

## Sunday Services

Evening services are at 6.30pm unless otherwise shown.

### December

- 3rd Brian Gameson  
(3pm) United Service at St Andrew, Ashingdon
- 10th Andy Thomas  
Rev Gordon Bates
- 17th Roger Thomas  
(4pm) Brenda Gutberlet (Christingle Service)
- 24th Brenda Gutberlet (Carol Service)  
(4pm) Worship Leaders (Crib Service)
- 25th (10.30am) Len Ward (Family Service)
- 31st Worship Leaders  
No evening service

### January

- 7th Sue Sigfrid  
Brenda Gutberlet
- 14th **Family Day**  
Len Ward (AAW)  
No evening service
- 21st Brenda Gutberlet (Covenant Service)  
Brian Gameson
- 26th Worship Leaders  
Brenda Gutberlet

*Some of the services are different from the Circuit Plan - the ones above are correct at the time of printing. But all services are subject to change at short notice - see your printed notices for up to date information each Sunday.*

## Dates for your diary:

### December

- 2 Bazaar, WI Hall, 9.30am
- 2 3-churches fellowship at Rayleigh, 9.30am
- 3 *Festival of Lights*, St Andrews Ashingdon, 3pm
- 6 Age Concern Christmas Coffee Morning, £4, Porters 10-12. Tickets 01702 215780
- 6 Circuit Meeting, Rayleigh, 8pm
- 17 Christingle service, 4pm
- 24 Crib Service, 4pm
- 25 Christmas Day service, 10.30am

### January

- 14 Family Day:  
Service, lunch and fun & games
- 21 Covenant Service, 11am

### February

- 4 Circuit Service, Highlands, 6.30pm
- 18 Circuit Service, Dudley Coates, Vice President of Conference preaching, Thorpe Bay, 6.30pm,

### NCH Christmas Post Box

The Christmas post box is now at the back of the church..

Judy will be distributing the cards after the Carol Service on 17th December



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Thanks to John Michael Sullivan (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-23-2006  
AT LEAST WE CAN SAY THAT HE WAS BROUGHT UP IN A STABLE HOME

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Thanks to Dad Hergewald (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-21-2006  
I'M SORRY, THERE'S NO ROOM FOR YOU

The Methodist Church



**A blessed and peaceful  
Christmas and New Year from  
Rochford Methodist Church**

**Dec 2006 /  
Jan 2007**

[www.rochfordmethodist.org.uk](http://www.rochfordmethodist.org.uk)

Rochford Methodist Church is a member of Southend and Leigh Circuit, part of the Beds, Herts & Essex District

The Newsletter of  
**Rochford Methodist Church**  
North Street  
Rochford  
SS4 1AD

Our services over the Christmas period are as follows:



**Sunday 17 December – 4 to 5pm  
Christingle Service**

Brenda will lead this special family-based service. We will use oranges, candles and sweets to demonstrate God's love for us through the Lord Jesus Christ. This service will last about an hour and will be followed by hot drinks, mince pies and sausage rolls - and distribution of the Christmas cards.

**Sunday 24 December – 11am to 12noon  
Family Carol Service**

Brenda will lead this service with a selection of favourite carols and readings from the Christmas story, as well as a nativity by the young people. Afterwards we hope you will stay and join us for some festive light refreshments.

**Sunday 24 December – 4pm  
Crib Service**

This will be a lower-key service led by our Worship Leaders to introduce the Christmas story to people of all ages, from the very youngest to the oldest. About 40 minutes long, it will aim to simply and clearly re-tell the events of the first Christmas. Children may take part in the service if they wish.

**Christmas Day - 10.30am  
Christmas Morning Family Service**

Led by Len Ward, this is our celebration of the birth of our Saviour Jesus. Everyone is invited to bring and show their Christmas presents during this service which will last about 45 minutes.

The next planned publication date is 4th February 2006. Articles, etc, should be with Dave by 21st January please.

I prefer articles by email, floppy disc or typed with a good BLACK original (because, being lazy, I can handle these without re-typing them), but I am happy to receive them in any form—so long as I get something from you!  
Emails can be sent to me at either of the addresses shown in the box on the right.

The **Rochford Methodist** is published on behalf of Rochford Methodist Church. Opinions expressed in this newsletter may not be those of the Methodist Church.

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## What goes on at Rochford Methodist Church?

