

Sunday Services

No evening services will take place in February. See your copy of the Plan for alternatives at the Methodist churches in Southend and Leigh

February

- 5th Jane Fulford
- 12th Rev Brenda Gutberlet
St Valentines Day celebration for all our church members and friends
Includes special celebration for those who married in our church
- 19th *Sing a New Song*, Worship Leaders.
Come and learn a new hymn or two
- 26th Andy Thomas

March

- 18 Rev Brenda Gutberlet, (*Mothering Sunday*)

We are still waiting to see the Circuit Plan for the next quarter. Evening services will start up again in March and we would love to have as many people as possible at these services



HYMN No. 26
You put your left leg in.....

Dates for your diary:

February

- 12 A day for our Church family, includes a special service for those who married at our church, but everyone else is invited too!
- 15 Church Council, 8pm
- 22 Start of Lent talks (6 weeks), led by Brenda, everybody welcome (bring a friend or two)

March

- 4 General Church Meeting (and tea), 4pm
- 15 Circuit Meeting, Hadleigh, 8pm
- 18 *Mothering Sunday*
- 25 Summer time—clocks forward

April

- 1 *Olivet to Calvary*, Benfleet Singers at Rayleigh
- 5 Maundy Thursday Service, Hockley, 8pm
- 6 *Good Friday*
- 8 *Easter Sunday*
- 18 Seminar on using *Back to Church Sunday* activities, Highlands, 7.30-9.30pm
- 21 Beds Essex & Herts District Synod at Rayleigh
- 22 *Women's Fellowship Anniversary* weekend
- 28 Book Sale at Hockley

May

- 12 Church Anniversary, a day for all of us to celebrate together as a family.

July

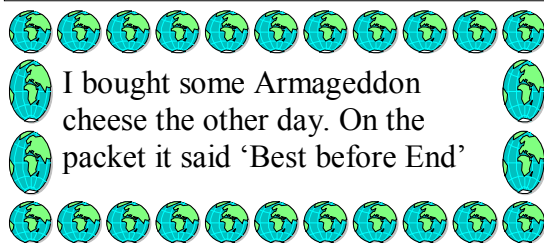
- 8 Church family day, picnic time!
- 29 Rev Brenda's last service, pm

August

- 19 Open Air service, Rayleigh

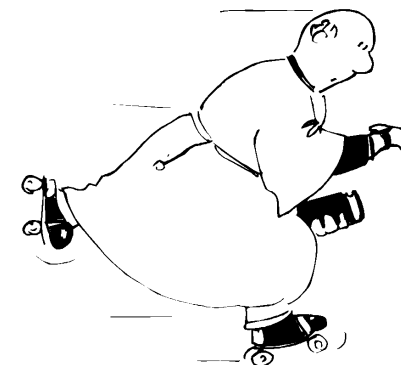
Midweek Communion services are held across the Circuit.

See your copy of the Circuit Plan for a full list



Rochford Methodist

The **Methodist Church** 



What with Lent, AND the clocks going forward on 25th March, the Vicar had to find a way of fitting everything in.

Feb/Mar 2012

The Newsletter of
Rochford Methodist Church
77-79 North Street
Rochford
SS4 1AD

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

www.rochfordmethodist.org.uk
Join our Facebook group

CAROL SERVICE

This year's Carol Service was very special and was very much enjoyed by everyone.

The Service followed the traditional story of Christ's Birth from beginning to end, with readings and carols which accompanied Nativity scenes, beautifully done by members of our F J Club (Follow Jesus Club). All credit to the preparation and patience of the leadership team for our young people, especially to Andrea who cleverly made all the costumes for them.

A lovely choice of carols meant we had a really good sing and we thank our Heather very much for her musical talent at the organ.

Extra chairs were needed to accommodate everyone in the Church, and it was lovely to be able to welcome friends and visitors alike who joined us for festive refreshments afterwards.

A lovely Christmas 'Get together' was had by all, and we look forward to next year's Carol Service!

Happy New Year to all.

Carole

Before you know it, it will be too late!

We will be holding our *Harvest Festival* and *Back to Church* service on the same day again this year—30th September.

Think about who you are going to invite to come along with you and mention it to them soon so they can put it in their diary.

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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Articles
always
wanted

The next planned publication date is **1st April 2012**. Articles, etc, should be with Dave by **18th March** please.

I prefer articles by email, floppy disc or typed with a good DARK original (because I can handle these without re-typing them!), but I am happy to receive them in any form — so long as I get *something*!

Emails can be sent to me at the address shown in this box.

What goes on at Rochford Methodist Church?

Sunday

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

Monday

2.30 pm Women's Fellowship (Sept - May)
7.00 - 9.00 pm *Blossom on the Oasis*.

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

4.30 - 6.30 pm The Urban Street Dance Group
7.00 - 10.00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous

Thursday

9.30 - 11.30 *Music Dreams* (for 0-2 years)
3.45 - 7.30 pm Hildale School of Dancing
7.30 - 9.30 pm Table Tennis (resumes in September)

Saturday

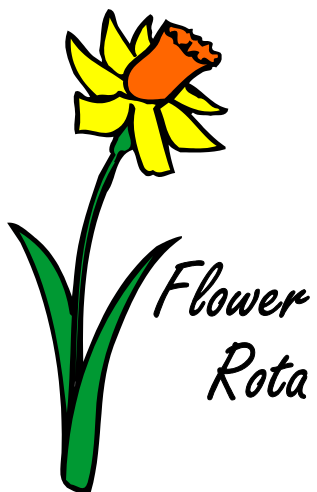
9.00 am - 2.30 pm Hildale School of Dancing

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

Please note that some organisations have either ceased to meet or they have reduced their number of sessions, so there are more spaces available for church or external meetings.

