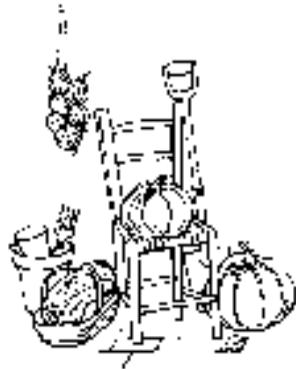
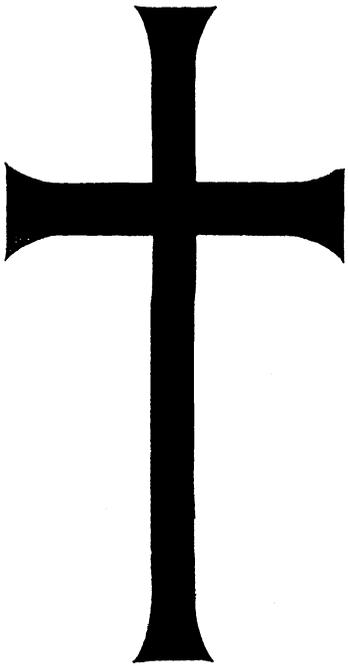


**CALDICOT, ROGIET,
LANGSTONE &
PENYCAEMAWR
METHODIST CHURCHES'**



AUTUMN 2014
QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

MEDITATION

Power of prayer

By the Rev Dr Denis Duncan

"TO TRAVEL hopefully is a better thing than to arrive" wrote Robert Louis Stevenson. The religious journey has something of this "feel" about it. It is not that spiritual goals are unimportant, of course, but the great blessing is really to know that you are travelling in the right direction.

If this is true for individual pilgrimages, it applies to corporate situations too. "Where there is no vision, the people perish," it says in the book of Proverbs.

Where there is no sense of direction in events, the same is true. How desperately we all try to see the right direction for the greater peace of what used to be Yugoslavia, but confusion and contumacy reign. In Ireland over the years of the Troubles, direction has been lost in sectarian feuds and traditional but unquestioned religious hostility. There was a sense of puzzlement throughout the nation on that Wednesday when interest rates went up and down in rapid but perplexing succession. Had we lost our economic sense of direction? When we lose our way in both personal and corporate situations, we



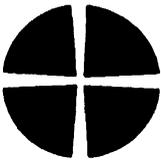
can experience a lostness and a meaninglessness that is devastating.

There was a time when Mary Magdalene found herself looking in the wrong direction. Her weeping eyes were focused on the tomb and her missing Lord. Then she turned round and, looking in the other direction, she found herself face to face with the living Lord. This was a turning-point indeed for Mary.

One of the "eternal verities" is the belief that God's grace and power can completely change the direction of lives. "I met a man," said the late and great Dr John White, referring to his encounter with Jesus. That was the secret of his robust conviction. The vocabulary of faith includes words such as renewal, regeneration, redemption and reconciliation. They testify

to the fact that, through grace, everything can change - aims, attitudes, reactions, relationships, even indeed our whole philosophy of life.

Change is the action of God, but Jesus encouraged and indeed commanded his followers to contribute to the possibility of change in people and in situations by importunate prayer. "The prayer of a good man is powerfully effective," said James, as is equally the prayer of a good woman. Intercessory prayer is the process through which we co-operate with God in bringing about change, in providing direction.



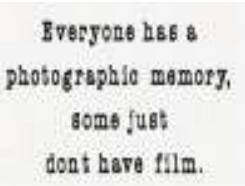
From the Green Room

Minister: Rev. P. Andersen, 27 Church Road, Caldicot.
Manse Tel: 430574 & Church Office Tel: 423843
Email: pwandersen@btinternet.com

District Website: www.methodistwales.org.uk/
Circuit Website: www.nlwc.org.uk/
Church Website: www.caldicotmethodists.co.uk/

Dear Friends,

There are two things I want to write about this time, and I will not divulge the second item until later. I will keep you in suspense as it were, unless of course you are one of those fast readers who see and digest everything on the page at one glance? Such people do exist you know, and some have photographic memories that can memorize every word. Amazing.



I cannot believe that as I am writing this, I am two thirds of the way through my stint as Acting Superintendent, and what a wonderful learning curve it has been, and is. I know I was Superintendent in my previous Circuit, and I know I did not originally come here to be with you in that capacity, but it has been good to revisit the tasks involved, and particularly to appreciate the great team of Circuit Stewards and Invitation Committee Members we have in this Circuit. I do not think that any of us quite understand all the work involved when Circuits start looking and applying for new ministers to replace those leaving, the time and effort, the pages and pages of profiles, and the many different stages each application has to go through. We have people who do this work willingly and professionally and at no pay whatsoever, and what a blessing they are to us all.

Indeed, not only do they do the work, but our Circuit Stewards are keen, very keen in fact, to encourage ministers to liaise closely with them so that their expertise can

be fully utilized, and in just a few months of being Acting Superintendent I have seen this working, and working well. Mutual support, trust and encouragement are the qualities required for the wheels to run smoothly, that and good communication at all times in exchanging news and views. So, thank you to everybody for the opportunities you have given me, and you know who you are.

Second, I want to write about membership. And why do I want to do that? The answer is simple. Over the last few months we have welcomed many new members into our church, some by transfer from another church and others with no previous membership and with whom I have shared the membership presentation I have on my laptop. Anyone who feels in any way called to become a member, just shout and I'll be there like a shot! Some people have asked me why do I have to become a member, and the answer is no one *has to*, and no one is being forced to. Anyone can come to church for worship, - indeed we invite everybody, - and leave after a cup of coffee or tea in the hall, in order to return the following week, and with no strings attached, thank you. This is absolutely fine. In the Methodist Church those friends of ours are known as 'adherents' (I often think for lack of a better word) and they are the fabric of any church. We could not exist without them.



However, for many (though not all) there comes a point when the question arises, "Do I want to get *even more actively involved* in church than I am already?" and

Continued over page

this is where membership becomes relevant, indeed often necessary. As a member you enter that new and exciting – sometimes daunting – stage when you can take on duties in the church, responsibilities, opportunities. Let me name but a few: door steward, church steward, Communion steward, pastoral visitor (and we are always screaming for those), church treasurer, church secretary, catering co-ordinator, leaders and secretaries for men's and ladies' meetings, and I could go on. There is much important work to be done in any church, (and in a lively one like ours not least), and believe you me, there are always openings and vacancies. But in order to hold down these duties you need to become a member first and voted in by the church council.

So, no pressure, and as I said, all who enter our doors are equally welcomed and important to us, but no organization can run without the dedication and often hard work of its members, in fact no Home can do that – and church is God's Home.

If you are interested in knowing more, or if you would like me to come and share my membership presentation with you, just speak to me at any time, give me a call on 01291 430574, or e-mail me on pwandersen@btinternet.com

It is my sincere hope that in time I may be asked to take my presentation to all the churches in the Circuit, not each church individually (as this would take forever) but in groups of, say, four or five churches. I would love to do this, and I am only offering the opportunity because I know that by the Grace of God my presentation works and it has helped people become members. It has also served as a 'refresher' for many who are members already, and I believe it might even help create a good Circuit 'feel' in the process.

I can but offer. And I do.

Preben

4th AUGUST – TIME FOR LIGHTS OUT!

Every householder in Britain is being asked to turn out their lights at 11pm on 4th August, to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

The nationwide event is based on the famous comment attributed to Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, on the eve of the conflict in 1914. He said: "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime." He made the remark the day before war was declared, as he gazed across St James's Park from his window at the Foreign Office at the gas lamps being lit.

The switch-off is being called Lights Out, and is backed by the Government as "one of the most dramatic UK-wide events ever organised." Throughout the UK, everyone is being invited to "turn off their lights and to replace them with one single light, to remember a day that changed the world forever."

The 'Lights Out' will take place at the same time as a candlelit vigil of prayers, readings and music held in Westminster Abbey. These candles will be extinguished one by one until a single flame is snuffed out at 11 p.m. More details at: www.centenarynews.com



ROGIET METHODIST CHURCH NEWS

At this time of year everyone is taking time out to relax and enjoy the Summer Holidays in order to recharge our batteries. Soon we will be moving into the Autumn and mellow fruitfulness, which brings us into the time when we remember to say thank you to God for what he has given us; a time to reflect. Recently I was reading a Church Magazine and this is the prayer I would like to share with you. –

“Lord help us to make time – to sit quietly moving into your presence, time to pray in gratitude for all that we have done. Time to bring to you those needs and concerns that keep us awake at night.

