

The Link Magazine

December 2015 & January 2016

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**Happy Christmas & A Blessed
New Year**

MINISTER'S LETTER—RIDING IN TANDEM WITH GOD

"...Jesus said let us cross over to the other side..." Mk 4:35

"His name will be, Immanuel –God with us" Is.7:14

My life's journey has been made possible through the missionary movement and charitable philanthropy since my father died when I was nine years old. As a former athlete and in response to God's grace in my life, I took on sponsored Bike Rides for charity as my way of giving back to society. This year I did 477km in Africa and 200 km from Loch Lomond in Scotland and round the Island of Mull to Iona a total of 677km (423 miles) for EMMS (Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society). In 2011 for the same charity I did 1,043 km (652 miles). During the 2011 Bike ride, one of the cyclists shared the following poem:-

*"At first I saw God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of the things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was out there sort of like the president. I recognized his picture when I saw it, but I didn't really know him. But later on when I recognized my higher power, it seemed as though **life was rather like a bike ride, but it was a tandem bike**, and I noticed that God was in the back helping me pedal. I don't know just when it was that He suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since . . . life with my higher power that is God makes life exciting! When I had control, I knew the way. It was rather boring but predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points. But when he took the lead, he knew delightful long cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places and at breakneck speeds; it was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness, he said "Pedal." I worried and was anxious and asked, "Where are you taking me?" He laughed and didn't answer and I started to learn to trust. I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure. And when I'd say, "I'm scared," he'd lean back and touch my hand. He took me to people with gifts that I needed, gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me their gifts to take on my journey, our journey, God's and mine. And we were off again. He said, "Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight." So I did, to the people we met and I found that in giving I received and still our burden was light. I did not trust him at first, in control of my life. I thought he'd wreck it. But he knows bike secrets, knows how to make it bend to take sharp corners, jump to clear high rocks, fly to shorten scary passages. And I am learning to be quiet and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant companion, my higher power. And when I'm sure I just can't do any more, he just smiles and says "Pedal." (Author unknown)*

This Christmas, may we experience God incarnate, Immanuel, God with us (Is 7:14) and may we draw ever close to Him and as we approach the New year; no doubt there will be storms ahead, but may we lean on God with whom we ride in tandem. He knows the way and would not allow any storms or head wind to come our way of which He has not measured the knots. May we heed the wise Solomon's advice to *"Trust God from the bottom of your heart: don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice to everything you do, everywhere you go, He's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all"* Proverbs 3:5-6 (The Message translation). Whatever the storms in the New Year may we take God at His word when He promises *"I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for"* Jeremiah 29:11 (The Message Translation). This Christmas may we draw closer in tandem with Immanuel and in the New Year may we ride in tandem with God.

I wish you all Happy Christmas to you and yours and A Blessed Prosperous New Year.

Daniel.

PRAYER FOR CHANGE

Published in the magazines St Andrew's, St Edmund's and Lidgett Park

Lewis Carroll wrote:

" Still, as Christmastide comes round,

We remember yet again-

Echo still the joyful sound

" Peace on earth, goodwill to men. " "

Advent is upon us, a waiting time, but as we wait, we know that for many there is no peace and that goodwill is not on everybody's agenda.

In this knowledge, we pray that as we celebrate Christ's coming, we will remember that the peace of the world depends on people living in harmony, despite their differences. May we use Advent as a time to renew hope and trust and dedicate ourselves to being open to others and sensitive to their opinions and needs.

Amen.

WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

6th Dec	10.30 am	Ms Mary Patchett	Gift Service
	6.30 pm	<i>Chapel Allerton Methodist Church</i>	
13th Dec	10.30 am	Mrs Susan Howdle	
20th Dec	3.00 pm	Revd. Dr Daniel Mwilu	Carol Service
24th Dec	4.30 pm	Mrs. Patricia Davies	All Age Worship
		<i>“Carols around the Cradle”</i>	
	11.30 pm	Revd. Dr Daniel Mwilu	Holy Communion
25th Dec	10.30 am	Revd. Dr Daniel Mwilu	All Age Worship
27th Dec	10.30 am	Revd. Dr Daniel Mwilu	
	4.00 pm	Revd. Dr Daniel Mwilu	

WORSHIP IN JANUARY

3rd Jan	10.30 am	Revd. Dr Daniel Mwilu	Covenant Service
	6.30 pm	<i>Chapel Allerton Methodist Church</i>	
10th Jan	10.30 am	Mrs Susan Mason	
	4.00 pm	Revd. Dr Daniel Mwilu	Holy Communion
17th Jan	10.30 am	Mrs Hazel Featherstone	
	4.00 pm	<i>United Circuit Service at Garforth</i>	
24th Jan	10.00 am	<i>St Edmund’s Church</i>	<i>Ecumenical Service</i>
	4.00 pm	Revd. Robert Creamer	
31st Jan	10.30 am	Mrs Dorothy Turnpenny	
	6.00 pm	<i>St Andrew’s Church</i>	<i>Ecumenical Service</i>

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men **Luke 2:14.**

CAROLS ROUND THE MANGER

For the last 10 years we have had a children's service at 4.30 pm on Christmas Eve. This has been aimed specifically at small children but last year and again this year I aim to change that so that it is more an All-Age service. Hopefully there will still be enough content to maintain the interest of little ones but also mark the beginning of Christmas for adults, who are unable to stay up until after midnight.

