

Christ is Risen

Envoy

Spring 2010

Chepstow Methodist Church

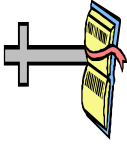
Albion Square, Chepstow, www.chepstowmethodist.org.uk

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Letter from our Minister



Dear Friends,

This edition of Envoy covers Lent, the season of fasting, preparation and reflection that leads up to Easter. It is a time of year that gives the opportunity for spiritual growth but it is important that we approach it with a healthy attitude. By this I mean there are potential dangers.

One danger is triviality. We often say things like 'I've given up chocolate for lent', which unless you are a true chocoholic, has more to do with diet and might distract from the deeper purpose of the season. Another danger can be attempting too rigorous self-denial. This can become a kind of spiritual feat of endurance that feeds the ego and not the soul. A tendency to focus too much on our shortcomings and to 'beat ourselves up' is a further risk to avoid.

However lent remains a key season of our Christian year and fasting is an important part of our walk with God. It is important to remember that it is a means to an end – to deepen our awareness of God and the life that we are been called to. So for example maybe you are able to fast once a week, or maybe a meal a day. Maybe you can fast from TV (or at least your favourite programme) or leave 'Facebook' alone for a while. Use that time for prayer, Bible study or reading some pages of a worthwhile book. Perhaps be practical and use the time to visit someone, write a letter, or pray. The point is to go 'Godward' and not just 'inward'.

The actual word Lent comes from the old English word for 'lengthen'; a reflection of the fact that the amount of day light lengthens each day in the 6 weeks up to Easter by about 5 minutes. Maybe in your busy life you can give this 5 minutes to God, just to sit still, be silent and abide. God is always present, it is us who are not always present to God – find some time in lent to be with the One who is always with us.

May God enrich you this lent and may the Hope of Easter inspire you to an ever deeper faith in the resurrected One.

Peace and Blessings

Andrew

The best way to be understood is to be understanding

DIARY DATES



Thursday, February 25th 7.30pm Church Council

February 22nd - March 7th Fairtrade Fortnight

Maundy Thursday, April 1st 7.30pm A special 'Encounter' service with Holy Communion

Good Friday Worship 6.00pm

Thursday, April 22nd 7.30 pm General Church Council

Easter Breakfast



Every year we hold an Easter Breakfast at the church between the Easter Sunday early morning Communion Service (8.00 a.m.) and the main Easter Service at 10.30 a.m. It is a time when the whole church family can celebrate together this special time in the Christian calendar, in a friendly and informal atmosphere.

At the breakfast we have home-made hot cross buns and croissants (with jam and marmalade) and a variety of cereals. If you would like to come to the breakfast, please put your name (& number in party) on the list that will appear a few weeks before Easter, on the notice board in the Wycliffe (downstairs) Hall.

Many thanks
Margaret Harvey



Flower Festival 2010

We will be holding a Flower Festival in our church this summer as part of the Chepstow Festival, from Thursday 8th July to Saturday 10th July. If anybody would be interested in flower decorating for the festival please contact Margaret Harvey (01291-628786) as soon as possible. More details of the festival will be included in the next issue of Envoy.

PAT'S PANTRY



Walsingham Honey Cake

This recipe comes courtesy of Sue Chimes, who has baked it for years. She kindly passed it on via 'im indoors, who came home excitedly from housegroup raving about it (I wonder sometimes about his reasons for attending). The cake seems particularly suitable for the Envoy, as it is a traditional recipe from Little Walsingham, which became an important place of pilgrimage in medieval times after a vision of the Virgin Mary was seen there. The area has long since been famous for its bees and honey. There is an obvious plug here, which I cannot ignore: you will find fine local honey from that well-known apiarist, Richard Liddell Esq. on the Traidcraft shelves in the church hall. Also purchasing as many ingredients as possible from these shelves helps the third world to improve their lot, so, go on, treat yourselves.

INGREDIENTS:

For the cake:

- 1lb (450gm)
 - 8oz (225gm)
 - 8oz (225gm)
 - 10floz (300ml)
 - 2
 - 1tsp
 - 1tsp
 - 4oz (100gm)
 - 2oz (50gm)
 - 2oz (50gm)
 - 3oz (75gm)
 - 3oz (75gm)
- plain flour, sifted
 - butter, softened
 - light soft brown sugar
 - milk
 - medium eggs, beaten
 - ground ginger
 - bicarbonate of soda
 - raisins
 - mixed candied peel
 - glacé cherries, halved
 - clear honey
 - black treacle

For the topping:

- 3-4tbsp
 - 1½oz (40gm)
 - 2oz (50gm)
 - 2oz (50gm)
- clear honey
 - light soft brown sugar
 - butter
 - flaked almonds

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C/325°F/gas mark 3. Take a 7 inch (17.5cm) square cake tin and line the sides and base with greaseproof paper, lightly oiled or greased.
2. Beat together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the beaten eggs and beat again. Add the flour, ginger and bicarbonate of soda and beat again. Stir in the dried fruit and cherries. Warm together the milk, honey and treacle and add gradually, beating well and making sure that all the ingredients are evenly distributed.
3. Turn the mixture into the tin and bake for 2 hours until a skewer comes out clean.
4. Remove from the oven and leave in the tin.
5. Warm together the honey, sugar and butter for the topping and pour over the warm cake. Sprinkle with the almonds and allow to cool completely in the tin.

Pat Lindo

THANKYOU



The family of the late Craig Michael Dolphin wish to express their deepest gratitude and appreciation to the Church Family for all the kindness and support (including the home and hospice visits, prayers, cards, flowers, phone calls, and emails), shown to them during their bereavement. We would especially like to thank the Reverends Andrew Webster and Rod Ingrouille, Dave Lindo, Mair Liddell, Kathy Griffin, Anna and Jon Potts, Meurig Jones, and the Monday Night Prayer Group.