Lord help us to make time –
Time to see the beauty of the world and skills and talents of its people, time to spare for others who need a listening ear. Time to work for the Kingdom that we pray will come.

Lord you have given us a lifetime of time,
Help us to make time meaningful to us –
Amen

Remember –

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Moving on

Harvest time will soon be with us so this is our Diary Dates for Autumn –

September 7th
Anniversary Service 10.30.am
Which will be shared with St Mary's Rogiet friends at our church.

September 13th
(Date to be confirmed)
Methodist Women in Britain
Coffee Morning / Bring and Buy to raise funds for Methodist Homes for the Aged (Morel Court Penarth)

September 21st
Harvest Festival 10.30.am
September 22nd
Harvest Supper 6.30.pm

October 18th
Autumn Fayre Coffee Morning
10.00.am – 12 noon

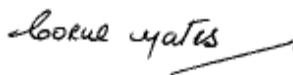
Stalls and refreshments on this morning –
Please join us!

We wish to announce a ‘Knit & Knatter’ afternoon is starting on Thursday 18th Sept at 2.30.pm This will be every 3rd Thursday in the month. If you can't knit you can come along and ‘Knatter’. We can all do that can't we? Please join us for some fun and friendship – Our prayers go to Ken and Trevor, hoping their health will improve soon.

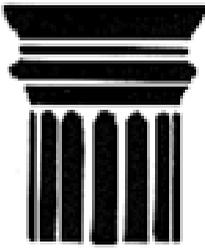
And Finally

Are you an active member,
The kind that would be missed;
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list;
Do you help with hand and heart?
Please take an active part!

Blessings to everyone,



Coral Yates



John Mills Column

Dear Friends,

September is the month when most people have returned from their summer holidays (especially those with children) also children and young people return to school or college. In our church life, organisations begin their activities as we plan the winter programmes and church services. This time of the year we remember some special Saints (to mention a few)

September 21st St Matthew Apostle & Evangelist.

September 29th St Michael & All Angels.

October 4th Francis of Assisi (Friar)

October 13th Edward the Confessor

October 18th St Luke. Evangelist.

October 28th SS Simon & Jude (Apostles)

These people were giants of the Early Church as well as Martyrs and clung so tenaciously to their right beliefs.

As I write these words it is been pouring with rain and earlier today we had lightning and thunder. This month St Swithen's Day July 15th if it does rain many people will say that it will rain for 40 days and 40 nights but whether it will rain or not It is one of the old superstitions , but some people still go on believing it. A superstition is a false belief, and yet people cling to it. If some people would only cling tenaciously to the right beliefs, and yet, sadly, these slip away from so many people. What is our right belief?. Surely, that GOD is our Heavenly Father, who loves us so much. He made the world and its creatures so wonderfully, and let man have the dominion of His Creation.

Man made in God's image the highest of God's Creation. When God saw that man would fail Him, and made a mess of His world, He sent Jesus Christ, His Only –

begotten Son to save us from our sins and follies. This same Jesus Christ having shown us as complete a picture that we can accept of God, promised, in His Holy Spirit, to be with us all our days and for evermore, that through Him we might regain our heritage as true children of our Heavenly Father. Such, simply and briefly, is our right belief. "BELIEF" comes from two old English words meaning to "Live-by", God is our Heavenly Father, who always wants the best for us His children. When things go wrong, He always wants to help, if we will let Him. Most of our trouble's today stem from the fact that man DO NOT want God. We want to go our own way, but God is always there to be blamed when things go wrong. Have you noticed how readily people blame God. Those people, normally have little to do with Him.

A RIGHT belief in God determines the way we live. We give Him worship. God's house becomes the best-loved of all dwellings, for in it we experience true joy. Our friends are those of God's household, there is a fellowship of Christians which has to be experienced to be known, There is a joy in doing things for God, which once again, can only be known in the doing. We do our best work for God, not for financial reward, but for something far greater.

How important it is to have a right belief, and how few there are today who have it?

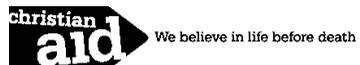
May we, by God's grace, be numbered among them.

JSM

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK **MAY 2014**

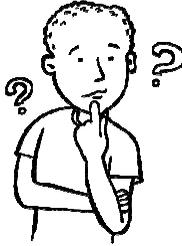
**THE TOTAL AMOUNT RAISED DURING
THE WEEK WAS £1198.53.**

**THANKS TO ALL WHO SUPPORTED THE
WEEK IN ANY WAY.**



LANGSTONE METHODIST CHURCH

On behalf of Langstone Methodist Church, I would like to say a big Thank You to each and every one who attended our Quiz Nite, on Wednesday 30th July. I think it's safe to say it was a great success, only made possible by your participation.



My special thanks also to Chris and Des for setting the questions and making sure everything went to plan. God bless you all.

Sally

SAILING WITH THE SPIRIT

It was a calm, windless day. Despite the weather, members of the sailing club were hopeful they would be launching their boats. Their sails were ready, but ...! with no wind and only calm waters, no-one was going anywhere!

Some sailors tried to manoeuvre their crafts by paddling into the open water and propelling with their hands, but soon realised their efforts were being wasted. They decided to join the people in the club house and wait for the wind. It was only after a good while that a gentle breeze began to blow and soon people were in their boats. Now, with full sails, they skimmed out towards the open sea.



tempting for us to think we can go it alone, and not be guided by the Spirit.

The people in the sailing club might have left their boats to do other things, but they were also watching for signs around them of the coming wind. No one was packing up and going home! They were waiting with a purpose.

In our times of stillness and waiting, we can watch for the signs of God as he works in the Church, in the community and in the world. We pray and worship together, and enjoy social times with each other, in readiness for God to move us into the course he has planned for us.

This scene can be a reminder of how the Holy Spirit can work in our lives. The Bible sometimes describes the Spirit as wind and sometimes, like the sailors we may have to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. There are occasions, from a spiritual standpoint, nothing seems to be happening – for weeks and months on end. During these waiting times we may wonder what purpose God has for us.

Our waiting times may have come on us due to various circumstances. The outlook may not be encouraging. But God is with us and he knows what we need now, and how he can use us in the future.

Those sailors on the shore anticipated their time afloat. Similarly, in *our* waiting times we anticipate to do the things of God! The season may soon come when we are guided, prompted, incited and directed by the wind of God who will move us in the right direction.

The impatient sailors are a reminder to us that we can do nothing without the Holy Spirit. Those sailors soon discovered that without the directing power of the wind, they were wasting their time and energy. It can be

Let's put up the sails to let God blow afresh into our lives!

Lester Amann

WHOLE LIFE DISCIPLESHIP: WHERE DO WE START?

'There's only one thing that's worse than being blind; having sight and no vision', so said Helen Keller, who was both blind and deaf. In terms of our vision there are two key questions which the church needs to ask today:

What does the church of the future look like? How do we reach people who don't know Jesus?

We can all come up with answers to these questions, but behind them lays THE question we have to face: *how do we make disciples?* Jesus was clear: *'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'* (Matt 28:18,19).

The trouble is that we are not good at obeying his command. If we are honest, we spend a lot more time thinking about making church, rather than disciples. *'If you make disciples, you always get the church. But if you make a church, you rarely get disciples'* (Mike Breen). Most of us are quite good at doing church. We might be able to

get people together on a Sunday and perhaps into a small group during the week. However, are we really good at producing people whose lives look like the people we see in the New Testament? Jesus commanded us to make disciples and we need to understand that the church is the effect of discipleship not the cause.

So how do we fulfil this vision? We are called to make disciples *'as we go!* This won't primarily happen in church, but in the places we spend time during the week in the *whole* of our lives. Of the 168 hours in the week, most of us will not spend more than 10 hours directly engaged in church activities. This leaves 110 hours (excluding 120 hours for sleep!) which we spend at home, work or in the community. So this is the primary context for our discipleship, witness and service, which the church *should* be equipping us for!

