

The Ambo

April 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 the pen of my grandfather, written in September 1898:

It wouldn't take long to convert this country, if every Christian was in earnest; but what can you expect if they go to church one night, to the theatre the next, and to a card party the night after? It takes about a thousand Christians to make one decent one now.

[Ed. *Dare I say: 'Not much has changed'*]

This month's issue is full of the usual 'goodies' - looking back, looking forward and all that is happening or being thought about in between.

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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MY VISION

It was my pleasure to speak at the Men's Breakfast on Saturday February 18th. I was given the theme of 'My Vision'. Below are some notes from what I shared.....

'Like anybody I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. So I am happy tonight I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord' . With these words Martin Luther King Jr inspired his followers at a meeting in Memphis the night before his assassination.

King said that his work as a leader in the civil rights movement in America began one night in his kitchen. There he received an anonymous telephone call from a man threatening to 'blow his brains' out if he didn't get out of town. He was afraid and cried out to God – *'Lord, I'm down here trying to do what is right. I think I'm right. I think that the cause we represent is right. But Lord, I must confess that I am weak now, I'm faltering. I'm losing my courage.'* And it seemed at that moment I could hear an inner voice saying to me, *'Martin Luther,*

stand up for righteousness, Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo I will be with you always, even until the end of the world..' I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone.' Three nights later a bomb exploded on the front porch of his home – the rest, as they say, is history.

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

- Is it the insistence of the alarm clock, the duty call of another day or is it a compelling vision – the clarion call of Christ on your life that draws you near to His throne and sends you out into His world.

What is your dream, your vision?

- Each of us is meant to be a dreamer, people who hold fast to a vision that beckons us ever onwards to serve Christ and to witness to those around us who have yet to receive Him as Lord and Saviour.

Without a dream/vision the people 'perish'

– The word 'perish' could be better translated 'wander astray' or meander aimlessly'. Individuals and churches can suffer from this where, despite our busyness, we lack genuine direction and purpose.

We need the right 'prescription

– For those of us who wear spectacles we all recognize the need to wear a pair with the prescription

MY VISION cont'd

that suits our eyes. It is tempting to observe an effective 'vision' at work in another person or church and then try to 'wear' it ourselves. It is imperative that we discover God's 'prescription' for us so that it suits our needs and God's plans.

Vision/Dreams costs – Joseph soon discovered this and his brothers certainly let him know about it! Yet at the close of day Joseph believed that though they meant it for evil God had meant it for good.

When the Apostle Paul shared with King Agrippa how he had a revelation of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus and how Christ had commissioned him to go and take the gospel to the Gentiles he closed by saying - (Acts 26:19) *"I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven."*

Paul's ministry was motivated by vision and he held this vision so keenly that he believed the very message he preached came through direct revelation from the Lord - (Gal 1:12) *"I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."*

My Vision - Like the Apostle, Paul, I am determined to - (Phil.3:12) *"... press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."* My personal vision/dream is to see and serve a church that is -

- 1) Relevant – We must be a people who 'scratch' where the people around us are 'itching' and ask the Lord how we can best impact our community for Him.
 - 2) Radical – We must resist the temptation to water down the gospel so as to appease people. The gospel will be an 'offence' to some but it is still *"...the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.."*
 - 3) Relational – Research has shown that the most effective way to reach out to people is when each of us shares Jesus with the people around us. By building honest relationships with others they will see Jesus in the way we live as well as through the words we say.
- Peter Marshall said – *"Give us clear vision that we may know where to stand and what to stand for, because unless we stand for something, we shall fall for anything."*

Mike Howell, Welton Baptist.

They do say ... Life isn't a matter of holding good cards, but playing a poor hand well.

The Bible says If the world hates you, just remember it has hated me first. *John 15:18.*

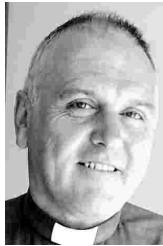
MINISTER'S LETTER

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

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter halfway through the season of Lent. I am however, looking beyond this season of solemnity to Holy Week and Easter Day. Holy Week begins by focusing attention on Jesus as He enters Jerusalem on a donkey and he is welcomed by the people of the city. 'Hosanna blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord' they cry. They are quite prepared to give Him their palms and their praises. Jesus however, was asking the people for their hearts and their allegiance; it is here that we see the tragedy of Palm Sunday laid bare.

As we journey through He cleanses the temple; as he fig tree, and as He eats the This meal takes on a new sig- and wine and shares them with the bread and wine are His broken for them, and of



generations to come, on the cross. This is the meal which binds Christians together as followers of Jesus; unfortunately it is also the meal which divides the church. When the supper is over Jesus goes with His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane where He is arrested. He is taken to be tried before the Jewish Council (the Sanhedrin) and then before Pilate and King Herod. After these trials He is taken to Calvary and is crucified to show to all the lengths which God's love will go to for His creation. During Holy week we will have the opportunity to journey with Jesus during our services on Palm Sunday at 10.30am and 6pm. We will be holding a Communion service at 7.30pm on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday we will be sharing in a Walk of Witness which this year will start at the bridge on The Greenway at 9.45am we shall visit each of the churches in the town. We will also be stopping outside FDC Law and Sainsbury's. After the Walk of Witness we shall hold a short service in our own church at 11.30am.

Holy Week we follow Jesus as rests at Bethany; as he curses the Passover meal with His disciples. nificance as Jesus takes bread His disciples, saying to them that body and blood which will be course, all who will follow in

On Good Friday evening there will be a Service of Reflection at church for all the circuit; this will commence at 7.30pm.

Easter Day will commence with a Communion Service at Chew Valley Lake. As I write this letter times have not been finalised, so look in the notices for more details. Our morning service will be at 10.30am, this will be a Family Communion, our evening service will be at 6pm.

At Easter we celebrate Our Lord's resurrection from the dead, this is the most important festival in the church's year for by rising from the dead Jesus showed that He was truly God. He also taught us that we can find New Life in

MINISTER'S LETTER cont'd

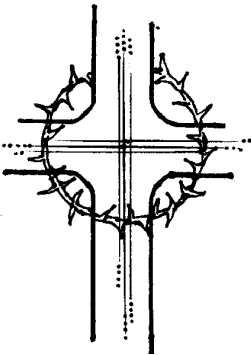

Him. So Easter is a time of New Life and may we use the Easter season to re-commit ourselves to Christ, to be used by Him to bring New Life to the church, our community and our world. As Christians this is really what we should be about, for the world does indeed need to be filled with the example of Jesus, the one who came and who still comes to bring life, life in all its fullness.

I do hope that we will all try to be present in church over Holy Week and Easter so that we can truly share the journey with Jesus to the Cross and the Resurrection.

On Sunday 23rd of April our evening service will be at St John's at 6pm, this will be one of a number of services throughout the year that we will be sharing with our friends from St John's, in each others church. Come and join in this Easter Praise.

May each of us find this time of Easter a blessed and happy time.

Grace Joy and Peace



Ode to Victoria Falls

Above the April canopy of green
Can from some miles away be clearly seen
A long thin cloud of smoke, which seems to burn
But not consume. Incredulous I turn
Like Moses, to learn more. As I draw near
A sound like ceaseless thunder hits my ear.
These are the cataracts the local call
Mosi oa Tunya, where the waters fall
Towards Earth's centre, causing mists to rise
Up, up and up, aspiring to the skies.

This is not yet the moment to rejoice;
Wonder and worship are the present voice,
Then through the Smoke that Thunders come a sound,
"Take off your shoes: you stand on holy ground
This is a drop of my unceasing Love.
You cannot see below it, nor above,
Nor through it, nor beyond to left or right.
Such is my Love, my Majesty, my Might.
Look to the sky where I have set my Bow
Of everlasting faithfulness and know."

Written by Douglas' friend Michael Sharman.

DID YOU KNOW?

At least 6 members of our Church Family took part and completed the Midsomer Norton Triathlon late last summer (16 lengths of Leisure Centre pool, 18 kilometres cycling + 5 kilometres running).

James was sponsored by friends and many of the Church Family, to whom he says a big THANK YOU.

His Dad, Stuart, was sponsored by friends and workmates at Polestar.

Just before Christmas, Stuart, Charlene and James went to Bristol Royal Infirmary and presented a cheque for £700 to the Special Baby Unit.

Many thanks to ALL the sponsors.