### Sunday

11.00 am FJ Club  
11.00 am Morning Service  
6.30 pm Evening Service

### Monday

10.45-11.45 am *Body Magik* Aerobics  
2.30 - 4.30 pm Women's Fellowship (Sept - May)  
7.00 pm *Blossom on the Oasis* (Ladies Dancing Group)

### Tuesday

9.30 - 11.30 am *Happy Hands* Toddler Group  
12.00 - 2.00 pm *Happy Hands* Toddler Group  
3.00 - 7.30 pm Hildale School of Dancing  
8.00 pm Wesley Guild (Oct-Apr)

### Wednesday

10.45-11.45 am *Body Magik* Aerobics  
7.00 - 10.00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous

### Thursday

9.30 - 12.30 *Music Dreams* (for 0-2 years)  
3.45 - 7.30 pm Hildale School of Dancing  
8.00 - 9.30 pm Table Tennis

### Friday

10.45-11.45 am *Body Magik* Aerobics  
6.30-7.30 pm *Body Magik* Aerobics  
8.00 pm Rochford Floral Group (2nd Friday of month)

### Saturday

9.00 am - 3.15 pm Hildale School of Dancing

The premises are available for use outside the above times. Contact Margaret Rayner on 544252 for more information.

### And in addition . .

Two open House Groups meet each month in a different place each time. One usually meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month and the other on the 3rd Wednesday. Look in the weekly notices for the dates and venues.  
A third House Group is for new members of the Church and is by invitation only.  
And a *fourth* one now meets at the church during the daytime - see Gwenda for details.

# John Wesley Wordsquare

Y	P	R	X	K	P	R	A	Y	E	R	S	J	L	K
C	H	E	J	N	Z	O	T	A	Y	M	I	N	O	R
H	H	S	O	P	N	K	H	Y	M	N	S	J	U	W
R	O	C	H	E	S	T	E	R	C	T	L	T	R	E
U	R	U	N	A	L	A	T	U	A	S	E	S	H	S
S	S	E	E	L	B	I	B	B	R	I	S	T	O	L
B	E	E	A	H	M	N	X	R	S	N	K	O	L	E
C	L	I	N	C	O	L	N	E	Q	I	Q	O	Y	Y
A	T	E	E	N	O	P	M	T	P	R	N	E	C	T
T	S	H	W	Y	R	A	O	N	T	W	O	G	L	R
F	G	T	C	D	L	F	M	A	X	O	O	B	U	I
P	V	E	S	F	T	A	Z	C	A	R	E	R	B	C
K	W	E	N	A	K	C	O	B	B	L	E	X	T	D
C	P	R	E	A	C	H	E	R	S	D	T	P	Q	H
A	U	T	H	E	B	E	S	T	P	O	F	A	L	L
B	X	S	U	H	T	I	W	S	I	D	O	G	S	I

Apologies for the poor scanning of the grid, but it was originally published in a Methodist magazine to celebrate the 300th anniversary of John Wesley’s birth. It was created by the Thompson family from South London with permission given to photocopy it.

All the words you have to find are connected with John Wesley and his ministry. All(!) you have to do is to find them. They maybe horizontal, vertical or diagonal and in either direction.

- |           |            |           |
|-----------|------------|-----------|
| JOHN      | ALL        | SING      |
| HORSEBACK | BRISTOL    | WITH      |
| THE       | ROOM       | CARE      |
| HYMNS     | IS         | PRAYERS   |
| EPWORTH   | BURN       | US        |
| BEST      | NEW        | HOLY CLUB |
| ROCHESTER | GOD        | COBBLE    |
| FLAME     | LINCOLN    | STREET    |
| OF        | PREACHERS  | SIN       |
| BIBLE     | IS         | WORLD     |
| WESLEY    | CANTERBURY | RESCUE    |

# From our Minister

Dear Friends,

This year there will be increased use of the internet to purchase goods for Christmas and throughout the year. We are now familiar with the term WWW – the WORLD WIDE WEB even if we are not computer literate.

WWW can also represent a prayer - let me explain. I hope and trust that in the busyness of this season you will take time out to contemplate the **W**ONDER of Jesus Christ, God’s Son being miraculously conceived and born as a frail baby (Matthew 1: 18-25; Luke 1:26- chapter 2: 20), in fulfilment of prophecies such as Isaiah 9:6,7; Micah 5:2-5 .