And in addition . .

Two House Groups meet each month in a different place each time. One usually meets on the first Wednesday of the month and the other on the third. Look in the weekly notices for confirmation of the dates and venues.



February

- 5 Carole Glendenning
- 12 Sheila Webber
- 19 Pat Rubidge
- 26 Sue Edwards

March

To find out who is on the rota this month, look out for the new list—a copy will be found on the notice board in the lobby.



February

- 4 Mike & Heather Sims, Jan Willson, Sandra Hull
- 11 Judy Garner, Rosie Martin, Maureen Whalley, Sheila Webber
- 18 Dave & Val Dobbin, Sonia Worthington, Colin & Margaret Rayner
- 25 Bruce & Carole Glendenning, George & Sue Edwards

March

- 3 Mike & Heather Sims, Jan Willson, Sandra Hull
- 10 Judy Garner, Rosie Martin, Maureen Whalley, Sheila Webber
- 17 Dave & Val Dobbin, Sonia Worthington, Colin & Margaret Rayner
- 24 Bruce & Carole Glendenning, George & Sue Edwards
- 31 Mike & Heather Sims, Jan Willson, Sandra Hull

From our Minister

Dear Friends,

As I write this article the 'hot cross buns' are already on sale as the retail industry switches gear from Christmas to Easter, for commercial interests.

For Christians the events of Holy Week are the high point of the Christian year. Ash Wednesday which marks the start of the six weeks of Lent is on 22nd February and I wonder if you have noticed that the 1st April is on Palm Sunday this year?

Traditionally, 1st April is called April Fools Day and there those on that first Palm Sunday who saw Jesus as a 'dangerous fool' and they relished the opportunity to capture and kill Him because he was a threat to their power and authority. Others were delighted to see Christ Jesus in Jerusalem—because they were excited about his teaching and miracles (Could this be the Messiah?).

Lent is a preparation time, an opportunity to reflect on the passion of our Lord, His sufferings, rejection and crucifixion for the sin of the world. If that was the end then we would only think of Christ as a dead hero—but it was NOT all over!

Up from the grave He arose and His Risen presence was seen by individuals and groups over the following six weeks. His Life has given life to all who believe and trust Him (John 3:16-17).

We are, because HE IS. As a Christian of a former generation said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." (Matthew 16; 21-28). May you be blessed this Lent and Easter as you go forward in faith together.

Yours with love and prayers,

Rev. Brenda

What does it mean to be a member?

Brenda will be taking classes shortly for anyone who would be interested to find out what membership of the Methodist Church is all about. If you are not already a member you can use the classes to explore whether or not you wish to become one, but there is no obligation on your part to complete the process.

If you are interested in finding out more, please see Carole.

Are you interested in World Issues?

As part of our Pilgrims' Way initiative one of our stated aims is to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.

We now believe that the time is right to further expand the horizons of our church's engagement in world issues.

You may have been aware of the problems our Methodist brothers and sisters have been experiencing in Fiji where their government had been putting severe restrictions upon their freedom to meet and worship together. This is but one example, but we believe we should be watchful of such world issues and be ready to bring them to our attention such that we can take appropriate action, eg writing letters of protest.

To help us progress this idea we are proposing to set up a new Office in our Church called the *World Awareness Representative*. This person will keep a watchful eye out for issues that we feel we should be engaging with. Could this be you? Following the agreement of the Minister, Stewards or Worship Leaders, the issue will be highlighted to the fellowship and suggested ways of escalating it will be agreed. It may be that a letter to the local MP, or the Methodist Recorder, will be required. Individuals can then progress the action, as they feel is right.

We will not be engaging in party political issues, as we must be neutral on this, but when we become aware of a burning issue, we will be ready to act.

Brenda advises that there is a representative at Connexion level called Mike King who will be able to give us further information.

If you are interested and want to find out more, please speak to Brenda, or one of the Stewards or Worship Leaders.

Mike

[As always, I would be extremely delighted to provide space in the *Rochford Methodist* as just one of the ways of bringing attention to the issues raised. Any articles provided will have priority in the publication. DaveD]

Diamond Jubilee Celebration—interested?

To celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Margaret is offering to host a church garden party, or similar, on 5th June.

It will be 'bring and share'-type catering with games for the more active.

But before Margaret goes too far with the planning she would like to know how many will be interested in coming. Please let her know as soon as you can.

But make sure you do, because, if you don't and you still turn up on the day to find nobody there, it will be because not enough people said they would be coming.

which means you can already start planning for Ash Wednesday if you feel like it!

We would be very interested to hear which hymns you actually use for Sunday worship – or at any other time. I was recently told of a “groundbreaking ceremony” for a new church development at which the gathering sang (outdoors – of course – with a guitar) “Ye servants of God” (*StF 340*) and Peter Relf's recent hymn, “In this place, with God's word” (*StF 554*).

You can let us know what you used (and what worked and what didn't) by posting your choices underneath our own Lectionary suggestions. And don't forget the Biblical Index – another resource to help you choose appropriate hymns.

An online hymn companion?

