow food alongside our neighbours within the wider community of which we are a part, these are our attempts to meet the needs of those around us and meet the God who has drawn us all together. Not everyone needs to prepare or serve food and drink – or even dig a garden(!) – but that doesn't mean that those unable to do so are prevented from playing an important part in this work. Most of us can come alongside someone else, listen, talk, and share a bit of love. And all of us can hold before God in our prayers, those who are organising and leading this work. Please do so.

With every blessing

Paul

Community Garden

As we look around us we're finally starting to see signs of spring, Crocus, snowdrop and Daffodils are starting to bloom despite the continued cold weather. With more Arctic weather predicted were all longing to be able to get out in our gardens and see what's survived the frozen winter.

That's all not stopping your dedicated community gardeners from kick starting the growing season off though. We've already had a successful share lunch and gardening session, with some construction of the inner raised beds, seed sowing and a general garden tidy up.

At our next bring & share lunch on 12 March we shall be filling our new beds



with our home made compost and topped with nutrient rich soil enabling us to sow some of our veggies straight out, this will include potatoes, radishes, beets and carrots. Meanwhile, we've got sowing underway in propagators at home on widow ledges and in warm conservatories for our tomatoes, peppers, pumpkins, salad leaves, leeks and beans.

Were fairly new to seed sowing, but apparently, the trick to seeding at home, is to sow them thinly in shallow trays, keeping them moist and warm, under plastic covers, plastic bag will do.

Once the seeds emerge, they'll naturally grow towards the light, so ensuring even multidirectional light will avoid them growing stringing and leggy (etiolation).

Seeds will also germinate at different temperatures so we need to have different trays in different places. Excess heat can be as harmful as the cold and each species has its own preferred germination temp range. Onions and broad beans, for example, can germinate at 8C whereas courgettes need 18C, and some chilli peppers demand



20C. Consequently watering is ideally done with room temperature water so as not to stress the emerging seedlings.

There's a few experiments we're trying this year too. One interesting specimen is a Cucamelon, which is a climbing plant, with little golf ball sized cucumber fruits that look like a miniature melon, and apparently have a zesty citrus flavour.

One of our beds at the front on Martin Way will be given over to wildflowers to encourage wildlife and pollinators, and hopefully encourage predator insects to eat up any pests that visit our veggies. We'll sow this up too.



On the fundraising front, we've got some exciting ideas brewing including a craft fayre and another one of Rosie's legendary quiz nights. We're also exploring grant applications too.

There are still some materials we need to finish off the mural and pond areas and some seating for visitors to enjoy the reflection garden. We're looking forward to a sharing our fantastic season ahead with our church and wider community.

If you'd like to sow some seeds at home, please let Shelley know and do come along to the share lunches if you can. There is plenty to do for all abilities if you would like to get involved or just come along for a chat.

You're also welcome to our catch ups held periodically at the Brook, where we discuss and plan the coming months ahead. Latest details are on our community garden Facebook group.

Abby & Shelley

Dates for your diary

Community Garden Bring & Share Lunch:

Sunday 12th March

Sunday 16th April

Sunday 21st May

Community Garden Craft Fayre

Saturday 3rd June

Moira's tribute to Gwen Hayes

Gwen was transferred into my Pastoral group in 2012. At that time Gwen was active and independent. Contact was made at Church services, Housegroup and other Church activities. As part of my role as Pastoral Group Leader, I would pass on the yearly membership card. In more recent times Gwen's needs changed resulting in fewer attendances at church and this of course was highlighted following the Covid Pandemic. Telephone communication became very much a lifeline and increasingly the calls became a weekly occurrence.

I have found the role of Pastoral Group Leader gives the opportunity to provide care and support as part of the church ministry in a non-intrusive way. Our weekly chats have covered a variety of topics but also the opportunity to share concerns, in particular health issues.