'Our job, like experienced surfers, is to recognise a wave of God's Spirit and ride it. It is not our responsibility to make waves but to recognise how God is working in the world and join him in the endeavour' (Rick Warren).

Paul Hardingham

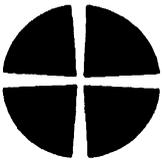
WHAT NOT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO ON HOLIDAY

Criminals just love Twitter and Facebook. Now they can locate unattended homes so much more easily - often within seconds of people posting comments about being on holiday on these social networking websites.

Thieves once had it hard – having to wander about neighbourhoods, peering over hedges, bribing milkmen, looking for empty houses. Now it is so much simpler: they stay at home and surf the internet - and can track down your address from a one-line posting within 60 seconds, according to researchers. Thieves look for messages such as 'packing

my cases' and 'just landed' with a smiley face, only hours after the sender's location was given as an airport.

How do they do it? A check on the family name and, for instance, the name of their child's school, cross referenced with an online address database, shows the location of the home. The study, by Co-operative Travel, goes on to warn people that their children are the worst offenders, as 51 per cent of young people tell their all their friends about the forthcoming holiday....



Extra Pastoral Letter From the Green Room

Dear Friends,

If you have read my latest THOUGHT in the Free Press – always available on our church website as well – you will know about the technical problems I have recently ‘suffered’. I have to say many such problems are probably self-inflicted, and I am not the most patient of people when they happen, and not even very kind towards the friendly people who try to sort them out for me, but never mind. That’s me!

My reason for writing this time is to say that recently I seem to be getting an increasing number of e-mails from people on Twitter and Facebook who wish - and try - to get hold of me by those means. I realize that often (though not always), this seems to be with the best intention, and I also recognize that perhaps some messages - and action I ought to take – may pass me by, and for those still waiting for my reply, I do apologize.

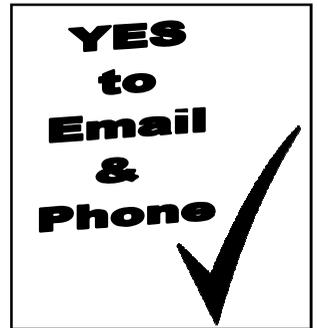
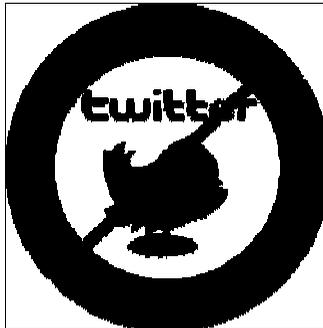


HOWEVER, I do need to say that I am NOT on Twitter NOR am I on Facebook or on any other social media for that matter, apart from e-mail. If you do want to contact me, you need to do so direct on my telephone or by e-mail (and I repeat the numbers below). These are the only ways you are sure to get hold of me, apart of

course from turning up at the door or catch me when I’m at church or walking about in the precinct. I do want to communicate, and communicate well, and people tell me I do, but I also need my privacy, and this is the only reason why I am not on social media, and never shall be.

I just wanted to clarify this, especially for those on Twitter or Facebook who may be waiting in vain for me to contact them.

Preben



Landline (+ answering machine): 01291 430574

Day Off: MONDAY

E-mail: pwandersen@btinternet.com

SISTERHOOD



Since writing my last report for Sisterhood in our Newsletter, my husband Trevor, has been very poorly in the Royal Gwent Hospital, Newport. With God's help, I pray he will be home again soon. Under these circumstances, I've not been at Sisterhood many times this quarter. I will write the speakers down for you, but no reports, there usually is.

June 5th – AGM
June 12th – Mrs Coralie Payne
June 19th – Mrs Bridget Gibbs
June 26th – Members

July 3rd – Mr Ray Franklin
July 10th – Mrs Fiona Gardener
July 17th – Mrs Wendy White
July 24th – Mrs Jean Hackett
July 31st – Members
August Holiday, returning Thursday 4th
September.

On Tuesday 2nd September, all are welcome to join the St Mary's Mother's Union service and tea, Caldicot St Marys Church at 2.30pm.

Our church is having a 'Flower Festival', with the theme 'The Rainbow', from the 25th to 28th September.

'Thought for Autumn'
Lovely shades of tangerine, cranberry and lemon,
All the fruits of heaven.
A beacon at autumn, for all the world to see.
A winding down, a special time, 'Autumn',
Bringing peace and tranquillity.

'Every Blessing' to all our Newsletter readers.
Your friend in Jesus,

Joyce Tanner

FROM THE DARKNESS

O gentle Christ, ever thanks to thee,
That thou from the dark hast raised me free
And from the coldness of last night's space
To the gentle light of this day's grace.

O God of all creatures, praise to thee
As to each life thou hast poured on me,
My wish, my word, my sense, my praise,
My thought, my deed, my fame, and my
ways.

From Poems of the Western Highlanders

When Adam met Eve

The topic for my class was palindromes, which are of course words or sentences that are the same read forward and backward. I asked the question 'What is the first thing Adam said to Eve?' I was expecting 'Madam, I'm Adam', but one student had a better reply: "Wow."

METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN (MWiB)



Methodist Women in Britain

Greetings to my friends in Christ; may the love of the Lord Jesus draw you closer to fellow believers and bring you closer to understanding the ways of those who do things just a little different from ourselves.

It has been brought to my attention that there are some who do not understand the constitution of the Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) so I thought that it might be helpful if I try, as much as I am able, to shed some light upon this new phenomenon that seems to have appeared on our church radar screens. In actual fact it has evolved from the Methodist Women's Network; it is not an organization, but an umbrella movement which aims to equip, encourage and enable those that affiliated with them, i.e. Women's World Day of Prayer, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women; any woman who attends a Methodist Church for worship, fellowship, fund raising, etc. is regarded as belonging to MWiB.

In the past it was, and still is, involved in the 8 Millennium Development Goals:-

1. Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat AIDS/HIV malaria & other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Establish global partnerships for development.

In the early days of Methodist Women's Network, women's issues were to the

forefront, especially awareness of violence against women. Long before the media picked up the issue of violence against women, we were distributing petition forms out for people to sign with the intent of handing them to the government. The Swanick Network Conference met followed by a Rally at Nottingham, if my memory serves me right, and the Rev. Dr. Pauline Webb, the speaker, received these thousands of petition forms which were taken to London. Interestingly enough, just weeks past when I switched on my radio to Women's Hour; the leading subject, 'Violence Against Women'. At the commencement of MWiB we were introduced to the newly established charity, 'children unite'; children are enslaved in domestic service around the world. At the launch gatherings we were invited to buy a pair of Traidcraft rubber gloves and write a message upon them, relevant to the subject of child slavery; at an appointed time and in the face of the media thousands of pairs of Traidcraft rubber gloves were dumped on the doorstep of 10, Downing Street. Again, other programmes and journalists have picked up the baton and ran with it.

So when you see the butterfly symbol along side another charity, remember MWiB is working along side those in need. Please note that we are still knitting for HHI and not long ago we had our Easter Offering, reaching out to the parts of the world that need our aid. Prayer for the work of the church, especially I would commend to you the Methodist Church Prayer Handbook; keeping us in touch with our brothers and sisters around the world. There is a new Handbook coming out in September, the theme 'Partners in Sacrifice'

Your friend in Jesus,

Beryl Simcock

Smile

What is a smile?
It's when you laugh in a whisper.

HARVEST FESTIVAL NORTHERN PORTUGAL STYLE

As I sit down to write this article the first ten days of July have past. Sadly, journalism, whether professional or amateur, needs to be prepared weeks in advance before going to press. So, harvest in Portugal as I remember it.

Golden glorious sunlight with the last of the oranges and lemons hanging tentatively upon the branches with many fallen and lying in a state of decay; obviously a bumper crop with more than enough to spare. The village had started its preparation for the forthcoming celebration a year in advance, as this was the event that would finance them for the next twelve months. Whatever they raised would determine the measure of how well they could socially fulfil their obligation to the villagers, so it was imperative that all was planned with the utmost efficiency as they drew on the expertise of the selected committee members. A weekend event that drew interest from people from afar, who had enjoyed the rural festal fun and fellowship other years and desired to support their fellow Christians financially.