Let the wonder of God made human (John 1: 14) lead us to **W**ORSHIP Him throughout our lives as we seek to grow in grace and have our faith stretched as we **W**ITNESS by word and deed that ‘Love came down at Christmas’ (H&P 105). May that faith in Jesus Christ make a difference to our lives throughout the Year! Therefore my prayer is that you may experience a WWW Christmas – filled with Wonder, Worship and Witness because Christ our Redeemer is born - O come let us adore **HIM**-Christ the Lord..

## A Christmas Prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father,  
 Help us remember the birth of Jesus  
 that we may share in the song of the angels  
 the gladness of the shepherds  
 and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.  
 Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.  
 Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,  
 and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,  
 and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,  
 forgiving and forgiven,  
 for Jesus’ sake. AMEN

Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

From

*Rev'd Brenda*

## THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS

The poet Wordsworth wrote: 'The world is too much with us, late and soon/Getting and spending...'

This is how modern life has become. And it seems to me, never is this so obvious as in the weeks just before Christmas.

People have forgotten about Advent, which is meant to be a time of reflection, repentance, quiet prayer and preparation. Preparation – not as one hears 'Are you ready for Christmas?' 'Ready' as in 'all the shopping done, enough food bought in as if for the seven lean years, the decorations and flashing lights up weeks ahead'. That's not what we should be 'ready' for.

No, we're not told 'it's Advent'. We're told 'it's the run-up to Christmas'. The High Streets and shopping malls tell us that they expect a better or a worse Christmas than last year – better or worse depending on the profits they make.

Bruce and I have both written to Royal Mail about their 'Christmas' stamp issue this year. I pointed out that the man dressed in a red costume has nothing to do with Christmas – he was an invention of Coca-Cola in the 1920s. Many of the 'Christmas traditions' are not of very long-standing tradition. The idea of Christmas trees was imported by Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband. Around the same time – 160 years ago or so – Christmas cards were invented to encourage use of the new Penny Post.

I think it is high time we recaptured our Christian traditions and stopped mixing them with the commercialised 'traditions' which have gradually grown up. After all, the Christmas Story in itself is magical enough, without the addition of white-bearded men in red with their red-nosed reindeer (a 1950s pop song), decorated trees and all the rest of it.

Christianity actually succeeded in Anglo-Saxon England because it did not insist on the abolition of decorated trees, evergreens, candles, a good meal with loved ones – this for the many people who rarely ate a good meal. Old pagan traditions were allowed to co-exist with the Christmas Nativity Story. I think that things have gone too far in the other direction. It's difficult to express these views because so often you are regarded as a 'Scrooge' saying 'Bah, humbug!' and deeply-held views are simply dismissed. 'You've got to do these things, haven't you' – a statement not a question. 'Well, you just have.'

And every year it starts earlier. Not out of November, I've heard television advertising accompanied by 'And here it is, merry Christmas, everybody's having fun'. Well, are they? Just after Remembrance Sunday?

Things I hear people saying absolutely grate on me. Last December I talked to a woman my age who had just had the sixth great-grandchild. When her grandson had finished running around the ward showing us all the pictures on his camcorder and had gone back to his wife and very new son, she exclaimed: 'That's another one I have to buy for'.

'Have to buy for' – it's the 'have to' that I dislike. 'Oh, you have to do it'. I hear it so often. And what it is all about gets submerged, forgotten.

We celebrate the birth of a Baby in very humble circumstances. That's what it's meant to be all about. That Baby who was born in a 'poor lowly stable' grew up into the Man who drove the money-changers out of the Temple. (Matthew 21 vv 12-13).

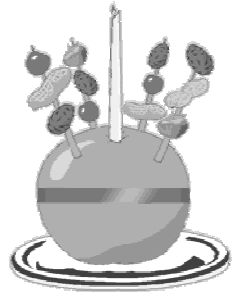
I wonder what he would say to the supermarkets, the shopping malls and the high streets of today, for the excuses for spending and profit-making that are perpetrated in his name?

For myself, I find myself tending more and more to those branches of Christianity that don't celebrate Christmas at all.