THOUGHTS TO SHARE

Father Michael of Downside Abbey came and spoke to the Men's Fellowship on Saturday 11th March and gives us these thoughts for all to share:

Through our Baptism, we are called by Our Lord and Saviour to follow Him, to trust in Him, and to imitate Him in His life and work on earth. This is a beautiful and most awe-inspiring invitation, and it is only in the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to respond. Each day, the call to Discipleship is renewed, and often several times in that day: no call is the same, and our reply is likewise different, building on the previous one. In this way we grow in the knowledge and love of God. Trials will always beset us, but Our Lord is with us to protect and guide; and to raise us up once more when we have fallen.

And the call is greater still than all of this. We are actually invited to share in the work of bringing others to the

Saviour. By definition, a Christian is an evangelist. This is not a matter of eloquence or learning, but rather by letting Christ speak and act through us. People who meet us should encounter Christ. Our smile, our cheerfulness, our peace, our forbearance are a most powerful statement of our Faith. The world, for all its faults, still recognises and admires the real thing, still yearns for meaning and truth, still hungers for a Redeemer and a Friend.

The disciple of Christ has never been more valuable to our society, where real virtue has been supplanted by the virtually real, where love has been displaced by sex, security by cash, joy by sensuality, and wisdom by factual information. Never let the evil one discourage us by high-lighting our failures and the indifference of those around us. God indeed has chosen us in His mysterious plan and "the Love of the Lord will be our strength".

PRAYER PAGE

This month we are focusing our prayers on an area due south of our town centre, map ref. C5, copied with permission of Standbrook Guides.

Living God,

We pray for our community, that in its homes and streets people may hear your voice. In their longing to be loved and valued, may they learn that you have always been there patiently waiting for us all to turn to you in faith and love to receive the new life you give.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Week 1. (Sun.2nd Apr. – Sat.8th Apr.)

Boundary Close; Charlton Park; Charlton Road; *Charlton Newsagents*; Norton Down Methodist Church.

Week 2. (Sun. 9th Apr. – Sat. 15th Apr.)

Norton Hill School – Head Teacher Mr Peter Beaven, approximately 87 Teaching Staff & 1300 pupils; Grange End; Kestrel Place.

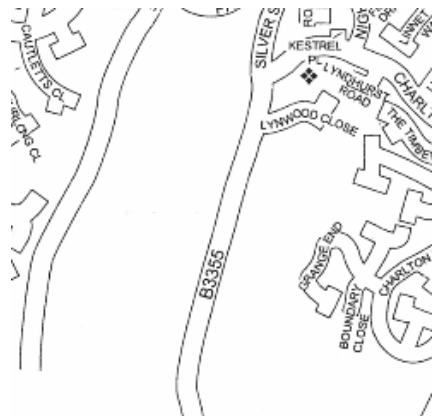
Week 3. (Sun. 16th Apr. – Sat. 22nd Apr.)

Linnet Way; Lyndhurst Road; Lynton Road; Lynwood Close; Nightingale Way; *Alcan Packaging*.

Week 4. (Sun. 23rd Apr. – Sat. 29th Apr.)

Park Way; Robin Close; Silver Street; *Midsomer Norton South Railway Station* (restored by volunteers from the *Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust*).

Your Notes:



FOR MUSIC LOVERS??

At this time of Easter it may be appropriate to pass on an item:

'Messiah' by Handel

Most people will, at least, have heard of this great oratorio, but have you ever been to a live performance of it? One such performance was being given in the Cleckheaton Town Hall many years ago and old Cuthbert Briggs thought he might like to go. He tried to persuade his wife Hilda to go with him, but she wasn't keen.

"Nay, Cuthbert, tha' knows it's nowt in my line. Gi' me a bit o' comedy or a singalong at t'end of Blackpool pier any day. No, thee go by the sen an' tell an' tell me all abaht it when tha' comes home."

So Cuthbert went on his own. He had no idea what to expect; in fact he had never heard of the Messiah. It was just that he fancied doing something a bit different from his usual Saturday night visit to the Sun Inn.

When he got back home Cuthbert's wife was all ears. "Come on then, tell us all abaht it." "Ee by gum", said Cuthbert, "it were all reyt but not quite what I was expecting. There weren't a lot of movement on t' stage. It were full of singers. Ah'd been sat there a bit when in comes a load o' fellas carrying fiddles. Then they brought on the biggest fiddle ah've ever seen, an' it were that big they 'ad to wheel it in on castors. An' then a little chap rubbed its belly wi' a stick an' you should 'ave 'eard it groan. It sounded like a cow wi' t'croup. Well, all t' fid-

dles joined in an' made such a racket an' they settled dahn an' it all went quiet.

After abaht a minute in comes t'Messiah; least, I think it were 'im cos everybody clapped an' all t'fiddlers stood up to welcome 'im. 'E were a dapper of a bloke, all dolled up in a white waikit wi' a red carnation in 'is buttonhole. Aye, ah'm sure he must a' been t'Messiah. Then he picked up a little stick and started wavin' it abaht at everybody on t'stage. They were all staring at 'im wondering what were up. Then they started t'sing.

They'd not been going long before they were fratching like cats. They wanted to know who t'King of Glory was. First one side said He is the King of Glory, then t'other side said He is the King of Glory. An' then they went at it 'ammer and tongs but it fizzled out in t'end. Then there was a reight todo about some sheep 'as 'ad gone astray. Some o' t'singers must a' been partial to a bit o' mutton 'cos they kept singing "O we like sheep". Me sen, I like a bit o' well done steak, but anyway.

Well, ah think them lost sheep must a' belonged t' one o' t'singers cos 'e stood up an' said every mountain an' 'ill should be laid low. "Good", I thowt ter missen, "if they flatten all t'mountains, they'll be sure to find t'sheep 'ats gone astray." Then t'organist started up an' t'band joined in and ee by gum, they seemed to be getting mad over summat.

FOR MUSIC LOVERS?? cont'd

T'way they were sawing them fiddles ah were expecting them to fall apart.

Then, after that, all t'women stood up t'sing. Believe me, some on 'em were a bit past it by t'look on em. They must a' bin 70 if they were a day. An' they sang "Unto us a child is born" an' all t'fellas shouted "Wonderful". Ah thowt to mesen, it's a blooming miracle! Then they composed their sens a bit an'sang about a woman called Joyce Greetly. Ah'd never heard o'er, but she's apparently t'daughter of Zion, whoever 'e is.

Ah were getting a bit fed up by nah. Ah'd been sat fo' nearly 2 hours when all of a sudden ah got cramp in me leg. Up ah jumped aht o'me seat

an' do yer know, rest of 'em jumped up at t'same time. They must all 'ave all 'ad cramp same as me. Then t'choir shouted "Hallelujah, it's going to rain for ever and ever". Well, ah'd never thowt to bring me broolly, so ah thowt ah'd better get off 'ome before it started. So seein' as ah were already on me feet, ah reckoned ah'd slip off 'ome quick in case there were a rush fer t'door. Ah think ah might a missed t'last bit, but ah reckon ah'd 'ad me moneysworth. Anyroad, it were a good do, but I do 'ope they find them lost sheep!!!

Sent in by Jill; read at a male voice concert her father attended.

Making The Connection

Think of the difference fair trade brings,
the dignity of wages for work that is valued.
Pride in the history of learning to grow,
to carve, to stitch: that sense of purpose.

Think of the power of a coffee bean,
the taste of satisfaction. Crops grown,
enjoyed by others, appreciated,
giving the pleasure of making plans.

Think of the fingers that made that stitch,
weaving us together, thread to thread,
touch upon touch, smile meeting smile.
Imagine the dream and feel it taking shape.

Think of connecting hope with reality,
one world with another, lives and hearts
and voices in a joyful celebration.
Rejoice in the difference fair trade brings.

Fiona Ritchie Walker.



They do say ...
I've had amnesia
for as long as I
can remember

The Bible says
The rich and poor
have this in com-
mon: the Lord
made them both.

Proverbs 22:2.

MISSION

The Avon & Somerset Constabulary Male Voice Choir will be performing here at a special Charity Concert on Saturday 8th April 7.30 p.m.

The choir last gave a concert at this venue some 10 years ago, and, since its original formation in 1974 has gone from strength to strength, performing both in the U K and abroad.