God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, and acts with a hand that never fails.

When God measures a man, he puts the tape around the heart instead of the head.

God is more interested in making us what he wants us to be than giving us what we think we ought to have.

FAMILY NEWS

BEREAVEMENTS



Russell Osborne – a principled, young man, who greatly enjoyed music and football. A loved and greatly missed son, brother and uncle and friend.



Craig Dolphin - Dearly loved husband and father. A former Naval officer who found success as an engineer in civilian life. An irreplaceable part of our congregation. Forever in Lori's heart.



Vera Lewis - Greatly missed as a mother, grandmother and family member who came through times of hardship to become a well known member of the Earlswood community.



Jack Marshall - So well known and loved within the church and wider community. A faithful servant of his Lord and missed greatly by his family and friends.



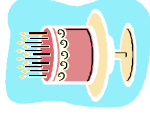
Stan Hughes - A well known figure in the local farming community, friend to many and companion to Avril.



Rose Brown – Died tragically and unexpectedly in her mid 50's. Loving wife of Chris and devoted mother of Matthew and Bonnie. Is greatly missed by all who knew her.

To those who mourn we offer our love and prayers

CONGRATULATIONS TO....



Doreen Fryer who celebrated her **90th Birthday** in November

Bert Mould who celebrated his **80th Birthday** in November

Marjorie Hall who celebrated her **80th Birthday** in February

Vi Stevens who celebrated her **80th Birthday** in February



Des and Hazel Edwards who celebrated their **Diamond Wedding** last December

Bill and Betty Dowler who celebrated their **Diamond Wedding** in March. Bill and Betty are members of this Church and were married here 60 years ago!

Richard and Mair Liddell who will be celebrating their **Ruby Wedding** in April



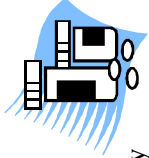
Antony and Nicola Horne on the birth of their first child, **Alistair Robert** – first grandson for Pam Horne.

Jonathon and Paola Giles on the birth of **Serena Francesca**, - a sister to Edward, and **grand-daughter to John and Cynthia Giles**.

Gethin and April Liddell on the birth of **Tirion Ellen**, - a sister to Awen and **grand-daughter to Richard and Mair Liddell**.

Amanda and Mike Randall on the birth of **Joseph Mathew**, a brother for **Jamie** and the sixth grandson for **Julie and Ces Jones**.

For the joys and celebrations that we share in – to God be the Glory



HOW DO YOU DRUG PROOF YOUR KIDS?

Last summer a group of people, including myself, from various churches in Chepstow and district were trained (by the charity Care for the Family) as facilitators to run the DPYK course. We then went on to successfully run a trial course for a handpicked group of parents in November. They were parents of children of various ages and all found the course friendly, fun, informative and most importantly useful. One Dad with pre-school children was heard to say "I'll keep this manual on my bedside table for when we've had a hard day!"

Although I have written this piece in my own words a lot of the subject matter comes from the parents' manual.

The six session course aims to educate and give parents the skills and confidence they need to enable them to steer their children away from the harmful use of drugs.

They need to be well informed about drugs and why kids take them.

Take a piece of paper and jot down your answers to the following questions. (The answers are given at the end). In the last 12 months what percentage of year 11 pupils (15/16 year olds) in the whole of the UK have taken heroin? What percentage have taken Ecstasy? What percentage have used cannabis? What percentage have used alcohol?

I can guarantee that, whatever you have answered, the media focus on dramatic deaths from heroin or ecstasy distorts our perception of the problem. However a wander around Chepstow late on a Saturday night demonstrates only too clearly that the misuse of alcohol by young people, often not thought of as a drug, is prevalent.

The Drug Proof Plan is based on three principles. **Besides being aware of drugs in our own community we as parents must try to maintain strong family relationships and engage in meaningful communication, which makes a long term difference.**

How well do you know your child? It may be easy to answer questions like "what is his/her favourite colour or favourite subject at school?" but what about "who is your child's hero or of what accomplishment is your child most proud?" The more we invest in building relationships and

communicating with our children the easier it will be to educate them to make good choices and steer them away from the harmful use of drugs.

The course talks of **parenting positively**. You can help your kids to have a bright future full of choices. Being a parent is meant to be rewarding and positive. Remember for most young people, illegal drug use is not a normal part of life.

However, as role models, we must be careful not to give out conflicting messages. Is your medicine cabinet full of mood-altering chemicals? Do you routinely need an after-work drink or after-dinner smoke to wind down? Do you laugh at drunken behaviour on television or in films? By the way we behave, we can help our children avoid many drug related problems. Of course no plan is foolproof. We can't prevent problems in 100 % of cases, but we can greatly reduce the likelihood of drug use by our children.

The course explains in detail a plan of action as to how to **parent positively**. It covers such topics as establishing boundaries, modelling respect and integrity, unconditional love and so on.

It is hoped that such parenting will enable children to avoid the destructive behaviour that often leads to them taking drugs. But parenting positively is of great benefit for all families. At its core, this course is a parenting course relevant even to those parents of very young-children.

Having discussed the reasons why kids take drugs, learned to identify drugs (with real samples) and recognise the symptoms of drug use, the course then goes on to help those for whom drug misuse is already an issue. There are sessions on intervening, where to get help (locally) and dealing with relapses. I have included some useful contacts at the end of this piece.

It is hoped that the course will now be offered in various locations, including our local schools, so that we can work together in Drugproofing Chepstow's Kids. As part of my work in the wider community I intend to continue to offer my services as a facilitator for this course. If you would be interested in attending a course in the near future then please contact me for further details.

I would ask for your prayers for the young families in Chepstow at present affected by the consequences of drug abuse and for the people who are called to work with them.