Patricia Davies

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT SERVICE

The Christmas Gift Service will be on 6th December and the stewards have agreed that money received will go to Leeds Autism Services.

Joyce Woods writes:

Leeds Autism Services, operating in the Leeds area was founded in 1988 as a Christian foundation charity.

Specific services for adults are offered aiming individually tailored packages of support, in order to assist people to achieve their goals.

They offer support and advice to individuals in a holistic and non judgemental frame work from 2 hours per week to 24 hours per day 365 days a year to their 64 service users. This is in their own homes, community settings or one of their own facilities. LAS are needing sensory equipment, new computer equipment, laptops and a vehicle to transport the people supported to activities which would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

LAS are currently trying to raise funds and the contributions from the Christmas Gift Service will be a very welcome contribution.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT:

- *The tragedy of war is that it uses man's best to do man's worst.*
- *Bitterness imprisons life; love releases it.*

Harry Emerson Fosdick.

CHRSTMAS TRADITIONS

Different people in different countries celebrate Christmas in different ways. Many of the things we associate with Christmas are really quite recent. Even one of the oldest customs, Santa Claus has changed in recent times. Santa Claus really existed as St Nicholas who lived about 400 years after the birth of Jesus and who was remembered for giving gifts to the poor and taking care of young children. St Nicholas in Dutch was called Sinter Klaas and from this we get the name Santa Klaus, but the Santa Klaus we know today really comes from America where he was described in a poem called "A visit from St Nicholas" in 1923 (Clement Clarke Moore).

The other thing that has come to us from America is the turkey. A hundred years ago the Christmas dinner in this country used to be a goose.

The Christmas tree is another custom that has come to us from another country. It is really a German tradition. The people in Germany used to celebrate the feast of Adam and Eve on December 24th and used a tree hung with apples to remind them of the tree in the Garden of Eden. We now use it to remind us of Jesus. The green fir tree reminds us of the life we have in Jesus and the candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. German settlers took the custom to America in about 1700 but it was brought to England by Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria only about 150 years ago. Another tradition which has developed is that every year the people of Norway give the people of Britain a Christmas tree for Trafalgar Square in London as a way of saying thank you for the help we gave the during the Second World War.

Christmas cards probably are an English invention but the first Christmas card as we know it didn't appear until 1843, again just over 150 years ago. It was used to send people good wishes. We then introduced that to America.

So Christmas as we know it comes from many different countries and many of the customs are quite recent but we use them to remind us of the important things about Jesus. Christmas should be a time of happiness when we think about the needs of others, when we give others presents and when we remember the love that God has for us. Sometimes this gets forgotten in the midst of all the shopping and all the parties.

Editor

FRESH FROM THE WORD – Daily Bible Reading Notes

Once again we are thinking about our daily bible readings. *Fresh from the Word* gives us a passage to read each day with a commentary and a prayer. These notes are read world-wide and I like to think that people all over the world are reading the same daily passage as I am. The notes contain additional prayers and a foreword by Kate Coleman. They contain a variety of writers and I am sure you will find them very helpful in your daily devotions.

This year the price is unchanged at £9.00 per book; when broken down it is a very cheap daily expense. Why not give it a try, if you do not already receive a copy, and sign up on the sheet on the notice board.

Hazel Rayner.

FRED'S QUIZ (for answers see page 26)

Here are four selections of European countries. In each group they all have a significant feature in common except for one of them. For the first three groups the odd one out has been identified and appears with an asterisk. You have to see if you can find why it is the odd one out. For the fourth group the task is even harder: you are challenged to find what they all have in common except for one and identify the odd one out.

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Austria	Austria *	Belgium	Belgium
Finland	Denmark	Czech Republic	Denmark
France	Estonia	Germany	Germany
Germany	Finland	Norway *	Luxembourg
Monaco	Ireland	Poland	Netherlands
Netherlands	Italy	Portugal	Norway
Spain	Netherlands	Spain	Spain
UK *	Portugal	Sweden	UK

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

“ Life’s truest happiness is found in the friendships we make along the way. “



THORNER BROADSHEET

Many thanks to all who supported us at our Christmas Fayre, which took place on Sat Nov 21st from 10-12 noon and where we served our usual bacon butties and also mince pies, Christmas cakes etc. This event was held for Thorner Church Funds so we thank you all for your generous support!!!