Truly representative of the Force, membership consists entirely of serving and retired police officers, support staff and special constabulary. Their wish is to maintain the tradition of choral singing in a pleasant social environment and they do so under the professional leadership and tuition of their musical director Alison Howell and accompanist Julie Payne. They also want to share that musical tradition with the community, raise funds for local organizations and charities and to act as ambassadors for the Force.

Their repertoire covers a wide range, from medieval and classical choral music, much loved ballads, and operatic choruses to arrangements of popular songs from stage and film musicals. The choir enjoys a high reputation for its quality of performance for which it has been awarded numerous cups and certificates in choral competitions.

This event on 8th April is to support our Church Project 2006/7, Mildmay Mission Hospital which works with young Aids sufferers, particularly in Africa.



An enjoyable evening for all musical tastes is promised. Tickets at £6 are available from the Church Centre Reception any morning (9am – 12.30 p.m.) or on the door on the night.

Our thanks to Fred who was instrumental in inviting the Choir.

Please do support this event, and, as always, let us know of your ideas for fund-raising.

John.

— — — —
CHRISTIAN AID

The recent Hunger Lunch (Sunday 5th March) held at St. John's Church Hall raised £230.00. This will be sent to Christian Aid specifically for the grave food and water situation in Eastern Africa.

Thank you to all who participated.

MISSION cont'd

This month we ask you to start thinking of your nominations for the next Church Project to start on 1st September 2006.

As before you will need to submit a short written explanation of the work

of the charity and why we should consider it for the Church Project.

These will be presented in *The Ambo* in the May and June issues and then voting forms will be in the July magazine for all to vote.

The results will be in August.

I WANT TO HELP BUT

This month we look at the **Women's Meetings:**

Why Two Women's Meetings? Women's Fellowship and Wives' Group. A good question! Within this Circuit the first step has been taken and one Circuit Women's Meeting or Network Meeting has been formed. Midsomer Norton is the only church to have a Women's Fellowship (or Bright Hour as it was known) and is the only women's meeting to meet afternoons. Wives' Group meet evenings and was originally Young Wives. (The 'Young' was dropped some years ago!)

The W F was started over 50 years ago, when the Hall was built. It met fortnightly as there was already a 'Sewing Meeting' which made goods for bazaars etc.

Initially some ladies looked after the pre-school children whilst mothers were at W F, but with the increase in Playgroups things changed a little, and mothers were staying and chatting. So it was decided to start a Young Wives' Group for these mothers on alternate

Wednesdays, and the W F ladies would look after the children. The group would finish in time for mothers to collect older children from school. The idea was that as children grew to school age mothers would transfer to Women's Fellowship – hence keeping Young Wives young! Unfortunately this has not happened (Jean was the last to transfer!).

This now means we have two meetings basically catering for the same group of women. In the case of W F there are no younger members (i.e. under 70) to take on responsibilities of office.

However, all ladies in the church belong to **Network** which holds various events and projects but the support for this is a bit one-sided, (mostly W F members).

Meetings content is similar but W F is more formal and has more of a mix with services for Christian Festivals, do-it-yourself afternoons and money-raising events. WF also has 4 meetings per session to give an overseas or home Network theme with Bring & Buy stalls for Network Funds.

I WANT TO HELP BUT cont'd

It would be lovely to combine the groups – there are half a dozen ladies who attend both meetings. Already each Christmas we have a dinner together and take it in turns to arrange entertainment.

Here is where the younger ladies of the church need to say what type of things they would enjoy. Come to some of the meetings, you will be welcome.

Network, nationwide is very aware of the problem of catering for, and enthusing, the younger members.

At present there is an urgent need for a Circuit Network Secretary, so if you feel able and are interested, have a word with me.

Jean..

Helen, on behalf of the Wives' Group, agrees with Jean's Comments. After the initial setting up the group now has members from a wider area than our church family.

Both groups are loyally supported by its ladies and contact is maintained by the secretaries meeting, exchanging information, getting updates on Network issues and arranging joint events.

Maybe the time is coming for new Mums and other ladies to join and the two groups will need to rethink for the future.

So, new folk, it's over to you!

WHEN DID I SEE YOU?

This question of Jesus to his followers is as fresh today as it was then. You can read the six quotations in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 25.

'When Did I See You?' is the theme for this year's Easter Offering. Envelopes will be distributed on Palm Sunday and collected on Easter Day or following Sunday.

All proceeds go to the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission, which includes Network Funds. This enables, among other things, the following to be funded:

Grants for Partner Churches overseas;

Support for long and short term Mission Partners'

Training for Mission Partners; and World Church in Britain Programme Special Projects.

The Circuit Easter Offering Dedication Service will be held at Pease-down St. John's Methodist Church on Thursday 4th May at 2.30 p.m. the service this year has been written by Irene Sayer, who is coming to Mid-somer Norton for the Network week-end on 10th/11th June.

Thank you for your generous giving, your prayerful support and interest. We support the work of 61 Methodist Partner Churches Overseas.

PUZZLE PAGE

1 What word across makes nine words down?

A	R	O	I	P	A	S	H	T
E	T	D	P	D	E	E	N	Y

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

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

- 1) Pile 2) Fancy 3) Stone 4) Sonic 5) Scorch 6) No charge 7) Not all
 8) On (such as ship) [6 letters] 9) Animal doctors 10) Embrace 11) Telephoned
 12) Region 13) Narrate 14) Separate 15) Suspend 16) Scruff 17) Hades.

3. Well known phrases (but hidden)

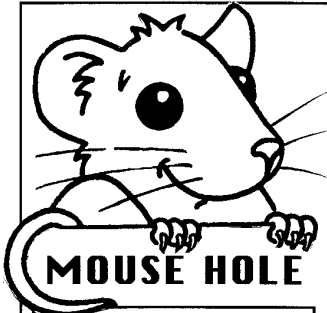
E.g. WONDERSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS..... = Wonders never cease.

- 1) ANDSOONANDSOONANDSOON.....
- 2) ONESTEPSPETSOWT
- 3) GNIOG

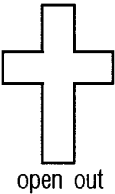
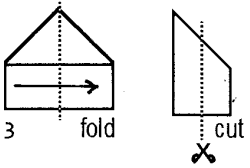
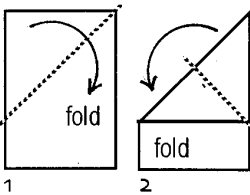
Answers on penultimate page.

They do say ... A successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks the others throw at them.

FOR the YOUNG at HEART



Fold-a-Cross

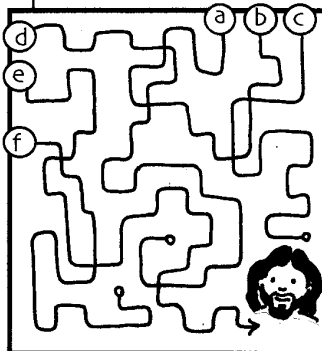


Decorate with Easter colours and patterns

I **light** the way so you can see,
I **show** the path, just follow me.
I **guide** you on the way to go,
I **teach** you all you need to know.
I **rescue** you, I set you free,
I **love** you, just as God loves me.



I am the **way**,
the **truth**,
the **life**.

I am JESUS



Which way to Jesus?

Look up the Bible verses, fill in the blanks!


 I _____ John 8:12
 A _____ John 14:6 
 John 4:25-26 M _____
 T _____ John 14:6
 John 10:11 H _____
 _____ E John 11:25

A CHALLENGE

Ask your child or grandchild who the Easter Bunny is, and what he does. Then, ask the little one in your life exactly who Santa Claus is and what he does.

Finally, ask him/her who Jesus Christ is and what He does; and ask the older ones in your family!

You might be surprised to know that many children, and adults for that

matter, cannot accurately answer two basic questions:

Who is Jesus Christ?

What did He do for You?

This is what the celebration of Easter is all about..... the core of our faith.

Children should know, (as should all of us), without a doubt, what this season of brightly coloured eggs and chocolate bunnies is truly all about.

EASTER SYMBOLS

At Easter it appears to be all bunnies, eggs and flowers in the shops.

Why are they symbols of Easter?



One of the oldest symbols in the world is the egg – it promises new life in Spring, fluffy yellow chicks are hatched from eggs.



The hare was a symbol of the moon, and is connected to Easter because the date of Easter depends upon the full

moon. Over time, the hare became a rabbit as rabbits are more numerous!



The lamb represents Jesus, and links his death to that of the lamb sacrificed on the first Passover. Jesus is called 'The Lamb of God'.