**Margaret Stoll**

## Christingle

This is a joyful all-age service to delight children and 'grown ups' and we are holding one at Rochford Methodist Church at 4pm on 17th December. But what is it? The following explanation is from the website of the United parishes of Layer de la Haye, Layer Breton with Birch and Layer Marney



### The Meaning and Origins of Christingle

Every year thousands of churches now hold special Christingle services or celebrations between Advent and Candlemas. Christingle, which means 'Christ Light', is a symbol of the Christian faith. During the service each child is presented with a Christingle - an orange decorated with a candle, red ribbon, fruit and sweets. The orange represents the world, the red ribbon around it the blood of Christ, the fruit symbolises God's creation and the candle Jesus, the Light of the World.

### The Christingle Story

The custom of the Christingle began in the Moravian Church and was first used as part of a Christmas Children's Festival in the Marienborn Congregation in Germany on 24th December 1747.

No one knows for certain when the word *Christingle* was first used or from what it derived, but wherever the Moravians went in the great outreach of missionary evangelism in the 18th and 19th centuries they took with them the custom of the Christingle.

The symbolism gradually developed and today in the Moravian Church in Britain, the Christingle consists of an orange representing the World, with the candle inserted in the centre and lit to represent Christ the Light of the World.

The candle used to be held on a goose quill, part of which was split into fronds, on which were impaled nuts, fruits, raisins and sweets. These stood for the created order over which Christ is King, and for the fruits of the earth and the benefits that come to our lives through God's bounty and goodness. Today the fruit is usually slid onto cocktail sticks stuck into the orange, the wood still being part of God's created order.

Sometimes red crepe paper is used to form a frill at the base of the candle which is a reminder of Christ's Passion, through which our redemption has come. A white frill often used denotes the purity of Christ's life as an example for us all.

The Christingle Service is usually held on the Sunday before Christmas, and is a children's celebration in which we place the child in the midst of all we do, just as the Christ child is the centre of all our lives.

At the climax of the service, each child receives a lighted Christingle and in the magical moment of the darkened Church, the visual symbol tells the truth of the Christmas story, - that in the darkness of the world there has shined a great light. In the darkness, with the lighted Christingle, the children often sing the Traditional Moravian Carol: *Morning Star, O Cheering sight.*

## Out of the (Christmas) mouths . . .

### Pontius Who?

At Sunday school, the younger children were drawing pictures illustrating Biblical stories. The teacher walked by and noticed one little boy was drawing an airplane! "Oh, what Bible story are you drawing?" she asked. "This is the Flight into Egypt," the little boy answered. "See, here is Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. And this," he said, pointing to the front of the plane, "is Pontius. He's the Pilot."

### True story

The nativity play was going as planned and Joseph and Mary were going from house to house knocking on the doors and asking if there was any room for them. As they continued to get "no room" answers a little voice called from the back "YOU SHOULD HAVE BOOKED!" bringing the house down.

### God's Not Deaf

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents' house the week before Christmas. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers. The younger one began praying at the top of his lungs:

"I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE..."

"I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO..."

His older brother leaned over, nudged him and said, "Why are you shouting? God isn't deaf." to which the little brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"

### The Three Gifts

After the Christmas pageant, I asked my 6-year-old son if he remembered the gifts that the Magi brought to Jesus. He thought for a minute then said "gold, frankincense, and humour". We could all use that!

### Didn't You Get My E-Mail?

As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"

### A little help from Joseph

One day during our children's sermon, I was telling the kids about how the angel came to Mary to tell her about how she would help bring Jesus into the world. One little girl seemed puzzled about this whole scene. Then another child asked what I thought the first thing Mary would have asked for after the angel left her. Instantly this little girl chimed in with "I'll bet she asked for a little help from Joseph!"

### Cryptic Christmas Card

A man sent his friend a cryptic Christmas card. It said: A B C D E F G H I J K M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z. The recipient puzzled over it for weeks, finally gave up and wrote asking for an explanation. In July he received the explanation on a postcard: "No L."

## Pilgrims Way – Our First Birthday!

Where has our first year gone?

We as a church have accomplished a great deal and met all of the objectives we set ourselves for the first year. I think this is one of the real strengths of Pilgrims Way – we decide what we feel we can handle as a church, and move forward on that basis. No one is pushing us to do things we don't feel are achievable, or necessary, or wanted.

To this end we had an excellent church meeting on 15 October when we reviewed what we have accomplished over the last year and came up with ideas for the future. There was an excellent turnout for the Review, which Brenda chaired, and you all contributed brilliantly to the success of the event.

