

The Ambo

November 2006



MIDSOMER NORTON
METHODIST CHURCH

Welcome to **The Ambo**

The word used for
a pulpit in early
Christian Churches



If this is your first time with our Newsletter, you are warmly invited to attend any of the meetings or events described. If you would like a regular 'labelled' copy of The Ambo please leave your name and address details with the Receptionist or a Steward.

From my Grandfather's writings in 1875:

'Windows of the Soul'

There is a sense of incompleteness in conversation
unaccompanied by the interchange of glances.

When two persons meet and shake hands, unless there is, at the same time, a meeting of friendly looks, the ceremony loses much of its significance.

You will have noticed there is no coloured cover this month.

Did you notice the cover is a bit stiffer.

Compare this issue with the cover and some pages of the
Reports Booklet. Can you tell the difference?

Any Comments? See page 5 for an explanation.

Your editor, Martin B. Dymond (martinbdymond@hotmail.com) is a member of ACE (Association for Church Editors - www.ac-editors.co.uk), and is a founder member of S.C.E.N.E.S (Supporting Church Editors in N. E. Somerset). As a Church we subscribe to Methodist E-News and Parish Pump, but look to our readers to submit items of interest.

The views of articles in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Midsomer Norton Methodist Church or the Editor.

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MINISTER'S LETTER

Rev. David W. Watson,
36 North Road,
Midsomer Norton,
Somerset. BA3 2QQ.
01761 412137

Dear Friends,

Since the last edition of *The Ambo* Denise and I have become proud grandparents once again. Our eldest daughter Rachel gave birth to a baby girl Hannah on 6th October. Hannah weighed in at 6lb 13oz. Both mother and daughter are both well and Hannah is loved by her sister Jessica and by her father Richard. Denise and I were not fit enough to go and visit until the weekend of 13th – 15th October and that tied in very nicely with a service that I conducted at Cheadle to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Cheadle Home Link Scheme. It was lovely to be able to spend time with Rachel and Richard and their two daughters. We now have 4 grandchildren, 3 girls and 1 boy.

Naturally we are very proud of

Family life is one of God's make the most of the love and us. November 11th marks the end November 12th we will mark Re-shall be remembering the dead of dead of so many wars since those have seen and still are seeing the



all our family.

warfare and conflict, which still rage through the world today. As we take time to think and to remember the dead of the wars let us also remember those who have lost loved ones from their families through warfare. The many families today, in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries, which are being parted by man's atrocities against man. War is a horrible and terrible thing.

I believe as a Christian that we who belong to the body of Christ on this earth should do all that we can to speak out against wars and their consequences. We must try to point people to the example of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. People in this world must realise that wars and terrorism and violence can only lead to more violence. Fanatics from all different factions must be made to see that the ways of violence do not bring in what they want.

Within the life of our own Circuit and Church here in Midsomer Norton we shall be holding two very important meetings. The first is at Radstock Methodist Church on Thursday 23rd November when the Chairman of the District, the Rev. Ward Jones will be sharing with us his thinking on the future of Methodism. At this meeting the Circuit Leadership team will be putting forward some very radical proposals regarding the future of the Circuit. It is our hope that we will be able to steer the Circuit out of a survival mode and into a mission mode. This meeting is open to all. If you care about the future of the church in this circuit then come along to this important meeting.

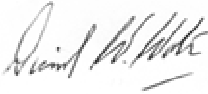
The second important meeting is our own church's Annual General

Meeting which will be held on Sunday 26th November after the morning service. We ask people to bring a Faith Lunch, after which we shall proceed with the meeting at which we receive the Reports of the various committees and organisations. We shall elect new officers and we shall close the meeting with the celebration of Holy Communion. There will not be an evening service at Midsomer Norton on that Sunday. Please come along to this meeting if you care about the church here in Midsomer Norton.

The day before this AGM we shall be holding our Christmas Bazaar and I would ask you please to support this very important event in the church calendar.

By the time you receive the next *Ambo* Advent will have arrived, during which we shall start our preparations for Christmas. Please look out for details of the special services and please come along to prepare yourselves for Christmas and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless you all,
Your friend and minister,



They do say We are born as originals; let us not live as copies.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Ambo's cover is now beginning to look dated, especially in view of the technical progress with computers, cameras, and colour printing. The costs have been investigated (and passed to Resources Committee) and paper costs should be about the same, or reduced. There will be an increase in costs for colour printing.

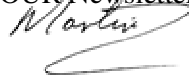
I am happy to buy a new printer (which I can use at home) so I wonder if some people would like to consider sponsoring the cover for one month each. The cost would be £15 a month. If 12 such folk would cover the first year the situation could then be reviewed. Maybe 2/3 folk club together, or a Group could sponsor a month.

Occasionally it would be nice to be able to use colour for an inside page to cover such as St. George's Fayre, Whitfunday, NCH Walk, etc., again for £15. The name of the sponsor would be shown in *The Ambo*, unless you wished to remain anonymous. (You may wish to nominate a month for a particular reason!).

I would like to start the change from January 2007, so if interested could you please see me as soon as possible, as my first job will be to buy the printer.

If anyone wants a preview of 'the new look' I have a few sample covers.

Thank you for your continuing interest in what is YOUR Newsletter.



CORRECTION:

Last month's issue, page 15, paragraph 4 should have read: Fred and myself requested profits should NOT be used for the general running of the church

My apologies for the omission of this important word.

Edi-

The Bible says So those who are last will be first and those who are first will be last. *Matthew 20:16.*

TAKE FOR GRANTED!

BRUNEL MANOR - Where is it? I was asked by e-mail by a regular reader. Every year we refer to it but never say where it is. Well, it's near Torquay. Going one better, you can now see what it looks like!



LETTERS

On behalf of the Bristol Methodist Centre I am writing to acknowledge, with very many thanks, your generous gift of harvest goods.

This is a wonderful time of year for us, when we are able to offer our homeless members an abundance of fresh produce, replenish our food store, and rejoice in the encouragement we received from our many friends in the District,

Please pass on our warmest thanks and good wishes to all our friends at Midsomer Norton Methodist Church.

*Yours sincerely,
Barry Penn, Coordinator.*

Kathy received a letter which says:

I write to thank you, on behalf of Tools With A Mission, and also all the people who responded to your call for items of haberdashery for TWAM. It is a fine collection of goods which will be well received by those in the Third World whom it was meant for.

*The message of thanks to you and all who contributed will, I hope, feel to be included in the many thanks from Tools With A Mission for their generosity. God Bless you all,
With kind regards, Roger Stockwell.*

The letter is on the Link Noticeboard. (If you have surplus items in future do not throw away - pass to TWAM).