Lilies are used to decorate churches. The large white flowers remind us of the new life that comes through the resurrection of Jesus.

EASTER at M N METHODIST

Maundy Thursday 7.30 p.m.

Communion Service

Good Friday 9.45 a.m.

Walk of Witness

Start: the bridge on the Greenway, visiting each church and finishing with a short service at

11.30 a.m. at M N Methodist

7.30 p.m.

A Circuit Service of Reflection to include items by the Circuit Choir

Easter Sunday tba a.m.

Communion Service at
Chew Valley Lake

10.30 a.m.

Family Communion
Rev. David W. Watson

6.00 p.m.

Evening Worship
Rev. David W. Watson.

Come and Join us in our Celebrations

LOOKING FORWARD



MEN'S BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP

Saturday 8th April 8.30 a.m.—9.30 a.m.

Breakfast served from 8 am.

In the Church Centre.

Prof. Douglas Hooper of 'Relate' will speak on

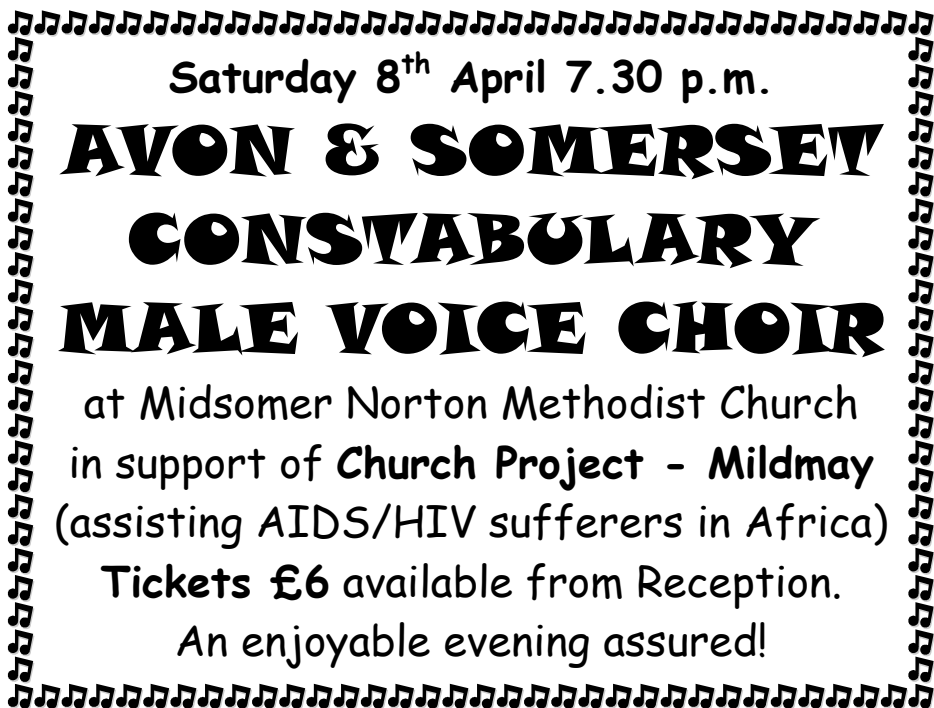
'Do Fathers really matter?'

MEN'S EVENING FELLOWSHIP

Thursday 27th April 8pm

At 96 Radstock Rd., M N

Looking at the prophet Habakkuk.



Saturday 8th April 7.30 p.m.

AVON & SOMERSET

CONSTABULARY

MALE VOICE CHOIR

at Midsomer Norton Methodist Church

in support of **Church Project - Mildmay**
(assisting AIDS/HIV sufferers in Africa)

Tickets **£6** available from Reception.

An enjoyable evening assured!

St. George's Day



FARCE

Saturday 22nd April 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.

Light Refreshments; from 12 noon LUNCHES

by Helen and BFG.

All the usual STALLS



- | | | |
|-------------|---------|---------|
| Books | Records | Kathy |
| Bric-a-Brac | | Fred |
| Cakes | | Dee |
| Drapery | | Doreen |
| Good as New | | Maureen |
| Garden | | John |
| Groceries | | Carol |
| Stationery | | June |
| Toys | | Linda |
| Crafts | | Liz |
| Raffle | | Ray |



- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Home-cooked Ham & Preserves | Cyril |
| Jewellery/Toiletries | Eunice |
| Car Wash | SMASH — see next page |



Plus SIDESHOWS -

Tombola, lucky dip, guess the weight +others.

Offers of help needed to man the side shows
please contact Marjorie.

Collection of items to John.

LOOKING FORWARD cont'd

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A NICE CLEAN CAR

'SMASH' WILL BE GETTING WET AGAIN

[SMASH is Sunday Meeting And Social Hour]

Saturday 22nd April 9am to midday ...

for CHURCH FUNDS.



Treat your car to a wash,

power rinse & shammy for £4

Or pamper it by adding a vac &

dust for an additional £3



In Mendip engineering car park (behind ex job centre);

drop your car off, or wait for it inside, with cup of tea.

Please park in Sainsbury's car park; if dropping your car off early

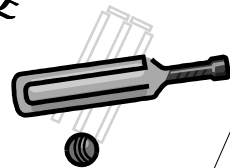
- please put keys in envelope marked with:

your car colour, reg, name; if you need to collect it before midday

& if you want the wash or the deluxe wash & vac!

COME & SUPPORT ALL THE HARD WORKERS

CRICKET CLUB
JUMBLE SALE
Saturday 8th April
9.am. — 12 noon.



The Bible says
Be on watch, be alert, for you do not know when the time will come.

Mark 13:33.

LOOKING FORWARD cont'd

GUILD CELEBRATION - Bristol District

Tuesday 25th April - 7.30 p.m.

at Knowle Methodist Church, Bristol.

Speaker: Rev. Ian Cramb.

All are welcome.

The Methodist Church is on the Bristol/Wells Road,
just passed the Broad Walk Shopping Precinct.

Parking: Multi-storey in Redcatch Road, or use side streets nearby
If transport required, or if you have spare seats, please see Jean.

EASTER MONDAY

VISIT TO

WESTON-SUPER-MARE

April 17th 2.15 p.m.

Meet at the car park, Old Pier end, for a walk by the rocks
and through the gardens. Bring a light tea.

For those who wish, the homeward journey will include a stop
at Cheddar for fish and chips.

For more details and weather check on the day contact Jim.

A taxi passenger tapped the driver on the shoulder to ask him a question. The driver screamed, lost control of the car, nearly hit a bus, went up on the foot-path, and stopped centimetres from a shop window.

For a second everything went quiet in the cab, then the driver said, "Look mate, don't ever do that again. You scared the daylight out of me!"

The passenger apologized and said, "I didn't realize that a little tap would scare you so much.

"The driver replied, "Sorry, it's not really your fault. Today is my first day as a cab driver. For the last 25 years I've been driving a hearse."

They do say ... Eventually you will reach a point where you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

AN INVITATION



Registered Charity No. 1048219

A VIGIL TO MARK A DISASTER

A candlelit Vigil on the Wells Cathedral Green will mark the day, twenty years ago, when a major explosion destroyed the Chernobyl nuclear power station on the borders of Ukraine and Belarus. April 26th, 1986 was the fateful day, when the nuclear accident changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in both countries and beyond.

The Wells-based Children of Chernobyl Charity is organising the Vigil at which the Bishop of Bath and Wells, a patron, will give a blessing. There will be readings and music and Elena Tarasova who came over with the very first group of children to the Wells area will travel from her homeland to take part.

The Vigil, which starts at 7.00 p.m. and lasts for about an hour, is part of a year-long countrywide recognition of the anniversary by Chernobyl charities and support organisations.

Running alongside the Vigil will be a week-long exhibition of the charity's work over the 15 years since it was set up, together with a look to the

future. This will take place from Monday, April 24th to Friday, April 28th in the Wells Museum.

“Although the accident was twenty years ago, children in the affected areas, together with their families are still suffering a growing incidence of cancers as well as depressive illnesses, brought on by living with the continual threat of low level radiation,” explains Rosie Price. “Our charity works in the very rural villages close to the accident where, sadly, fewer resources are available.”

The charity will be bringing twelve youngsters aged from 9-12 years to Wells from the villages this summer where they will stay with local families for a month. “We are looking for local families to host the children and give them a month they will always remember,” says Rosie. As well as hosts we need drivers, mini-bus drivers, volunteers to organise and help run a clothing bank during the visit, as well as help with escorting children on trips. Anyone interested in hosting or helping with the visit should ring Rosie Price 01458 446294.