Some of the key points that were raised as changes that people liked included, more all age worship services, the "family days", new hymn books, the harvest lunch, and the printed notices. The quiet time before services was also welcomed, but we did agree to re-visit this again to ensure that there was also a period of silence for personal meditation.

The review also generated lots of new ideas from all of you who attended, for us to consider for the coming year. We have since reviewed all the feedback as an Action team and are now formulating the Action Plans for agreement at the next Church Council meeting.

Some of your new ideas are already being implemented. There was a suggestion that we advertise our Christmas services to those coming to the annual bazaar. We have produced a Christmas publicity leaflet that will be handed to each person as they come into the WI Hall, as well as being distributed to the locality and the many groups that use our premises.

We plan to involve the younger members of our congregation in the services a lot more, and encourage the local preachers to make use of their talents within the All Age Worship services.

Another suggestion was that we start another House Group during the daytime for members who rather not come out in the dark evenings. Gwenda has kindly offered to run this and we (Brenda and the Stewards) have gratefully accepted her kind offer. This will go before the Church Council for formal agreement at the next meeting.

This is only a taste of some of the ideas you've come up with that we are planning to bring before Church Council – watch this space!



## Church Retreat

About 15 of us from Rochford, Hockley and Rayleigh Methodist churches gathered together for a Retreat entitled *Pilgrims Together* led by Brenda and Len. After coffee, we had a brief worship session. The day was based on the book *At sea with God* by Margaret Silf.

After worship we were into a session called *Stepping out of the boat*. Based on Matthew 14, verses 22-33, we were asked to imagine ourselves as a latter-day Peter being asked to step out in faith to face a challenge or difficulty. We were also asked to consider whether or not the Church had changed over the years, and what hopes and dreams we have for our own church. We were invited to make a graph of our lives - where we thought we were at a high point in our lives and when we were low.

During the next session, we were asked the main question of the day which : “If you were a boat, what kind of boat would you be - and where are you?”. We then divided into groups to discuss it. The question wasn’t frivolous, but led us into thinking seriously about ourselves and our lives. One person thought they were a tugboat, trying to pull things together. Several people were in much more frail vessels - rowing boats, canoes and coracles and seemingly they were in stormy waters. And at least two felt as they were between different types of boat.

We returned to the main group and were then given another task - “What are you taking on board” and “Dealing with stowaways”. Back in our groups we looked at the shape of our boat - ourselves, our attitudes and our lives. We were given a list of truths we need to take on board, such as ‘I have a unique voyage to make, and *my* voyage is uniquely precious in the eyes of God. No one has the right to tell me otherwise’ and ‘I do have my faults, and if friends point them out, it is the *faults* they are criticising’. ‘Stowaways’ (unwanted or unnecessary things we cling to) were suggested, such as ‘old hurts and resentments’, ‘poor self-image’ and ‘comfort blankets’ and we were invited to bring them out and deal with them - but not in a ‘heavy’ way.

Lunch followed (and what a lunch!).

The afternoon session, entitled *Journeying Outward* brought the previous sessions together. What are our passions? What does God want to bring to birth in ourselves, our Church or our local community? Is there a new area of ministry beginning to emerge for us? etc

The day finished with another brief period of worship. We were given stones and shells. The shells, we took away as a symbol of pilgrimage. The stones we left behind at the foot of the cross as a symbol of shedding our load and the things that weigh us down.

Apart from the study and the worship, the enduring memory is the hospitality of David and Catherine Wood (and father in law who washed up) opened their home to us. Oh, and the upstairs bathroom was a wonder to behold.

If you want to try a future Retreat, have a word with Brenda. If there’s enough interest, she will arrange one. And it’s well worth trying it!

## The RE Lesson

Then Jesus took his disciples up the mountain and, gathering them around him, taught them saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek ...

Blessed are the merciful ...

Blessed are they who thirst for justice ...

Blessed are all the concerned ...

Blessed are you when you are persecuted ...

Blessed are you when you suffer, be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven.

Try to remember what I am telling you.”

Then Simon Peter said, “Is this for homework?”

And Andrew said, “Will we have a test on it?”

And James said, “When do we have to give it in?”

And Philip said, “How much will we have to write?”

And Bartholomew said, “Will I have to stand up and say it in front of the class?”

And John said, “What is the title?”

And Judas said, “What is it worth?”

And the other disciples likewise.

Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to see Jesus’ aims and objectives, and his learning outcomes. They enquired of Jesus his development plan, his scheme of work, his attainment targets and monitoring process.

And Jesus wept.

*(From the newsletter of All Saints Church Newton-le-Willows)*

## For web users

Here are a few useful URLs if you want to look around the Internet:

**[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)** - The official Methodist site, gives information about the history, beliefs and working of the British Methodist Church. It also has a lot of downloadable resources and many links to other Methodist and Christian websites.

**[www.prayerguide.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.prayerguide.org.uk/index.htm)** - The Prayer Guide from the Teal Trust, provides 100 web pages of answers to questions on Christian prayer and intercession and has ideas for personal prayer as well as resources for leaders of worship.

**[www.familyfriendlychurches.org.uk/](http://www.familyfriendlychurches.org.uk/)** - The Family Friendly Churches Trust, who state their aim is to support churches that want to improve their profile with children, young people and families. They also help churches make the best use of IT equipment. Lots of downloads and other resources available for sale.

## Women's Fellowship

We are well under way with our programme now and the next two months are as follows:

January	8	Revd Brenda
	15	Len Ward - <i>The last 7 years of Len &amp; Babs</i>
	22	Chris Knowles - <i>Christian Hope International</i>
	29	John & Cecile Low
February	5	Joyce Saunders
	12	Member Afternoon
	19	Joan Clark
	26	David Tysoe - <i>Hymn Writers</i>

So book Monday afternoons in your diary now - 2.30pm sharp.

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## Plan planning

Have you ever wondered what goes into sorting out the plan? As far as Rochford, Hockley and Rayleigh are concerned, we are working up to **nine months** ahead. In fact it usually starts at least a few months **before that**.

The Church Council or another organisation will decide various dates ahead of time - Church Anniversary, Harvest Festival, Guild Anniversary, etc, and will usually try to arrange a special speaker.

When the stewards of Brenda's section meet in our regular quarterly meetings we have two sets of grids to work on. As we usually meet just before the final plan comes out, the two sets are for the quarter following the final plan and the quarter after that. So, we are thinking six months beyond the end of the new plan - 9 months in advance.

The first set of grids are for the three months immediately after the new plan. By the time of the meeting, Brenda has information about Circuit plans, as well as where and when she will not be available to us. On these grids we put specific information about when we want All Age Worship, Covenant, etc, or changes to times of services.

For the second set of grids we mark in general terms any of the special dates and when we have a specific need for Brenda to preach. This also puts up a marker for the other churches in the section.

Brenda gets a similar set of grids from the Superintendent Minister and transfers the information from our grids to the Super's. The Superintendent then has the 'joy' of *trying* to match up the needs of the churches with the available preachers.

The first confirmation of whether or not any of our requests have been fulfilled is when we receive the plan at the beginning of the next quarter.

And then we start again on the *next* three months!

## TIDDLERS

I have been really overwhelmed since I took over the tiddlers from Hugh and Joan as to the generosity of the people who save their copper and small silver. Hugh and Joan said when I took over that they hoped I would get as much enjoyment and fulfilment as they had over the years and I have.

I have had to bring back my money counting skill that I gained when working for Natwest but it has also given Charlotte several math's lessons in money counting as she always asks can I help Mum.

So far this year I have sent £30 to little Haven Hospice and £25 to MRDF and we are very close to the next £30 to the Hospice at Home service. If any one has a charity that they would like to benefit from this little fund then please let me know and they may be the next ones to get a donation.

If you bring a bag of pennies to church and I am not there then please leave it in the Sunday school cupboard and I will pick it up the next time I come to church or on a Tuesday when I sometimes call in to toddler group.

So please keep collecting and we can make a little difference to someone.

**Andrea Haslam**

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## Wesley Guild

With the session in full swing, our meetings on Tuesday evenings have been very interesting.

We opened on October 3rd with Revd Brenda leading a devotional meeting and this was followed by an alphabetic quiz in which everybody won a prize!

Jackie Hall came the following week and told us about her holiday in Vietnam and the week after that John Wyatt brought us up to date with the history and development of National Parks.

Len Ward led our Devotional on 31st October.

We entered November with our Guild Anniversary on 5th November when Les Wallace led our service, teaching us a new worship song in the process and on the Tuesday, two of our Community Police Officers came and told us about their work.