What future for the (Methodist) Church?



This was the question posed at the Men's Break-fast in October by Rev. Ward Jones - a question that is being aired with increasing urgency across the country. Does the Church (not just Methodism) have a future in this country?

The 2001 Census indicated that 78% of the population regard themselves as Christian. Yet we know from church statistics that barely 2% attend church on anything like a regular basis. Strange when there is so much evidence to show that people in Britain today have a greater spiritual hunger than they have had for decades. So the answer to Ward Jones' question ought to be 'Yes, of course Methodism (and all the other churches) has a future.'

Matthew 9:35-37 seems to describe the Church's position so well '*The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers too few*' - hardly a promising situation. Yet if we read on to the end of that verse Jesus goes on to tell his disciples to '*...ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.*'

But if we are to pray for growth, remember: Matthew's gospel continues with those same disciples being sent out in the power of the Spirit to the people. The pray-ers became part of the answer to their own prayers. And why not? After all prayer is a two-way channel. So when we pray for more workers we should expect God to challenge us to become part of the workforce too.

Isaiah 49:1-6 is a piece of prophetic poetry probably dating from the latter days of the Jewish exile in Babylon (6th century BC). In it the poet reminded the people of Israel that, despite all that had happened to them (the loss of their lands and status and the destruction of their temple in Jerusalem) God still intended to work through them for the benefit of all mankind - '*I will give you as a light to the nations that my salvation might reach the end of the earth*' (Isaiah 49:6)

The poet was fostering a belief that at some point in their history God would move to establish His rule in the world. They were a people of destiny!

Right through to the time of Jesus, this belief strengthened and developed. It was into a culture dominated by this belief that Jesus was born. It shaped His life, His mission and His death. He became the embodiment of Israel's mission to bring salvation to the world; and His disciples (and later the Church) took on that mantle from Him.

As latter day followers of Jesus we stand in that tradition. We (the Church) are the people through whom God intends to carry out His work of salvation today - a people of destiny! The question is: are we ready for the challenge?

READING THE BIBLE

Why is reading the bible important?

Whoever would be one with God must often and often read the Holy Scriptures. For when we pray we speak to God, and when we read the Bible God speaks to us.

Aelfric of Eynsham, c955-1020.

Without a grounding in regular Bible reading, we can never properly understand our faith, ourselves, the world and our relationships. With it, Christians can offer the hope our culture needs.

Elaine Storkey.

Our post-modern world is in desperate need of Christians whose hearts and minds are fresh and clear from encountering God through Scripture. There really is no other way to grow.

Jeff Lucas.

We learn more about God through reading the Bible, especially through his revelation of himself in Jesus. We see how he has acted in the past, and can recognise similar patterns in our own lives.

Kate Hughes.

We might say that Christians are those who live in and by the story of Jesus, remembering it within the community of the church, in and for their own time, and in their own lives..... The story need never grow old or cold, because it is capable of endless reinterpretation and new meaning.

Nicola Slee.

If you want to read the Bible with the help of Notes, I B R A [International Bible Reading Association] produce:

**‘Light for our Path’ and
‘Words for Today’**

Both are available in book form or cassette at £7.25 and Large Print at £8.25.

Regular orders will be repeated unless cancelled. New orders and changes to Kathy by **Wednesday 15th November**

The Bible says If you have ears then listen to what the Spirit says to the churches! *Revelation 2:7.*

THE ACORN



Here beside the hedge I stand
With an acorn in my hand.
Folded small as small can be,
In the acorn lies a tree.

If this magic thing I keep,
The tree will always be asleep;
If it were buried it would soon
Awake, unfold and see the moon -
The gleaming moon, whose light
would flow
Into the tree to Spring.

Here beside the hedge I stand
With an oak tree in my hand.

M.J. Martyn

*Taken from the NCH leaflet
for the 2005 Service preparation.*

MISSION

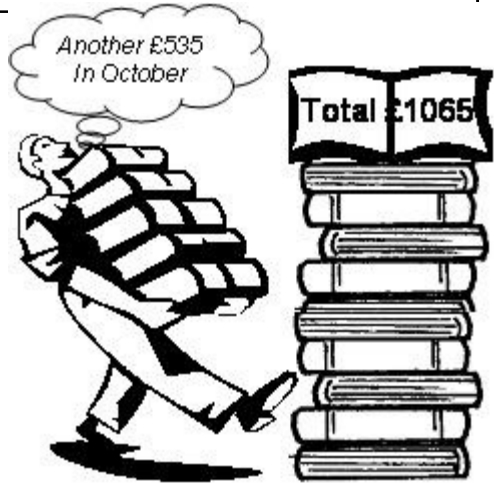
Many thanks to all who have already contributed in any way to the 2006/7 Church Project, which has just eclipsed the £1,000 mark! This figure has been achieved that much sooner due to the extra effort put into recent sponsored and other activities as mentioned in Church Notices and *The Ambo*. Special thanks to those individuals who took the lead roles!

Further fund-raising ideas are welcomed! A Barn Dance is planned for next March, Saturday 10th, more details later.

On Friday 1st December the annual town community shopping evening takes place and our Church Centre will be open as before from 6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Monies from sale of refreshments will go to the Church Project. Please if you can help on a refreshment rota for an hour, serving tea/coffee/soft drinks and mince pies etc. please let me know. Thanks to Charlene and BFG for covering the last hour. We hope to sell traditional Bacon Butties, courtesy of Fred and his team as well as hot soup and rolls, courtesy of Dee and her team! There will also be charity stalls.

The Church will be open for quiet, seasonal reflection.

Please come and enjoy the town's community spirit.



SOME INFO from MILDMAY (last year's Church Project)

We are currently running an impressive auction on eBay in conjunction with Charity Aid Foundation.

There are some great 'money can't buy' experiences on offer:-
Have a waxworks figure made by Madame Tussauds
Formula 1 drive with Minardi
Red Arrows experience
Learn to Wing Walk
Duxford Experience
Play in Pro-Celebrity Golf tournament in Portugal
etc. etc.

If these turn out to be too expensive there are a number of lower cost celebrity items on sale that might be of interest.

If you have contacts you think might be interested please pass the information on. Thanks.

John.

PUZZLE PAGE

1 What word across makes nine words down?

O	O	A	P	A	I	L	A	E
D	L	P	D	M	P	P	D	G

2 Each answer is of four letters, running clockwise from the number, The letters in the top rows across will spell a sentence.