As this magazine covers January as well, we hope you'll join us in 2016 for the first of our fund raising events of the year which will take place on Sat Jan 23rd from 10 – 12 noon and will be a 50/50 event in aid of MHA and Action for Children As usual our famous Bacon Butties will be served !!!

Here in Thorner we're looking forward to our Carols on the Millennium Green, which will take place this year on Sat December 12th beginning at 3pm. All are welcome and we'd love you to join us. The format is similar to the Carols around the Oakwood Clock. We have mince pies and mulled wine on the Green to finish off the event. Soft drinks are also available. It's a great opportunity to meet people and to enjoy singing our favourite carols; do come if you can, you'll be made most welcome. We have a collection for The Children's Society, so please don't forget to bring some money for the collection box!!

We hold our Covenant Service on the third Sunday in January next year, which will fall on Sun Jan 17th in 2016. Our Minister, Daniel, will be presiding. This will be the beginning of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity and we will be joined by the folk of St. Peter's C. of E. at Thorner Methodists so they too can make their Covenant promises along with us. We look forward to having a full church!

It just remains for me, on behalf of all of us here at Thorner Methodists, to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for 2016. May the love and peace of the Christ Child fill your hearts this Christmas and throughout the coming New Year.

God Bless,

Ann Johnson Thorner Senior Church Steward

Tel. 0113 289 3532

PARACHUTE PLUMB, a true story.

Charles Plumb was a US Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience!

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb. "I packed your parachute," the man replied. "I guess it worked!" "It sure did," Plumb assured him. "If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, as he kept thinking about that man. Plumb says, "I kept wondering what he had looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat; a bib in the back; and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor." Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, each time holding the fate of someone he didn't know in his hands.

Now, Plumb asks us: "Who's packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. He also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory - he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety.

Sometimes, in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason. As you go through this week, this month, this year, recognize people who pack your parachutes. And most importantly, show them your appreciation, gratitude and give them some attention - share this message with them. You may not even know these people yet, so allow your kindness to have no boundaries whatsoever. You'll never know who might be packing your parachute right now... **With thanks to Ray Mounsey for sending this in Ed.**

LIDGETT PARK METHODIST CHURCH

Carols & Christmas Music

With the Wendel Singers and YEP Brass Ensemble.

Thursday 17th December @ 7.30 pm.

Adults £8 Children £1 15 to 18 Free

Including coffee and mince pies.

The concert is being held to raise money for the charities Christian Aid and Christians Against Poverty which we are supporting over the coming year.

Handel's

MESSIAH

THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

St Aidan's Church, Roundhay Road, Leeds

Saturday 5 December 2015, 7:30 pm

Presented by **HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY**

Conducted by Andrew Padmore

Organist Daniel Justin, Soprano Sarah Power, Mezzo Soprano Hannah Mason ,
Tenor Trystan Llyr Griffiths, Bass Andrew Mahon.

Tickets £10/ £5 students and under 16s

Harrogate Theatre Box Office www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk 01423502116

Or on the door.

THOUGHTS FROM A HOUSE GROUP

The Thursday house group continues its study of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and, as has become our pattern, we read the passage and try to understand what Paul was trying to say at the time before moving on to a discussion of what it might mean for us today.

Recently we have been thinking about 2 Corinthians 3, verses 1-6. Paul is addressing the question of his authority, which is being questioned by some in the church at Corinth. In the ancient world people rarely travelled for pleasure but only on business or to conduct affairs of state and when they did so would carry written testimonials confirming who they were and what authority they had. Paul is sensitive to the criticism that the only testimonials he produces are what he says about himself.

Paul's answer to this is to follow up on the prophecy of Jeremiah, that God will create a new covenant with his people, a covenant that will be written on their hearts and not on tablets of stone. The mark of this new covenant, which Paul claims comes with and through Jesus, is that those who sign up to it have the Spirit of God in their hearts and lives and this has the power to change the sort of people they are. So argues Paul, the only reference he needs is for people to look at you, the people of the church in Corinth, a church he founded, and see in the quality of your lives that something wonderful has happened.

The question which follows naturally from this is, of course, what do people see in the quality of the life at Lidgett and Shadwell churches that would lead them to want to know more about our faith? From here we were led into thinking about the 5 year plan. What do we consider our present strengths to be? How can we build on these? In what areas are we lacking? How will the stranger new to Christianity learn something of what it means by looking at our life together?

It is not all gloom. We can be proud of the things we do for our community and of our charitable giving and of social activities such as our drama group. We also have a strong sense of pastoral care in our community, but perhaps we need to engage more with those who lead busy lives, for whom Sunday worship, for example, is not a priority. Can we provide for people at other times, for example, the young for whom Sunday has become the main day for playing sport. Are there ways in which we can widen the scope of our worship so that we

acknowledge the needs of those unfamiliar with traditional patterns of worship and language? How can we meet people where they are rather than where we want them to be?