The church at Valdozende is on the side of a hill with a vista that can be embraced with the scan of an eye. Like the Wye Valley, it is picturesquely stunning. As far as I could tell there had been planning and scheming

independently of the committee; there was a buzz in the air as people came and went carrying various foods and flora for decorating the church. The baker had produced extra loaves of bread especially for the occasion and the ladies produced their beautifully made linen bread bags to carry the bread to church. The smells were divine! Elsewhere the venue for the outside evening disco was being transformed with strings of coloured lights and kiosks with drinks and food were being created. Close by another group laboured intently as they erected the firework frames, ensuring that there was total safety.

“Sunset and evening star.....Twilight and evening bell.....” (Alfred Tennyson) The after-glow of the setting sun and a sense that nature was preparing for rest, while God fearing people were eating their Saturday evening meal with their families. Night fell! There was a loud sound and coloured lights lit up the valley and the festivities began; people tumbled out from their cottages to join those who had been waiting in anticipation for the evening revelries. The sound reverberated round and round and round the valley; people jived, danced, sang, laughed, ate and drank and then.....when it became really dark there were Ahsssssss and Oooooos as the fireworks opened up the sky with a cacophony of sparkling wonderment. As the first cascade was fading, so the next explosion of fantasy lit up the sky and valley below.

The following day, Sunday, dawned bright and fair. We, the group from South Wales, dressed in our Welsh Costumes sallied forth to church and joined the congregation for morning worship which, was shared by the whole valley courtesy of the loud speakers. Not much different from our service structure, but with something that I can only put down to the working of the Holy Spirit. The afternoon brought much excitement as people met from the four corners of the village and beyond to take part in the parade, led by a brass band.



National and regional costumes were worn by adults and children; women carried their baskets upon their heads, children with baskets over their arms, bringing their contributions of varying sizes. We all converged into a reasonable order and one elderly lady had in her basket a clutch of eggs and a bantam hen, which produced an egg during the march to the delight of the children. As I looked back along the procession I was aware that tractors with trailers laden with felled trees had joined us, and I have a feeling there was also hay, all

this for the harvest home. Later an auction would be held and everything would be sold. Intermittent with the auction lots there were items from the children and young people. At the end of a very exciting weekend the last of the fireworks were let off before we wended our way home.

May God bless you and your harvest festivals,

Beryl Simcock

FACING UP TO OUR GIANTS - GOLIATH

We know how David fought Goliath, pointing us to how we can overcome the giants in our lives. These 'giants' represent the problems, pressures and pains which we all face at different times, eg: worry, fear, discouragement, difficult people, stress at work or a hopeless situation. How did David finally deal with Goliath, the greatest challenge of his life?

a) David Experienced God's Power:

'David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied' (1 Samuel 17:45).

David refused to use Saul's armour, preferring to face Goliath with his sling and 5 stones. While employing his shepherd's skills, he trusted that God would use them to overcome Goliath. He relied on the Name of the Lord Almighty rather than his own strength. When we come against our 'giants', we can pray and act in the powerful name of Jesus, as well as acting in a way that honours his name.

b) David Enjoyed God's Provision:

'As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly towards the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck

the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground' (1 Samuel 17: 48-49).

When David ran at Goliath, he was trusting that God would give him the necessary power at precisely the right moment. God's mighty power was certainly behind the small smooth stone, as it embedded itself in Goliath's forehead and sent him crashing to the floor!

Like David, we can face, fight, and finish off our 'giants' if we are willing to trust and depend upon God. What word, prayer or action do we need to take, that will be as effective as that stone? We are all on a battlefield. When fearful and unexpected giants come across our path, we might initially want to run away, see the fight as too hard for us, or believe God to be unfair in giving us such a challenge. However, along with all the energy we have, we can trust in a God who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine.

'That little stone took Goliath by surprise; such a thing had never entered his head before!!'

Paul Hardingham

JUSTICE AND MERCY

I am very glad that I am not a judge. I would, I confess, enjoy the income and status, but there are far too many aspects of the job that disqualify me absolutely.

For one thing, how do judges keep awake during those long and tedious explanations of fraud or money-laundering cases? On the other hand, how can they sit there for weeks or months on end listening to legal arguments when the case is so obvious that a ten-year-old could pronounce guilt? Worst of all, however, must be the whole matter of sentencing. The accused stands there before you, found guilty by his peers, and now, after a couple of days to think about it, you alone have to decide what the punishment shall be.

Jesus said, "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get'. There's the problem, in a nutshell. Indeed, his next words make it even worse: 'Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own?' I have never actually murdered anybody, but I've lost my temper plenty of times. I've never robbed a bank, but - hand on heart - has every single statement I have made in a tax return been the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? By the standards of Jesus, a judge needs to do better than that.

I would enjoy sending the revolting men in Oxford who abused vulnerable young girls to jail for a very long time, but what would I have done with the maths teacher who stupidly allowed himself to fall in love with one of his pupils and then run off to France with her? I don't think I would have sent him to prison for five and a half years. I would have looked at him in the dock, seen a man whose career as a teacher was finished forever, and (I suspect) given him a suspended sentence and warned him as to his future conduct. At least that would have saved the nation something like a hundred thousand pounds.

And it is exactly what a judge recently did with a woman teacher who had an affair with a 16 year old boy pupil. But perhaps - see the problem? - this would not sufficiently deter other teachers from similar disastrous relationships with their students.

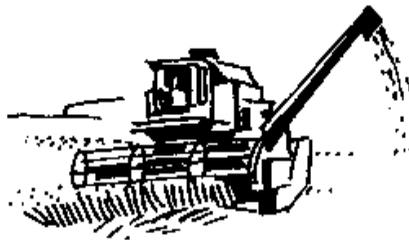
So I do not want to be a judge. But at the same time I admire those who feel able to take on that fearful responsibility. We often pray in church for those who 'administer the law', that they may 'uphold justice, honesty and truth'. All of us who are glad someone else is doing it ought to utter that prayer with profound sincerity.

David Winter

THE HARVEST COMES

The harvest comes
The fields turn gold
The grain is ripe.
And, as of old
The workers glean,
And thresh, and grind
They knead and bake
And bread we find

*Fruit of the grain
A Holy token
Of our Lamb of God
His body broken*



The sun shines warm
The grapes are ripened
The fruit is picked

For Vintner's stipend.
The grapes are crushed
Their juices stored
And in due course,
The wine is poured

*Fruit of the vine
A token, too
Of the blood of Christ
That was shed for you*

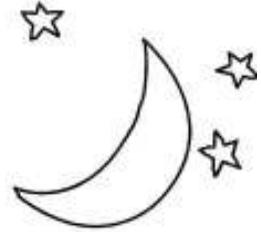
By Nigel Beeton

THIS WORLD GOD MADE



This world God made so beautiful,
Its wonders thus displayed.
The dawn, the day, the setting sun,
Designed to give us aid.

The stars above, that brightly shine,
And moon, that tracks below.
Infinity, which knows no bounds,
As constellations glow.



The overcast of darkness falls,
We sleep, and find due rest,
From toil and stress, the faint of heart,
We wake, new strength possessed.



With explorations, we then find,
Inventions, man aspire,
And knowledge of the sick, to heal,
Technology require.

The earth, so full of riches given,
We benefit and live.
While nature with its balance fair,
Our adoration give.

And when at last, mans time is spent,
We first should understand,
The earth, creation, God hath made,
In Heaven, we grasp His hand.



David E.N. Collins

Divine illustration....

A teacher was observing her classroom of young children while they drew. As she came to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said gently, "But no one knows what God looks like."

Without missing a beat, the girl replied with perfect composure: "They will in a minute."

SUSAN BEMUS - MISSOURI

James and Jane Williams lived at No. 4 Post Office Row, Sudbrook. James was a lay-minister with the Bible Christian Movement. Both were committed Christians and the home life reflected that, with the family gathered to morning and evening prayers – and a passage of scripture. This was noted throughout the village and the pair were known as “The Gentle Jesus Man” and “Mrs Christian Williams.”

Around 1920, three of their ten children pledged themselves to the South American Mission Fields and sailed off to fulfil that intent. On reaching their destination, they enrolled in the Glad Tidings Bible School and began their work for the Lord. The three were Ralph, Richard, and Olive. Ralph and Richard found wives amongst the students there – and after graduation they were married. Olive later married the Reverend Fred Alford.

