

The Link Magazine

Minister: Revd Robert Creamer

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Editor: Stan Pearson

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sbpearson@gmail.com**MINSTER'S LETTER**

Dear Friends,

This is the last Minister's letter that I will write to you, before Rev Tanya Short becomes your minister in September. So I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for the kindness, sympathy and understanding that you have shown me in these past twelve months, as I have juggled the responsibilities of circuit ministry, and the (at times hidden) work of being Superintendent, along with our own family bereavement during this period.

It has been good to work with your church stewards, and I have appreciated their collegiality as we have met together on a bi-monthly basis. Thank you to the whole congregation for engaging with some hymns that have been new to you. I believe that there is such a wealth of good new material in Singing the Faith, that expresses our faith in words that make sense to today's world. Singing and speaking of our faith in words that make sense and resonate with people today is part of the evangelistic task of the church.

In this year there has been a major building alteration with the work that has been done on the entrance doors and vestibule. To my great relief this work has been carried out with virtually no involvement from the minster! It has brought such an improvement to the building and its outward appearance: there is a real sense of increased light in the building and a far more welcoming image of the church as the building is viewed from Lidgett Park Road. Again, under the theme of evangelism, the outward visual impression of a church building speaks non-verbal volumes to the people in the local community who pass by.

The Annual General Church Meeting identified key areas to work on in the future which Tanya is already aware of, highlighting the need to engage more with those who use our buildings and to develop our own growth in faith and discipleship. So, I wish you every blessing as you focus on those priorities in the coming years with Tanya's ministry and leadership and thank you for the joy of travelling together in faith this year.

Love and Peace,
Robert

WORSHIP IN JULY & AUGUST

7th July	10.30 am	Mr Andy Birkett
14th July	10.30 am	Revd Robert Creamer <i>Holy Communion</i>
21st July	10.30 am	Revd Phil Chilvers
28th July	10.30 am	Revd Robert Creamer
4th August	10.30 am	Local Arrangement
11th August	10.30 am	Revd Robert Creamer <i>Holy Communion</i>
18th August	10.30 am	Revd Dr Neil Richardson
25th August	10.30 am	Revd John Sadler
31st August	2.30 pm	<i>Welcome Service for Revd Tanya Short</i>

Other Services:

23rd July Farewell Service for the Revd Dr Roger Walton Chair of District 7.00 pm at Brighouse Central Methodist Church, Commercial Street, Brighouse, HD6 1AQ

22nd August Welcome Service for the Revd Kerry Tankard New District Chair 7.00 pm at Christchurch, The Grove, Ilkley, LS29 9LW

PRAYER FOR CHANGE

These prayers are published also in the magazines of our ecumenical partners, St Andrew's Church and St Edmund's Church.

Summer Thoughts for Pentecost

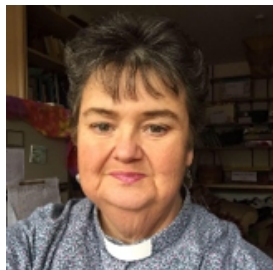
Ever-living God, creator and sustainer of all things, we rejoice in the world of nature around us. The days have grown longer. The rain falls steadily on our gardens, in the sunshine seeds and buds have burst into life, birds and beasts are busy all around – the whole world echoes your praise. Grant that we may always strive to protect your creation, rejoice in it and so praise your name.

Come, Holy Spirit,
Inspire us, strengthen us, refresh us, guide us, bless us so that our praise may never cease. **Amen**



*The photo in the left is bit of fun. I hope you can read it.
The one on the right is the splendid cake Abi made to celebrate 40 years since the ordination of Revd Phil Chilvers. Ed.*

Dear Friends,



As I'm writing this I look forward with excitement, that in a few weeks' time I will be your minister and serving in the Leeds North & East Methodist Circuit.

A little about me; although I have lived for the past 33 years in Yorkshire, you will soon tell from my accent that I'm from 'down South'! I grew up in and around Oxfordshire, in a loving family.

After studying Social Work at college, I entered the world of work in the Cotswolds working, for what was then, the National Children's Home.