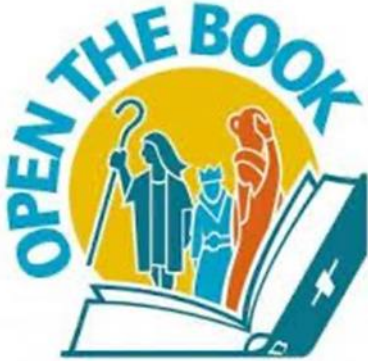
Whether visiting in the home or chatting via telephone, the opportunity to encourage and support with prayer proved to be helpful. Gwen asked for prayer now and again and it was a precious time for both of us.

It was a real privilege to have Gwen as a friend, she was so open, so honest and a true blessing.

Thank you , *Moira*



Open the Book



After the disappointment at not being able to return to one of our local school for weekly assemblies, we were delighted recently to receive an invitation to deliver monthly assemblies at Hillcross school in the New Year. This is a fantastic opportunity to introduce children to stories from Bob Hartman's StoryTeller Bible and to dramatise these in their school's Collective Worship.

The OTB team currently have 9 volunteers from 4 different churches. It would be great to have volunteers from Martin Way to join our enthusiastic team. It is a lot of fun and the children specially love the drama. We meet initially at St Martin's Church at 9.30 to pray, rehearse and gather the appropriate props needed for the story.

Upcoming dates:

Monday 27th March

10.30- 10.50

You don't have to be a budding actor or actress, just a heart to share Bible stories to young children, some of whom would never get to hear these stories from any other source.

Contact Gwen Wildman for more details

Spring is Coming

Phil and myself visited RHS Wisley on Wednesday 8th February it was a glorious sunny day and we sat in the sunshine revelling in the warmth of the sun. Here are some of the pictures I took, which shows spring is just round the corner. I hope you will enjoy them.

There was a sculpture of Rabbits by The Glasshouse and I found this general information about Rabbits on Google. “**Rabbits can hop and BOY can they also jump!** In fact, rabbits can jump to impressive heights and distances.... a little over 3 feet high and a whopping 10 feet long! Because their eyes are positioned on the sides of their heads, bunnies can see an almost perfect 360 degrees”



And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.” —*Genesis 1:14*

Sylvia



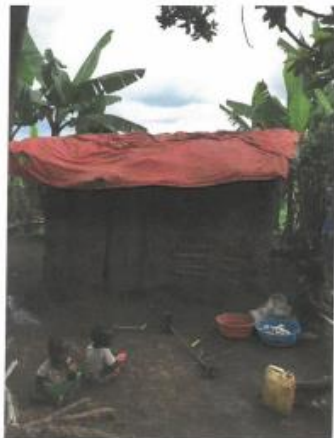


**Thank you for your help in supporting this work.
You have made a difference in so many lives this year.**

Review of the year 2022

- The sponsorship programme is continuing to make a difference in the lives of 256 young people and their families
- Children have now returned to school. The Ugandan government had made changes to term length to allow the children to 'catch up' on their time in school. The school year is slowly returning to the preCovid structure of starting in late January and ending with exams at the end of the year
- Some families have requested that their child transfer onto vocational courses and we are able to review this request, and where possible, enable them to gain valuable skills through our approved providers
- During Covid lockdowns we had to suspend supplying afri-pads, mosquito nets, rainwater harvesting kits, solar lamps, sun hats for young people affected by albinism and tippy taps. However, this has now restarted in the villages as the Care for Uganda workers are able to monitor conditions
- We have been able to support the building of a new primary school. This school is being led by young men who have come through the sponsorship scheme and are now wanting to give back to the children of Uganda
- The money raised for health projects has continued to fund fuel, maintenance and allowances to run motorbike ambulances in a number of areas in the district. We support 220 workers with training, support meetings and allowances
- The annual report is now with the Charity Commission.

**Being on the ground in the area helps our workers to
identify where help is desperately needed.**



Andy, Care for Uganda's CEO, visited Uganda in September. The lead motorbike ambulance driver had contacted Esther, our deputy welfare officer to see if Care for Uganda could help a very poor family he had made contact with.