Angela Horder Tel: 07843788534

Email: angela@angelaedwards.wanadoo.co.uk

Answers: (taken from 2007 survey - published in 2009).

Heroin - 1 % Ecstasy - 3% Cannabis - 29% Alcohol- 91%

Further info available at www.espad.org

Support Services:

Talk to Frank 080077 66 00 www.talktofrank.com

Government website offers free and confidential advice about drugs and can refer on to local drugs services.

National Drinkline 0800917 8282 www.healthwise.org.uk

Telephone advice on alcohol misuse issues and refers on to local services.

RECORDER REVIEW



I expect that by the time you are reading this, Haiti and its tragedy will have faded from the news and current affairs, hopefully however, not from our thoughts and prayers, because the Haitians are certainly still living with it and will be for many years. The prayer below was printed in the 21st January edition of the Methodist Recorder, as was the following article, which I find helpful.

Dave Lindo

“Methodist Church Prayer for Haiti”

Powerful God who causes the power of the universe to create and destroy.

We thank you for lives spared and miracles that have taken place in the devastated country of Haiti.

Give us grace to live with the mystery of your power that at times like this leaves us confused, broken and shaken. We pray for the people of Haiti and ask that you will comfort the grieving and injured.

We are humbled by their confidence in you in times of trouble.

May the embrace of compassion and humanity be a shelter and refuge.

May your word feed and nourish as the world brings relief and rebuilding.

We pray for the Rev Gesner Paul and the people of the Methodist Church in Haiti.

We ask that you will strengthen them as they work to bring relief and comfort to our brothers and sisters in Christ. This day and every day, give us the will to listen to your voice and work together to heal broken lives, build destroyed homes and establish justice for all your people.

Amen.

“And where is God in all this...?” (by Kenneth Wilson)

Looking at the pictures emanating from Haiti in these last days has been terrible. I have not the words to describe it; dead bodies, the screaming dying buried in the rubble, the children wandering lost and hungry.

We have, as we believe, the God-given capacity to learn from our experience, to apply ourselves to the business of understanding our world and applying the knowledge for our benefit. Scholars work at the evidence and develop theories which help us to understand why these devastating events occur. Such explanations as we have are, of course, as yet only partial, but they are scientific and, therefore, well-founded.

And where is God in all this? Your answer will depend upon your theology. At least one American fundamentalist preacher has a clear answer – it’s the fault of the people of Haiti, because the state was founded in sin. Well, no thank you; that is no explanation. Why would a loving and all-powerful God think that the way to bring about improvement would be to destroy 10 per cent of the population?

On the other hand, you might take the view that the world we have is the best that God could do – we have the best of all possible worlds. Maybe. This has more to recommend it, because it leaves room for human free will.

If God had wanted a world in which everything was predictable, God could (presumably) have made one. But God wanted to be responsible for a world fashioned after his own personal nature and that meant abandoning the determining of everything and working in partnership with the world through endowing it with the potential of personhood – the feature we believe manifests itself through evolution in our humanity.

What would be intolerable would be the thought that in giving free will to humankind, God had abandoned us to our own devices. This is what we believe God has not done. He entered into our condition and lives with and

alongside the experiment to which God has committed God's self. This means we have to rethink the nature of theology.

Far from being a fixed system, for which we have to make pathetic excuses in the face of terrible disasters, theology is a form of exploration which pushes us to the edge of our experience.

It was Kenneth Grayston who developed this theme in his inaugural lecture as the first Professor of Theology in the University of Bristol in 1966. The theologian, he argued, must face the world and its end in the light of "God's action in Christ". And we are free to do so – indeed, as Christians understand it, God calls us to do this.

After all, the last enemy is death per se, not disaster, failure or despair. And death is precisely what God faced up to in Christ. So let's get on with some serious theological exploration and leave limited explanations to the scientists. They are rather good at it.

The Rev Dr Kenneth Wilson is visiting research fellow, Chichester University and a supernumerary minister in the Somerset (Mendip) circuit.



SPRING MIRACLES

New life is springing swiftly all around
In bird and tree, and flower with bursting bud.
The cuckoo calls with sweet melodic sound,
And all is green again where once was brown.
Another spring! Another miracle!

New life is springing in my heart again,
That dances in delight at all I see.
Where all was anguished discord, full of pain,
Now issues forth such glorious harmony.
It's spring for me! Another miracle!

New life ti"om Jesus opens up my heart.
With new eyes now, I view the path I tread.
Jesus now lives - from Him I'll never part;
He fills my every longing, now, forever.
Eternal spring! The final miracle!

Mary Pledge

FOR HE HAS DONE IT

A personal reflection on the 22nd psalm

Oh how near and yet so far. How must it feel to have sat next to the world's favourite psalm for well over two thousand years and know you will never make the grade? How many millions have passed over with the 23rd psalm at their funeral and what chance is there that someone might choose the 22nd psalm instead? Can you hear it shouting Me! Me! from your Bible?

It hardly has an auspicious start "My God my God why have you forsaken me" and it goes downhill from there. "A man without friends, a worm indeed, despised by the people for his trust in God." The psalmist paints a picture of a man encircled by his enemies and at the end of his strength. The Lord is not this man's shepherd, nor does he lead him by the still waters. This man is puzzled by God, trusting implicitly that God has known him from the womb and yet God seems to have left him in the most wretched of conditions.