Stan Pearson

A WINTER'S TALE

Joseph's Story (not the coloured coat man)

Life was good. Mary was in the latter stages of her pregnancy and I had just received a large order to produce tables and chairs and then what happens. At prayers one morning we were told that notices had been distributed around the town by the local administrators telling us that our Roman masters were inflicting upon us a countrywide census. Being sticklers for accuracy we are not only to register in person but also within the area of our ancestral lands.

Bethlehem was our registration point, a good six or more days' journey especially with Mary being so close to giving birth. Unfortunately, the three day census period was almost upon us so we had no option but to make the journey. Friends lent us a good sturdy donkey and with James, my son from a previous marriage, Mary and I set off for Bethlehem.

Having had a fairly uneventful but tiring few days on the road, we entered Jerusalem and rested before the final part of the journey. I did not realise, although I should have, that the shortness of the census period would cause such an influx and concentration of people into the area. We met with families from Caesarea, Joppa, Beersheba and many others from far off towns and cities who, like me, were annoyed at this Roman officialdom.

As dusk fell conversation drifted to views on the unusual brightness from a number of stars which travellers had observed now for a number of nights, the brightness keeping at bay complete darkness. Certainly it aided our progress and we arrived in Bethlehem late evening on the first census day.

Other than the synagogue what did the Romans consider to be the focal point of the village? Yes the inn (it was also larger than the synagogue) and registering

could take place all day and most of the night without upsetting any of our religious customs or traditions. Arriving late but while still open for registration, we decided to register straight away and get it over with. While Mary and James stood in a lengthy queue I searched in vain throughout the village for lodgings for both the family and our invaluable donkey.

By the time we eventually got to the registration table Mary was so exhausted, distraught and on the point of collapse that the officials demanded that the innkeeper took pity on us and find some sanctuary even if it was only basic. Pity and a “small” exchange of coin proved necessary for the basic, a section of the area of the building used for the innkeeper’s animals. The donkey seemed more than satisfied, however.

It was not a peaceful night and early next day, the inn being open for registration since before dawn, Mary gave birth to a healthy boy. I am so proud of Mary, her struggles perched uncomfortably on the donkey’s back, through the heat and dust of that unpleasant journey. She had been so wonderfully rewarded. News of the birth spread quickly around the village and we became almost an attraction at the inn for both villagers and travellers alike, so much so that we “enjoyed” a second night with the animals.

News of the birth also spread beyond the village and those shepherds and farm workers who were also obliged to register took the opportunity and came and registered while the additional brightness was still occurring and the flocks were settled. A peek into the animal shelter for a glimpse of our baby seemed highly satisfying to them. A human birth must have reinforced the wonders of nature for them and they returned, to my mind, in good spirits to the fields.

The final day of the census found us still in our emergency surroundings and naturally thoughts of our return journey came to the fore. The end of the census period saw a rapid decline in pressure on lodging places. Mary was still feeling the effects of both the birth and journey so it was decided to have a few days recuperation in a more suitable room at the inn.

Mary regained her strength and our little family left Bethlehem with thankful

hearts. Even the donkey seemed to know it was going home and appeared to take on its additional load in its stride (well-wishers had given various small baby gifts).

As we approached Jerusalem the sight of the great temple seemed to draw us to it and I realised that the time for our son's circumcision and purification was fast approaching. What better place to have the rites carried out than in such a magnificent sacred building. What a story to tell our friends and neighbours. Although our decision meant a short stay in Jerusalem to prepare and make arrangements for the ceremonies themselves, Mary and I felt a compulsion to be at that place and that time.

If the circumcision and purification ceremonies were not daunting enough in that great place, a complete stranger, we were later told that his name was Simeon, came out from the onlookers and accosted us and took our baby from Mary's arms. Mary's hand on my arm and her contented look stopped me from snatching back our child. The look was also one of acceptance and almost expectation. No attempt was made by anyone to stop the man from holding our child aloft, giving a monologue I didn't understand, returning the baby to Mary and then melting away into the body of the temple. I held my counsel.

The next few days passed without incident as we journeyed back home to Nazareth. Once home the donkey was returned, James returned to his studies and Mary blossomed into an adoring mother and special wife. I got back to the hard work of fulfilling my furniture commission.

Oh, how remiss of me! I haven't told you our son's name. We called him Jesus and he was born in time to be registered. I wonder if in the future some dusty old parchment or stone tablet will come to light which will show not only Roman efficiency but prove the truth of that brief moment of our time in Bethlehem.

Colin Watson

PROJECT NEWS. DECEMBER 2015 / JANUARY 2016_

Welcome to our latest up-date!