StF+ has begun to compile background notes and ideas for singing to accompany each hymn entry on the site. There's a long way to go but, in the run-up to Christmas, we posted information about *Singing the Faith's* three new Advent candle hymns (*StF 165, 166 & 174*), as well as Marjorie Dobson's *Jesus the carpenter* (*StF 275*), Geoffrey Ainger's *Born in the night* (*StF 193*) and Bernadette Farrell's popular *Longing for light* (*StF 706*).

Do take time to explore *Singing the Faith Plus* and let us know what you think. You can get in touch with me by emailing stfplus@methodistchurch.org.uk, using the feedback page of the website, or posting your thoughts to “Editor, Singing the Faith Plus” at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR.

In the meantime, may I offer you my good wishes for 2012 and for all your worship and music-making.

Yours –

Laurence Wareing (Editor, *Singing the Faith Plus*)

Although the above article focuses on the website that supports the new hymn book, *Singing the Faith*, the book itself is very useful in personal prayer as many of the hymns were chosen with this aspect in mind.

Dave has access to the Electronic Words edition and due to copyright restrictions can provide only a very limited number of copies for individual study. Many of the hymns in the electronic edition also include printable music—where the owners of the copyright have given permission. Slightly different copyright rules apply to the reproduction of hymns and music for use in Sunday worship!

(Most of) the hymns in *Singing the Faith* **also** appear in the 2012 version of HymnQuest which is another computer resource containing thousands of hymns from hundreds of hymn books. If you are trying to find an obscure hymn from an obscure hymn book, you can usually short-circuit the system by having a word with Dave first.

Dave (and Heather) also have paper copies of *Singing the Faith*. Come to the service on 19th February to try some of the new hymns!

Singing the Faith Plus meeting your needs

Singing the Faith Plus (www.singingthefaitplus.org.uk) is the web-based resource designed to complement and support the new hymn book of the Methodist Church, *Singing the Faith*. It was established in order to provide a platform for new hymns, songs and contemporary worship resources as well as offering a single point of access for information on Methodists hymns and worship.

Designed for musicians and leaders of worship, *Singing the Faith Plus* (StF+) includes unique search and index facilities, together with suggestions and articles to assist in choosing the right hymns and songs for local needs. It is also a place to share new hymns and songs, words and opinions, and to explore new materials for Methodist worship.

Answering your questions

Already, StF+ is evolving as more people use the site and write in with specific notes and queries. We've added a new menu section, "About StF" (http://www.singingthefaitplus.org.uk/?page_id=293), with pages devoted to the hymn book itself, other editions and "Frequently asked questions". We've also created a central space for leaving your questions and comments.

Other editions

At the moment, the most frequently asked questions have to do with other versions of the hymn book – especially organ, electronic words, and backing track versions. These and other options continue to be discussed by the newly formed Singing the Faith Reference Group, which will guide the development of the book, website and all things related. At the moment, the latest news is this:

The *Electronic Words Edition* is now available and further information about this is on the "Other editions" page of the website: (http://www.singingthefaitplus.org.uk/?page_id=4917).

We've also heard that Hymnal Plus has produced an upgrade to accommodate all the content of *Singing the Faith*. This features backing tracks of all 826 accompanied music items in the book. For further information, please go to the Hymnal Plus site (www.hymntechnology.com). We are happy to bring this product to your attention but, as it has been produced independently, we have not tested it thoroughly and cannot guarantee its accuracy or quality.

News of all further developments will be posted on the website as soon as they happen.

Lectionary suggestions

Already, the "Hymns for Sunday worship" calendar on StF+ is being well used. Here you can find suggestions for which hymns you might use to accompany the readings of the Lectionary. We are working three months ahead –

CHRISTMAS IN COVENTRY

Last year [2010] Barry and I went on a 4-night Christmas break to a hotel just outside Coventry. The experience was disappointing in some respects but was saved from total disaster by the fact that we were independent as to transport and had not gone there on a coach trip. The main reason that I wanted to go to Coventry was that it is a very historic city and I had never seen the Cathedral. This, on its own, is worth seeing. It is the third Cathedral on this site, the earliest one having been based on a Benedictine community of nuns and founded in 1043 by Leofric, Earl of Mercia and his wife the Lady Godgifu (Godiva), dedicated to St Mary. A medieval Parish Church Cathedral dedicated to St Michael and this, having survived the dissolution of the monasteries, was destroyed by bombing on the night of 14th November 1940. The ruins are preserved alongside the modern cathedral. So, the site of both cathedrals is indeed 'hallowed ground' and it is a spiritual experience just to be there.

We were warned to be there early for the Christmas Eve service just to be sure of squeezing into the very limited parking. An hour before, people were arriving even then. The cathedral is modern, it is huge, and there must have been a thousand people occupying every available seat. The service was entitled 'The Form of a Servant' and this was its theme.

"Coventry has had three Cathedrals in the past 1000 years: the 12th century. Priory Church of St Mary, the Medieval Parish Church Cathedral of St Michael and the modern Coventry Cathedral, also named for St Michael. Coventry's fortunes and story are closely associated to the story of its Cathedrals - a story of death and rebirth.

Coventry's earliest cathedral, dedicated to St Mary, was founded as a Benedictine community by Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and his wife Godiva in 1043. Built on the site of a former religious house for nuns, its sheer size is some indication of the wealth which Coventry acquired in the middle ages.

In 1539, with the dissolution of the monasteries, the See of Coventry and Lichfield was transferred to Lichfield and the former cathedral fell into decay. Only in 1918 was the modern diocese of Coventry created in its own right, and the church of St Michael designated as its cathedral.