On the Noticeboard in the Link is an invitation to all members of M N Methodist Church to attend this vigil, + wine & cheese reception. RSVP requested. Please read it.

Clothing: *Especially for older children can be given to Martin by say May as a convoy goes out in June. Baby and toddler clothing is not required. Thank you, Ed.*

A SMILE

If we could count yesterday's smiles and double that number today.
We might feel the kind of happiness that would take our frowns away.

A smile can say so many things and still not speak a word.
So many times a smile has said, the kindest words I've heard.

We know a smile says nothing wrong like the words we'd like to say,
Let's try to smile more often to brighten someone's day.

A smile doesn't show any envy, it shows only care.
To give one never costs a thing, it was given for us to share.

Sent in by Helen Chivers from 'Place & Time' Autumn/Winter 2005/6.

They do say ... Marriage is only ever easy when you accept it's always going to be difficult.

The Bible says May the nations be glad and sing for joy, because you judge the peoples with justice, and guide every nation on earth. *Psalm 76:4.*

SUNK WITHOUT TRACE?

In the last few months, one local household has been having a good clearout and general reorganisation involving the disposal of accumulated items and papers well past their sell-by date. 'What are you holding on to that for, it should have gone to a jumble/car boot sale. As for those old books, why keep them when you are unlikely to read them again?' Most readers are probably familiar with the scenario!

So the electric paper shredder has been going overtime on papers of present and past generations, setting in motion some deep thoughts. How easy it is to expunge from our lives all references to our forebears, as if they had never existed! No doubt this goes on all the time when bank accounts are closed and medical records are pulped, to name but a few instances. * (As an aside, there is an increasing interest in researching 'family trees' as evidenced by the recent TV series 'Who do you think you are' and there are computer programmes to aid recording any discoveries made).

And how easy it is, in this computer age, to eliminate or create people's identities for good or ill. Worrying, isn't it - or just a fact of life?

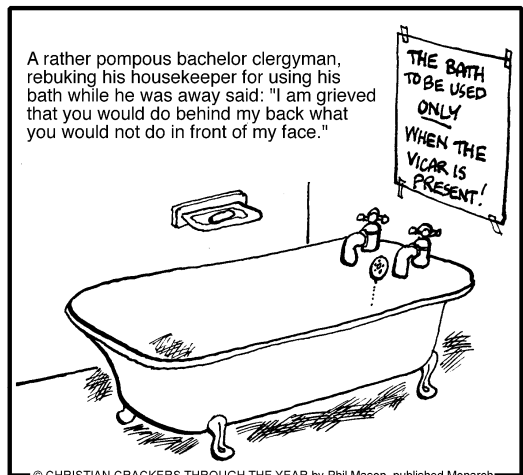
A former company director of a publication was heard to query whether eight years on the board had actually achieved anything worthwhile as the day to day

power was vested in the editor who appeared to ignore board advice.

Or a former trustee of a charity that had been fighting to survive in a changed world, wondered what had been achieved during a similar period of time, trying to keep 'the old ship afloat' in order to serve those needing its help.

So, what is the result of all we seek to do in this life? Is it wasted, or is it of eternal significance? Perhaps we should not be overly anxious if 'in our day and generation' we have sought to do our best, and focus not on the limitations of our human span, but ultimately on Jesus' words, 'Come, good and faithful servant,!'

* The general rule under the Statute of Limitations is to retain documents for six years, but exceptions can apply. Professional advice should be sought in the case of doubt.



THREE STEPS TO

Being a 21st century leader.

Trust your people: Effective communication, strong teams and a demonstrable value set founded on integrity and honesty are the most valuable leadership characteristics. These attributes deliver competitive advantage and are a prerequisite to responding quickly to changes.

Be in touch with your feminine side: There's a recognition the differing management styles of men and women can provide a powerful blend. An increasing number of companies value the collaborative leadership styles associated with women.

Know your limits: Successful business leaders are willing to recognize their own limitations and draft in external talent to work with them through rapid growth and change.

SITUATIONS VACANT

SENIOR YOUTH CLUB (APPROX TENS TO SIXTEENS)

Opening in September

Monday nights, 7.30-9pm

Male and female leaders

required to offer an average of
one night per month.

Coordinators to carry out reception duties and to provide continuity.

(3 required in total - 2 to attend
each evening).

Please contact Marjorie.

A lady went into the Post Office, "I want to send this parcel by Air Mail to my Godchild in Australia", she said.

"What's in it?" asked the Postmaster.

"Some books and a Bible", said the woman.

"Anything breakable?" asked the Postmaster.

"Only the Ten Commandments", replied the woman.

The Bible says When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was thrown into an uproar. "Who is he?" the people asked *Matthew 21:10.*

PICTURE PARABLE

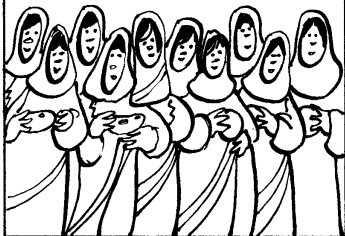
The TEN YOUNG WOMEN



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS - WE CALL THEM "PARABLES".



JESUS ONCE SPOKE ABOUT TEN YOUNG WOMEN



THEY HAD BEEN INVITED TO A WEDDING - AND THEY WERE WAITING FOR THE BRIDGROOM.



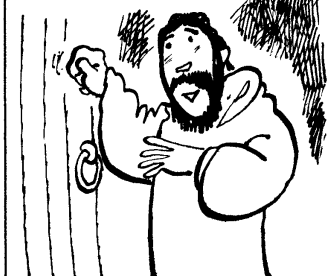
EACH ONE HAD AN OIL LAMP.



BUT ONLY FIVE OF THEM HAD BROUGHT ALONG SOME SPARE OIL.



LATE AT NIGHT THE BRIDGROOM ARRIVED



FIVE YOUNG WOMEN COULD LIGHT HIS WAY.



THE OTHER FIVE FELT VERY FOOLISH - THEIR LAMPS HAD RUN OUT OF OIL!!



See Matthew 25.1-13

THE BUZZ 42

These stories from around Methodism might give you ideas to take up locally.
The contacts will provide more details.

WORSHIP - developing leaders

From Harrow and Hillingdon circuit, London NW

We've been working on developing the role of worship leaders for some time, and now have 10 working in 7 churches. We have a circuit co-ordinator, and candidates are approved through the Preachers' meeting and appointed by their Church Council. WLs work with drama and music groups, and collaborate with ministers and Local Preachers. The year's training WLs receive ensures their role is well-organised, and we think the churches are delighted. We wait for Conference decisions on WLs with interest.

E-mail contact: <mailto:geoff427PrRd@aol.com>

Phone contact: Charles Morris 020 8868 5794

LEARNING AND CARING - we never knew!

From Trinity URC/Methodist, Leek, Staffs

We had some surprises over 5 weeks in a series called 'Faith and Action' in which members talked about their working lives. A cabinet-maker (and Local Preacher) showed joints and tools. 2 Samaritans talked about non-judgmental listening. A manager in Health Promotion told us about women in asylum-seeking families and their need for the Health Service. An International Safety Officer for a major pharmaceutical company raised ethical issues, and our minister spoke about the personal experience of ministry.

E-mail contact: <mailto:jc@simmonds4041.fsnnet.co.uk>

Phone contact: Jean Forrester 01538 383566

SERVICE - with sofas and cappuccino

From Loughton, London NE

We've been serving coffee in our foyer for 19 years, but it was looking drab. A designer and architect from our congregation dreamed a makeover, and with a generous gift we now have an up-to-date area with armchairs, leather sofas, magazines and a Fair Trade menu. We have a picket-fenced play area with quality toys to attract young parents with children, as does story-telling at half-term. Police drop-in happens once a week. It's also used for café worship.

E-mail contact: <mailto:christine.baker@christenltd.co.uk>

Phone contact: Rev Tony Morling 020 8508 1834

METHODIST E-NEWS cont'd

EVANGELISM - poster colour

From Kingston upon Thames circuit, London SW

27 people from 3 of our churches got together for a day's workshop on poster-making. We had fun, learned a lot, and each of us produced a poster by the end of the day. We now have a good supply of posters - which people have noticed. One church has a group planning for forward events. We think plenty of other circuits / churches would benefit from similar initiatives. The day was led by Yvonne Coppock, and you can also find out more at www.postersplus.org.uk

E-mail contact: <mailto:m.rheinlander@ntlworld.com>
Phone contact: Rev. Anthony Walton 020 8546 1024

.....
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 name and phone number.