Christmas Concert:

The next Project event is the much-loved seasonal concert with Joe Roberts and the Wendel Singers together with the YEP Brass Ensemble on Thursday December 17th at 7.30pm. Entrance is £8 for adults, £1 for children and 15 to 18 free. Do join us in this celebration of Christmas, share some great music and enjoy a coffee and mince pie in the interval.

2016 Events.

November's Link listed provisional dates for some of our events. Until the return of our own intrepid explorers, the Dalton Duo, we are still only able to give provisional dates for the first two listed below.

Saturday March 12th : Mad Hatters Tea Party to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of Alice In Wonderland.

End of April : Italian Evening : our guest chef, Signor 'aydon, will present a delectable range of Italian food for you to enjoy.

A Friday evening in late June : David Wilks presents an evening with young musicians : those of you who came to the concert earlier in the year will need no incentive to join us again for this superb display of talented musicianship. The date and further details will be announced as soon as possible.

Saturday July 16th : Dance to Rebecca Todd and her friends "The Little Big Band". This is now definite and will take place at the Queens Hall, Immaculate Heart Church which is a large hall with a licensed bar. The evening will start at 7pm with a display from the Swing Dancers who will then take us through some of the steps more slowly before we take to the floor for a variety of dances at about 7.45pm. Do put this date in your diary, invite your friends and family and help us to raise funds whilst enjoying a special evening.

July 21st to 24th : Flower Festival in Church : a huge success two years ago, we look forward to opening our church to a wider public to enjoy the beautiful floral displays.

The Project committee will be meeting before Christmas to plan future events. Looking at the calendar, we currently have a blank space in May. If you have any ideas or can offer to host an event (Coffee Morning, Open Garden etc.) do please let us know. It would be great to try something new to mix in with our established favourites.

Before I close, may I add a special word of thanks, not only to everyone who helps the Project on special occasions, but also to those who help at the Saturday Coffee Mornings, month in, month out. Raising around £200 every time, this has become an established and very enjoyable social occasion.

Finally, as always, our grateful thanks to everyone for your continuing support.

Margaret Farrar.

CHRISTIAN AID LUNCHES

Church	Organiser	Date
St Andrew's URC	Alex Jowitt	Tues January 19 th
Friends Meeting House	Liz Schweiger	Feb 25 th (to be confirmed)
Immaculate Heart	Anne Cogan	Thurs March 10 th

TO MY MANY FRIENDS AT LIDGETT:

I wish to thank all my friends who sent me flowers, cards and phone calls during my absence from church, all due to a nasty fall I had on Street Lane injuring my spine. It helped a great deal to know people do care and it was appreciated.

With thanks, **Viv Naylor**

BIG BOOK BONUS!

The value of sales from the Coffee Morning book stall has occasionally been as high as £45 a session, average annual takings amounting to between £350 and £400 towards the Church Project. This simple way of fund raising is only possible through the generosity of book donors and purchasers.

You will be aware that storage space and the desire to 'refresh' our stock mean that unsold books are eventually moved on. They are taken to the Oxfam Bookshop in Headingley. Oxfam regularly informs us of the value of these sales-plus-gift aid. In the last four years, sales of your donation to Oxfam via the book stall have amounted to £1,734.70.

In the current refugee crisis, Oxfam is concentrating on providing sanitation and fresh drinking water, fulfilling basic needs and helping to combat the spread of disease.

Thanks to everyone. **Peter, Andy and Gill.**

SOUNDING BRASS AND VOICES

The Wesley Singers were originally formed 30 years ago at the introduction of the (then new) hymn book, Hymns and Psalms, to familiarise the churches with the new selection. Since then the choir has established a reputation for fine singing and is much in demand. It has been bringing music to the Methodist People of Leeds and beyond ever since.

We were fortunate to host the 30th Anniversary Concert at Lidgett Park, which was performed in conjunction with the West Yorkshire Police Brass Ensemble. It was a splendid and uplifting occasion with a good mix of choral and brass music, both sacred and secular. We were privileged to have, in addition, some fine soloists, Julie Boocock on flute, Liz Kenwood on oboe, Giles Taylor on organ and Pat Jordan on Piano.

The event raised a total of £3,616 pounds, every penny of which went to support the work of the Yorkshire Air Ambulance. A very successful evening in every way.

SIMPLY STITCHING

Many thanks to all of you who visited our Hidden Talents exhibition at a recent coffee morning and expressed interest in and admiration of the work on show. Visitors will have realised that in seven years our meetings have seen developing talents, that our interests have extended to include Bobbin Lace, Patchwork and Water Colour Painting – and that much of our work is more complex than simple.