The majority of the great ruined churches and cathedrals of England are the outcome of the violence of the dissolution in 1539. The ruins of St Michael's are the consequence of violence in our own time. On the night of 14 November 1940, the city of Coventry was devastated by bombs dropped by the Luftwaffe. The Cathedral burned with the city, having been hit by several incendiary devices.

(Continued on page 6)

GRANNY'S LAMENT

I'd love to have the children
They really are such fun
But Wednesday morning I've arranged
To get my highlights done.
Thursday might be possible
Just let me have a look, Oh!
No it's readers' circle,
And I've specially bought the book.

I'd love to have the children
But Sunday lunch is booked
And afterwards I said I'd pop
To Emma's for a look
At her new kitchen which I hear
Is absolutely great
That means I'm pretty certain
I won't get home till late.

I'd love to have the children
And Friday would be free
Except that Joan and Dorothy
Have asked me round for tea.
Saturday is out because
I'm going on a visit
With our local garden club
I'd really hate to miss it.

Monday morning's Bridge Club
And Tuesday is Keep Fit
I'm sure all that line dancing
Has helped my joints a bit.
I'd love to have the children
I really am quite vexed
I haven't got a day that's free
Till the weekend after next.

I would like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers over the last few months, and especially during my brief stay in hospital.

My prostate cancer (which was only low-grade) is under control with the use of drugs. The operation, which was for separate problem with my prostate, appears to have been successful and as a by-product is likely to have removed most, if not all, of the remaining cancer cells. I have now to wait to see the consultants to find out what happens next.

Dave

(Continued from page 5)

The decision to rebuild the cathedral was taken the morning after its destruction. Rebuilding would not be an act of defiance, but rather a sign of faith, trust and hope for the future of the world. It was the vision of the Provost at the time, Dick Howard, which led the people of Coventry away from feelings of bitterness and hatred. This has led to the cathedral's Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation, which has provided spiritual and practical support, in areas of conflict throughout the world.

Shortly after the destruction, the cathedral stonemason, Jock Forbes, noticed that two of the charred medieval roof timbers had fallen in the shape of a cross. He set them up in the ruins where they were later placed on an altar of rubble with the moving words 'Father Forgive' inscribed on the Sanctuary wall. Another cross was fashioned from three medieval nails by local priest, the Revd Arthur Wales. The Cross of Nails has become the symbol of Coventry's ministry of reconciliation.

Margaret Stoll

why animals and plants evolved was changes to the DNA that enables the parent to pass on changes that ensures its children survive.

To my mind, this takes a massive amount of planning and hasn't happened by sheer chance—the 'God Particle' is probably closer to the truth than the mockers dare believe.

I believe that evolution has occurred and still happens. DNA is the element that drives it and I find it easy to believe that the 'God within us' is actually DNA which God designed from the start to enable man to be created and develop. I also have a feeling that when God found that the creatures on the earth were not developing into thinking 'God-like' creatures he took steps to stop that line of evolution—the dinosaurs for example—but all around us we can see God's handiwork. Everything in Creation works together, whether it is the eater or the eaten!

My Facebook chat then went on to the Bible with the atheist saying Christianity in the Old Testament was awful and gruesome with a reference to children being torn apart. I had to tell him that the Old Testament *had* no Christianity. It is the history of the Jews, along with their hymns, biographies of the prophets and principles of their faith. What I failed to tell him was that the Old Testament pointed the way to Christ and showed just how far the Jews had moved away from God's teaching.

Christianity started with the birth of Christ and is a development of the Aramaic Judaism into which Jesus was born. Jesus gave us the great Commandment 'Love others as you would want them to love you'. The English translation of just 'love' does not give a good feel for the original meaning of the Greek word used, as it should also reflect the need to care for, and respect, other people. Respect their beliefs, their possessions, their families, etc, in the same way you would expect people to respect you—unconditionally. Go back to the Ten Commandments and you can see that, after 'Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind' virtually all the others are reflected in Jesus's Commandment.

Then the old chestnut about 'Religion causes wars'—no it doesn't! Wherever there is war or struggles between people it is invariably down to a small number of people (often only a single person) who wants to impose (or keep) power over others—and they very often use religion as the justification or rallying-point to stir-up others.

Jesus was not killed because he was teaching his followers to respect and care for one another—how can this concept of Christianity be wrong?

What did happen was that the Jewish leaders were afraid of the loss of their *own* power. They were afraid that Jesus was telling the world that the rules and regulations the Jewish authorities were imposing on the Jews lower down the hierarchy were man-made, and were getting in the way of the kind of loving relationship that God wanted with each one of us. The Jewish authorities had power and they wanted to keep it—and they used *their* version of religion (in the form of the Jewish rules and regulation) as the justification for having him murdered.

But God's planning allowed even for this happening, as it was predicted within the Scriptures by the prophets (particularly Isaiah). Christ's death on the cross was a necessary development for us to return to try to understand, to worship and love God as He wants.

But it *is* right for Christians to disagree and speak out against injustice. Jesus took direct action in the Temple when he violently, and angrily, demonstrated about the use of the Temple for non-religious purposes—however you dress it up to justify it.

Love the Lord your God . . . Love one another as you would have others love you

Evangelism? On Facebook?

You can't be more wrong if you think that Facebook and Twitter are just for mindless chatter. Recently I was forced into thinking about, and explaining, my faith by an atheist and a non-Christian on Facebook. By the time I had finished responding to their taunts, the atheist had stopped arguing and I just hope I had managed to persuade him that his views were based on an imperfect understanding of the Bible.