Perhaps this is the atheists preferred psalm, a God so mysterious that he watches in silence as the poor suffer and allows the rich to praise him in hypocrisy is either a God not worth worshipping or a God that doesn't exist. This is one of those psalms that set us a real challenge. There is no middle way, no sweet offer of a peaceful life with a table laid out in the face of your enemies. We are forced to choose either God or nothing. But just as we feel that the psalmist has finished and decided for the prosecution, the inner voice swells within him. "I will declare your name to my brothers" He sees that the rich will continue to feast and worship whilst still watching the poor in the dust kneeling before the Lord. This, in the end, is outside his control and his understanding. All he knows is that 'Posterity will serve him'. Here is the faith that moves mountains and puts us at peace even to the grave. His decision was to make the leap from despair in his condition, to a sure hope that all will be well. It is the final line this gives life to this psalm and perhaps proves that it really should be the preferred psalm of every burial service. God 'has done it.' All is in place even though we cannot see it and our role in the bargain is simply to believe in His promise.

*Bob Kouba
Local Preacher*

I can see you all reaching for your Bible to check it out, I did! - Ed



EQUIP & REFRESH

THE ONE DAY ALPHA

CONFERENCE

Saturday 24th April 2010, 10am – 5pm

St Mary's Priory Church Chepstow,
Monmouthshire

Conference led by: South East Wales & Borders Alpha Team
Alpha UK and Pastorate from Holy Trinity Brompton

**IMAGINE LIVES IN YOUR AREA
BEING TRANSFORMED
WITH THE GOOD NEWS OF
JESUS CHRIST**

Find Out More by Contacting Vera & Brian Lloyd

Tel: 01291 620643
Eml: verabrian@btinternet.com
Web: <http://alphaswales.org.uk/>

THE ALPHA COURSE
explore the meaning of life

alpha.org



E & R DAY PROGRAMME

9.30 am	Registration
10.00 am	Welcome & Worship
10.15 am	Introduction and Testimonies.
10.45 am	Track 1 Principles of Alpha
	Track 2 How to plan an Evangelism Strategy
11.30 am	Coffee/small group discussion
12.15 pm	Track 1 Practicalities of Alpha (Part 1)
	Track 2 Prayer and Alpha
1.00 pm	Alpha UK Strategy
1.15 pm	Lunch (provided)
2.00 pm	Track 1 Practicalities of Alpha (Part 2)
	Track 2 Seminar Choice – Worship on Alpha
	Seminar Choice – Senior Alpha
	Seminar Choice – School Gate/Parent & Toddler Alpha
2.45 pm	Coffee/small group discussion followed by Q&A panel
3.45 pm	Model Alpha talk:
	How Can I be filled with The Holy Spirit?
5.00 pm	Close

Cost for day including lunch £10

Equip & Refresh
Is a two-track conference, with worship, ministry and a chance to network locally.
It is designed to help you run Alpha, whether it is your first or your fiftieth course.

Equip & Refresh is for?
Everyone involved with Alpha, including church leaders, course co-ordinators, small group leaders & helpers - the more people who share the vision, the better the course will run.
Leaders in local churches & individuals who would like to find out more about Alpha. It will explain what Alpha is about & how to begin running a course.



Children's Corner by BB Junior Section

We started back 2 weeks late at Boys Brigade in January because of the snow, since then we have made some bird food to put in our gardens, learnt how to do some magic tricks and played lots of games to get to know other children in Juniors. We are also busy collecting sponsorship for our Sponsored Swim in March.

During our 'God Spots', we have been thinking about the layout of the Bible. You can do the activity below with a bible and a pen.

Find the missing numbers in the sentences below:

1. Laban changed Jacob's wages _____ times. *Genesis 31:41*
2. Hezekiah, when very ill, prayed and had _____ years added to his life. *Isaiah 38:5*
3. Naomi had _____ sons. *Ruth 1:2*
4. There were _____ thankless lepers healed. *Luke 17:17*
5. There were _____ generations from Abraham to David. *Matthew 1:17*
6. There were _____ lepers at the gate of Samaria. *2 Kings 7:3*
7. Solomon took _____ years to build his own house. *1 Kings 7:1*
8. Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites for _____ pieces of silver. *Genesis 37:28*
9. Other sheep will be brought, but the number of flocks and shepherds will be _____ *John 10:16*
10. The tower of Siloam killed _____ people when it fell. *Luke 13:4*

Easter Word Search

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

Find the

words:

Apostles
Christ
Cross
Crown
Crucifixion
Holy
Jesus
King
Lamb
Love
Mary
Redemption
Resurrection
Risen
Romans
Rooster
Sacrifice
Salvation

Here's an
Easter
picture to
colour.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
John 8:12



www.coloring-pages-kids.com

"I am the light of the world, and of life. Whoever follows me will not walk in the dark."

TRAIDCRAFT

Trading for a fairer world

GOOD NEWS

We have recently sent £700, profit from the three stalls I supply, to Traidcraft Exchange. The bulk of the profit has come from your Christmas purchases.

This money will go to furnish loans for ducks, goats, chickens, sewing machines, trees, bee-hives, or other projects etc. This helps to release the recipients from poverty and they are often able to pay to educate their children, a luxury they themselves have never enjoyed.

Will you be one of those who, in supporting our **Traidcraft stall** regularly, helps the desperately poor to help themselves?

There is a **TEA EVENT** so come and look for bargains and perhaps change your regular brand of tea to Fairtrade you know it makes sense!



The new spring catalogues are now available - please tell me if you would like one. **Cynthia Giles 01291 625677**

P.S. Your buying '**Fairtrade produce**' results in a fair share of the sale proceeds going back to the producer. That, after all, is the whole point of **Fairtrade**.

Lent Lunches

Don't forget Lent lunches are still available every Saturday, 12.00 – 1.30pm in our church until 27th March

All proceeds to Christian Aid



Editor's Notes

NEWS FROM THE CIRCUIT

As many of you know, since last September our Chepstow and Caldicot Circuit has amalgamated with the Newport Circuit and the Monmouth Circuit to become one new larger circuit – namely the '**Newport and Lower Wye Circuit**' - a new geographical boundary with a total of 21 churches within it. One noticeable change for us already is that we are seeing many new faces coming to share with us and lead our worship here in Chepstow on a Sunday morning.