In 1986 after I married, we moved north where I worshipped at my local Methodist church, I began working for Bradford Social services with families in crisis. After having my own children, I re-trained as a counsellor and for 12 years I had my own counselling practice. Sadly, during this time marriage ended.

My call to become a minister was a complete and utter shock – and for long enough I buried my head in the sand! But God doesn't give up!! He called and called, and however much I buried my head and made excuses, he kept calling. With much prayer and support from my children and good friends I answered God's call. For the past 5 years I have served in the Ryedale Circuit in the Yorkshire North and East district, ministering to both market town and village churches. So this is me a single mum, of two grown up children, Dan who is 27 and lives and works in Lancashire as Graphic Designer and Lu, who is 25, lives near Skipton and is a qualified teacher, who works for a local charity that works towards being a community where vulnerable,

disadvantaged and disabled children and young people experience happiness and belonging.

I am very excited to be coming to the Leeds North & East Circuit and looking forward to being part of your community and exploring both the beautiful parks and the excellent shops and theatres!

And so, as I embark on this next stage of my journey this September I will place my trust in God, knowing that He is good, that his guiding hand will hold me firm, serving Him and you to the best of my abilities.

I look forward to meeting you all,

Blessings,

Rev Tanya

WHAT (WHO) IS THE CHURCH?

What is new in our situation is that religious traditions can no longer be forced upon anyone.

The fact that authoritarian religion is dying before our eyes does not say anything about other, quite different forms and possibilities of religion and church.

Perhaps the church is not so much the crumbling edifice we see but more a tent for the wandering people of God.

The tent is not always where I am, but ultimately, I keep meeting the tent-people-- on the street, among the homeless, or in the courts. Unlike the church, the holy is much more an encounter than it is a structure.

With thanks to Gerry Leake. Ed.

LIDGETT PARK DRAMA GROUP Celebrates its Golden Anniversary

In May this year that amazing group of people which is the Lidgett Park Drama Group reached a significant milestone. They reached their fiftieth birthday and decided to throw a party.

So the Community Hall was set out with tables for a meal which was attended by drama group members present and past from far and wide along with friends and supporters.

They served up a hearty traditional meal of meat pie, mushy peas and mint sauce followed by meringue and strawberries and cream. Delicious.

This was followed by an entertainment which took the form of an awards ceremony. Interspersed with videos of their many productions, awards were made for all the different aspects of drama group life: notable roles played, costumes provided ingenious props constructed, backstage work of all kinds, front-of-house, incidental music for villains, etc and so it goes on.

The awards themselves, loosely based on BAFTA's or some such similar prestigious award, were obviously sourced at great expense. Being a fiftieth celebration they had to be gold. They were called 'Lidgetts' and were presented by various different LPDG members with great ceremony:

"And the Lidgett for goes to" Outsiders could be forgiven for thinking that someone had bought a set of wooden spoons and sprayed them gold. The one David received for musical support is proudly displayed in the hall here. It keeps falling over and is currently leaning against the miniature crocheted organist awarded to him previously on another occasion.

The variety of shows put on by the Drama Group is amazing. They have even taken them on tour. Particular mention should be made of the Murder Mysteries – all twelve of them .They were all written by Irving and made for a sociable evening built round a meal with audience participation and a prize for guessing the identity of the murderer/ess.

But for those of us whose offspring were scooped up to join in, it is the February half-term pantomimes that stand out in the memory. Our daughter Lucy took part from a very young age and continued right through teenage years until student days. The Drama Groupers used to invite in all the youngsters from toddler age upwards. And those youngsters were delighted to be part of the green room fun and to join in with the naughtiness of the adults. They were encouraged to perform wicked words like 'bottom' that were frowned on elsewhere.

So "Thank you" on behalf of all the parents for everything you have done. You have spread your benign tentacles throughout Lidgett life. Many is the minister who was tricked into going on stage to be at the mercy of those wonderful pantomime dames.

I should also mention the thousands of pounds that they have raised for all Lidgett Park's Charity Projects over those fifty years.