Ralph and Jewyl eventually had four sons and much later, Owen, the eldest, had four daughters. The eldest of these was Susan. You all know of Susan, because her informative and interesting appreciations of hymns and their writers have appeared in our quarterly magazine. Susan was a committed Christian, like her forbears. She directed her church choir and composed pieces for them. She also led the handbell group at the church. She held a front position at her local

courthouse until she retired a short while ago.

Earlier this year (2014) Susan was found to have very serious tumours in the breast, in both lungs, and in the brain. Her sisters gathered to support her husband, Jim, and her father also joined them.

A small amount of radiotherapy was applied and chemotherapy was offered. Susan declined and turned to her faith, trusting that her Lord knew best. She lasted about three weeks and died peacefully, sustained by her faith.

At the time of her diagnosis, I mentioned it at our church and Olive put her name in our prayer book and we, as a church, have been praying for her weekly. Susan no longer needs our prayers, but please continue to pray for her husband, her son, her father and her three sisters. Roger has more of her work and will probably print them, little by little, but Susan will not write anymore!

The family thank you all for your interest in her work – and thank you very warmly for all your prayers on their behalf. Her father asked particularly that their appreciation should be expressed to all of you.

Thank you and God bless you.

June Rowles

HYMN TUNES

A TOUCH OF INFINITE CALM

My topic this time is slightly different than in most of my past hymn articles. When Shelley, Darlene or Pat plays a hymn arrangement for prelude or offertory, I often like to remember the hymn lyrics that go with that tune. The words are important as they carry a powerful message that most people can understand. But the tune alone can have an impact too.

On a recent drive to Pennsylvania for the birth of my grandson (Gabriel Rhyse, 6lb 13 oz.), I spent a lot of time singing along to the CD of our choir's Easter cantata, trying to learn it all by the time I returned home. When I was "sung out" I put on other disks to listen to, my favorites being my Welsh male choir CDs. Now, contrary to popular opinion, I have not memorized the entire hymnbook. Still less do I know all the Welsh language lyrics to some of the more obscure Welsh hymn tunes. So most of the time I did just listen.

As most people know, Sir Arthur Sullivan collaborated with Sir William Gilbert on a number of operettas such as "The Mikado" and "Pirates of Penzance." Sullivan's sacred tunes are not as well known, but he actually preferred the "serious" music he wrote prolifically. He had tried for several years to set to music a poem written by Adelaide Anne Procter, but it wasn't until his brother's death that inspiration born of grief produced "The Lost Chord."

The lyrics speak of a chord "like the sound of a great Amen" that brought peace and calm, quieted pain and sorrow, and "came from the soul of the organ and entered into mine." But it is Sullivan's musical interpretation of those lyrics that speaks most clearly. When you forget about the words and concentrate on the music, you can hear a faint echo of that one lost chord, the great Amen, that will not be heard again this side of Heaven.

While listening to the soaring harmonies of those Welsh language hymns, I found that the music alone had the power to reach into my mind, stir my soul, and often bring me to a very different kind of musical experience than I usually find in church on Sundays. There is definite value in just listening to the tune and harmonies, not trying to find a message in the hymn lyrics but letting the music itself soak into your soul and bring you your own personal message of "infinite calm." It may be a different message than the words convey.

Susan Bemus 2013, Granby, Missouri

YES, WE'LL GATHER AT THE RIVER

When I lived in Independence, Kansas, as a child, I liked hiking down to the Verdigris River with my grandpa to fish for crappie (I don't remember that we ever caught any). Then in 1962 my family moved to Arizona where the nearest river was a 3-foot-wide trickle for most of the year. After 40 years in Arizona I was ready to move closer to some bigger streams and rivers.

I enjoy living near so many water sources. I

like seeing cows standing belly-deep in the neighbour's stock tank. The honking of the resident Canada geese from the pond over the hill makes a pleasant lullaby. Kids wading in Hickory Creek seem the essence of summer. Even when they flood, even when I know they contain snapping turtles or water snakes or E. coli bacteria, I just love lakes and ponds and creeks and rivers.

To me, a river is a symbol of progress, restoration and renewal. But early hymn writers usually focused on rivers as symbols of death, "crossing over the river" to Heaven. In 1864, Brooklyn pastor Robert Lowry wondered why hymn writers didn't put more emphasis on rivers as symbols of life. As Lowry mused on this thought, words began to come to him first in the form of a question: "Shall we gather?" Then the question was answered, "Yes, we'll gather," and on this question and answer the hymn began to develop. The lyrics reference Revelation 22:1, where the angel showed John "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

"Shall We Gather at the River" is a favourite hymn of many, such as movie director John Ford, who employed it in the soundtracks of several of his Western films. It has also been featured in many other movies, including the Academy Award winning film "Trip to Bountiful." Dr. Lowry himself wasn't very fond of this hymn, and was sometimes surprised to find how much pleasure others took in singing and hearing it.

Although Dr. Lowry said, "I would rather preach a gospel sermon to an appreciative, receptive congregation than write a hymn," he did write nearly 500 hymns including "I Need Thee Every Hour" and "Low in the Grave He Lay." His hymn writing may have been just a form of recreation to Dr. Lowry, but thousands of appreciative, receptive hearers over the years have gathered at the musical river to learn and be comforted by his sermon in song.

*Susan Bemus 2013,
Granby, Missouri*

CLOUDS



Yet, we always know this dear man, as “Doubting Thomas”, and nowadays it is used of anyone who refuses to accept the truth. Eventually, at a slightly later time and another gathering, Jesus appears again, and Thomas is present this time. “Then Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “*Peace be unto you.*” Then he said to Thomas, “*Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing.*” and Thomas answered and said unto him, “*My Lord and my God.*”

Matthew 10, verses 2,3,4, give us the names of the original twelve disciples, and Thomas is named there. Mark 3, verses 16,17,18,19 give us the same list. Luke 6,- 14,15,16 also repeats all the names for us. Each list contains the name of Thomas.

John chapter 11 gives us the illness and the death of Lazarus. Jesus expresses his intention of going to Bethany to the sisters of Lazarus. There is fear amongst the disciples because they felt it put Jesus in serious danger. But Thomas says to the group, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” That sounds brave to me and shows his devotion to his Master. It gives me an insight into the firmness of character that Thomas is displaying.



We don't know whether Thomas did touch the wounds. The Bible doesn't tell us that he did – it doesn't tell us that he didn't. But in that moment, as the offer was made, Thomas was convinced – “*My Lord*”, whom he had been with throughout his ministry and “*My God*”. No longer any doubt that he was God and that he was risen. The need to feel no longer existed. Perhaps he did feel the wounds, but he didn't need to; the words from Jesus had wholly convinced him. What a wonderful moment of revelation for Thomas – for all of them – because I am sure some felt as uncertain as Thomas, but lacked the courage to say so. Then those words from Jesus – “*Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.*”

Not so much only a word for Thomas, but a word for all time, for all of us, who would follow on; a word to encourage us down the ages. We have believed without seeing and Jesus is saying that is a blessed state. Yes, although we have not seen Jesus with human eyes, we have seen him by faith. We have read his story, read of his deeds and words upon earth. We have read of his gentleness, but his firmness of purpose, his determination to go to the cross for our sins. We too have recognised his sacrifice and his resurrection and we have embraced it all by faith. We are those “that have not seen but yet have believed.” Hallelujah. Like Thomas we need nothing more to convince us, we

In John 20 and verses 24 & 25 we read that the other disciples have seen the Lord and tell Thomas all about it. Thomas finds it unbelievable, and is that surprising? Thomas has seen the Lord crucified, taken down dead, and enclosed in the tomb. If I had been to a funeral and then was told the buried person was alive, my reaction would be just as decisive as that of Thomas. I would think that the person telling me was having hallucinations, or maybe even had “a screw loose”! How would you react if you were told a similar tale?

feel the power and the presence of Jesus in our lives.

Acts chapter 1 tells us of the ascension and verse 13 tells us that Thomas was amongst those present. This was the final sealing act for those apostles, that their Master was taken up into heaven before their very eyes – the final proof that he was returning to heaven, from whence he had come.

While they stood there in wonderment – *“two men stood by them in white apparel.”* They said, *“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”* A promise to them and to us that one day in the fullness of time, God will step down through the clouds in the same way. What a glorious day that will be – when we who have believed without seeing – will see the God that we love and worship. The God who endured the agony at Calvary for us to be privileged to witness that great day. The gospels also record that Christ will come in the clouds.