Other members of the congregation were also cajoled into exhibiting their talents. George Stansfield brought along the tablecloth he had worked while convalescing in hospital during World War II, Ron Gelsthorpe showed two of his earlier works and Pat Nolan lent her delightful soft toys. No-one could have resisted Boy Blue and Girl Pink or the Pixie on a Toadstool and Humpty Dumpty had to be rescued several times by the King's Men and his horses. We must not forget Howard, who burned the midnight oil in order to finish his scarf!

We continue to meet on the second Wednesday of each month and you are very welcome to join us, if only to share a cup of tea and a chat.

Audrey Gabbitas.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE FOUNDED ON LOVE AND COMPASSION

What can draw us all together as human beings on a religious quest is love and compassion. Interestingly, the one thing that all the founders of faith traditions across the world stumbled on as the key to life, peace and well-being was **compassion** or, in the words of the Golden Rule, “*Do to others as you would like them to do to you* “. Christians have long assumed that the Golden Rule began with Jesus but this simply shows our ignorance of others. Ancient wisdom from Sumatra says, “*Let all your undertakings be pleasing to you, as well as others. If that is not possible, at least do not harm anyone* “. Zoroastrian sacred texts say, “**That** nature alone is good, which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself “. From the Hindu Vedic texts, “*This is the sum of duty. Do nothing unto others which would cause you pain if done to you* “. Confucius said, “*What one does not wish for oneself, one ought not to be willing to grant to others* “. From Plato, “*May I do to others as I would that they should do to me* “. The Jewish Talmud says, “*What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow human beings: this is the whole Torah while the rest is the commentary thereof ...*”. From the Buddha, “*Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful* “.

When we hear these – and there are more – then the words ascribed to Jesus in Matthew, “*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you* “ seem strangely less unique. And Jesus acknowledged this, adding that this “*sums up all the Law and the Prophets* “. Human beings have thus long recognised the centrality of compassion and codified it within their various religious traditions.

I have taken the above excerpt from the book ***In Defence Of Doubt – An Invitation To Adventure*** by Val Webb, who holds degrees in Science and Theology.

ISBN 978 1743 240 557.

Gerry Leake.

THEOLOGY

Does the word turn us off? It simply means talking and thinking about God and one purpose is to find a sense of meaning and purpose for our lives and this is a personal thing

Theology is like a garment we have produced, not a universal truth.

The garment, like all garments, will fit some, and not fit others.

Should garments be thrown out then, because they do not fit everyone?

Ah, then we should freeze in the winters of our loneliness!

Better we should simply adjust the fit and see to helping others

*as they, too, weave their mantles.. **Marjorie Suchocki (theologian)***

ANNUAL PROJECT PUZZLE

The annual project puzzles were unleashed in 2000. I have been looking back at some of the early ones and discovered one for which I had not kept a copy of the answers so I thought I had better have a go. Guess what – I found many of the clues very difficult so can understand why several people said they were hard. Apologies – in penance I really will endeavour to make the 16th a bit easier whilst still offering a challenge. What's more they will be sold at the bargain price of £1 hoping this will extend the take-up but still make a good contribution to the project funds. There will be three gift token prizes though **all** of the sale proceeds will go to the project. Think of it – for a fiver you could send 5 copies with Christmas cards to people you are not too keen on!

Fred Langley

LIDGETT PARK LADIES' GROUP

Meeting fortnightly on a Thursday evening at 7.45 in the Community Hall. Refreshments provided.

10th Dec. CAROL SERVICE. This is OPEN to all. Please come along and enjoy what is usually a lovely occasion. Donations will be for our President's. Mrs Marion Bright, charity of choice - Age Concern.

Christmas is then fast approaching and we have no further Ladies' Meetings until January.

7th Jan. NEW YEAR PARTY. A musical soiree.

21st Jan. OPEN EVENING (all welcome) Our own Alan and Sue Wittrick will be telling us about their experiences, their talk being entitled "Galapagos".

Lynne Pullein



We gather Jennifer is enjoying her holiday in Canada. Who are the strange men? Rumour has it that one may be Haydn and the other Clive Langley. A good time seems to have been had by all.

Ed.

DRAMA REVIEW

"Baked Alaska – Time to change the temperature" by Paul Burbridge and Jonathan Bidgood

A powerful production, a stunning performance and a scary, challenging message was given at St. Edmund's Church by the Riding Lights Theatre Company on 6th November 2015.

The show was presented to a church nearly full. The backcloth to an adaptable and slightly unstable stage of the world showed the universe. The story line took in comfortable families in familiar situations which affect all of us and concern many. Waste disposal, wastage of water, excessive use of energy, fossil fuels and renewable energy, the throw away society and flying to holiday destinations were emphasised. There were sketches, all based on actual events and scenarios. One man had attempted to overcome opposition to a wind farm because "it spoiled the view". Another scenario featured the devastation and poverty caused by oil companies' exploitation of the Niger Delta. Another showed the difficulties still being faced by people of Bangladesh six years after Cyclone Aila in 2009 which caused much of the country to be flooded by the sea: people were living on floating islands and had adapted ways to grow food in such conditions. Yet another sketch also highlighted the Pacific island of Nauru which was once a beautiful paradise but has been so exploited by the phosphate industry it is likely to be the first country to be submerged by rising sea waters.