Fittingly the last award was given by Peter Harper to Irving Theaker. Peter tried to capture the genius of the man who wrote the pantomime scripts. Conjuring up a cast of villains, heroes, heroines, pantomime dames, simpletons, wicked witches, cows, horses, bears, geese.....the list goes on.Irving always tailored his shows to the people available and to their individual talents which, it has to be said, were also pretty impressive.

So heartfelt thanks, Drama Groupers, and keep it up.

Margaret Wilks

The Elysian Singers (Wetherby)



(Picture taken before the 40th Anniversary Concert at Boston Spa in April 2014)

There will be a Concert given by the Elysian Singers

on

Saturday 13th July, 2019 at 7.30pm

Musical Director – Jonathan Power

The Elysian Singers are a 30-strong mixed-voice choir
based in Wetherby

Most of the singing is unaccompanied

Their repertoire stretches from the

16th to the 21st centuries, and

includes sacred and secular music,

serious and popular

Entrance £8

All profits to Oasis Relief, Zambia and Streepur Village, Bangladesh

YORKSHIRE LUNCH



To celebrate Yorkshire Day (August 1st) our coffee morning on 3rd August will be extended to include a Yorkshire lunch.

Lunch will consist of a pork pie slice, Wensleydale cheese, salad and pickles and will be available from 11.45 am, last serving 1.00 pm. Gluten free and vegetarian options will be available.

The price will be £5.00 per person and will include one cup of tea or coffee.

KIND HEARTS AND HATS.



September's coffee morning will include a stall selling headware of every variety from very posh hats to children's bonnets and all types in between.



Prices will range from £10 (they really are very posh hats) to £1.

If you would like to contribute to the hat stall either by bringing hats or knitting or crocheting a hat this would be much appreciated. All money raised will go to our joint project.

Scarves. Also at the September Hat Stall there will be a selection of scarves made by the women of Sreepur Village.



ACTION FOR CHILDREN (NCH)

Collections and donations received over Christmas period were £59.45p for Diaries and Christmas cards, £267.48p for collection at Christmas Day Service and £515.16p from Home Collection Boxes. Thanks to all for your generous support.

This year Action for Children celebrates its 150th birthday. The first 'Children's Home' was a renovated stable in Church Street, Waterloo started by Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson on 9th July 1869 with 2 ten year old boys Fred and George. In 1871 the home moved to Bonner Road, Lambeth with girls being admitted and was also approved by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. The charity became the National Children's Home and Orphanage in 1908 then Action for Children in 2008 reflecting the charities move away from mainly homes to a wider range services to children.

It now helps 301,000 children, young people and families through over 550 services and this year 2018-19 raised over £1.2 million.

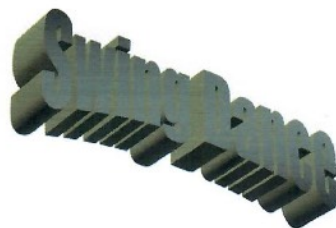
To help us celebrate the 150th Birthday there is a poster (see lounge notice board) with 15 fundraising suggestions to get you started.

Action for Children Sunday is 14th July but the Stewards have decided to have the service on 4th August for A for C at Lidgett Park.

Information about Action for Children's work or fund-raising events email www.actionforchildren.org.uk or tel.0300 123 2112

Regional office is Suite 2, 19, Innovation Centre, Innovation Way, Heslington, York, YO10 5DG

Anyone interested in having a Home Collection box please see **Peter Bennett**.



With the Little Big Band &
Swing Dance Leeds
Queens Hall, Immaculate Heart Church
Harrogate Road, Moortown, LS17
Saturday 6th July
Doors open at 7.00pm
Swing Dance Demo at 7.30pm
Dancing for all 8.00-10.00pm
Admission £10
(accompanied children FREE)
All profits to Oasis Relief, Zambia &
Sreepur Village, Bangladesh
The Project at Lidgett Park Methodist Church

FILM REVIEW

GONE WITH THE WIND

After it was published in 1936, Margaret Mitchell's novel, *Gone With The Wind*, proceeded to outsell every other book in the U.S.A. apart from the Holy Bible. Hollywood scrambled to secure the film rights, which were sold for what was then a record sum with David O. Selznick winning the race to become the film's producer together with Metro Goldwyn Mayer. The film duly made its appearance in December 1939, and it remained commercial for no less than thirty years, which achievement is unmatched. When adjusted for inflation, *Gone With The Wind* is still financially the most successful film in box office history.