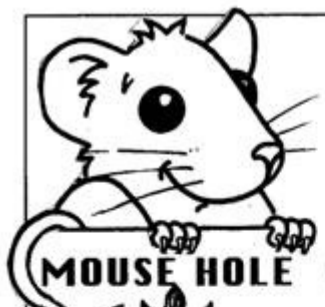
			3		4			6	7					10
1	2						5				8	9		
11			13				16							20
			12		14	15			17	18			19	

1) Stay 2.) Avoid 3) Oven 4) A clergyman 5) Eat 6) Squats 7) Slim 8) Loathe
 9) Australian Fruit 10) Unknown 11) Tidy 12) One 'wellie' 13) Against
 14) Floppy 15) No hair! 16) Rational 17) Land measure 18) Raise 19) Elegant
 20) Secure.

Answers on Page 31.

They do say Many might have attained wisdom, had they not thought they had already attained it.

The Bible says Let us stop judging one another. Instead, you should decide never to do anything that would make your brother stumble or fall into sin. *Roman 14:13.*



A Gift of Hope

Share a little of what God has given you and help other children in the world who are in great need, by sending them a shoe box filled gifts.

The Christian charity Samaritan's Purse organise 'Operation Christmas Child'.

They collect gift filled shoe boxes and send them to children in need all over the world.

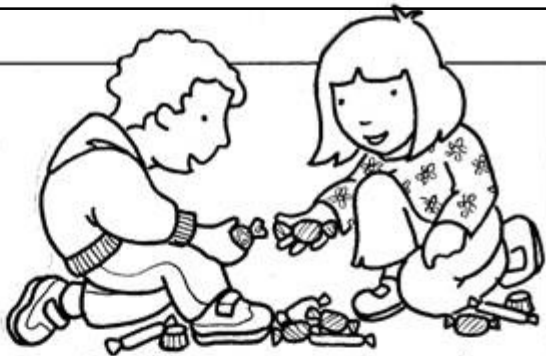
They collect the boxes in November, so to find out more call their information line on 0870 011 2002

or look on

www.samaritanspurse.uk.com to find out what to put in and where to send the boxes.

Watch a video about their work look on www.samaritanspurse.org click on *Our Work* then

on *Operation Christmas Child*.



"God is able to give you **more** than you need, so that you will **always** have all you need for yourselves and **more** than enough for every good cause."

2 Corinthians 9:8

"Do not forget to **do good** and to **share** with others, for with such sacrifice **God** is pleased"

Hebrews 13:16



A GIFT TO SHARE

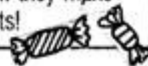
Draw around a small plate onto thin card to make a circle. Cut out and cut in half. Using one of the halves, roll around to make a cone shape and stick.



Fill with sweets and cover with wrapping paper.



Gather the paper at the top of the cone with ribbon and give as gifts to your friends... they make great Christmas presents!



QUICK GUIDE TO A HEALTY CHURCH

An easy guide and cure of congregational ailments

It's not enough to care for the spiritual well-being of fellow church members. You also need to consider their physical health. Many people in today's churches complain of a variety of ailments ranging from the minor to the fairly minor. But how can you help the person next to you in the pew? Use this simple guide:

Symptom: The patient complains of sore ears, or suffers from temporary deafness lasting until Monday morning.

Cause: The music in church is too loud. This is the fault of the young people who like their music LOUD. They also like it without any proper words or even a decent tune.

Cure: Ban young people from the church.

Symptom: The patient has pain in the eyes, or bruising to the back of the head.

Cause: Children joining in the worship by waving banners. If they are in front of you they poke you in the eye. If behind, they whack you on the rear of the cranium.

Cure: Ban children from the church.

Symptom: The patient appears to have anger management problems and is suffering from a feeling of deep resentment.

Cause: Parents of children banned from church are cross with you, and are taking every opportunity

to let you know it.

Cure: Ban parents from the church.

Symptom: The patient has a crick in the neck, and may also be exhibiting signs of eye-strain.

Cause: Many older people find it difficult to see the overhead projector screen, as it is too high on the wall and the contrast is poor. They would find it easier to return to using books in worship.

Cure: Ban older people from the church.

Symptom: The patient still complains of sore ears, or suffers a temporary deafness lasting until Monday morning.

Cause: The music in church is still too loud.

Cure: Ban musicians and worship leaders from the church.

Symptom: The patient has trouble staying awake and is unable to concentrate.

Cause: The sermon is too long, grey and wearisome.

Cure: Ban the clergy from the church.

Symptom: You are the patient. You have a sense of loss, a feeling of loneliness, and are unable to worship God properly or serve him effectively.

Cause: You've banned every one from the church and are the only one left.

Solution: Ban yourself from the church and join the one everyone else has gone to. If they let you in.

From Christian Herald 19 June 2004;

PRAYER PAGE

November 5th is Guy Fawkes Day and there will be bonfire/firework parties taking place around our area, please pray for fun and safety at all these events. Also the town Carnival takes place on the 9th, the Church Bazaar on the 25th, and the town's Christmas Shopping evening on the 1st December, please pray for all those working hard preparing for and those who will attend and support these events. As last month we continue to focus our prayers on an area to the east of our town centre.

Map Reference: D4

Week 1:(Sun.5th Nov. - Sat.11th Nov.)

Oak Terrace; Poets Corner; Railway View Place; Ruskin Road.

Week 2:(Sun.12th Nov. – Sat.18th Nov.)

Shakespeare Road; Shelley Road; Somer Court (off Gullock Tynning); South View Place; St. Peter's Road; Sunny Mount.

Week 3:(Sun.19th Nov. –Sat. 25th Nov.)

The Leaze; Waterside Crescent; Waterside Road; Waterside Way; Wesley Avenue.

Week 4:(Sun.26th Nov. – Sat. 2nd Dec.)

West Hill Road; Westfield Terrace; Wheelers Close; Wheelers Drive; Wheelers Road.

Father, may your kingdom come and your will be done in the places and lives of those we have thought of. Amen

Notes:



DIETER'S PRAYER (written as the 23rd Psalm)

Strict is my diet I must not want,
It maketh me to lie down at night hungry.
It leadeth me past the refrigerator,
It trieth my willpower.
It leadeth me in the paths of starvation,
For my figure's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the aisles of pastries,
I will buy no chocolate éclairs, for they are fattening.
The cakes and the pies they tempt me.
Before me is a table set with green beans and lettuce,
It filleth my stomach with liquids,
My day's quota runneth over,
Surely calories and weight charts
Will follow me all the days of my life
And I will dwell in the fear of scales forever!

Anon.

From Christine's Autograph Book:

Smile awhile, and while you smile,
smile another smile,
And soon there's miles of smiles
And life's worth while, because you smile.

Happy moments - Praise God
Quiet moments - Worship God,
Difficult moments - Seek God.
Painful moments - Trust God.
Every moment - Thank God.