Having clarified things in my own mind, I thought I would share my ideas with you—bearing in mind that there is no deep theology involved and Methodism may not necessarily agree with me!

The first stage concerned Darwin's Theory of Relativity and how I stood as a Christian. I explained that there is no difference in my mind between the two concepts. Darwin saw evolution and reported his findings. He never said that there was no God and, indeed, the Christian church leaders at the time had looked at his book (which is *still* a 'theory') and realised how God had worked from Creation to develop human beings. It is only in modern days that atheists have used Darwinism to justify trying to drive a wedge between Creationists and Christians. These atheists usually have a corrupt and incomplete understanding of what Christianity is all about; they don't want to challenge their own thinking (or laziness) by actually finding out what Christianity is. They may be afraid they might be wrong, but by just taking the blanket position of 'I don't believe in religion' they like to feel they give the (usually false) impression they have made a study of religion and have made a conscious decision, rather than having failed in their understanding in the first place.

Genesis was written down during the end of the time that the Jews had been wandering in the desert. One thing you do not want with you when you are a nomad is 'books', or scrolls in that time, so much of the story of creation and the history of the Jews was passed on by oral tradition. You know what Chinese Whispers is like, and there was a realisation that if what was being passed on was not to be lost or distorted then it needed to be written down.

The story of Creation was a simple way of explaining to people, who did not have the benefit of modern science, a way that the world developed. And it is very similar in many ways to current scientific thinking! Don't get hung up on the way the story deals in 'days' - think of a day as being a 'stage' of variable length.

In the beginning the earth was without form. Science says that before the *Big Bang*, there was nothing, not even an atom. There was only the elements that make up an atom swirling around because there was nothing solid that would attract them to one another. In the universe at the time, imagine a strange sort of glow—not quite light.

Scientist Peter Higgs has suggested that a particle that had weight (mass) appeared and atoms started to be created. He called it the *Boson*, but it was quickly dubbed 'the God Particle'. As part of the scientific version, atoms were formed, re-formed and reacted with each other. Chemical elements were formed and, with them, organic and inorganic compounds. Amongst the organic compounds were the ones that appear in DNA.

Over time, suns were created and the planets with/from them and so the earth was formed. With the suns, visible light appeared and the earth and its twin planet (the moon) was created with most, if not all, the requirements for life to eventually start to form. Single-celled things like amoeba which (without a brain) learned to divide themselves in order to reproduce must have come first. Water would have been an early compound and the pressures within the earth's core would have forced the land to rise and separate the waters.

Darwin didn't know it (but neither did the rest of the world until the 1950s) that the *reason*

Stewards Corner

This month it's my turn to write an item for this column.

I'm new to the job but somehow it all seems very familiar—oh yes, Dave has done it for a year or two and I must have absorbed much of what the job entails.

The practical side of the Sunday morning job is straightforward—put up the hymn numbers, and page numbers for the Bible readings, make sure everything is ready for the preacher and that people reading have arrived and we have an organist!

To make sure nothing is missed we have a very useful check-list on the board in the Vestry—referred to very often! It is our responsibility as a team to make sure worship takes place as advertised in the Plan. Sometimes this can involve last minute phone calls if a preacher is suddenly unavailable to turn up on Sunday morning! It helps that I speak to the preacher the previous week to sort out hymns and readers, so hopefully any problems are sorted out then. We write to each preacher two weeks before they come to give contact details and duty Worship Leader names if they wish them to help during the service. When the final edition of the Plan is sent out we work out 'how to' or 'who will' fill the Local Arrangement slots.

We take turns to make sure the collection is correctly counted and paid into the bank, a job I find challenging, but I know Dave will always check my maths if I am very doubtful—guess why Heather looks after the *Happy Hands* account! I am finding this a bit easier each time I do it.

I've attended the meeting of all the stewards in Brenda's Section where we forward plan special preachers and services we would like to put in the Circuit Plan—we seem to wish the year away and next Christmas is already at the back of our minds!

We also share what is happening in each of our own churches by way of Bible studies, housegroups and prayer meetings so that, if we cannot attend these at our own church, we are invited to attend at either Hockley or Rayleigh.

With Brenda leaving us this year it will be a time of change as the new Probationer at Hockley and Rayleigh cannot work with us for two years, but we will still need to keep in touch with those churches as we 'rejoin' them in 2014.

As John mentioned in the last edition (supplement), and in the notices, he is near the end of his term of office so we need a new team member. The rota means our duties are spread out so no one has to be on duty every week. Are you interested? If so, please speak to any of the stewards soon and learn more.

Val

Study Leave

As you know I have just completed three months sabbatical leave after ten years in the Methodist Ministry. Having recently spoken at Hockley's Thursday Club on this subject I was asked to write a short article which I have also passed on to Dave

What did I do? Firstly, I had to plan and agree those plans with the Sabbatical support group and these in turn had to be approved by the District Sabbaticals committee! My prospectus included—seeing more of my family and friends; completing a piece of Celtic study in Cornwall (holy wells and the Celtic saints associated with them); walking the Saints Way from Padstow to Fowey; experiencing an Ignatian 8 day silent retreat and de-cluttering my bungalow!

To be honest I did not find it easy to 'mentally' stop working but once I did the whole experience was a journey of discovery, refreshing and renewing in every way.