All points of view relating to climate change were raised and questioned in the performance. They were portrayed vividly and movingly by just four talented actors who also did all the scene changes. "Baked Alaska" was a play which could be enjoyed as a piece of theatre, but its message is we are all involved because we are alive. The message that we need to be committed to doing something about it, was so powerful it felt wrong to admit you enjoyed the production. That message is, in Barak Obama's words in August of this year, "we are the first generation to feel the impacts of climate change and the last generation to be able to do something about it... to get something right and to get something right for our kids". This was highlighted by possibly the only non-documented scenario in the production. A woman dreamed of her granddaughter talking to her. Life certainly did not seem pleasant but the granddaughter in the dream just accepted it. But her question to "grandma" was, "What did you do about it when you had the opportunity?"

Riding Lights, a professional theatre company based in York, have been taking this message to different towns and villages in venues all over the country six nights a week (except for two nights in York to start the tour) since 15th September until 28th November leading up to the climate change talks in Paris at the end of

November and early December.

The message of this play is that climate change is a reality – and we are all affected and involved.

Peter Harper

BOOK REVIEW

Who on Earth is God? Making Sense of God in the Bible by Neil Richardson
2014 Bloomsbury T&T Clark: London: ISBN 978-0-56747-243-4

Does it ever worry you that the God we read about in the Bible so often seems to be portrayed as a one who is jealous and vengeful, a god who commands the annihilation of the Canaanites, for example, or who destroys the world in the flood, or who punishes the people of Israel by sending them into exile? What do we mean when we say that God is righteous or God is holy; what do we mean by the wrath of God and how do we square this with those parts of the Bible that tell us that God is Love and one who forgives not 7 times 7 but 70 times 7? How do we square a God of wrath and judgement with a God who is a creator, who we believe came to live among us and share our human condition? What do we mean by terms like salvation? Do we believe that God condemns people to hell?

While asserting that the Bible is for him, as a practising Christian, an important source of revelation about God, Neil makes a number of points. The Bible needs to be read in its textual, cultural and historical context; it needs to be read through the lens of the person of Jesus Christ, while at the same time not allowing the New Testament to 'drown out' Old; it should be read with others when you can. As we do this we are advised to be prepared to revise our understanding of God; not to jump to conclusions on the basis of one or two passages; and to remember that the 'God' of the text has to be interpreted in the light of our experience of God in our lives. Furthermore, at a time when we are engaging in interfaith dialogue we need to relate our beliefs about God to those of the other world religions '*Truth is one – how could it be otherwise if there is one 'Creator' of all things?*' (p. 214)

I found this book to be a mine of useful information and insights as Neil brings his scholarship to bear. The story of God in the Bible is shown to be a rich one and a coherent one that is relevant to the world we live in and the way we live. Give it a go!

Stan Pearson

HOLLY COOKS (<http://www.hollycooks.co.uk/>)

My grandson, Joseph, recently had his first birthday. Much to everyone's surprise he really latched on to one of his mother's fruit cakes, eating it by the fistful. So, his mum made it into a birthday cake for him. It is delicious and will make a good cake for Christmas. Ed.

BIRTHDAY (OR CHRISTMAS) FRUIT CAKE

1lb/450g mixture of dried fruit such as raisins, sultanas, cranberries, blueberries, apricots, prunes or dates
 5oz/140g unsalted butter
 5oz/140g dark brown sugar
 3 eggs
 5oz/140g plain flour
 a good pinch of salt
 1 tsp mixed spice
 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
 2oz whole almonds
 2oz macadamia nuts
 2oz/140g glacé cherries, chopped
 2oz/140g mixed candied peel, chopped
 1½ tsp black treacle
 Grated lemon zest
 Butter for greasing

8"/20cm x 4"/10cm tin

Serves 8

1. Preheat the oven to 140°C/120°C fan/285°F/Gas mark 1.
2. Line the cake tin with well-greased baking paper.
3. Place 1lb/450g mixture of dried fruit into a large bowl and cover with boiling hot water for ten minutes, then drain.
4. While you wait for the fruit to soak, beat the butter until it's soft, with an electric whisk. Now beat in the sugar. The beating incorporates air into the sponge which makes it light, this is an important part of the process.
5. Whisk the eggs and then weigh out 5oz/140g of the eggs. Add the whisked egg to the butter and sugar a little at a time, beating well after each addition.
6. Sift the flour on top of the butter mixture, then add the spices and salt. Using a metal spoon stir in the flour.
7. Now add in the nuts, cherries, peel, dried fruit, treacle and zest and stir to combine. It's important to at least quarter your nuts to ensure they don't sink in the mixture as the cake cooks

8. Spoon the mixture into the prepared baking tin. Using the back of a teaspoon make a 6"/15cm x 1"/2½cm channel down the middle of the cake. This stops the cake raising too much in the middle.