.....
MORE E-NEWS

TAKE ACTION TO STOP SEX TRAFFICKING

Sex trafficking, where women and children are forced or coerced into prostitution, is one of the most tragic and alarming products of today's society. Each year several hundred thousand women are trafficked across Europe.

In their Social Action Project, the Women's Network of the Methodist Church is calling for people throughout the Methodist Church in the UK to take action against this modern-day slavery.

A major resource pack, designed to support this project, draws together a variety of different resources from organisations such as Amnesty International and the Conference of European Churches as well as three practical action guides produced by the Women's Network.

The aim of the pack is to support individuals and groups as they campaign through letter writing and other means to urge the government to sign up to the European Convention on Human Trafficking which will encourage the government to do more for victims of trafficking.

The practical action guides also highlight concerns about the creation of temporary brothels for the 2006 Football World Cup in Germany. Many foreign sex workers are expected to arrive for the tournament. Some will be victims of forced prostitution or of people trafficking. A key objective of this pack is to discourage those attending the World Cup from visiting brothels. You can sign a petition opposing the prostitution of women during the World Cup at the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women website <http://www.catwinternational.org>

METHODIST E-NEWS cont'd

The Trafficking resource pack is available from The Women' Network Office, Methodist Church House 25 Marylebone Road London NW1 5JR Tel: 0207 467 5175. Price £10.00 + P&P £3.20.

E-mail: <mailto:womens.network@methodistchurch.org.uk>

RESPECTING CHILDREN

The Churches Network for Non-Violence (CNNV) is launching a new resource to support the Church's teaching that physical punishment is wrong and that children should be treated with respect, love and non-violence.

Respecting Children explores the rights and needs of 21st Century children, considers the difference between punishment and discipline, addresses alternatives to smacking and discusses practical ways of creating non-violent environments.

The handbook is designed for use through local churches and is flexible so it can be adapted to suit the needs and concerns of local church leaders, carers, children's organisations, educators and anyone else who might come to use it.

One of the key aims of the CNNV in publishing this pack is to encourage people to campaign actively and to contribute towards ending legalised violence against children.

Respecting Children is available at a price of £7 from: CNNV Co-ordinator, 6 Sylvia Avenue, Hatch End, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 4QE. A CD of the handbook is also available for £3. Please make cheques payable to Churches Network for Non-Violence (CNNV).

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

A new CD-ROM, Building Confidence, was launched this week by The President of Methodist Conference, Rev. Tom Stuckey, and Vice President, Mr. John Bell.

The CD-ROM is packed with useful information covering property schemes, schedules, local mission and unity, ministry and mission grants, environmental issues and more. There are links to the latest information on The Methodist Church website, along with the four supplements from Shaping the Future; Models for Mission; Mission with Many Gifts - a Staffing Policy; Property for Mission and Managing Money for Mission. There is also a 'Hard Questions' workbook to help in planning your mission venture.

Alan Pimlott, Connexional Property Secretary said: "Many of our Methodist buildings are centres for mission or community centres... Many exciting projects are being developed now, as we speak, on Methodist premises and the Methodist Council is encouraging every local church and Circuit to review

METHODIST E-NEWS cont'd

their buildings in the light of all other resources available."

Copies of the Building Confidence CD-ROM may be purchased from Methodist Publishing House for £2.00. + P&P (Ref: XA355)

<http://www.mph.org.uk> Tel: 01733 325002 E-mail: <mailto:sales@mph.org.uk>

AID, TRADE, DEBT AND SUSTAINABILITY - WHERE ARE WE NOW?

A Conference is currently running at Sarum College, with Robert Pearce (Christian Aid), Dr Wilf Wilde, Jonathan Bartley and Fiona Hulbert.

2005 was widely seen as a crucial year for Britain 's role in international relations and for 'making poverty history'. This conference will explore the progress we have made, what further policy developments may be needed, and what Christian theology has to say.

For details of the full Politics and Theology Programme see <http://www.sarum.ac.uk/society>.

CHURCH NEWS SERVICE from Parish Pump

Sunday trading is back centre stage

A crucial few weeks lie ahead for the Keep Sunday Special Campaign and a plethora of other organisations and individuals who are determined to fight off the threat of more shopping hours on a Sunday.

The campaign has called upon a group of eminent politicians to examine the effect that weekend working is having on community and family life. The Parliamentary panel will meet over a period of weeks and will take evidence from an assortment of witnesses from children and family organisations, trade unions, retailers, religious groups and consumer groups.

The new threat to what remains of the family weekend comes from an

alliance of major retailers calling themselves 'Deregulate.' Members, including Tesco, Ikea, B&Q and Asda, want the Government to lift all restrictions on large-shop trading on a Sunday. They are seeking to convince the Department of Trade and Industry that the demand comes from consumers hungry to spend even more than they already do on Sunday shopping sprees.

Heading the panel will be Labour's Lord Anderson, together with Ann Widdecombe, Gary Streeter, Andy Reed and Colin Breed. Their task will be to report by Easter to meet a tight Government deadline.

One of the first things they will be asked to examine is the huge discrepancy between poll results issued by the big stores and the NOP commissioned by KSS which demonstrated

CHURCH NEWS SERVICE cont'd

that 72 per cent of those interviewed would prefer to have a regular shared day off with their family and friends rather than have more time to shop on a Sunday.

This result does not stand alone. Usdaw, the shopworkers union with many members in Tesco stores, produced a similar NOP poll result. A survey of 500 shop staff found that 62% came under pressure to work on Sundays and only 11% have had the confidence to use their legal right to opt-out of Sunday working.

The attitude of many backbenchers in the House of Commons has raised hopes that Parliament will not on this occasion go for an extension. Nearly 180 MPs, among them many Labour members, have signed an Early Day Motion opposing any extension to Sunday trading.

There are many other concerns for the Panel to consider. Promises made in the 90s to pay shopworkers premium rates on Sundays have been largely disregarded; ancillary workers serving the supermarkets have had to work harder for less compensation and probably the most serious of all effects has been on communities which have lost their local shops.

In villages all over Britain the elderly, the handicapped and those without transport have found a valuable social link has been cut off when their local shop closes down.

Campaign Manager of Keep Sunday Special, John Alexander, says it is essential to re-engage the interest of the churches right across Britain. 'Already many practising Christians have been denied the opportunity to worship on a Sunday and with even

three extra hours of trading on a Sunday many more will find the opportunity to attend their local church will be even more limited.

"If Christians in particular and other faiths in general, are discriminated against in order to privilege the minority that actively want to shop and trade on a Sunday, the Government will be putting the clock back so far as non-discrimination is concerned."

More information from Keep Sunday Special website:
www.keepsundayspecial.net.

Singing Parables

Don Maclean, who recently relinquished hosting BBC Radio 2's Good Morning Sunday show after 15 years, has just launched his own Singing Parables CD.

Don, well-known from his days as a presenter of Crackerjack and a proud native of Birmingham, says: "I know it sounds bizarre, but no-one's done the Parables in this way before."

They have been translated into modern lyrics and set to music by Fr John Daley of the Watermead Apostolate. He asked Don to record them. All the best known are included - for example the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. A few not so well known are also on the list - the Peasuring Widow and the Tale of the Talents.

Don adds: "Some are done, as you would expect, with a certain amount of humour, but we hope they all get across the original message which Jesus intended."

Don Maclean recently visited the Venerable English College in Rome, and later was introduced to Pope

CHURCH NEWS SERVICE cont'd

Benedict XVI to whom he presented the initial copy of this CD. The trip was arranged by colleagues at BBC Radio as a surprise on his 'retirement'.

Palm Sunday - 9th: Holy Week begins

This year, Easter Day falls on 16 April. The week leading up to it, which begins with Palm Sunday on 9 April, is very special in the church year, and is known as Holy Week.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, the day when the Church remembers the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The gospels tell us that he had gone up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, and that when he entered the city, the crowds gave him a rapturous welcome, throwing palm fronds into his path. On this day churches worldwide will distribute little crosses made from palm fronds in memory of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem.