I did not have the opportunity to see the film version until 1954, and it remains the longest film that I have ever seen, which is not surprising given that it lasts for no less than 220 minutes. I have to confess that I had never even glanced at the book until purchasing a paperback version very recently, and I have to say that, though I am that rarity a male who believes in romance, I found its nearly one thousand pages to be hard going. I was not surprised to learn that it had to be rewritten for the screen. The story of how this was done was told in a recent book by Adina Hoffman called *Ben Hecht. Fighting Words. Moving Pictures*. Though his biographer elects not to say so, Hecht was like so many people connected with Hollywood in that he was more than a little mad. It seems that Hecht was called to the set of *Gone With The Wind* with production well under way to serve as an emergency script doctor. He had not even read the book it was based on. His frantic overhaul took him seven 18-hour days, with Hecht sustained by peanuts and bananas, during which he watched from a couch while Victor Fleming, the Director, and David O. Selznick acted out scenes. Selznick, who was also mad, contrived to pretend that he was the film's leading female character Scarlett O'Hara.

Gone With The Wind takes place in the southern United States in the state of Georgia during the American Civil War (1861-1865)

and what is called the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877). The seven southern states, including Georgia, declared their secession from the United States (that is, the Union) after Abraham Lincoln was elected President, given that he had promised to abolish slavery, which they believed would wreck the southern economy. The Union refused to accept the secession, and the Civil War resulted. That is the background to a romantic story, which, though complicated, essentially resolves around a young woman called Scarlett O'Hara, who believes herself to be in love with a nice man called Ashley Wilkes and tells him so, but he prefers to become engaged to his cousin, Melanie Hamilton. Scarlett O'Hara feels humiliated by being rejected, not least because the interchange is overheard by another man, and a rogue, called Rhett Butler whom she tells is not fit to wipe Wilkes's boots. Thus marks the beginning of their complex, usually warring, relationship. Meanwhile, for no good reason, Scarlett decides to marry Charles Hamilton, Melanie's brother, but he soon dies of pneumonia. Rhett Butler believes the Civil War to be a lost cause from the beginning, but this does not stop him from blockade running for profit. Soon, Atlanta is attacked from three sides, and Scarlett has to beg Butler to drive her and those with her to Tara, her home, which he elects to do before clearing off to join the Confederate Army. Once back at Tara, Scarlett eventually steals a prospective husband called Frank from her sister, whom she marries for his money. She is soon running his business for him. Frank contrives to get himself shot dead, and Scarlett, now with a child, is a widow again. She eventually agrees to marry Rhett Butler. The daughter dies in a riding accident. Butler gets fed up with Scarlett, who, finally, and – it seems – too late realizes that she is in love with Butler and not Wilkes, but Butler clears off, saying – at least in the film – that he 'does not give a damn' about her. She resolves to win Butler back because 'tomorrow is another day.'

Frankly, there is much more to the novel and the film than I have said, but close to being worn out by the plot's twists and turns my conclusion is that however well told – and it is - *Gone With The Wind* did not convince me in one important respect. I had better preface my remarks by saying that I am without doubt a romantic, and I am one of the five per cent of men – it cannot be more than

this – who actually like women. This does not mean, though, that I treat much of their behaviour without well-merited cynicism. Women may well be generally superior to the male of the species, but that by no means is a challenging test. All the research relating to relationships, even now, comes up with the conclusion that when it comes to relationships, men go primarily for looks - which, of course, is stupid because time will inevitably destroy them – and women, though they talk the language of romance and read the stuff, put money first. Much more controversial is the familiar male thesis that not just in life but in relationships with women nice guys finish last. Of course, at this stage feminists go bananas, but, as Hilary Clinton found out to her cost, when it comes to it how many votes can they deliver? Now, in *Gone With The Wind* both Wilkes and Rhett Butler have real money. So, why would Scarlett O'Hara go for Wilkes, except, of course, to get at Melanie, when he is a nice guy, when she can have Butler who is plainly a much more interesting man, if a rogue and a bastard, and why does she take until the last reel and page to see this?