I hope that as we get used to being a part of this larger Circuit, we will be interested in finding out what is happening in other churches and support events that are being organized by them (our Sunday newsheet will mention some of these). In turn I'm sure there will be a learning curve as we try to remember to inform the other churches as to what events we are organizing here in Chepstow!

For my part as Editor of Envoy, to encourage all in getting to know what is going on in the new circuit, I will be purloining articles (with permission!!) written for other church magazines in the circuit, and publishing them here in Envoy. This will become a regular feature page in this magazine. I am however looking for a 'catchy' heading for this page – Any ideas?

For this issue of Envoy I have chosen two interesting articles from 'The Link' magazine, Newport – namely '**The Interview**' and '**Newport Night Shelter**' (see consecutive pages).

Every blessing

Mair Liddell (Editor)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Newport and Lower Wye Circuit will be posting Envoy and other church magazines on its website:

www.newportandlowerwymethodistchurches.org.uk

If you contribute an article to Envoy, but do not wish for it to appear on the website, please let me know when you send me the article.

Revd Lyn Healey, who has recently been to preach at our church here in Chepstow is being interviewed in the article below. I thought you may be interested in learning more about her. - Ed



THE INTERVIEW

Revd Lin Healey talks to Des Morgan

Des: Lin, where were you born and what was your early involvement with the Church?

Lin: I am a true 'Essex girl'! I was born in Romford as my parents lived in Chadwell Heath. I was baptised in St Chad's Parish Church, but the Congregational Church was nearer so I attended Sunday School there until I took confirmation classes – although I decided not to be confirmed at that time. Church was dull and boring!

Des: Tell us about your family?

Lin: I have an older brother who is a Lay Reader in the Church of England – he lives near Christchurch in Hampshire. I met my husband, Jack, while I was in Teacher Training College in Bristol and he was studying Physics and Maths at the University. We were married in Flexbury Methodist Church in Bude, Cornwall in 1970 (my parents had moved to Bude when Dad retired from Ford's). We have two grown-up children; Adrian, married to Janette, lives on Merseyside and Ellie, married to Paul, lives in London, and two grandchildren, Nathen and Oscar although Nathen sadly died when he was seven and a half weeks old.

Des: How did you become a minister? What are your main areas of interest in your ministry?

Lin: I became an Accredited Local Preacher in 1986 and knew then that I had been called to the Presbyterian Ministry but waited until 1989 before I candidated. I trained on a three year, non-residential course linked to the Salisbury and Wells Theological College. I served in the Aldershot, Farnborough and Camberley, and the Buckley and Deeside circuits and then became Superintendent of the Cwmbran Circuit in 1999. I have

enjoyed all aspects of my ministry (although, if I'm honest, building projects and schedules are not my favourite – that is where Jack comes in – he thrives on them!) but I have developed a special interest in the Ministry of Spiritual Direction, the practice of which I find very challenging and yet also a great privilege.

I retired ('sat down' as they term it in Methodism) from the full-time itinerant ministry owing to some health problems in 2007. Fortunately, these have become controllable now I'm in a less stressful environment.

Des: Can you explain your new role as Assistant Chair of the Wales Synod?

Lin: When the Wales Synod was first established there were two co-chairs. After only a few months, Revd Will Morrey was appointed to a senior position within NCH (now 'Action for Children') and this left the other Chair, Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, to manage on his own. After much discussion and prayer it was decided to create a new model for the leadership of the Synod. I was able to offer some part-time help and have undertaken to give the Synod, on average, one day a week, as have Revd Linda Woollacott (Superintendent of the Neath Port Talbot Circuit) and Revd Keith Tewkesbury (in the Colwyn Bay & Llandudno Circuit). These two ministers carry out their roles for the Synod whilst continuing with their circuit responsibilities. Sometimes the 'day' will be one whole day – at other times it will a few hours on different days which aggregated will make a 'day'. Each of us will lead on certain aspects of the Chair's portfolio of work on behalf of the Synod and also have a 'geographical' pastoral responsibility. I will be looking after the South-East Wales Area.

Des: What are your hobbies and interests?

Lin: I have a few hobbies and interests outside the church – in particular I am an enthusiastic gardener, walker and enjoy 'twitching'. Jack will say I also have a flair for cooking. When the weather is kind and the diary allows, Jack and I and our faithful canine friend, Meg, like to spend periods away touring in our motor home.

I enjoy all types of music from rock and pop to classical – and some non-secular choral music too, especially the works of John Rutter and

Margaret Rizza. I have promised myself that sometime soon I will learn to paint. (four-inch brush and emulsion!)

Des: What are your hopes for the Methodist Church?

Lin: As the overall number at worship tends to reduce, we sometimes worry about it – but I believe God is challenging us to review our understanding of church and, perhaps, channel our energies in very new and different ways. In my experience of meeting families through weddings, funerals, baptisms etc God is out there in the world, interacting with people and, while it is important to worship together, it is also important for us to engage with God in the world about us. Things like the Newport Night Shelter really encourage me – this is the Church living out its mission in the community. Sadly I feel that if we continue to expect the world to come into our churches rather than the Church going out and ‘being’ in the community, we shall fail. ‘Fresh Expressions’ or ‘new ways of being church’ is where we must be if we are to reveal God’s message of hope to the 21st century people amongst whom we live and work. Having said that, I do not advocate the leaving behind all our traditions – the answer has to be a fine coming together of the very best of all we can offer – and a willingness to be flexible in all that we do.