The children's dad died quite recently and their Mum was trying her hardest to look after her family of four children. The house is of mud construction, consisting of one room, which has holes everywhere. When it rains, the conditions are appalling. It is situated on the edge of a swamp area which means mosquitoes and the danger of malaria. It is at the bottom of a slope so water runs off into the house.

There is no bed, they all sleep on the floor, with very few blankets. Turn over to see the difference ...

Together we can make a difference



Old house to new house...

Through community sponsorship, we have been able to build a house on the plot. The old house had been built at the bottom of the land, so all surface water drained into it. The new house is at the top of the slope, away from the mosquitoes and surface water.

We will be able to take two of the four children onto the sponsorship programme.

This again shows the difference that Care for Uganda's supporters can make to people's lives. To support the community is a privilege.

Update on a young person who has completed the child sponsorship scheme



This is Ashlaf, who works locally in a garage with Deo. They carry out all the repairs for the motorbike ambulances. They are doing a very good job keeping the motorbike ambulances on the road so that they are available to take people to clinics and hospital as required.

Ashlaf went through the child sponsorship programme and completed it with a vocational course in motorbike mechanics.

It is so good to see yet another youngster gaining employment through the education and training offered by your sponsorship.

Thank you for your support

Contact Care for Uganda, 23 Heatherslade Road, Southgate, SA3 2DD

Tel: 01792 233109 Email: andy@careforuganda.org

Website: www.careforuganda.org

There is room

There has always been room it's the welcome accounts. This is how Mary and myself came to this church in the early 1960s. Having visited a local Anglican church to attend our first sons christening we were turned away because our God parents were not confirmed, we were made welcome at Martin Way.

In those ancient days at Martin Way, there was usually about 55 to 85 folk in church every Sunday morning, a full choir, full Sunday school, plus an evening service.

Of course, things would dramatically change television sport on Sunday, shops opening on Sunday, young people's activities on Sunday mornings, but the church door was always wide open over these many changes across the years.

There were numerous church activities, women's fellowship, women's midways, choir, youth club. All non-members were invited to attend church on a Sunday, but most of these folks were already attending local churches anyway. We held yearly fete's in the summer, Pantomimes & Plays; always with that encouragement to visit on a Sunday. when Men's supper club started, nearly all were members of other churches, but our door is always open.

So the "open" invite was always there, there was always room, but days and years have changed church life so much even prior to Covid.

When I started being more involved in church life after finishing shift work, one of my first appointment was door duties on a Sunday morning and evening. In those early days of 60+ in the congregation it was a case of handing out hymn books, plus service books and the notices with a quick smile, "hope you're well", and that was the welcome.

After the service, not too much time to chat, you collected all the books from the pews and tidied up. Most of the congregation in those early days were very private or hurrying home because the roast was on a low gas. There was no tea or coffee or chat time.

Moving on over the years with new ministers, the emphasis was always the welcome to church by the door stewards slowly the congregation got less and less usually because of moving away and the passing away of an elderly members. So often more chat was had at the door, and now often passed onto new members inside for those brief moment, it was a start to a more friendly welcome. There was always plenty of room.

I'd like to relate to my own experience of that door welcome. Firstly, I'd relate to our dear friend, Mrs Gwen Hayes, always by herself, would always sit towards the back, always in the same pew as was the habit. In those days, she was very private. Her routine had to change as the rear two pews became the sound desk with Roy and Michael Mortley and dear Gwen moved two or three rows forward because of this little upset a few of us got to chat to her more and being on the door more opportunities were there. Still being very private she then said, "you know Derek you and a few others are the only ones that ever talk to me". At the next stewards meeting this and the door duties were the main topic "welcome without being over the top". Suddenly Gwen and others had lots of friends her confidence grew. She supported happenings within the church, even involving food which was a worry health wise. Sadly, we lost our Gwen in late 2022.