9. Put into the oven for 3 – 3¼ hours. The cake is done when a skewer inserted comes out clean. Leave the cake in the tin for ten minutes until a little cool and then remove from the tin and cool on a cooling rack.

The cake can be decorated with marzipan and fondant icing. Warm the jam and using a pastry brush cover the cake in the jam. This helps the marzipan to stick.

The carbohydrate content of the whole cake (without the icing) is 693 grammes and the calorie content is 2772 kcal.

THE DRAMA GROUP CONTINUES ITS GOOD WORK

Thank you to the Lidgett Park Players for the murder mystery on Saturday afternoon at Chapel Allerton. Since then I have heard several excellent reports of the event with one person saying yesterday that it was the best one so far. Don't know how Irving manages to think of something different and yet ensure that "who dunnit" is difficult to spot.

We raised £274 towards the Nigeria Health Care Project so it was worthwhile. David Cundall, our co-ordinator and his training team arrived safely in Lagos on Saturday and will be starting their sessions training trainers who will then go back to teach other health care workers resuscitation techniques that will save the lives of countless babies. The money we are raising is helping to support the training team most of whom are giving up their annual leave and paying their own air fares. So your contribution did not just provide excellent entertainment but will also save lives!

David Laycock

BAGS OF HOPE FOR CHRISTMAS – a message from Irene Rajah

UCB is offering Bags of Hope for Christmas and I would like to give each family One Bag of Hope. (*WFT Gift Edition + The Promised one*) *this Christmas*.

I won't be able to hand them out myself as we hope to go to Sri Lanka the last week in November. I do hope I can count on a couple of you who will find some time to help me put the Books in the Bags provided and give them out at Church before Christmas.

WHO'S WHO

Ministers	Rev. Dr Daniel Mwailu	2681757
Church Stewards	Anne Millett	2666910
	Pat Brooke	2678506
	Betty Ashton	2935832
	Daphne Barton	2664999
	Jan Sanders	2933700
	Jenny Dalton	2934588
	Ruth Albiges	2665482
	Val Faint	2663433
Church Council Secretary	Susan Philo	2685204
Church Treasurer	Alan Wittrick	2613392
Treasurer's Assistant	Jackie Bennett	2684914
Senior Property Steward	Peter Bennett	2667380
Senior Communion Steward	Val Faint	2663433
Room Bookings (long term) J	Jackie Bennett	2684914
Room Bookings (one-off)	Patricia Davies	2663090
Junior Church Contact	Peter Bennett	2667380
Pastoral Secretaries	Kathy Benson	2941059
	Val Faint	2663433
Worship Consultation	Patricia Davies	2663090
Organist/Lidgett Singers	David Wilks	2932960
Car Rota Organiser	John Wells	2661952
Church Notices	Pat Brooke	2678506
Editor of The Link	Stanley Pearson	2736463

Benevolent Fund Secretary	Barbara Holmes	2686499
Christian Aid Organiser	Heather Fry	2933784
Churches Together Rep	Barbara Belsham	2737192
Link Distribution Manager	Joyce Toms	2933693
Church Flowers	Margaret Lee	2663876
House Groups	Margaret Mattocks	2668727
	Stanley Pearson	2736463
	Gerry Leake	2664856
Stewardship Envelopes	Paul Nolan	2663160
Gift Aid Secretary	Garth White	2730313
Ladies Group Secretaries	Lynne Pullein	2665303
	Margaret Huskisson	2666781
Badminton	Jackie Bennett	2684914
Church Walking Group	Peter Harper	2662310
Drama Group	Carol Russell	2698341
Simply Stitching	Audrey Gabbitas	2664979
Women's World Day of Prayer	Pat Nolan	2663160
Church Cleaning	Angela Bowers	07749877933
3rd Roundhay Brownies	Jan Ridsdale	2684873
Candy Stripes	Office	2757697
Play Centre Group	Jeanette Bartle	07985569146
Toddler Group (Thursday)	lidgettparktodds@hotmail.co.uk	

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QUIZ ANSWERS

A- UK does not use euro: B - Austria is land-locked: C – Norway not in EU: D – Germany not a monarchy

Fred Langley

HOMER'S WISDOM (the best of Homer Simpson from the Daily Telegraph)

"How is education supposed to make me feel smarter? Besides, every time I learn something new, it pushes some old stuff out of my brain. Remember when I took that home winemaking course, and I forgot how to drive?"



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