NEWPORT NIGHT SHELTER – AT ST JULIAN’S

It was in April last year that the idea of setting the night shelter project into effect was brought before our stewards’ meeting. Jade Holburn and Stuart Johnson at Teen Challenge had become very concerned about the number of people sleeping rough in the city. They decided to co-ordinate a network of accommodation by approaching Churches Together and challenging them to open their doors to homeless people throughout December and January. We obviously had a lot of questions and some trepidation concerning this venture but decided to offer help on Monday nights, the most convenient for us, and to take one step at a time. A main concern was getting a sufficient number of volunteers as at least 10 are needed to cover the three shifts each night. We had a good response from our own and Shaftesbury members and we decided to call upon other churches in the area to help.

Some volunteers have travelled in from outside Newport and have been such a boost to our numbers. Along with some training nights and many of our questions satisfied, we opened our doors on November 30th.

It has been an amazing journey and a most wonderful opportunity for outreach, witness and response to a very obvious need. This winter has been particularly difficult and we were glad to provide a hot meal for our guests – usually around 10 or 11, and to arrive early morning to find them warm and sleeping peacefully in our hall. It has also helped to be able to pass on any concerns our guests may have had, in one instance an urgent need for chiropody, in another worries about medication prescribed by the hospital. Providing hats, gloves and even slippers has gone some way towards protecting them from the elements. The volunteers have enjoyed the experience as much as the guests.

There have been a few problems and we need to tweak a few things, but the venture has been a resounding success. The project, now extended through February and March, was well researched and it has been a joy to take part. Seven more churches have joined in so we can now offer accommodation at one or another of them every night of the week.

Let us pray for them and for all the churches in Newport. At present we are the only city in Wales providing night shelter in this way though enquiries have been coming in from other places.

Sue Fury.

More volunteers will be needed for next winter. The night is divided into three shifts and at least three people are needed for each shift. Attendance at a specially arranged training evening will be required. Sue is willing to answer any queries (01633 664921) and happy to come and speak to groups to explain the project and what is involved.

WANTED

New Editor for Envoiy

Is there anyone who would be interested in taking over the editing of Envoiy? Bringing in new ideas?

Please email me if you're interested

Mair Liddell - mair@theliddells.me.uk



MUSICAL DIRECTOR: GRAHAM BULL

30th ANNIVERSARY SEASON 2009/2010

PASSIONTIDE CONCERT : SUNDAY MARCH 21ST 2010

M. Charpentier : Te Deum

WA Mozart: Missa Brevis in B Flat

JS Bach: Magnificat

JS Bach: French Suite no.3

With CCS Orchestra

Soloists from Gloucester Cathedral

St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow, 7.30pm

SUMMER FESTIVAL CELEBRATION CONCERT

WEDNESDAY JUNE 30TH 2010

S Coleridge-Taylor: Hiawatha's Wedding

CV Stanford: Songs of the Fleet

A Borodin: Polovtsian Dances

The Drill Hall, Chepstow, 7.30pm

Craig Downes (Tenor) Roger Martin (Baritone)

Marjorie Duerden (Piano)

CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd – Music Centre Wales, also registered charity (no. 1127098). Further information, please tel. 01291 623310/620414/424725.

Chepstow Choral Society welcomes new members. If you enjoy singing, wish to see your local choral society continue offering live concerts such as the above, and believe "live" music is important in a community such as ours, please come along and join us.

A choral society always needs singers!

Holy Mysteries!



This Envoy page challenges our minister to answers some tricky questions! Have you got a question? Whoever or wherever you are – Send it in!!

Q *Andrew, you have recently said that you are hoping to raise the issue of 'justice' in our life together. Why do you feel this is important?*

A I have indeed mentioned justice a few times, in particular at the last Church council. I explained how impressed I was with the church mission statement (I think if I had read the document before I came I wouldn't have taken the job!) However the one comment I wanted to make was that the word 'Justice' didn't actually appear - though I accept issues that would come under such a heading are there.

I just feel that – along with maybe grace, hope, salvation, Love – justice is one of the most important words in scripture and that rather than been an 'add on' or something for the 'keenies', concern for justice ought to be a central feature of our individual and corporate discipleship.

It soon became clear to me that we are generous givers to charity - in Advent alone we raised thousands for good causes. Of course it is a crucial part of the Christian life to give and give again as we are able. My point is that not only should we give food, shelter, medicine to those in need but ask the question why is it that in a world of such 'God given bounty' there are people in need of these things. Justice is asking why is there such a wide gap between the rich and the poor? Why do over a billion people live on less than a dollar a day? Why are there such man made phenomena as poverty? And having asked the questions we must strive to challenge and change the world (starting with ourselves) so that it is closer to how God intends.

To justify this view I could 'cherry pick' from the many verses of the Bible that call for justice (e.g. *Micah 6:8, Amos 5:25, Luke 4:16-19*) but to do so would soon grow into a long list. To cut such verses out of the scriptures is to have a Bible full of holes! Also the importance of justice is beyond any particular verses. Rather it is part of what it means to be true in our worship of God. Time and again it was failure to

practice justice – and not just charity – that led to the breaking of covenant between God and His people. *Isaiah chapter 58* says it all as does *Matt 6:10*. Our faith is not about free bus passes to heaven but about joining God's movement that is bringing heaven to earth – whether that is in the hearts of individuals or the global economy.

God loves everyone but God is not neutral. The Bible presents a God who is in solidarity with the poor, the powerless, the disposed, the lost and the least and those of us who seek to be faithful are called to show the same. At its best the Church has been a transforming influence in the world, for example in challenging the slave trade, in campaigning for debt relief, prison reform or against child labour. However the truth is that too often we have been apathetic or even worse have sided with the powerful against the poor.

This is why we ought to be praying for the Kingdom to come and offering ourselves as an answer to that prayer – which could mean campaigning, agitating, questioning, shopping with a conscience, shaping our life style to fit with what Jesus would ask of us. This isn't political correctness but Gospel correctness.