Typing Error from another magazine:

The 'Fasting and Prayer' Conference
includes meals.
'POTLUCK SUPPER' Sunday 5pm
PRAYER AND MEDICATION to
follow.

Sent in by Geoff.

They do say Fishing for compliments can lead to chips on the shoulder.

The Bible says Remember, then, what you were taught and what you heard; obey it and turn from your sins. *Revelation 3:3.*

NETWORK NEWS

The Bristol District Project for 2005/6 was Blindaid Africa. Many of you will have heard Rosalie Lees talk about this project that she started to help the blind young people in Africa by supplying tape recorders, CDs, typewriters and word processors etc. £4,410 has been sent from the District, for which she is very grateful.

The project for this year is Children's Hospice S W Babe Appeal. The collection taken at our recent meeting at Trowbridge amounted to £178. This has gone towards the project. Thank you to all that support these projects.

2007 is the 20th Anniversary of Network. The following dates should be noted: Women's Network: Forward Together. One day conference at Taunton on 11th May 2007; cost £15 including lunch. Some of us went to

the one held at Yate last year. An excellent day. I have some booking forms.

I also have booking forms for the Bristol District Residential Experience held at Glenfell House, Cheltenham. Margaret Sawyer, Connexional Secretary of Network, is to be the leader, and her subject is 'Whose Footprints?' Dates: 20th 22nd March. Day visitors are also welcome.

The Network Conference will be held at The Hayes, Swanwick on 19th-21st September. Subject: 'Where are we going to?' Key note speaker: Ann Morisy; Music & Worship: Alison Adam, a member of the Iona Community; plus a lot more. Once again, I have information and booking forms.

Details of all these are on the Network Noticeboard.



SHIPSHAPE

The Sea of Life presents us
With some currents that confuse,
And many 'Ships' are needed
On this memorable cruise.

Apprentice-ship and Workman-ship
Can form a worthy crew;
Leader-ship and Statesman -ship
Can steer us through.

Worship is a Flag-ship
That is carefully designed
And proper navigation
Can leave Hard-ship behind.

Though the Sea of Life 's uncharted
At times it must be said
The finest craft is Friend-ship
When it steams full speed ahead.

*Anon. Sent in by Doreen,
from Stoke Gabriel News.*

CHRISTMAS

Saturday 25th
9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
followed by



Refreshments



Cakes



Handicrafts

Home-made Gifts



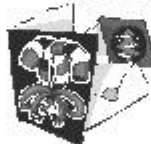
Home-made Sweets



Toys



Cards



Books



Garden Plants



Pickles



Face Painting



Tombola



Children's
Activities

Toiletries



Decorations



Guess the

BAZAAR



th November
2 noon (stalls)
y Lunches



Clean your dirty car

And vac those dirty seats

Rinse, scrub & shammy!

OR Let SMASH do the hard work for you.



Sat 26th Nov, **9am till midday** - in aid of the church funds.
Minimum donation of £4 for wash & £4 for vac

Held in Mendip Engineering car park (behind ex job centre). Please park in Sainsbury's car park. You can wait inside with a cup of tea if you prefer.

(If dropping your car off early, please put keys in envelope marked with: your car make, colour, reg, your name, if you need to collect it before midday & if you want the wash or the deluxe wash & vac!

EXTRA VOLUNTEERS NEEDED PLEASE!!

(Phone Ian if you can only spare a couple of hours morning or early afternoon)

Donations for the stalls shown opposite will be gratefully received. Items should be of good or 'new' quality so they can be sold as presents.

If giving bottles (for Tombola) please remember **No Alcohol** is allowed.



Collection boxes are in the Link to receive your donations. Nearer the day, of course, we will appeal for cakes for the always-popular cake stall.

Please come and help make the day a success by buying your Christmas Presents [all under one roof], have a meal, and boost Church funds.

Bring a friend, we look forward to seeing you there.



PRESENTS?

Are you wondering what Christmas Present to give someone?

The Present Aid catalogue, available at Reception, could solve your problem. The person who will be receiving the present may be pleased if you gave them a low cost present and gave the rest of the money normally spent to people in real need. These are some of the ideas found in the catalogue: £11 provides 18hrs. computer training for children in the Congo orphaned by Aids; £24 provides 16 ducks for Duck Farming in Bangladesh, so allowing people to become self-sufficient; £30 provides carpentry tools and training for a man in Honduras who can set up a small business; £55 enables a latrine to be built in Nicaragua – this drastically reduces the spread of diseases such as cholera

and malaria. The catalogue has suggestions for gifts ranging from £11 to Solar Panels costing £600.

In the January issue of *The Ambo* I would like to be able to report how many presents have been given using the Present Aid catalogue. There is a response form in Reception. Please put a line through a number for each present given using this scheme.

Trevor.

There are, of course, many such schemes in being, such as 'Christian Aid' and 'Send a Cow', and which are used by Church friends. See also 'Christmas Post' where the one card to all friends and money into the box is a similar principle.

Editor.

FASHION SHOW

Friday 17th November 7.30 p.m.

in aid of

Macmillan Cancer Support

Please come and support friends who are modelling at

M&Co

in High St., M N

Tickets £5 each (limited in number) to be bought in advance from Methodist Church Centre via Mike/John,

M&Co or Beth Davies on 01761 418787.

Tickets qualify for 10% M&Co discount voucher.

First prize raffle ticket is lunch for 2 at 'The Moody Goose'

MEN'S BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP



Saturday 18th
November
8.30 am



Breakfast from 8am)

Steve Voake

(former local Primary School
Head) will speak on
'Life as a children's author'

They do say Never believe
anything until it has been denied
officially.

C A M E O

Come And Meet Each Other

The next event is
SWIMMING at
Fosse Way School
on Saturday 18th



Nov. from 7pm, followed by
Fish & Chip Supper at the Hall.

then

CAMEO CAROLS

on Sunday 3rd December
after evening service.

Come and sing your favourite
carols in the hall,
with Fruit Punch,
Mince Pies and Ap-



DICKENSIAN CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EVENING

Friday 1st December
CHURCH CENTRE
OPEN 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.

Charity Stalls, Refreshments & More

TABLE TOP SALE

at

Midsomer Norton Methodist Church

Saturday 27th January 2007

9.00 am until 12.00 pm

Tables available to display and sell your items for only

£6.00

All table bookings must be made in advance

For further information or
to book a table please contact
Heather on 412983

**Tables
limited so
book today**

CHILDREN'S HOSPICE S W

News Update:

There is a CD of Nomine, the CHSW group formed for raising funds for the new hospice. It is available from me or can be ordered on 416657.