Cornwall is so rich in history and always a delight to visit and engage with the local people who have a great wealth of knowledge and oral history of their culture. Staying at a friends house on the Rosevine Peninsula (between Falmouth and Truro) whilst they were away meant I could keep the dogs with me. This meant avoiding kennels for them and they were welcome companions on the Saints Way walk since much of it is in remote countryside.

The Saints Way is a properly marked route which begins at Padstow Church. It was from this site (although the present Church was not there then) that those old Celtic saints both men and women walked down through Wales began their journey through Cornwall. Many were the offspring of King Brychan of Wales who was converted to Christianity together with his entire family. They spread throughout our country to share the Gospel long before St Augustine came to Britain. Indeed when St Augustine arrived he found a well established Celtic church.

As I walked, I reflected on the differences between my walking this route and the early Celtic saints. I was properly dressed, had eaten a good breakfast and carried a mobile phone, torch and maps etc. they had none of these helps and in addition were prone to attack from pagan people, plus dangers from accidents and the quickly changing weather. How faithful they were risking all for the Lord Jesus Christ. How faithful am I /are you today in reaching out to share the Good News of Jesus Christ?

Very often the saint would pray and plant his/ her staff in the ground and a well of clean drinking water would become visible which astonished the local people. These 'holy wells' became places of prayer and baptism. Many large Churches today began life as a humble holy well. In Cornwall and Wales you can still visit a number of these ancient sites which are as they were first established but some have been lost.

Advanced Technology

In this modern 'improved' world of electronic readers, e-readers, Kindles and iPods, we would like to introduce the new Bio-Optic Organised Knowledge device, with the trade name of **BOOK**.

BOOK is a revolutionary break-through in technology—no wires, no electrical circuits, no batteries, nothing to be connected or switched on. It is easy to use, even a child can operate it.

Compact and portable, it can be used anywhere- even sitting in an armchair by the fire—yet it is powerful enough to hold as much information as a CD-ROM disc.

BOOK is constructed of sequentially numbered sheets of paper (recyclable), each capable of holding thousands of bits of information. The pages are locked together with a custom-fit device called a binder which keeps the sheets in their correct sequence.

Opaque Paper Technology (**OPT**) allows manufacturers to use both sides of the sheet, doubling the information density and cutting costs. Experts are divided on the prospects for further increases in information density: for now, **BOOKS** with more information simply use more pages. Each sheet is scanned optically, registering information directly into your brain. A flick of the finger takes you to the next sheet.

BOOK may be taken up at any time and used merely by opening it.

BOOK never crashes or needs rebooting, though, like other devices, it can be damaged if coffee is spilt over it and it can become unusable if dropped, too many times, onto hard surfaces. The "browse" feature allows you to move instantly to any sheet, and move backwards and forwards as you wish. Many come with a search engine called an "**INDEX**" for pinpointing the exact location of any selected piece of information so it may be instantly retrieved.

You may, if needed, make personal notes next to **BOOK** text entries with optional programming tools, **Portable Erasable Nib Cryptic Intercommunication Language, Styli (PENCILS)**

Updated from the March 2000 edition of the All Saints Parish Magazine Landbeach

Ten Little Churchmen

Here's an adaptation of an old rhyme that I found at the back of my 'odds & ends' folder. It's obviously Anglican but can be applied to any church setting.

Ten little Churchmen went to Church when fine
But it started raining, then there were nine.

Nine little Churchmen stayed up very late
One overslept himself, then there were eight.

Eight little Churchmen on the road to Heaven
One joined a cycling club, then we had seven.

Seven little Churchmen heard of Sunday 'flicks'
One thought he'd like to go, then there were six.

Six little Churchmen kept the place alive
One bought a television, then there were five.

Five little Churchmen seemed loyal to the core
The Vicar upset one, then there were four.

Four little Churchmen asked out to tea
One couldn't leave in time, then there were three.

Three little churchmen sang the service through
Got a hymn they didn't know; then there were two.

Two little Churchmen argued who should run
The next summer outing, and then there was one.

One faithful Churchman, knowing what to do,
Got a friend to come to Church - then there were two.

Two sincere Churchmen each brought one more,
So their numbered doubled, and now there were four.

Four sturdy Churchmen simply couldn't wait
Till they found four others - then there were eight.

Eight eager Churchmen, searching round for souls,
Praying, working, witnessing, drew others in by shoals.

Shoals at every service, cramming every pew,
O God, give us keen Churchmen in our parish too.

As I walked, I reflected too on the communion of saints that rich heritage in which we stand of those alive today and those of previous generations who have loved and served God and who are now in God's nearer Presence. Thanks be to God for all those forbears whose lives and witness has helped to shape the people we are today. Life itself is a journey which is enriched and empowered with purpose and direction when we respond to Christ's call, "Follow Me".

I hope you have enjoyed reading this excerpt. Next time I will write about 8 days of silence!

Revd. Brenda

There was a man who worked for the Post Office whose job was to process all the mail that had illegible addresses.

One day, a letter came addressed in a shaky handwriting to God with no actual address. He thought he should open it to see what it was about.

The letter read:

◀Dear God,

I am an 83 year old widow, living on a very small pension. Yesterday someone stole my purse. It had £100 in it, which was all the money I had until my next pension payment.

Next Sunday is Christmas, and I had invited two of my friends over for dinner. Without that money, I have nothing to buy food with, have no family to turn to, and you are my only hope.. Can you please help me?