My last story of "yes, there is room" goes back once again, two door duties. The service has just begun and in came Michael and Bernita Fuwa arrived and in her arms was baby Abigail. It was maybe only eight months old they wanted to sit near to the door in case, Abigail cried, or there was a disturbance,

Mary and I tried to say not to worry, of course Abigail was a treat and not a sound. After the service a few folks chatted, and our minister got introduced. From that day on Michael and Bernita sat either with us or in front so we really got to know them. Joshua was born some years later besides now been friends, they became church members, the children progressing through Sunday club. The kindness shown by them to Mary and myself, especially through our illness and through Covid with regular shopping and meals, it has still been a blessing. Sadly, our friend, Bernita became very ill with cancer last summer and passed away. She had a wonderful send off from our family and friends filling out the church (many were unable to attend because of other illnesses).

One could always imagine the rivalry between Mike and Bernita at weekends because they both supported different football clubs. Life for them through 2022 was unkind because they planned a wonderful holidays celebrating Michael's 60th in Mexico then his mum's 80th in Nigeria and his & Bernita's wedding anniversary, a real happy family, cut short in life.

These are just two examples of the friendly "Open Door" welcome, which in my time of being involved has always been there and am sure continues to this present time.

Our church, its ministers and members have always been there because "There is always room" it's always difficult to FILL but we will always get those that WANT to be there.

Every blessing and thanks because we were welcomed.

Mary and Derek Heaton

PS, we must keep inviting as there is always room.

Please email items for next month's Newsletter to
newsletter@martinway.org.uk by **Sunday 14 May 2023.**

CHURCH DIARY

March 2023			
Wed	1	11.30am	Open Table
Fri	3	10.30am	World Day of Prayer
		12.30pm	Lunch Club
Sun	5	10.30am	Holy Communion – led by Revd Paul Timmis
Tue	7	10.30am	Coffee & Chat
Wed	8	11.30am	Open Table
		8.00pm	House Group
Thur	9	8.00pm	Church Council – Zoom
Sun	12	10.30am	Morning Worship – led by Viv Newitt
		12.00pm	Community Garden Bring & Share Lunch
		6.00pm	Holy Communion – led by Revd Paul Timmis
Tue	14	10.30am	Coffee & Chat
Wed	15	11.30am	Open Table
Thur	16	7.00pm	Circuit meeting @ Stoneleigh
Fri	17	12.30pm	Lunch Club
Sun	19	All Day	Mothering Sunday
		10.30am	Morning Worship – led by Revd Paul Timmis
Tue	21	10.30am	Coffee & Chat
Wed	22	11.30am	Open Table
		8.00pm	House Group
Sun	26	10.30am	Morning Worship – led by Brenda Cannon
Tue	28	10.30am	Coffee & Chat
Wed	29	11.30am	Open Table
Fri	31	12.30pm	Lunch Club

April 2023			
Sun	2	10.30am	Café Worship – led by Revd Paul Timmis
Tue	4	10.30am	Coffee & Chat
Wed	5	11.30am	Open Table
		8.00pm	House Group
Thur	6	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday Service – led by Revd Paul Timmis
Fri	7	10.30am	Good Friday Service – led by Valerie Ashcroft
Wed	5	11.30am	Open Table
		8.00pm	House Group
Thur	6	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday Service – led by Revd Paul Timmis
Fri	7	10.30am	Good Friday Service – led by Valerie Ashcroft
Sun	9	10.30am	Easter Sunday Holy Communion Service – led by Revd David Hookins
Mon	10 -14	All Day	Spring Harvest
Tue	11	10.30am	Coffee & Chat
Wed	12	11.30am	Open Table
Sun	16	10.30am	Morning Worship – led by Valerie Ashcroft
		12.00pm	Community Garden Bring & Share Lunch
		6.00pm	Holy Communion – led by Revd Paul Timmis
Tue	18	10.30am	Coffee & Chat
Wed	19	11.30am	Open Table
		8.00pm	House Group
Fri	21	12.30pm	Lunch Club
		10.30 am	Morning Worship – led by Revd Paul Timmis
Tue	25	10.30am	Coffee & Chat
Wed	26	11.30am	Open Table
Sun	30	10.30am	Morning Worship – led by Sally Rush