The next highlight of Holy Week falls on Maundy Thursday. Maundy Thursday focuses on one of the final acts concerning Jesus to be related in John's Gospel – the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus. The ceremony of the 'washing of the feet' of members of the congregation came to be an important part of the liturgy (regular worship) of the medieval church, symbolising the humility of the clergy, in obedience to the example of Christ.

'Maundy' is an unusual word, and relates to this medieval practice of foot-washing. In the Middle Ages, church services were held in Latin. The opening words of a typical service on this day are based on the words of

Jesus recorded in John 13: 'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.' In Latin, the opening phrase of this sentence is 'mandatum novum do vobis' The word 'maundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command).

In England, in by-gone years, as an affirmation of humility, the monarch would wash the feet of a small number of his or her subjects. This has now been replaced by the ceremony of the 'Maundy money', in which the Queen distributes specially minted coins to the elderly at cathedrals throughout England.

Good Friday is the day on which Jesus died on the cross. It is the most solemn day in the Christian year, and is widely marked by the removal of all decorations from churches. The custom of observing a period of three hours' devotion from 12 midday to 3 pm on Good Friday goes back to the 18th century. The 'Three Hours of the Cross' often take the form of an extended meditation on the 'Seven Last Words from the Cross', with periods of silence, prayer, or hymn-singing.

Lent ends with Holy Saturday.

St George's Day - 23rd d circa 300 AD

The Saint of an English Army before he was Patron Saint of England, St George may have been a soldier, but he was no Englishman. He was an officer in the Roman army under Diocletian, who refused to abandon his faith during the Terror, and was martyred at Lydda in Palestine about the year 300 AD - supposedly 23 April.

CHURCH NEWS SERVICE cont'd

Over the years St George became the example of a Christian fighting-man; a powerful helper against evil powers affecting individual lives; a soldier-hero of the Middle Ages, of whom remarkable deeds were reported.

In the Golden Legend of the 13th century, Jacobus de Voragine gave St George a handsome write-up:

One day, St George rode up to the heathen city of Sylene in Lybia, where he found the citizens in great distress. A neighbouring dragon had forced them to surrender two sheep each day for its dinner, and when the sheep gave out, two of their children; and now they were about to sacrifice the King's daughter, dressed as if for her wedding. St George encountered the little party by a stagnant lake, where the dragon lived, and persuaded the sobbing Princess to tell him why she was so miserable. At that moment the dragon appeared, looking inexpressibly revolting. The Saint charged, and drove his spear into the gaping mouth. To everyone's amazement, he tumbled the monster over and over.

Then St George borrowed the Princess' girdle, tied it round the dragon's neck, and persuaded her to lead it back to Sylene herself. The sight of her approaching with the befuddled dragon on its makeshift lead emptied the town. When the inhabitants timidly crept back, St George promised to behead the dragon if they would all believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised.

It was a most effective form of evangelism, for everybody said 'yes' at once. So 15,000 people were baptised, and four carts were commissioned to remove the dragon's body.

St George thus became a symbol of the war against evil, and is usually portrayed trampling the dragon of sin under his horse's hoofs. The Crusaders had a vision of him helping them against the Saracens at Antioch, during the first Crusade, and so brought the story of St George back with them from Palestine. Presently England put herself under the protection of the Saint. His day was declared a holiday in 1222. A red cross on a white field is the flag of St George.

Mark - 25th (d c 74)

Mark, the son of Mary, whose home in Jerusalem became a place of rest for Jesus and his 12 apostles, is considered the traditional author of the second gospel. He is also usually identified as the young man, described in Mark 14.51, who followed Christ after his arrest and then escaped capture by leaving his clothes behind.

Papias, in 130, said that in later years Mark became Peter's interpreter. If so, then this close friendship would have been how Mark gathered so much information about Jesus' life. Peter referred to him affectionately as his 'son'.

Mark was also a companion to Paul on his journeys. When Paul was held captive at Rome, Mark was with him, helping him.

Mark's Gospel, most likely written in Italy, perhaps in Rome, is the earliest account we have of the life of Jesus.

Early in the 9th century Mark's body was brought to Venice, whose patron he became, and there it has

CHURCH NEWS SERVICE cont'd

remained to this day. The symbol of Mark as an evangelist, the lion, is much in evidence at Venice.

Worship and technology

One of the characteristics of our age is the advance of technology, which permeates almost every aspect of our lives. Probably your grandparents' house had one electric motor in it: the vacuum cleaner; how many are there in your house? With this revolution has come the idea that anything is and should be possible.

But not everything will be desirable, and may not benefit people in other parts of the world. The worship of technology has meant that bigger, faster, more efficient goals can be pursued, regardless of their consequences. We are often governed by seeking after power and status rather than by a desire to do good. We have the technologies to eradicate disease and make the desert bloom; instead we manufacture more powerful armaments to combat 'the risk of terrorism'.

It is not easy for Christians to challenge or disentangle ourselves from this prevailing culture. But the worship of God means recognising that the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness is his. And we are stewards of it, to enjoy and not to destroy, to share and not to hoard to ourselves.

Christian voices need to be heard in the debates about technology just as much as they are needed in debates about the family, education and political power. In her book 'Choices at the Heart of Technology', Ruth Conway writes that 'Shalom', the well-being of all in community under God,

will become a reality only when technologies are aimed at empowering others rather than controlling them, profound respect is shown for nature's life-sustaining processes, addressing needs is given priority over creating demands, and the fruits of incessant technological change are measured against the durable harvest of the spirit. Technology will contribute, but not if it is made an object of worship.

Chocolate at Easter

Chocolate. Just a mention of the word can trigger off all kinds of emotions: craving, greed, passion. Few foods have the ability to get such a hold on people. As you buy your Easter eggs and bunnies and whatever else this month, here are some of the facts of chocolate:

Where does chocolate come from? Chocolate is made from the seeds of the tropical cacao tree, theobroma cacao. The Greek 'theobroma' means literally 'food of the gods'. The Cacao Tree is found in Latin America, where temperatures are 25 - 28 degrees.

Who first discovered it? The Aztecs. The cacao beans were used to prepare a hot, frothy beverage with stimulant and restorative properties, something like hot chocolate.

Who was (probably) the first chocoholic? The Emperor Montezuma. He drank 50 goblets a day of the frothy drink.

Who used chocolate as currency? The Aztecs. 100 cacao beans would buy a slave; 12 cacao beans bought the services of a courtesan, etc.

When did chocolate as we know it today begin? Surprisingly, not until

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1879. That year Rodolphe Lindt had the inspired idea of triglyceride cocoa butter. The cocoa butter in chocolate contains saturated fat, but a normal level of consumption doesn't have any bad effects.

At what point does a chocolate lover become a chocoholic? It is generally considered to be when a person feels impelled to consume 12 or more 60 gram bars of chocolate per week. Chocolate contains its own cannabinoid (a chemical that prolongs pleasurable sensations) and when you eat chocolate, there is an increased blood flow in areas of the brain which are also activated by addictive drugs such as cocaine.

But scientists agree that occasional over-indulging will cause no long-term problems... except perhaps around your waistline!

Discipleship in Today's World: 'Just what is a disciple?'

David Watson (not ours!) in his book *Discipleship* (written 25 years ago) asks why the Christian church is so ineffective. He goes on to say:

'the vast majority of western Christians are church-members, pew-fillers, hymn-singers, sermon-tasters, Bible-readers, even born-again-believers or Spirit-filled-charismatics – but not true disciples of Jesus. If we were willing to learn the meaning of real discipleship and actually to become disciples, the church in the West would be transformed, and the resultant impact on society would be staggering.'

These words are as challenging today as they were when first written!

Let's not forget that the gospel

word for disciple is *mathetes* in Greek, which means 'learner'. The first disciples were called to be alongside Jesus to observe his life and teaching. It was just the same for any rabbi with his students. They spent all of their time with him, to observe and learn from him, in order to become like him.

This is still true for all disciples in the 21st century; we are called to life-long learning alongside Jesus. This is not primarily about information gathering, but about learning to live the life of Jesus in every aspect of our lives. What would Jesus do if he had my job, my family or next door neighbours, or leisure time? A few years ago the wristband *WWJD* (what would Jesus do?) was very popular among some Christians. It is certainly the right question we need to ask ourselves in any given situation of everyday life.

'A disciple of Jesus is one who practises his presence and arranges his or her life in such a way as to live as Christ would live if he were them.' (Dallas Willard).