Sincerely, Edna ▶

The postal worker was touched.. He showed the letter to all the other workers. Each one dug into his or her wallet and came up with a few pounds. By the time he made the rounds, he had collected £96, which they put into an envelope and sent to the woman. The rest of the day, all the workers felt a warm glow thinking of Edna and the dinner she would be able to share with her friends.

Christmas came and went.

A few days later, another letter came from the same old lady to God. All the workers gathered around while the letter was opened.

It read:

◀Dear God,

How can I ever thank you enough for what you did for me? Because of your gift of love, I was able to fix a glorious dinner for my friends. We had a very nice day and I told my friends of your wonderful gift.

By the way, there was £4 missing. I think it must have been those thieving b.....s at the post office.

Sincerely, Edna ▶

Item came via email. It's reality is suspect!

Hockley Methodist Church– Friendship Days

Children bored in the school holidays? Want to do something different?

If you are not already aware, our friends at Hockley Methodist Church arrange *Friendship Days* during every school holiday for children aged between 3 and 11.

These take place on the first Tuesday of each holiday (including half terms), except Christmas. They are also held on the first three Tuesdays in the summer school holidays, from 10am to 12 noon. Everyone is invited and there is no charge.

The sessions are normally Bible-based and are held in the hall. They include crafts, games, and of course some teaching. They make full use of Hockley's multi-media equipment to show short films, Powerpoint presentations or even karaoke-style singing. One or two older children keep returning to give a helping hand—and some mums stay for the whole time. Refreshments of some kind are served about half-way through.

If any children from Rochford wish to join them, they will be most welcome.

The next Friendship Days are on 14 February and 3 April, both at the usual time of 10am to 12 noon.

For more information phone Muriel on 01702 204748 or Anne on 01702 202010

Where have all the young men gone?

It is a truth universally acknowledged that men, particularly young men, are missing from congregations throughout Methodism in Britain more than ever before. While your average congregation certainly does contain the male of the species he is most likely to be found clutching *Hymns and Psalms* in one hand and his bus pass in the other.

And hooray for him and his female counterparts without whom most local churches would just fall apart.

But where have all the young men gone? A report to Conference might come up with a scientific approach to this big question but a magazine survey a while ago suggests that part of the answer may lie in simple male likes and dislikes.

On the list of men's dislikes in church, said the survey, are flowers(!), embroidered banners, hugging, dancing, holding hands and any activity which involves sitting round in groups and sharing their feelings. Men feel safer with sermons and proclamational or anthemic songs (on the OK list with men was, by the way, *And can it be*) and activities which mirror team games.

Perhaps we need a fresh expression of the muscular Christianity of previous generations—a local Methodist church paint-balling team, perhaps? Any suggestions?

[Taken from the *Spy* column in the *Methodist Recorder* published a couple of years ago]

Wesley Guild

We're in the last few weeks of the session, so I've listed **all** the remaining meetings.

February

- 7 *Hancock's Half Hour*, Robert Mortlock
- 14 *Havens Hospice*, Hilary Metcalf
- 21 Christian Hope International
- 28 *Quiz with a difference*

March

- 6 (2pm) Visit to St Andrews Church, Rochford with Maurice Drage
- 13 *Life of an MP*, James Duddridge
- 20 Val Hawes
- 27 *Beetle Drive*, Fundraiser for Nigeria Healthcare charity

April

- 5 Maundy Thursday service at Hockley
- 10 (Sat) AGM. Wine and cheese

Just to clarify two or three things:

- On 6th March, it is an **afternoon** visit to St Andrew's Rochford
- On 13th March, the meeting will be factual and not party-political.
- On 5th April, the service is at 8pm and will be led by Revd Brenda—this will be your last chance to celebrate Maundy Thursday with Brenda and her other two churches.
- On 10th April, it will a chance to taste **non**-alcoholic wine—for those who have fought shy of trying it so far.
- Unless shown otherwise, meetings take place at 8pm **sharp** at the church.

Women's Fellowship

February

- 6 Revd Brenda Gutberlet
- 13 Members' Day **
- 20 Rev Richard Isles
- 27 John & Cecile Low

March

- 5 John Gentry
- 12 Jenny Sims
- 19 Maureen Sams
- 26 David Tysoe

April

- 2 Pastor Brian Gibson **

Our Women's Fellowship meets at the church on Mondays at 2.30pm. All ladies, whether members of our church or not, are welcome to come along, and can bring a friend if they wish. Everyone will have a warm welcome (and a cup of tea afterwards!).

** this is a change to the published programme

Recipe Corner

Sheila Webber has provided us with the recipe this time (and there's a very nice looking recipe for scones waiting on the stocks for the next edition!). Enjoy!

Banana bread

4oz plain flour
2oz whole wheat flour
2oz oats
2oz brown sugar
3 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
pinch salt
2oz finely chopped walnuts
1 egg
2/3 - ¾ cup milk
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
6oz mashed bananas

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180° C (350° F, Gas Mk4).
2. Combine flours, oats, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and nuts.
3. Beat together egg, milk and banana and oil.
4. Add the egg mixture to the dry ingredients and mix for 30 secs (batter will be lumpy).
5. Pour into a greased 2lb loaf tin and bake in a moderate oven (180° C 350° F, Gas Mk4) for 60 mins until tester comes clean (lower the heat if the cake is browning too quickly).

You are reminded that oven temperatures will vary between different types, brands, sizes of ovens, in addition to your location, altitude, outside temperature, humidity, etc.