Anyway, *Gone With The Wind* proved to be a spectacular success both as a book and as a film. The American Film Institute still rates it as the fourth most important movie of all time. Though these days Clark Gable is largely forgotten, and finishes merely seventh in that Institute's list of great movie actors, in 1939 he was very much the first choice to play Rhett Butler. At the time he was commonly referred to as the King of Hollywood. His wife, Carole Lombard, cruelly suggested that he came close to qualifying as the Queen of Hollywood too, but I cannot repeat her reasoning in a church magazine. Scarlett O'Hara was played by Vivien Leigh, an English actress, who in this film came close to attracting lasting fame by effectively playing herself. In real life, she was an absolute bitch. She certainly hated Gable, continually complaining about her co-star's halitosis, which she attributed to him failing to regularly clean his false teeth: an allegation that may have been well based, though smoking can apparently have the same effect. Anyway, though not surprisingly, she found the love scenes to be difficult, Vivien Leigh won an Oscar for Best Actress for playing Scarlett. *Gone With The Wind* inevitably won the Oscar

for best picture. So did Victor Fleming as a Director, though he actually suffered a nervous breakdown when performing this role. Of the ten academy awards the film attracted, the most interesting was that given to Hattie McDaniel as the best supporting actress, given that she was black and this was 1939. As one of my main interests is the classic cinema, I was glad to have the opportunity to see *Gone With The Wind* once more when it was recently repeated on Sky Television. There was a Golden Age in the history of the cinema, and this great film was at the heart of it.

GEOFFREY K FRY

PRODIGALS ALL.

The divine generosity (Luke 15: 22-24)

There are no boundaries to God's love. Colin Watson painted a vivid word picture to bring to life the parable told by Jesus of the Prodigal Son. This brought to mind a poem written by our friend Commissioner Harry Read of the Salvation Army in his book "*Heartfelt*" and this seems to me to be relevant for each one of us: Prodigals All! I hope you like it as much as I do and that it is a source of blessing to everyone. May the Lord bless you now and always.

Joyce Wood

We have permission from Commissioner Read to print his poem which is shown below. Readers may well have heard about Harry Read recently as he was featured during the recent celebrations of D-Day when he was one of two veterans in their 90's who repeated the parachute jump they had done on D-Day as members of the airborne forces.

Editor.

The Divine Generosity.
There are no boundaries to God's love.

My heart is stirred, Lord, as I contemplate
 The wonder of your generosity.
 You seem to use each day to demonstrate
 The all-embracing love you have for me.

If my true worth was placed upon a scale,
 My words, my deeds, my attributes assessed,
 To win approval I would surely fail
 Since my waywardness by you cannot be blessed.

But you have given this prodigal your robe
 And with a Father's love have me embraced,
 Ignored each mounting, unpaid debt I owed,
 With priceless gifts have all my sins replaced.

I never cease to marvel at the grace
 That puts your glow of glory on my face.

Commissioner Harry Reid (with permission)

JESUS' ONE-LINERS – 5

*It is easier for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle
 than for a wealthy person to enter into the Kingdom of God.*

Matthew 19.24

When we read the recorded sayings of Jesus in the synoptic gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, one thing that stands out is that Jesus often used exaggeration, as well as humour, in order to get his message across. And this one-liner, which is to be found in all three synoptic gospels, perfectly illustrates his technique. Here we see Jesus exaggerating in order to ensure that his audience will go away with this overstated picture imprinted in their minds, as well as the message associated with it.

Some scholars have been unhappy with the extreme exaggeration of this statement and have suggested that the version that we have is the result of confusion with the original Greek. They point out that the Greek word for rope (kamilos) is almost identical with the Greek word for camel (kamelos), and therefore that Jesus probably used 'rope' in this saying. Most scholars, however, consider that the saying, as quoted above, is typical of Jesus' exaggerated form of teaching, and is most probably that which fell from his lips.