No meeting the following week as we all went to the Cliffs Pavilion to see *The King and I* and following the musical theme, John Downer came and presented a musical evening. Brenda rounded off the month with another devotional evening.

The next month will be our carol singing sessions. On 6th December we will be at Wedgwood Court, on the 12th we will be at Spa Court (Hockley) and on the 19th it will be a new venue at Coachman Court. After a hiatus for Christmas, we are back at the church again.

Jan	2	<i>That was the year that was</i>
	9	<i>St John of Jerusalem eye hospital</i> Joy & Bill Hardwick
	16	<i>A Gospel evening with Peter &amp; Shirley Spreadborough</i>
	23	Andy Thomas leads a devotional evening
	30	<i>Pavitt's puzzles</i>

Don't forget, we meet at 8pm *sharp* at the church and we would love to see you.

## Property (GOOD) News

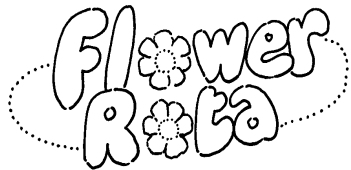
Now that our lovely new premises are being used every day of the week, and most evenings too, I am happy to be able to tell you that our loan from the Circuit has been fully paid off and we are completely out of debt!

This happy situation we find ourselves in would not have been the case had it not been for the foresight that Owen Scoging had, to venture into the Building Project in the first place.

His faith in us that the money could be raised was quite remarkable and we now have the premises that he had wanted, so that the work of God can continue into the 21st century here in Rochford.

We will remember all that he did for our church and will be forever in *his* debt.

## Carole



December	3	Margaret Stoll
	10	Joan Beehag
	17	<b>Christmas Arrangement</b>
	24	Beryl Scoging
	31	Helen Willson
January	7	Guild Anniversary
	14	Margaret Stoll
	21	Carole Glendenning
	28	Ivy Blenkinsop

The current rota runs out at the end of February. See Beryl if you wish to join the rota, make any changes to your dates, or just to find out more about it.



December	2	Malcolm & Pat Rubidge, John & Marian Webb
	9	Colin & Margaret Rayner, Ron & Carol Castle
	16	<b>BIG CLEAN</b>
	23	<b>No cleaning this week</b>
	30	Bruce & Carole Glendenning, George & Sue Edwards
January	6	Mike & Heather Sims, Jan Willson, Sandra Hull
	13	Judy Garner, Rosie Isaacs, Maureen Whalley, Ivy Blenkinsop, Sheila Webber
	20	Dave & Val Dobbin, Roy & Olive Pavitt, Gwenda Andrews
	27	Malcolm & Pat Rubidge, John & Marian Webb

## Why God made dogs and cats

And Adam said, "Lord, when I was in the garden, You walked with me every day. Now I do not see you any more. I am lonesome and it is difficult for me to remember how you love me."

And God said, "No problem! I will create a companion for you that will be with you forever and who will be a reflection of my love for you, so that you will love me even when you cannot see me. Regardless of how selfish or childish or unloveable you may be, this new companion will accept you as you are and will love you as I do, in spite of yourself."

And God created a new animal to be a companion for Adam. And it was a good animal. And God was pleased. And the new animal was pleased to be with Adam and he wagged his tail.

And Adam said, "Lord, I have already named all the animals in the Kingdom and I cannot think of a name for this new animal."

And God said, "No problem! Because I have created this new animal to be a reflection of my love for you, his name will be a reflection of my own name, and you will call him dog."

And dog lived with Adam and was a companion to him and loved him. And Adam was comforted. And God was pleased and saw that it was good. And dog was content and wagged his tail.

After a while Adam's guardian angel came to the Lord and said, "Lord, Adam has become filled with pride. He struts and preens like a peacock and he believes he is worthy of adoration. Dog has indeed taught him that he is loved, but perhaps too well."

And God said, "No problem! I will create for him a companion who will be with him forever and will see him as he is. This companion will remind him of his limitations, so he will know that he is not always worthy of adoration."

And God created cat to be a companion to Adam. And cat would not obey Adam. And when Adam gazed into cat's eyes, he was reminded that he was not the Supreme Being. And Adam learned humility.

And God was pleased and saw that it was good. And Adam was greatly improved. And dog was pleased and wagged his tail. And cat didn't give a hoot one way or the other.

### Who is the Real Virgin?

A ten-year-old, under the teaching of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which virgin was the mother of Jesus? The Virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"