Matthew says, *“they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”* Mark says, *“and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”* Revelation says, *“Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.”*

Isn't that an amazing thought? That one wonderful day the clouds will part and our God will appear before our human eyes. It will be a wonderful day only if we are secure in the knowledge of Jesus as our Saviour. For those who have ignored him, denied him, scoffed at him, it will be the start of a time of fear and retribution. We must all answer for what we have done here on earth whether good or bad. If we have accepted the blood of Christ, we will be protected, but if we have not believed we will have nothing and no one to help us. *“Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.”*

We know that the scriptures have been written and preserved as a map for Christians to follow, so I easily accept that Jesus didn't mean that statement to be just for Thomas. Yes, it was for him, because he had asked for assurance, for proof perhaps, but it was also for us who would not see, but who would need to believe if we want to attain heaven.

All that followed seems just as unbelievable. Jesus ate fish with them and shared his presence. Then they walked out together to the place where he would be taken from them. They stood and watched him disappear and then the two angels appeared to them, promising that Christ would return. That takes a bit of swallowing; and yet it is part of the greatest story ever told. The story of Jesus has changed the lives of people all down the ages. Whenever anyone starts to examine that story, the spirit of God begins to work in their lives and hearts and keeps up its influence until they come to accept its truth.

Not only does it light the lives of those accept it – it blights the lives of those who refute it. Even those who set out earnestly to disprove it, have finally had to admit that they have found God through it. *“Blessed are those who have not seen but yet have believed.”*

Even then, though, Jesus was leaving his followers, he told them to wait for further blessing. Then on the day we call Pentecost, he gave them an injection of spiritual power that wiped out any lingering doubt from their hearts. That power energized them into a ministry that began to harvest souls for Christ. Those that stood by were astonished at the languages and the learning that poured from their lips. The disciples were made brave and bold by the certainty that now filled their beings. Souls have been harvested ever since in the name of Jesus, and that will go on until Jesus comes again. In fact, the Word tells us that there will be a

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

great harvest of souls before the end times and before that wonderful second coming in the clouds.

We look for it, we long for it, we pray for it. The influence of evil is all around us now in our modern society. It exhibits itself in frightening proportions. But all this is forecast in the Bible, in God's Word. All the promised signs are appearing, the Word is being fulfilled. The news is taken up with everything that is of this world. It is shocking, distressing, unpalatable – it makes us feel despair at times. In spite of all that, we have peace and joy in the worship and the knowledge of our Saviour. We who truly know him will be part of his great harvest and we can invite others in word and deed. If we are instrumental in leading souls to find God – they will be our sheaves, our golden sheaves, that we can present at that great and final harvest.

Until then, "blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed" Let us go on believing until the clouds open and Christ is revealed to us in all his glory.

I often contemplate the clouds, the sky-scape clear and broad

*And in imagination see a vision of the Lord
Perhaps it's what I long to see the scripture coming true*

With all believers standing by astounded at the view

But if it truly happened so, what would my feelings be

Would I feel some reservations when my Lord looked at me

Would I feel I wasn't ready to face his piercing look

Would I feel I hadn't yet done all he'd said in his book –

But he could step down tomorrow and then I would be caught

I wouldn't be halfway worthy of the gift he has bought

I haven't always carried out the work he gave to me

I haven't treated my neighbour as I wish he'd treat me

And I've been a cruel critic and could have been more kind

Is this really the character I want Jesus to find?

So I pray that the cloud cover will not open today

That I'll be given enough time to reflect on my way

To follow his instruction and to learn and obey

To be fit for his acceptance when the clouds roll away.

Amen

Calamus

CAN GARLIC REALLY SCARE THINGS OFF?

Dracula didn't like it, according to Bram Stoker. But we should. Because *Allium sativum*, which belongs to the same family as onions, chives, and shallots, might well protect us from a range of diseases, especially those that hit us during the winter.

There is a long held belief that garlic helps against heart disease by thinning the blood and helping to lower cholesterol. Certainly the Romans had faith in garlic – they marched into England on it, trusting it



to keep them safe from the bronchitis inducing mists and fogs.

Today, numerous studies are looking at garlic's power to combat bacterial, fungal and even maybe viral infections. It can be used

to treat colds, sore throats, verrucas, cold sores, catarrh, bites and stings, stomach problems, mouth ulcers - and as a general tonic. As one garlic lover puts it: "Your breath will be terrible, but who cares? After a week, you will feel like a million dollars."

THE HEALING POWER OF LAUGHTER

The health benefits of laughter have become widely recognised in recent years. People feel less pain after a good laugh because (research suggests) it releases chemicals that act as a natural pain-killer.

Physical benefits of laughter have been found to include a drop in stress hormones and less risk of heart disease. Mental and social benefits include less anxiety and stress, improved mood and enhanced group bonding.

Humour helps us to keep a positive outlook in difficult situations, disappointments and loss. More than that, laughter gives us the courage and strength to find new sources of meaning and hope. It really is contagious – just hearing laughter primes your brain and readies you to smile. It dissolves distressing emotions. You can't feel anxious, angry or sad when you are laughing.

Humour gets you out of your head and away

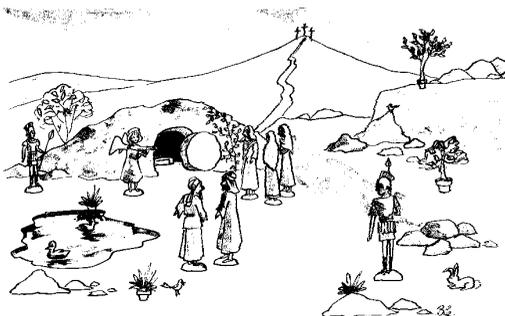
from your troubles. Infants begin smiling during the first weeks of life and laugh out loud within months of being born. But you can learn to laugh at any stage of life. Smiling is the beginning of laughter. It can help to set aside special times to seek out humour and build from there. Pay attention to children and emulate them. They are experts on playing, taking life lightly and laughing.

The old advice to "count your blessings" will distance you from negative thoughts. When you hear laughter, move towards it. Share your embarrassing moments. The best way to take yourself less seriously is to talk about times when you took yourself too seriously.

There are now hundreds of non-profit laughter clubs world-wide, including many in the UK.

Philip Barron

THE HIVE EASTER GARDEN 2014



The Hive are girls and boys 5yrs to 10yrs old. They meet on Wednesday evening, have fun, making craft things learning new songs and play games etc. We as a church congregation were invited to a ½ hour service on Palm Sunday afternoon, to bless their Easter Garden.

The children were hands on. They drew what they thought the Easter Garden should look like. The finished garden looked beautiful and wonderful. They had the three crosses on a green hill. The cave, and a big stone to roll

away. A gravel path: going through the garden, with heather and small plants, looking fantastic.

The children chose the 3 songs we sang, all favourites, they read the bible, said prayers. The youngest child said the Blessing which was beautiful.

Each child was given a Fairtrade Easter Egg to take home. Tea and coffee was served with Hot x Buns, for all in the schoolroom.

After reading this report, are you asking yourself, where was I, that Palm Sunday afternoon? These children, need or support and encouragement. How do you think they felt when they looked around? The Parents and Grand - parents, their leaders and supporters they saw. But where were we? The church congregation, like school reports, 'Could do Better!'

From a member who was there.

HE RULETH ME

The following is reproduced from the Order of Service for the Thanksgiving for the life of Revd F. Barrie Heafford held on 17th February 2014 at Aylesbury Methodist Church.

HE RULETH ME

In pastures green. Not always:
Sometimes he who knoweth best, in
kindness, leadeth me
in weary ways where heavy shadows be;
Out of the sunshine into darkest night.
I oft would faint with sorrow and affright.
Only for this - I know he holds my hand.
So whether in a green or desert land,
I trust him, though I do not understand.

And by still waters. No, not always so:
Oftime the heavy tempests blow.
And over my soul the waves and billows go.
But when the storm beats loudest and I cry
aloud for help, the master standeth by

and whispers to my soul, "lo it is I" -
Above the tempest wild I hear him say:
"Beyond this darkness lies the perfect day.
In every step of thine I lead the way."