In this saying Jesus is emphasising the potential dangers of having excessive wealth. So what are these dangers, as Jesus saw them in his native Galilee, where the wealthy (Roman and Jewish) were a very small minority, and the vast majority of people (his listeners?) lived in harsh conditions of penury?

First, in Jesus' eyes, wealth encourages a false independence; that money can deal with every situation that may arise; that everything has its price; that it is possible to buy one's way into happiness and equally buy one's way out of difficulties. Often, however, we find that this is an illusion; that there are things that money cannot buy.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, excessive wealth can easily make people selfish. However much we have, we have a hankering to have more. As has been said 'Enough is always a little more than a person has'. Further, there is always the fear that the day may come when we will lose much of what we have. Consequently, instead of having the impulse to give some of it away to help others, there is the tendency to cling onto it and, if possible, amass still more.

Finally, we should note that Jesus did not say that it was impossible for a wealthy person to enter into the Kingdom of God, but that riches made it more difficult. He was challenging the wealthy of his generation to consider where they stood. When we acknowledge the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor in our own Society, Jesus seems to be speaking to, and challenging, our generation also. **Gerry Leake**

OPEN WEEKEND



For me the open weekend was a chance to start opening up the Church enabling local people and those who come on our premises regularly to see who we are and have a glimpse of our church life. The idea came from various conversations but it furthered one of our priorities selected at the annual church meeting to work more closely with the groups that use our premises. The church was open Friday and Saturday and after the service on Sunday morning with refreshments provided.

Flowers and displays depicting the life of the church included music, weddings, baptism, worship, communion and funerals with two stunning arrangements in the new entrance. All of these showed the huge creativity of our own members and a lot of careful thought and preparation went into these.



The imagination needed to design the Simply Stitching display and the quality of the exhibits was beyond my comprehension. Absolutely stunning. The junior church, toddler group, ladies group, Saturday coffee morning, Sunday lunch, drama group and the project all had interesting displays featuring their activities.

It was important to invite the groups who use our premises to



participate in this weekend. Thanks to the relationships which Patricia Davies has created with these and her hard work in liaising with them there was an excellent response. Candy Stripe

children produced a really colourful display of drawings of themselves and handprints. Scottish dancing included some mini costumes in their display and Cre8 (under5 music and drama), North Leeds Dance Academy, Rainbows, Brownies, and Playcentre produced boards and displays to show people what they do.



So who came over the weekend?

Church members who also invited friends and neighbours.
A group of adults from Wykebeck Day Centre and their carers.

Many of the children from Candy Stripe came on Friday afternoon

Local people some of whom were curious about the work that they had seen being carried out

Wesley Singers who were gathering for an outing on Saturday morning

Lots of Soccotots parents just for a few minutes

A few from toddler group and ladies group

People from other churches and quite a few others!

What was the funniest time over the weekend? Undoubtably Stan's face when he relayed that the noticeboard heading of " Meditation Tranquility and Peace" was still showing above the wedding display.



What was the most touching moment?

David opening up the organ to show two very young brothers how it worked and then playing for them.

Many many people spent many hours preparing for the weekend and helping when the church was open in so many ways and without all that effort it couldn't have happened. So a huge thank you is due to everyone who helped in any way. Thank you! Some people couldn't be there but were still thinking of us!

I believe we will need to think carefully about whether we can open the church more regularly in the future.

Sue Wittrick

I have been sent a wonderful array of photos and regret that we can only show a few of them in the magazine. Ed.

PROJECT NEWS. JULY 2019.

We now move forward into supporting Oasis Relief Zambia and the Sreepur Village in Bangladesh. These two charities will already be well known to many of us. Mary Patchett has held a number of fund-raisers for Zambia, not least her delicious Pancake Parties. Jan Rippin has sold items made by the women in Sreepur Village on the Fairtrade stall at every Saturday Coffee Morning. We look forward to helping to boost the funds to both these much-needed charities.

A request has been made by the Elysian Singers to hold a concert in church on Saturday July 13th, profits from which will be given to the project. They have given a concert at Lidgett before and it was very successful. We were delighted to be asked and look forward to the evening's entertainment. Further details appear in the this Link.