Highway Proverb

The Bishop of Christchurch, NZ, tells the story of a group of Old Testament translators who were putting the Book of the Proverbs into contemporary English and were a little puzzled when they came to the verse, "The slothful man saith, there is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets". (Proverbs 22 v.13).

After consideration one of the translators thought it should be associated with more up-to-date road dangers and proposed as a modern rendering, "The slow-moving man says, I shall be slain on the highway, I see a Jaguar approaching".

JMA – What next?

The Methodist children and youth team was set up in 2008. One of the aims of the team's 5 year strategy is:

"To empower children and young people to respond to social, global and world church issues".

To achieve this a strategic review of JMA and World Action was undertaken in 2010. A consultation paper has been issued with the objective of how JMA can develop. Ideas from the paper include the following suggestions:

1. More resource information for secretaries.
2. The setting up of a JMA website (surprisingly none exists at present). This would be "interactive, creative, informative and educational". It would enable people to reflect their views and acknowledge their efforts.
3. Updating and modernising the JMA magazine Rainbow to make it more relevant to young collectors. Suggestions for the magazine included articles written by children from the projects JMA is helping with and also a question section from children in the UK.
4. What is the essence of JMA? -A better definition is required.
5. Identify where JMA focuses its work within world missions. From this it is hoped a strategy can be developed to plan ahead

The review will result in a short "vision paper". This will form the basis of a wider consultation and sharing exercise but as yet nothing conclusive has been put into print.

Church General Meeting 4th March 2012 at 4pm

**Come and take part in running the church
Elect the Church Council
Hear more about what's going on
Volunteer for jobs**

(Do we dare say, "agree to join the Church Council"?)

Would all sections of the church please ensure that someone from their area sends a report to Dave by 22nd February so it can be included in the Annual Report (and shorten the meeting?)

December, Winter, Christmas, Buy, Celebrate.

If the headline means something to you, you know how you want to get out of Christmas. Certainly this is what the commercial side of the world want from us and they did themselves proud with the build up to Christmas. The message was buy, buy. Buy what you want, and you want what we tell you, not what you need to have. Christmas is coming, eat drink and be merry.

Well it's all over, time to recoup from all that eating and spending, it's time to reflect.

But did we as a church get our build up to the celebration right?

Now what was it meant to be?

- Advent,
- Christmas,
- Epiphany,
- a Celebration!!

From the start of Advent to up the Carol service we only managed to fit into our three services six carols, out of a possible 15 hymns. I should point out that four of the Carols were sung on the first Sunday of Advent, leaving only two to be sung before the Carol Service. The services you may recall were packed with the message of the coming birth of Christ and what it should mean!! Of course it is good for us to celebrate with friends and family and share food together. It is however, acceptable to be alone and contemplative.

My recollection is that the services did not lead me to the celebration of the coming of Christ or put me in a contemplative mood. In fact the Carol service was quite a shock to the system, when I found out Christmas had arrived in Church.

If we are to have any chance against the commercial world we need to take back Advent and Christmas and build up to what this year was a fine Carol service and enjoyable Christmas morning service. (I was not there Christmas morning but I only heard good things).

Come on, we are the church, let's get it right so that next year I am not bemoaning the fact that commerce is taking over Christmas.

I would welcome any comment.

Bruce

A Blessing for bath-time at the end of the day

Gracious God, bless this weary body that now craves rest and relaxation;
Lord Jesus Christ, bless this racing mind that seeks peace at the end of another demanding day;

Loving Spirit, bless this anxious soul that longs for release from shame and regret.

May the warmth of the water enfold me like God's loving arms;

May the smell of the foam carry me beyond the horizon of today's labours;

May the cleansing touch of the soap prepare me for the promise and challenge of tomorrow.

Norman Shanks

(From *A book of Blessings . . . And how to write your own*, Ruth Burgess ISBN 1 901557 48 0.
It can be bought direct from Wild Goose Publications at www.ionabooks.com)

HOCKMIRA

HOCKLEY METHODISTS' INACTIVE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION

Programme for 2012

Anybody and everybody are welcome on our walks and the going is suitable for all ages and children unless otherwise stated!

More details of each walk - start times, meeting points, parking, requirements for picnic baskets, barbeques, wine coolers, etc - will be circulated nearer the date.

Monday 9th April Saffron Walden – Audley End 5½ miles
Easter Monday

Monday 7th May Manningtree to Flatford/Dedham 4 – 7 miles

Saturday 2nd June Woodbridge – annual visit to the Cogars; pub lunch first then tea and cakes chez Cogar.

Sunday 17th June Hockley - local walk approx 2 hours,
Fathers' Day start 2:30pm

Saturday 7th July Aldeburgh 5¾ miles

Saturday 11th Aug East Tilbury 6½

Saturday 1st Sept London walk arranged by Michael & Kay Deedman

Saturday 13th Oct West Mersea, 6¼ miles.

Contact Mike or Mu Pregnall of our Hockley church on 01702 204748 or e-mail mumic@pregnall.freeserve.co.uk if you want further details of any of these walks or need a lift.

Mike Pregnall

Watch out for the cute ones!

A little girl walks into a pet shop and asks in the sweetest little lisp, “Excuse me, mithter, do you have any wittle wabbits?”

The shopkeeper bends right down and puts his hands on his knees so he's on her level, and asks, “Do you want a wittle white wabby or a wittle bwack wabby? Or maybe that cute wittle bwown wabby over there?”

She in turn puts her hands on her knees, leans forward and says in a quiet little voice, “I don't fink my pyfon weally cares.”