So, whether on a hilltop high and fair
I dwell, or in the sunless valley where
the shadows lie - what matter? He is there.
Yea, more than this: where'ere
the pathway lead,
He gives to me no helpless, broken reed.
But his own hand sufficient for my need.
So, where'ere he leadeth I can safely go;
And in the blest hereafter I shall know
why, in his wisdom, he hath led me so.

The Abbot in a monastery in San Diego

*Taken from Prestwood Methodist Church
Summer 2014 Magazine,*

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A DRIVER'S FRIEND

I have a little Satnav, It sits there in my car.

A Satnav is a driver's friend,
it tells you where you are.

I have a little Satnav, I've had it all my life.

It's better than the normal' ones,
my Satnav is my wife.

It gives me full instructions,
especially how to drive

"Its sixty miles an hour", it says, 'You're doing
sixty five".

It tells me when to stop and start,
and when to use the brake.

And tells me that its never ever,
safe to overtake.

It tells me when a light is red,
and when it goes to green.

It seems to know instinctively,
just when to intervene.

It lists the vehicles just in front,
and all those to the rear

And taking this into account,
it specifies my gear.

I'm sure no other driver,
has so helpful a device

For when we leave and lock the car,
it still gives its advice.

It fills me up with counselling,
each journey's pretty fraught

So why don't I exchange it,
and get a quieter sort?

Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes
sure I'm properly fed.

It washes all my shirts and things,
and keeps me warm in bed!

Despite all these advantages,
and my tendency to scoff,

I only wish that now and then,
I could turn the blighter off.

*Contributed by Chris & Cynthia Hartley
Taken from Prestwood Methodist Church
Summer 2014 Magazine,*



Contributions for the next magazine would be most welcome. Members and friends of Caldicot, Langstone, Rogiet, & Penyaemawr we would like to include an article of your choice. Please forward items to:-
Barbara or Roger Simms, 14 Rockfield Crescent, Undy,
Tel: (01633) 880304,
Email roger@barbaraandroger.co.uk
no later than midday :-

**FROM THE
EDITOR**

**Sunday
16th November**

NEVER BET AGAINST THE CHURCH!

“You will be his witness to all men of that you have seen and heard” (Acts 22:15)

Such power! The apostle Paul had just been attacked by the crowd, rescued by the Romans – and was now, not receiving counselling, but making a speech! He tells the crowd of his conversion; how Ananias, his mentor, had supported him and given him words of divine commission. Here is an example for us all of:

Staying power. Paul was, perhaps, the greatest-ever exponent of Christian mission. Even at this late stage of life he can still face riots, beatings and prison.... and come up running.

A sports axiom in America years ago read, *Never bet against Notre Dame, New York Yankees, or Ted Schroeder in the fifth set.* But history might equally say, ‘Never write off the Church or its messengers before the final Day.’

Winsome power. Paul loved his fellow-Jews – and this came across in his speaking (22.1), and in his clear demonstration that he was one of them.

A Christian pastor in Africa was about to be killed for his faith. “May I say something before I die?” he asked. “Say it quickly!” came the brusque reply. “First,” said

the pastor. “I love you. Secondly, I love my country. Third, I will sing you a song before I die.” With that he sang to his captors – in their mother tongue – all four verses of the hymn that begins, *Out of my bondage, sorrow and night, Jesus I come, Jesus I come.* Then the shots rang out – and he was gone. It was the historian, H.M. Gwatkin, who wrote, ‘This change, from self to unself as the spring of human action, is the greatest revolution which the world has seen.’

Cutting power. When Paul told of his part in the murder of Stephen, and that Christ was now sending him to the Gentiles, the riot started again (22:19-23). The fact is that true and faithful witness to Jesus Christ inevitably results in a reaction, one way or the other. Why, then, do we persist in a belief that can often be costly? The answer is, *Because Christianity is true!*

Moral power. Paul is then about to be beaten by the Romans – but he challenges them. “Er... Is this legal?” he asks. It wasn’t – and they back down. Through it all, one man – sent by God – was in control.

Lesson: It’s never wise to bet against the Church!

Richard Bewes

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HOLIDAY SNAPSHOTS?

This summer, how many photographs did you take while on holiday? What did you do with them all? It seems that with the arrival of smartphones and the internet, some of us are in danger of ruining our own holidays by obsessive clicking.

Instead of switching off, and simply enjoying our holiday surroundings, we spend hours taking photographs which we then upload on Facebook, and comment on.... and then we spend even more time reading what people have said about our holidays, and responding.

Now one professor at Lancaster University has warned: “The technology is getting in the way not only of people

experiencing where they are, but also the other people they are with. Capturing the moment in your head is more important than capturing it on your smartphone.” And, as more people admit to carefully staging photographs that make them look happy and relaxed, for uploading onto Facebook, “there is definitely a competitive element. It’s about telling other people where you are and using it to show off.”

Sunshine.co.uk, who commissioned the study, found that it seemed “the more you are connected, the more you struggle to have proper personal time with people that matter.”

A MIRACLE DRUG?

70 years ago researchers isolated for the first time the antibiotic drug streptomycin. Within a few years it was in widespread use as the first effective treatment for tuberculosis, which in my childhood was both widespread and incurable.

In 1949, during my National Service, I was working as a nursing assistant on the TB ward of an RAF hospital. The patients were fed a healthy, nourishing diet and exposed to as much fresh air as possible. That, and linctus to alleviate the constant coughing, was the best we could do for them. As one 19 year old said to me, 'It's odd when you've barely grown up to know what you're going to die of'. In fact, he was wrong.

One Friday the ward staff were summoned to a meeting and instructed on the use of a new drug, which had proved effective in several countries in combating TB. On Monday we collected the bottles and pills and began to administer the medication. To our astonishment, and the delight of the patients, the effect was instantaneous and amazing.. Within weeks, many of these young men and women were symptom-free. In a month or so they were being discharged from hospital,

cured. 'Miraculous' was the word we were all using. The drug, of course, was streptomycin.

I think of that experience whenever I collect my regular prescription of medication from the surgery. We take so much for granted in terms of medical advances, but in fact the change - just in my life-time - is spectacular. Diseases like small-pox and diphtheria, once widespread and deadly, are part of medical history. Tuberculosis, or 'consumption' as it was often called, has been virtually eradicated, only persisting in its deadly work where poverty gives it shelter. And of course the progress is ongoing. Every month there are reports of new treatments and new drugs - the only problem seems to be paying for them!

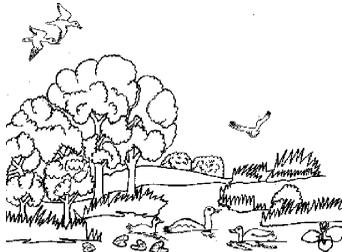
I wonder if it could be true that on our amazing planet the Creator has hidden all the tools we need to combat the diseases and afflictions that trouble us - just leaving us to find them, and thankfully put them to their God-given use. Fanciful? Perhaps, but I think there's a whiff of a profound truth there somewhere.

David Winter

WHERE DID THE PLANTS, BIRDS AND ANIMALS GO?

Here's some alarming news: more than half of the plant and animal species in Britain are dying out, according to a recent ground-breaking report.

The State of Nature report has brought together 25 leading conservation groups for the first time to assess the condition of British wildlife. The results are stark: we are in danger of killing off our hedgehogs, skylarks, dormice, water voles, butterflies, and turtle doves, to mention but a fraction of animals on the danger list.



Sir David Attenborough, the television presenter, is calling for better planning of the countryside and warns that not only is the variety and beauty of the countryside in danger, but also resources such as clean air and water. "If you allow the natural world to gradually decline the consequences are multitudinous." The conservation groups behind the State of Nature report include the RSPB and Royal Botanic Gardens, recommend creating new habitats on farms and in cities and 'green corridors' through urban areas.

BOOK REVIEW



Hear My Cry – words for when there are no words

Bible Society, £3.99

As individuals and communities across the country reflect on the First World War during its centenary, Bible Society is marking this anniversary with an illustrated collection of psalms, poems and personal stories to aid reflection about the War. The majority of the personal stories are drawn from original research among families whose ancestors fought or died in the War. Many of the soldiers' Bibles have survived, some with dramatic evidence of the part they played.