Pantomime:

Jack & The Beanstalk - 20th/21st January, 3pm or 7pm at St. John's School. All proceeds go to the 'Babe Appeal'

Tour:

Dianne Chiplin [412118] has arranged visits to the new Hospice at Wraxall in 2007. Please contact her if you would like to join a tour of the site.

Mary.



The Bible says Jesus said: Come to me all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28.

CHRISTMAS POST BOX

We will be running the Christmas card schemes again this year.



Thanks to all who participated last year, when the total raised from both options was over £200.* Once again there will be two schemes. Individual cards may be posted in the Post Box, which will be in the Church Vestibule on Sundays 3rd and 10th of December and at other times in the Link. Please seal the envelopes and address clearly with surnames, addresses not necessary. Also there will be a board for cards in the Link for the alternative scheme. All donations, in sealed envelopes please, to be posted in the post box. Suggested donation of 10 pence per card for the post box

scheme + money, in lieu of cards not bought, for those placed on the board. Last year some folk wanted some of the money to go to charity as well as church funds. So, this year monies received will be split 50/50 - church funds and church project.

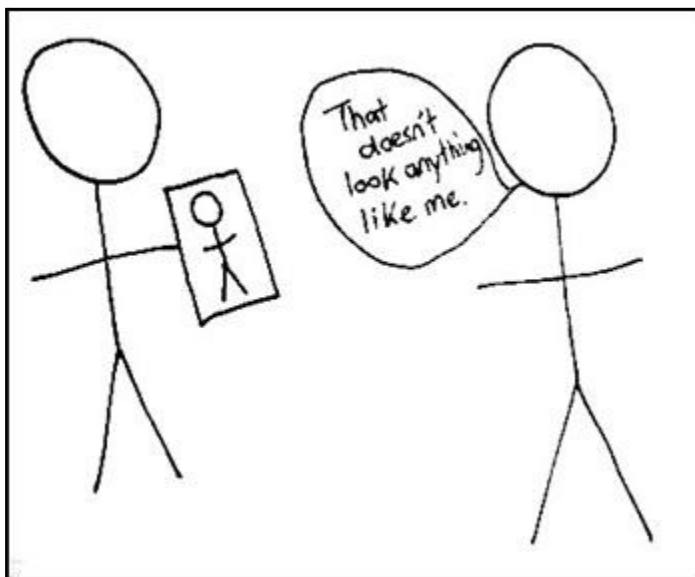
Donations may be gift-aided by placing the money in one of the 'pink envelopes', marked 'Christmas Post'.

Last date for posting will be Friday 15th December, and cards will be ready for collection on Sunday 17th December.

We both hope that you will be able to support one or other of the card schemes.

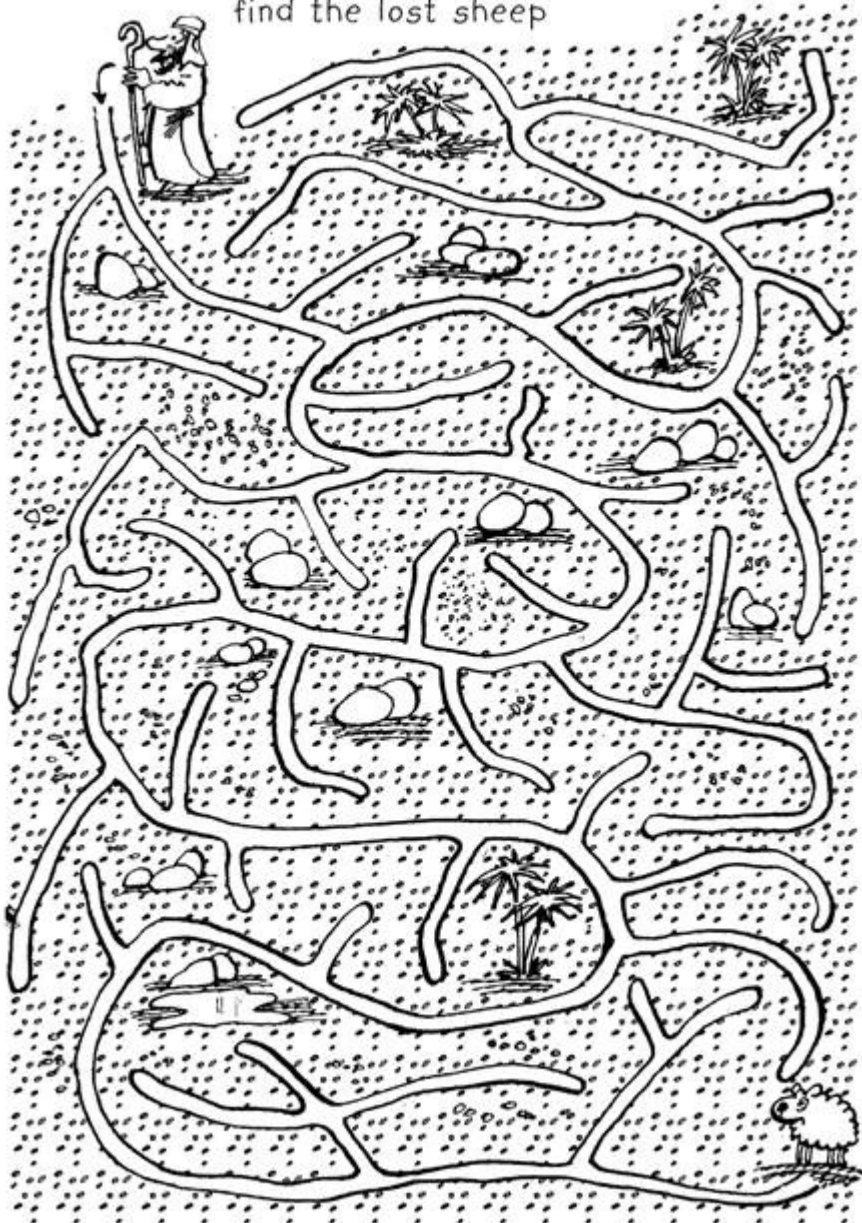


Sheila and Linda.



PICTURE PARABLE

The Lost Sheep
- help the shepherd
find the lost sheep



THE BUZZ 49

These stories from around Methodism might give you ideas to take up locally.
Please use the contacts to learn more.

WORSHIP - first time children! **From King's Somborne, Winchester**

We're a village chapel with 16 members, but with the parish church we've run Young Christians Together in Somborne for the past 3 years, with now 35 children up to age 11. 7 of them (aged 8 - 11) have just completed a 'Welcome to the Lord's Table' course, and received communion for the first time at a joyful service in the chapel. With the Bishop's approval they can now receive communion in both churches. We enjoyed running the course, and will repeat it soon. We recommend it to anyone working with this age-group.