Andrew Webster



WHAT SHALL I GIVE -

This is a question constantly on our minds, even more so in the last weeks with the awful earthquake in Haiti. Early in our Christian experience, the question of 'rightly balanced giving' is bound to arise in our minds. Many scriptures tell us of God's giving, for example: James 1v5 he "giveth to all men liberally"; 1 Tim 6v17 "God who giveth to us richly all things to enjoy"; John 3v16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son"; Romans 6v23 "the gift of God is eternal life". These among many other scriptures tell us of a God who delights continually to give. (How many more verses on giving can you find in the bible).

Does God notice what we give? Mark 12v41-44; Luke 21v1-4. We are bound to feel that the actual amount given in this story matters little to the Saviour. He beheld how they gave which turns our minds to the manner of their giving not the riches which they gave. Generosity is a

Christian grace. To give is to be God-like; the measure of our giving should be as he has given to us.

The question of giving and finance, which often presents such problems to churches, can be overcome when Christians recognise the privilege and rise to their responsibility, "freely ye received, freely give". It is a fundamental principle that all a believer has belongs to the Lord. Tithing was observed by Abraham, withholding any part of the tithe was robbing God (Malachi 3v8-10). Giving to God in the true sense began after the tithing obligation had been met, that is, tithing plus more. And what of now? Under grace, giving is wholly voluntary often referred to as 'free-will offering', but the standard should hardly be less than that under the law. Five times in the New Testament giving is called a 'grace'.

How should we give? This lies with each individual believer, instructions chiefly found in 1Cor 16v1-3; 2Cor 8 and 9; 'each one of you' well to do or otherwise, recognising though that the former have greater opportunity,

1Tim. 6 v17-19. Give willingly not grudgingly 2Cor. 9v7 for God loveth a cheerful giver; Acts 20v35 - it is more blessed to give than to receive.

How much should we give? This is to be according to a person's ability 2Cor 8v11-12; Acts 11v29; and God's promise Luke 6v38; Proverbs 11v24-25. The bible teaches us to give systematically and not haphazardly, 1Cor 16v1-2. We should not be giving for the admiration and applause of men (Matt. 6v1-4), our giving should be done privately because of love to God and man, 1 John 3v17-18; 1 Gal. 6v10.

After all the offerings and gifts are received by the church, what guidance does the Bible give on how these should be distributed? Any suggestions?

Contributor unknown!

This is a very difficult topic. Thank you for challenging us in our giving of money, but let us not forget the importance of giving of our time; compassion/love is important also. Any comments from the readers? Do write in.

'Hold a true friend with both hands.' - *Nigerian proverb*



GIDEONS SHARING GOOD NEWS

Those of you who have had the pleasure of staying in a hotel or the misfortune of having to stay in a hospital will probably know what I mean by a 'Gideon Bible'. These are the Bibles that you would find inside the lockers next to the bed, put there by an International organisation known as 'The Gideons'.

My first introduction to this organisation was when my aged mother came to live with us and four times a year a Gideon magazine arrived for her through the post for she was a 'Friend of the Gideons'. When she died these magazines continue to arrive at our home and I always intended writing to the British branch of the Organisation to let them know that she had died, but I never got round to it. Instead I would flick through the magazines and read the occasional article. In time guilt made me send the Gideons first one donation and then another as I began to fully appreciate the work that they were doing, although I never read a begging letter in the magazine, only positive news of how God was working through his Word to those who read it in their time of need.

Here's a short resume of Gideons International

The Gideons International founded in 1899, serves as an extended arm of the church by placing and distributing Bibles and New Testaments in the human traffic lanes and streams of national life. It operates in more than 190 countries (over 80 languages) annually placing more than 76 million scriptures worldwide. This averages one million copies of the word of God placed every seven days, 107 per minute. Wow!

The Gideon work commenced in Britain in 1949 and there are now 3,600 Gideons as well as 2,200 Auxiliary members working in 270 branches distributing 840,000 copies of God's word per annum in the British Isles.

Gideons share God's Good News with

- the traveller by placing Bibles in hotel/motel rooms
- young people by giving New Testaments to pupils in Secondary schools, as well as to student nurses, physiotherapists (I received one as a student) university campus etc
- transport police, railway staff

- the sick and the elderly by providing copies of the New Testament and Psalms in hospital wards and retirement homes, as well as Bibles in doctors', dentists', and solicitors' waiting rooms.

We are told and we believe, (don't we?) that God guides and speaks to us through his Word (The Bible) and yet we are always so surprised when we hear individual stories of God meeting the needs of the 'needy' as in these examples below. Let us instead be thrilled and excited about what he can do if only we'll allow him.

Here are a couple of moving stories from the 'Gideon News' magazine.

From the hospital bed!

When a NE London branch of the Gideons were making their regular topping up visit to two local hospitals they heard some encouraging comments.

'One lady, who had just been given a New Testament for her locker said, "I'm enjoying this so much, could I buy one?" (they gave her one to take home)

'When placing a NT in a bedside locker, the gentleman in the bed said, "I've just been praying for someone to visit me."

'Several patients asked for prayer and have been pleased when the Gideon member prayed for them then and there.'

'When asked if there was a NT in the locker, the patient who was packing ready to go home, said "It's not there mate, it's in my bag!"

Pilot's life takes off!

'As a young pilot working for Malaysian Airways, I was flying single engine aircraft into some of the remotest parts of Asia. I spent some nights in very simple accommodation, but there was a Gideon Bible left by the bed and that Bible was the beginning of my search to know God – I was not able to put it down. Before too long God spoke to me and I was not able to resist his invitation to "come unto me and I will give you rest". Not very long after, my wife came to know the Lord as her Saviour. We are now both Gideon members in Kuala Lumpur. Today I captain 747 Jumbo Jets around the world and have the joy in personal witness and presenting New Testaments.'" *Captain K Sivaraman*

Mair Liddell



SEE AMID THE WINTER SNOW

Snow whatever else it does, revives memories particularly when there is a heavy fall of the stuff which fortunately does not occur too often.