The Saturday prior to this (July 6th) is, of course, the Summer Swing Dance with Becky Todd's fantastic friends "The Little Big Band". The venue is the Queen's Hall at the Immaculate Heart

Church and the fun begins at 7pm. Admission is £10 p/p and free for accompanied children. This event attracts an audience from outside the church – and even outside Leeds! Many of us go who don't (or can't !) dance but just soak up the atmosphere. The Swing Duo's demonstration is wonderful, the band are fabulous and play such a range of music that everyone can enjoy it. If you have never been, why not give it a try? The Queen's Hall has a bar, the hall is light and airy with comfortable seating and there is plenty of parking. Last but not least, the profits go to the Project!

The Project Group will meet in summer to produce a diary of fund-raising events for the next year. If you have any ideas, do please let us know.

Finally, as always, thank you all for your continuing support and generosity. It is a great testament to the people of Lidgett that we raise so much money for charitable causes, year after year after year.

Margaret Farrar. On behalf of the Project Group.

THE COST OF BEING A CHRISTIAN.

According to The Times (April 19th & 22nd 2019), there is now an increasing concern about the plight of Christians world-wide. The facts of persecution are grim. Christians face danger in 73 countries. The worst is North Korea, but even in India, the world's most populous democracy, Christians face dangers from a wave of violence meted out by ultra-nationalists to non-Hindus. In China, new constraints on religious worship have given the authorities a licence to shut down and demolish churches.

The Open Doors UK charity found this year that 245 million Christians worldwide were facing severe persecution. At least 290 people were killed in Sri Lanka and more than 500 injured, when explosions ripped through hotels and three churches during Easter services this year.

Jeremy Hunt, the foreign secretary, launched in December a review into the worldwide persecution of Christians led by the Bishop of Truro, the Right Rev Philip Mounstephen, who has been asked to examine the extent of oppression faced by Christians and to question the Foreign Office's response. The Foreign Office has conceded: "The UK's foreign policy response has not always reflected the suffering of persecuted Christians."

Bishop Mounstephen has expressed the view that "There is a lot of post-colonial guilt around a residual sense that the Christian faith is an expression of white western privilege. Whereas actually the Christian faith is overwhelmingly a phenomenon of the . . . global poor and people who, by their very socio-economic status, are vulnerable."

A similar point has been made by Archbishop Anba Angaelos, the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London. According to the archbishop "[In Britain], Christianity is seen as the state religion and therefore the source or beneficiary of power. We don't realise there are Christians around the world who live in incredibly difficult situations and their faith leads them to live in poverty and deprivation . . . and also presents a very real risk to their livelihoods and even their lives."

So, whatever problems we think we face as a church in this country they pale into insignificance compared with the problems faced by our brothers and sisters elsewhere. And it is not just Christians who suffer for their beliefs as we are reminded by treatment of the Rohingya Muslims by the Buddhist-supported Burmese leadership and by the recent attacks by a white extremist on the mosques in New Zealand. **Ed.**

And another point for reflection:

According to the the thinktank, Theos, 61% of the UK public think the teachings of religions are essentially peaceful, but 70% also think that most of the wars in world history have been caused by religion.

TROUBLES TREE

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, and after he had just finished a rough first day on the job: a flat tyre made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit and his ancient one ton truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door, he underwent an amazing transformation. His face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

'Oh, that's my trouble tree,' he replied. 'I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again.' 'Funny thing is,' he smiled, 'when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.'

Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance. We all need a Tree!

Posted by someone on Facebook.. *With thanks to Rachel Mounsey*

SHADWELL METHODIST CHURCH
Cafe Morning 10.00 am - 12.30 pm

18th June	Bacon Butties
16th July	Paninis and Toasties
20th August	Bacon Butties
17th September	Soups
15th October	Paninis & Toasties
19th November	Bacon Butties
17th December	Xmas Treats

There will also be the usual wide range of delicious home-baked cakes and scones and a variety of styles of coffee. The company is excellent so come and meet the people of Shadwell



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