Churches make neighbourhoods 'a better place to live'

More than eight out of 10 people in Britain go into a church or place of worship each year and six in 10 believe a place of worship makes their neighbourhood a better place to live, according to the recent findings of an Opinion Research Business attitude survey. The results back up similar findings in 2003.

The survey, sponsored by the Archbishops' Council and English Heritage, also found that six in ten people believe that places of worship

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should be more actively involved in the local community, and more accessible to the local community.

"These responses show that churches, far from being museum pieces, are living breathing communities reaching out to churchgoers and non-churchgoers, central to their neighbourhoods and making possible much needed and welcomed local facilities of all kinds," said the Rt Rev Richard Chartres, Bishop of London + chair of the Church Heritage Forum.

[The Church of England maintains almost half the Grade 1 listed buildings in England, spending £120 million a year on church repairs. The state, through English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, provides £26 million for repairs to listed church buildings and cathedrals.]

The Bishop said: "This research clearly supports the Church's call for more state funding for the maintenance of not merely the country's architectural heritage but a central plank of its social cohesion."

The Cowboy's

Ten Commandments

(posted on the wall at Cross Trails Church in Fairlie, Texas)

- (1) Just one God.
- (2) Honor yer Ma & Pa.
- (3) No tellin' tales or gossipin'.
- (4) Git yourself to Sunday meetin'.
- (5) Put nothin' before God.
- (6) No foolin' around with another fellow's gal.
- (7) No killin'.
- (8) Watch yer mouth.
- (9) Don't take what ain't yers.
- (10) Don't be hankerin' for yer buddy's stuff.

Now that's kinda plain an' simple, don't ya think? Y'all have a good day.

Poems

Wounds

O Saviour Christ, thou too are man;
Thou hast been troubled, tempted,
tried;
Thy kind but searching glance can
scan
The very wounds that shame would
hide.

Henry Twells

The Cross Road

He chose.
He chose the cross road.
Darkness, desertion and desolation
Pierced him like the thorns on his chosen way.
In his broken, bleeding body,
Through the heat and dust and mockery,
Through the heaving crowds of feeble men
He stumbled with his death tree.
Up, up, up the steep and cruel high road
To the skull place of the outcast
Where the cross road had its end.
In the nailing and the piercing,
In the searing suffocation,
In the bearing of the whole world's filth
His cross road set me free.

Daphne Kitching

April Rain

It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining daffodils;
In every dimpled drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills.
The clouds of grey engulf the day

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And overwhelm the town –
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining roses down.

Robert Loveman

The Josephs (Luke 23:50-56)

It began and it ended
With a Joseph,
The life of Jesus.

One laid him in a manger,
The other laid him in a tomb.

One named him Jesus
And brought him up.

The other asked for Jesus,
And brought him down from the cross.

They were both men
Who stood firm
When life said, Run.

They both turned disappointment and
despair

Into stepping stones of trust,
And walked on, as witnesses

That to God,
Darkness is a light switch.



A minister, known for his lengthy sermons, noticed a man get up and leave during the middle of his message. The man returned just before the conclusion of the service.

Afterwards the clergyman asked the man where he had gone. "I went to get a haircut," was the reply.

"But," said the minister, "why didn't you do that before the service?"

"Because," the gentleman said, "I didn't need one then."

The Sunday School teacher asked her class: "When you die and go to Heaven...which part of you goes?"

Young Suzy ventured: "I think our hands go, whatever else."

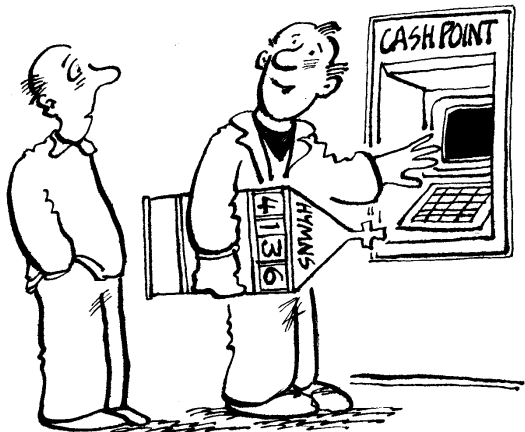
Startled, the teacher asked why. Suzy replied, "Because when you pray, you hold your hands together in front of you, so when God comes to get you, he'll just naturally grab those first."

The young chaplain was paying his first visit to the ward for mentally troubled patients. He asked the director what the criterion was which defined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized.

"Well," said the Director, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."

"Oh, I understand," said the chaplain. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup."

"No," said the Director. "A normal person would pull the plug...."



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...between you and me, it's the
only way I can remember my PIN number!

SOME REALLY USEFUL INSTRUCTIONS!

- On Boot's Children's Cough Medicine:** 'Do not drive a car or operate machinery after taking this medication'.
On Nyctal Sleep Aid: 'Warning: May cause drowsiness'.
On most brands of Christmas Lights: 'For indoor or outdoor use only'.
On a Japanese food processor: 'Not to be used for the other use'.
On Sainsbury's peanuts: 'Warning contains nuts'.
On an American packet of nuts: 'Instructions: Open packet, eat nuts'.
On a bottle of Palmolive Dishwashing liquid: 'Do not use on food'.
On a bottle of laundry detergent: 'Remove clothing before distributing in washing machine'.

DEADLINE

for May's *The Ambo* is Wednesday 19th April 2006,
 for issue on Sunday 30th April.

Just For Easter	Who tells chicken jokes?	Comedihens.
	How do baby hens dance?	Chick to chick.
	Why does the chicken go to the theatre?	For hentertainment.

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

Answers to Puzzle Page.

1. GODMOTHER
 2. 1. Heap 2. Whim 3. Rock 4. Boom 5. Sere 6. Free 7. Some 8. Abroad
 9. Vets 10. Kiss 11. Rang 12. Area 13. Tell 14. Part 15. Hang 16. Nape
 17. Hell
He who comes from above is greater than all. John 3:31.
 3. 1 And so on ad infinitum 2. One step forward, two steps backwards.
 3. Going backwards.

THE CHURCH CENTRE is open Monday - Saturday 0900 - 1230
Tel. 01761 410450 Answerphone on at other times
Web-site at www.msnmcc.fsnet.co.uk
Address: High St., Midsomer Norton, Somerset. BA3 2DR

APRIL

Sat 8 0830

Sat 8 0900-1200

Sat 8 1930

Tue 11 1930

Maundy Thu 13 1930

Good Fri 14 0945

Good Fri 14 1930

Easter Sun 16 tba

Easter Sun 16 1030

Wed 19

Sat 22 0900-1200

Tue 25

Tue 25 1930

Tue 25 1930

MAY

Thu 4 1430

Wed 10 1930

Sat 13 0830

SUN 14

Sat 20 0930 - 1200

JUNE

SUN 4

W/end 10 -11

Men's Breakfast Fellowship (Breakfast from 8am)

Cricket Club Jumble Sale.

Concert - Avon & Som. Constabulary M V Choir

Resources Committee meets

Communion Service

Walk of Witness + Service at 1130 at M N

Circuit Service of Reflection

Communion Service at Chew Valley Lake

Family Communion

Deadline for May's *The Ambo*.

St. George's Day Fayre.

Women's Network - Coming Together (at Bristol)

SCENES – Local Church Editors meet.

Guild Celebration at Knowle Methodist

Circuit Easter Offering Dedication Service at P. St. J. Church Council.

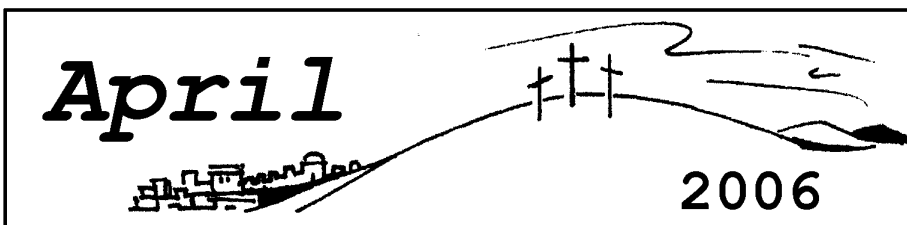
Men's Breakfast Fellowship (Breakfast from 8am)

Start of Christian Aid week

Christian Aid Mini-Market.

Whitfunday at Somervale School

Network Weekend with Irene Sayer.



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.