One, of the ultra heavy falls was in 1947, which I did not experience, being overseas. A colleague of working days told an interesting story. Resident at St. Briavels at the time, the place was cut off for four days. Assisting the other local fellows with shovels they managed to open the road. As he said, with some delight, the first vehicle to get through was the beer lorry from Chepstow. There must be something very British about that!

Previous to that around 1942 I was on my way home from school, in the snow, with Glyn Lockyear. Along the Bulwark Road Charlie Williams was approaching with his Council refuse barrow and trilby hat. Said I to Glyn "Watch me knock his hat off" The snowball was a bit low and caught him on the ear. What happened then was a demonstration of speed by two people. Like a flash Charlie had Glyn around the throat and with supporting invective was intimating that he would be qualifying for an early funeral. Meanwhile I had covered fifty yards in two seconds flat, or so it seemed.

Was I proud of it? Frightened more likely, but it was the sort of thing that boys have done and will continue to do. Amen.

Snow can be dangerous. As a weedy boy of five years I had a snowball pushed down my back and I became seriously ill. My late mother used to recall that the situation was precarious. Mrs Humphries, a neighbour poured some brandy down my throat and mother avowed that saved my life. Later that good Samaritan gave me a Bible which I still treasure.

I have read most of the good book but admit to baulking at some of the writings which give the "Who's Who" of the characters of the time.

Fortunately I enjoy good health - on that score alone I think it is good to attend church to say 'thank you' for my many blessings.

Ron Evans

Gardening advice from the Editor

When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant!

Gardening with Lesley



As I sit here and look at the snow covered ground, and think of the weeks of very cold weather we have had this winter, I wonder which of my plants have survived. Plants have many survival mechanisms to protect them from the cold weather. Bulbs are planted in the soil where they are protected from the worst of the frost. Herbaceous plants are dormant at this time of year and can survive the winter cold. Shrubs and trees that are native to areas where the pattern of warm summers and cold winters can survive these weather conditions.

There will be plants that do not survive the combination of prolonged frosts and damp cold weather. Dahlias left in the ground may rot; the French style Lavendula stoechas miss the Mediterranean sun and sharp drainage; frost can kill the new buds on some shrubs and some herbaceous perennials may die where the water and frost rotted their roots. Plants in pots are prone to frost damage, as the pots do not give the insulation protection given by being planted in the soil.

As the frost and snow goes, and the months of spring bring warmer gentler weather, I shall be looking in the garden to see which plants have made it through the winter. There may be plants where there are no green shoots of recovery. I have learnt to be patient with such plants. In the past when I have begun to dig them out, there are often green shoots at the base of the plant. If the dead plant material is trimmed away, the green shoots will quickly grow back. It may also be important to protect these new green shoots from slugs - as plants often "disappear" not because of winter weather, but because those lovely new green shoots are such excellent slug food.

However, where there are winter damage gaps, it is an opportunity to put in some fresh plants to fill the gap. When the plant has been dug up and the earth reworked it is ready for fresh planting. A quick and easy way to fill the gap is to plant some annual seeds. A mixture of Love-in-the-Mist (Nigella); Candytuft and blue cornflowers give a pretty pink/blue cottage garden combination. For a more dramatic dark red mixture try Cornflower 'Black Ball'; Poppy (papaver somniferum 'Blackcurrant Fizz') and Poppy (paeoniflorum 'Black Paenony').

The blank space in the garden can also be used to give the opportunity for children to participate in the garden. The common Pot marigold *Calendula officinalis* is bright, colourful and easy to grow.

Sunflowers are a great favourite with children and the variety Sunflower 'Russian Giant' will grow between 8-10ft – although my children often grew sunflowers from the seed sold in bird food but these can be less successful as the seeds may be treated or not as fresh. Growing plants that you can eat is also fun for children - strawberry plants can be fun; try the small alpine strawberries which produce many small fruits and are less prone to slug and bird damage. Runner beans grown from seed and planted up bean stick wigwams are colourful and produce a good crop of beans. Another fun plant to grow is ornamental gourds that produce strange shaped fruits that can be dried and painted – a mix such as 'Jim Jams' will produce a variety of interesting shapes; alternatively a special shape such as 'Snakes' or 'Speckled Swans' will produce specific shapes as their names suggest. Growing pumpkins to make autumn lanterns is also a rewarding activity for children. The variety 'Jack of All Trades' is an excellent plant for this. Some of these plants can be bought as plants from the garden centre; but growing them from seeds* in pots and then planting them out is often more interesting for children.



The advantage of growing a range of annuals in the “bare patch” is that plans can then be made to put in a more permanent planting in the autumn. The area can be dug and a shrub planted for permanent show and then bulbs can be planted deep in the surrounding area. There are many shrubs and bulbs to choose from. For a pretty spring display plant *Cytisus x praecox Albus*, which is a white ornamental broom with white narcissi *Thalia*, white outdoor hyacinths and a variety of grape hyacinths (not the invasive sort) such as *Muscari Azureum* and *Chinodoxa Glory of the Snow*. To finish off this area, plant some primroses to give a great spring effect.

Just writing about these plant combinations makes me look forward to the Spring with great anticipation – new growth; new plants; new opportunities. At this time of the year we look forward to Easter and think again on new hopes; new starts and new opportunities.

***Seed varieties available from Thompson and Morgan, but also these and many similar are available at most garden centres.**

Lesley Kelly