E-mail contact: <mailto:pam222@tiscali.co.uk>
Phone contact: Rev. Rosemary Baker 07789 864219

LEARNING AND CARING - in Russia **From Stockton Heath church and Warrington circuit**

A group of 30, mainly from Stockton Heath, have been to Russia to work in the Pyatniski orphanage in Tula, south of Moscow. In just 9 days, we renewed 6 bedrooms, put up a new ceiling in the dining room, and replaced an unsafe staircase. We slept on new mattresses for which we'd raised money. We were supported by prayer-partners, and we shared by phone in worship while we were there. It was great, but there's much more to do. The circuit is now committed to this charity for the next 3 years.

E-mail contact: <mailto:johnastott@btinternet.com>
Phone contact: Rev Loraine Mellor 01925 722191

SERVICE - in store **From Moulsham Lodge church, Chelmsford**

We've worked with the local Co-op store to promote an Essex-wide appeal called Harvest for the Hungry. It's a Euroaid project working for the people of eastern Europe. In the store, we set up a stand to encourage people to buy food items, and near the exit was a special trolley into which people could put their gifts. We've had great co-operation and a great response.

E-mail contact: <mailto:shibberd@idosnet.co.uk>
Phone contact: Paul Smith 07725 068784

EVANGELISM - a walk and a prayer

From Wokingham

Methodists were among around 300 Christians who took part in The Big Idea - a week of fun. The aim was simple - to bring unconditional blessing to the town: we held 2 open-air services, 3 community fun-day events, a youth event, a visit from comedian Syd Little and ten projects, including tidying-up unsightly areas, painting murals, building a new school path and gardening at the Community Hospital. The Big Idea was well received: the public were especially amazed that all the activities, and even the refreshments, were free!

E-mail contact: <mailto:kp.tame@virgin.net>

Phone contact: Karl Relton 0118 977 2814

THE BUZZ NEEDS 'GOOD NEWS' STORIES FROM YOU!

Contact Roger Hutchings <mailto:rogerhutchings@methodistchurch.org.uk> if you have a story for The Buzz - just leave your name and phone number.

MORE E-NEWS

LOST IN WONDER

A new online space, created by the Methodist Church, invites visitors to join a pilgrimage of discovery, freeing the mind from clutter, calming the spirit and strengthening awareness of and openness to God.

Based on an ancient design, www.lostinwonder.org.uk is an online labyrinth that invites visitors on a spiritual journey of encounter and challenge. A labyrinth is a metaphor for the spiritual journey into death and out again into life.

Ten interactive 'stations' can be visited in any order, each with images, a Bible text, a prayer and a guiding voice leading the guest into the theme of that place. Some stations reflect on the priorities of the Methodist Church - worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism - while others consider different aspects and expressions of spirituality.

"A labyrinth is an ancient way to journey deeper into God's presence and then to travel out again into God's world . This is a place of change and challenge as well as rest and contemplation. We hope people will find in it a freedom that helps them connect with others who want to learn about God's love".

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MCTXT4U

A great new weekly free text service aimed at 9-13s was launched by the Methodist Children team on 1 October. 9-13s can join up and start receiving texts.

Text subjects will cover:

Word - bible text, poem, book recommendation,

Action - could be something to do, read, respond to

Challenge - practical or thought provoking
Prayer - Actual prayers, prayer ideas, people to pray for.
Ur World Heads-up - what is happening in the world (news), fashion,
culture, issues involving children and young people.
Da Buzz - Latest crazes, issues, films, music, jokes
Links - Useful web links

Also a new style bulletin board for the 9-13s called DaBlab to encourage their 'texters' to build an online community and share their views and news. To join for free texts, text JOIN to 07786205203. See www.methodistchildren.org.uk.

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HEART OF WORSHIP

Heart of Worship is a conference, organised by the Methodist Church, for people who care about the development of worship and want to be empowered to make it better.

International speakers, range of workshops + exhibitions will help to explore:

HOW we increase awareness of God's presence and celebrate God's love

HOW we underpin everything we do with God-centred worship and prayer.

Plus - lots of opportunities to worship together. Friday 4th - Monday 7th May 2007 Venue Cymru, Llandudno. Early bird discounts available for bookings received before 30th November 2006.

<http://www.HoW2007.org.uk> for more details and booking form.

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RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Church of England launched their report on Domestic Abuse on 2 October during the course of which they paid generous tribute to the collaboration of the Methodists.

The Women's Network in the Methodist Church began work on the issue in 1999 with their social action project Women and Violence. This led to research within the Methodist Church on Domestic Abuse, the findings from which ensured that further work be done especially around theology, policy and practice. This work was contained in the final report, "Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church ...Taking Action", that was shared with the Church of England working party.

At the press conference Sue Burrige, Secretary to the Anglican work, spoke of her delight in two mainstream denominations coming together over an issue that affects all faith groups.

Margaret Sawyer, Connexional Secretary for the Women's Network In the Methodist Church, said she valued this way of working as one in which "we can overcome our fears and contribute to an open and honest approach to issues of abuse in which the human face of God is scarred."

New worship resources for 'Women Against Violence Sunday' on 26 November are available from the Methodist Church website at:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=pandw.content&cmid=869>

Alternatively they are available from The Women's Network Office, Methodist Church House 25, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR Tel: 020 7467 5175

The Church of England report 2006: Responding to Domestic Abuse: Guidelines for those with pastoral responsibility is available at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/papers/domesticabuse.pdf>

The 2005 Methodist Conference report on Domestic Abuse is available at: http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/conf2005/co_domesticabuse_0805.doc

See also the factsheet on Domestic Abuse:

http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/factsheets/fs_domestic.htm

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MRDF 'SMALL MIRACLES' ADVENT CALENDAR

The new MRDF advent calendar is now available. It features:

- * beautiful pictures and Bible references
- * photos and stories from MRDF's work with Dalit women in India

CHURCH NEWS SERVICE from PARISH PUMP

SAINT DAYS

11th Martin of Tours 316 – 397

This winter, when you next see someone who looks both poor and cold, think of Martin of Tours. This monk bishop, born in Pannonia (now Hungary) became one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages.

Martin's father was a pagan officer in the Roman Army, and Martin was intended for the army as well. But from an early age Martin wanted to be a Christian, and felt that as a Christian he could not serve the Roman Empire. Martin was imprisoned for this early 'conscientious objection', and not released until 357, when nearly 40.

One day Martin met a nearly naked beggar at Amiens. He took off his cloak, cut it in half and gave the half to the beggar. Soon after this, he

had a dream in which Christ appeared to him, wearing the half of cloak which Martin had given away.

Martin was the pioneer of western monasticism: he founded the first monastery in the whole of Gaul about 360. He was made bishop of Tours in 372 – by popular demand of both his clergy and his people.

As bishop, Martin continued his simple life as a monk and evangelist. Christianity had been largely confined to the urban centres of population, but Martin went further, and took Christianity to the pagani (country-men). For 25 years this greatly loved bishop travelled his diocese by donkey and boat, preaching the good news of Jesus Christ, and helping his people to tear down their heathen temples and sacred trees. He was sought out for his healing prayers for the sick, and also

his defence of the faith from heretics.

Martin's emblem in English art is often that of a goose, whose annual migration is about this time of year. 'St Martin's Summer' in England is a spell of fine weather that sometimes occurs around 11th November.

- - -

13th Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850 – 1917)

First saint of New York City

In the aftermath of the terrorist attack on America, many Americans were seen to be 'saintly' in their brave attempts to help save lives. But Frances was the first citizen of the United States to be officially canonized as a saint – by Pope Pius XII in 1946. She founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and worked among orphans, children and the sick of New York.

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Pulling out of the Nosedive

In 1989 the number of people attending church each week in England was 4.7 million. During the 9 years between 1989 and 1998 that number reduced by a million people to 3.7 million.

In the 7 years 1998 to 2005 that number has reduced again, to 3.2 million, half a million less. Bad news and good news! Bad news – the number continues to decline. Good news – the drop is nothing like as steep as it was. We are pulling out of the nosedive!

That is the title of the book on the recent results of the 2005 English Church Census: Pulling out of the Nosedive. It gives the details of how the percentage of the population at-

tending church has dropped from 7.5% in 1998 to 6.3% in 2005. It also tells that there are more growing churches, more people from ethnic minorities in church now, and how the largest churches are growing.

It also explains that many women are not attending so frequently, that 29% of churchgoers are 65 or over, and that more than half the churches have congregations of 50 or fewer people. So there are plenty of challenges ahead if we are really to pull right out of the nosedive and start climbing again!

- - -

Church People are older!

The results of the 2005 English Church Census, recently published, showed that 29% of churchgoers were 65 years of age or older. That compares with 25% in 1998 and 19% in 1989. By contrast, the population figures are, respectively, 16%, 16% and 15%.

This means that not only are churchgoers older than average than the population generally, but, as these percentages show, they have grown proportionately older over the last 16 years. There is an especially large proportion in the age-group 65 to 74, what the Government calls the 'Third Age'. One sixth, 17%, of churchgoers are in this age-group, twice the 8% of the general population.

Older people do not always have the energy of younger people, nor do they have the habits of younger people. Many watch the BBC Sunday evening programme Songs of Praise, and the older they are the more "spiritual" they find it. For those only able to get to church on special occa-

sions like Christmas and Easter, or who are in ill health, such programmes are hugely appreciated.

Many older people are grandparents. Research shows that grandchildren respect the values of their grandparents, many of whom have been influential in helping their grandchildren learn more about Christianity. Perhaps we can encourage them to do more still!

- - -

What are you built on?

“Lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left...” Isaiah 54: 2, 3

How strong and flexible are you, as a person? Did you know the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco can move up to 20 feet in either direction at its centre? It's built to sway - to absorb and accommodate vast daily stresses and heat. But it always comes back to its true centre, because it is built on a vast system of steel and concrete that sinks down into a solid rock foundation far down in the Pacific.

Each of us needs to be anchored like that - onto a sure foundation. Without it, we will be at the mercy of the storms and strong tides of life. Burdens and flying debris from other people's lives will knock us off balance. That foundation for us is Jesus. How is your relationship with him? Is it solid? Is it deep enough to hold you steady on your course as 2006 draws to a close?

Jesus urges us to 'abide' in him. It takes time to get to know him. The Bible is his message to us; prayer is our message back to him, and more: for if we draw close to him, he promises to draw close to us, too.

Caught Napping?

Do you socialise a lot? No wonder you need to nap...

People who gossip, socialise and learn a lot will need to nap more often than those who don't. That is the outcome to a recent scientific study reported on in the journal *Science*.

The study has concluded that our bodies require sleep in order for our brains to process all the interactions of the day. The study, carried out on fruit flies (with whom we apparently share important genes) found that when adult flies were trained to do a complex task, they sleep more. It may be that the brain needs sleep to make the beneficial changes related to social experience and learning.

Any comments readers? Editor.

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A weighty matter

Two thirds of the UK population are already overweight - or even obese. Some doctors are predicting that the current generation may not live as long as their parents, and that the death toll from obesity could surpass even smoking.

There are no easy ways of ducking the problem: the only way is to adopt a healthy lifestyle - and stick with it. Drinking lots of water can help - it suppresses your appetite (hunger is often a sign of thirst), and stops you feeling tired, which will boost your energy levels. Forget takeaways. Forget eating out. Discover the health-conscious chef in you and cook from scratch - using lots of fruit and vegetables. Also, get moving! There is no pill that replaces regular exercise.

- - -

Drink cocoa, think positive – and live long!

A cup of cocoa and a cheerful outlook may well lengthen your life, according to a recent study on elderly Dutchmen. In a study of 470 men over 65, those with the highest cocoa consumption were half as likely to die from cardiovascular disease as others. Cocoa may be beneficial because it is a rich source of antioxidants, which mop up free radicals.

- - -

Remembrance Sunday 12th November

High Streets everywhere will blossom with red poppies this month: everyone from toddlers in prams to grannies will be wearing one. By Remembrance Day more than 33 million are expected to be sold around the county by an army of many thousands of volunteers. The money raised will help our ex-Service people and their dependants. To achieve all that takes more than flower power.

We have recently completed the bloodiest century that the world has ever known. More people died in wars last century than ever before in the history of mankind. Many millions of those died fighting fascism or communism.

How many will die this coming year in our war with international terrorism?

The story behind the Poppy Appeal:

On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, the First World War ended. Civilians

wanted to remember the people who had given their lives for peace and freedom. An American War Secretary, Moina Michael, inspired by John McCrae's poem, began selling poppies to friends to raise money for the ex-Service community. And so the tradition began.

Raising money through poppies is an easy way to do your bit for those who have served and are currently serving in the British Armed Forces, and their dependants. The money you raise will go towards supporting those who have been prepared to make a personal sacrifice through serving in the British Armed Forces.

The Poppy Poem

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies
grow

In Flanders' Fields.

John McCrae

- - -

Prayers and Poems

River and Sky

Move our hearts with the calm,

smooth flow of your grace. Let the river of your love run through our souls. May my soul be carried by the current of your love, towards the wide, infinite ocean of heaven. Stretch out my heart with your strength, as you stretch out the sky above the earth. Smooth out any wrinkles of hatred or resentment. Enlarge my soul that it may know more fully your truth.

Gilbert of Hoyland d 1170

- - -

Rich Days

Welcome to you, rich Autumn days,
Ere comes the cold, leaf-picking
wind;

When golden stocks are seen in fields,
All standing arm-in-arm entwined;
And gallons of sweet cider seen
On trees in apples red and green.

With mellow pears that cheat our
teeth,

Which melt that tongues may suck
them in,

With blue-black damsons, yellow
plums,

And woodnuts rich, to make us go
Into the loneliest lanes we know.

W H Davies

- - -

Peace for this Life

The peace of God be unto you,

The peace of Jesus unto you,

The peace of Spirit unto you,

Be peace unto your children too,

Peace unto you, your children too,

Each day and night let there be peace

Till of  this
world your
portion

cease.

Poem of the Western Highland-

The doctor sat his patient down: "I have some good news and some bad news."

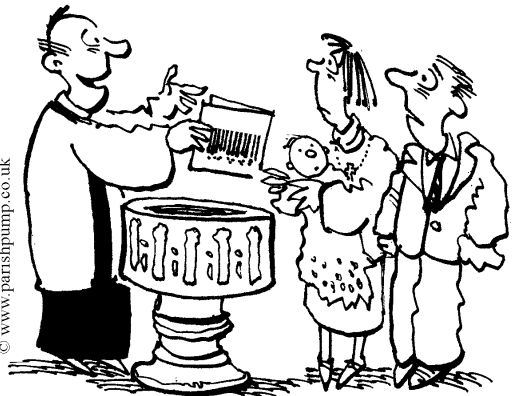
The patient said, "Give me the good news."

The doctor said, "They're going to name a disease after you."

An old lady went to church and heard the young minister preach. When she was leaving someone asked her what she thought of him. "Well!" she said, "he was truly apostolic. He took a text and went everywhere preaching the gospel."

A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted, "Thou shall not take the covers off the neighbour's wife."

Regardless of how many items there



© www.parishpump.co.uk

*...you'll be pleased to know that **all** your son's biometric information is contained on this new style baptism card...*

EXPRESSING YOURSELF?

Here are more metaphors from actual GCSE essays (thanks to David).

The young fighter had a hungry look, the kind you get from not eating for a while.

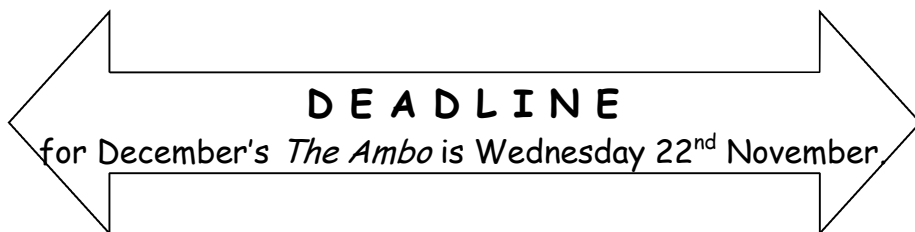
He was as lame as a duck. Not the metaphorical lame duck either, but a real duck that was actually lame. Maybe from stepping on a land mine or something.

Her artistic sense was exquisitely refined, like someone who can tell butter from "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter".

She had a deep, throaty, genuine laugh, like that sound a dog makes just before it throws up.

It came down the stairs looking very much like something no one had seen before.

They do say Beware of a half-truth; you may get hold of the wrong half.



This Newsletter (less personal details) is reproduced on our web site, where photographs are usually reproduced in colour.

Answers to Puzzle Page:
1. DISARMING
2. 1. Wait 2. Miss 3. Kili 4. Dean 5. Dine 6. Sits 7. Thin 8. Hate 9. Kiwi
10. Anon 11. Neat 12. Boot 13. Anti 14. Limp 15. Bald 16. Sane 17. Acre
18. Lift 19. Chic 20. Safe.
It is kindness I want not animal sacrifices. Matthew 12:7.

THE CHURCH CENTRE is open Monday - Saturday 0900 - 1230

Tel. 01761 410450 Answerphone on at other times

Web-site at www.msnmcc.org

Address: High St., Midsomer Norton, Somerset. BA3 2DR

CHURCH DIARY

Sun 5 2000

Wed 15 1730-2130

Sat 18 0830

Sat 18 1900

Wed 22 1900

Wed 22

Sat 25

SUN 26 aft serv.

DECEMBER

Fri 1

Sun 10 aft eve ser.

Sat 9 0830

Sun 10 1800

Wed 6 1945

Wed 13 1930-2100

Sun 17 1800

Thu 21 1930

Sun 24 1800

Sun 24 2330

Christmas Day 1000

Sun 31 1030

2007

BFG meet at Cathy's House.

WWDOP Evening Conference at Wells Rd, Bristol

Men's Breakfast Fellowship 9breakfast from 8am).

CAMEO - Swimming at Fosse Way Sch +F/chip sup

Stewards' Meeting.

Deadline for December's *The Ambo*.

Christmas Bazaar.

Annual Church Meeting.

Town's Christmas Shopping Evening – Centre open.

CAMEO Carols with fruit punch + mince pie.

Men's Breakfast Fellowship (breakfast from 8am).

Circuit Ser. for Mike Evans' LP Recognition Service.

Circuit Wives' Group Carol Service at Radstock.

Christian Aid Coffee Evening at 28 North Rd, MN.

Annual Candlelit Carol Service.

Concert of Carols and Music for Christmas.

Evening Service will be a Christingle Service.

Midnight Communion.

Morning Service.

Morning Service only.

JANUARY

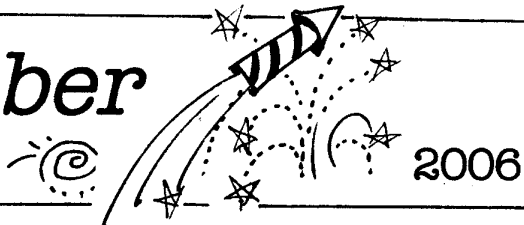
Fri 12 1900

Tue 16 1930

CAMEO Get-Together at Church Centre

Resources Committee meets.

November



Activities & Events

Weekly activities are displayed in the Centre's Reception area, where posters for special events will be on the Noticeboard, Details on a weekly notice sheet are also available there.

Sunday Worship

Morning Service - 10.30 am : Evening Worship - 6.00 pm

2nd Sundays - Breakfast Praise 9.30 am (Coffee/Toast from 9.00)

+ Community Mini-bus picks up less-abled friends for 10.30 service.

You are invited to join us at any time.