Sister Wendy Beckett provides a commentary on paintings by Pieter Bruegel and John Nash, and the moving words of poets such as Wilfred Owen, Eleanor Farjeon and Siegfried Sassoon are represented alongside other voices from the war years. *Hear My Cry* also features a Foreword written by General the Lord Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff 2006-2009.



The New Testament (CEV) Audio CD Set **Bible Society, £25**

Now you can encounter the greatest story ever told—you've never heard it before. Brought to you by Bible Society, and dramatised by Riding Lights Theatre Company, this CD box recording is an unabridged reading of the CEV New Testament set, and brings to life the whole New Testament in a dynamic and vibrant way.

Audio storytelling certainly has power,

and this CD set takes you back to first century Palestine, the extraordinary life and teaching of Jesus, and the compelling dramas of the early church. There is also a 64-page study guide which will be an ideal introduction for newcomers and for those wanting to delve deeper. It's perfect for groups, as well as individual study and reflection.

Holy Wells – a Pilgrim's Prayer Companion and Guide

By Brendan O'Malley, Canterbury Press
£9.99

Pilgrimages to holy wells were common in medieval Christendom, and especially among Celtic peoples with their profound awareness of the God's presence in creation. In the wider Christian tradition water is a symbol of life, grace and healing - a gift of God, springing forth from the earth. Many parish churches were built close to wells which were used for baptism and for healing services. Today, interest in holy wells is resurgent; thousands of pilgrims and walkers visit holy wells each year.

This resource has been written in response to a demand for prayers and blessings to use at a holy well. It includes an introduction to the history and significance of holy wells, a wide variety of prayers and simple liturgies for individual pilgrims, groups and churches that are based near holy wells. It also includes a guide - with GPS references - to the principal holy wells in England, Wales and Scotland



80 Creative Prayer Ideas – a resource for church and group use

By Claire Daniel, BRF, £8.99

Prayer is a vital part of the Christian life but people often struggle with actually getting on and doing it. This book offers 80 imaginative and creative ideas for setting up 'prayer stations', practical ways of praying that involve the senses - touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, and hearing, rather than simply reflecting, as we bring our hopes, fears, dreams and doubts to God.



Soul Keeping – caring for the most important part of you

By John Ortberg, Zondervan, £7.91

The soul is NOT 'a theological and abstract subject.' The soul is the coolest, eeriest, most mysterious, evocative, crucial, sacred, eternal, life-directing, fragile, indestructible, controversial, expensive dimension of your existence. Jesus said it's worth more than the world. Wouldn't it be worth knowing how to care for it? Two things are for sure. One is: you have a soul. The other is: if you don't look after this one you won't be issued a replacement. Bestselling author John Ortberg writes another classic that will help readers discover their soul and take their relationship with God to the next level



Tails I Lose – the compulsive gambler who lost his shirt for good

By Justyn Rees Larcombe, Lion, £8.99

Justyn Rees Larcombe had it all. Around his beautiful home were the mementoes of success - the Sword of Honour awarded by the Queen when he left Sandhurst; the silver photo frames with the pictures of his much loved wife and family; the rooms full of the rewards of a City career. But Justyn had a parallel life: he gambled. Gradually he allowed it to take over everything, getting through a staggering three quarters of a million pounds - some his own money, some his wife's, an some

belonging to the company he worked for.

The crunch came: he lost his job; his wife left him, taking his sons. Anything that could be sold was - and then gambled away again. One day, he had no alternative but to go back to his mother's home and start again. Today Justyn has a high profile in the media, talking about the dangers of gambling and helping others coping with gambling addiction



The Lion Book of Nursery Rhymes

By Julia Stone, Cally Johnson-Isaacs, Candle, £9.99

Every child's favourite nursery rhymes are collected together here for a new generation. These rhymes are not only classics but help develop language skills as children learn to recite them. Cally Johnson-Isaacs' bold, jolly little pictures capture the fun and mischief in nursery rhymes, while being friendly and appealing. A stylish volume that a child can treasure for years.

Acts and Omissions

By Catherine Fox, SPCK, £9.99

The Bishop of Lindchester is happily married with four daughters. But does he have a secret? Archdeacon Matt is inclined to think not. That said, it's obvious to him that Bishop Paul's got a pretty big bee in his mitre about the brilliant but troubled Freddie May . . .

Welcome to the fictional Diocese of Lindchester, where you will be taken (dear reader) on a yearlong romp in the company of bishops, priests and lay people. Prepare yourself for a bumpy and hilarious ride from the rarefied heights of the Cathedral Close down to the coalface of ordinary urban and rural parishes. *Acts and Omissions* reveals the Church of England in all its mess and glory. It is a world shot through with grace, but one where even the best intentioned err and stray. And occasionally do those things which they ought not to have done...



ST JAMES-THE-LEAST OF ALL

On how to save electricity in church

The Rectory, St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Your church certainly seems to have taken to the idea of green electricity with a vengeance. To have covered the whole of your roof with solar panels was a brave move, and makes quite a sight – especially when the sun catches them, dazzling motorists on the by-pass and causing multiple pile-ups. I pity the local pigeons, who try to land on it and then do a gentle glissade into the gutters.

I know there have been objections to your proposal to erect a wind turbine in your car park – although no one could claim that it spoils the aesthetic appearance of your church. Nothing, my dear Darren, could do that.

May I humbly offer you some further suggestions for reducing your electricity consumption. If you cut your sermons by half, then everyone could go home 20 minutes earlier. Similarly, if you only sang each chorus once instead of your customary 17 times, that should cut your service times in half. And why have lighting so good that everyone can see everyone else? That is the last thing our own congregation ever want to do.

I raised the issue at our last church council meeting, but having only recently gone on to electricity, there seemed little enthusiasm for yet more change. Major Hastings still fondly remembers our old acetylene plant in the churchyard, destroyed during one Mattins when the verger was unaware of the gas leak and lit up a cigarette. We still occasionally find pieces of his cassock when mowing the grass.

Mr Prentice, with a slightly malicious gleam, suggested building a treadmill, to be worked by the Young Farmers – which would also keep them out of the pub while Evensong was taking place. I couldn't help feeling that

our Ladies Group would have far more determination to keep the thing rotating – probably providing enough energy to light the entire County. I was tempted to suggest we invite the vicar from our adjoining parish, St. Agatha's, to preach every Sunday, as that would fill our church with more than enough hot air.

I finally stopped all further discussion on the subject when a solar panel consultant arrived at the Rectory and began his sales pitch with the phrase: "I've come to convert you".

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

On publishing my book

The Rectory, St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

After all these years, who would have believed it: to have my own book printed. I must admit, I had imagined a leather-bound volume with gold leaf lettering on the spine – perhaps even titled "Volume One", implying future delights when further work would appear. A paperback, held together with glue was a slight disappointment. The publisher's reason for a print run of 50, saying that it meant fewer would have to be dumped in cut-price bookshops was not what I had expected either.

He seemed to think that my commentary on Eusebius's tables for cross-referencing the gospels, as explained in his letter to Carpianus, would not have mass interest. While I concede it will be unlikely to dent the sales of Harry Potter, and that I am unlikely to be involved in negotiating the film rights, I had hoped for slightly more enthusiasm for this stride forward in global knowledge.

The excitement of the book launch and signing was also tempered when only the bishop arrived, expecting a free copy, so he could mark it for theological errors. My suggestion that he take a copy to colour it in did not go down well. I suspect I will not now

by The Rev Dr Gary Bowness

be asked to deliver a paper on it at the next clergy conference.

I was briefly excited when several parishioners came into the shop. But it turned out that one wanted to book a baptism with me, and another wanted to complain that at his recent wedding, I had nearly married the best man to the bride. I was tempted to tell him that the time may come when he wished I had, but decided that would be another sale lost.

I could not even console myself with a free drink. The publisher had only brought two bottles of that particular white wine, of unknown origin, that seems specially reserved for book launches and retirement parties. I suspect it derives less from a vineyard and more from a laboratory. One bottle he kept for himself and the other disappeared after my Confirmation class came in to ask whether the book would be serialised on TV.

In the end, I bought all 50 copies myself, placed a note in the bookshop window saying that, due to exceptional demand, the print run had been entirely sold out. It has also solved the annual problem of Christmas presents; in your case, a second copy will probably arrive for your birthday too.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

On the challenge of hitting 11 o'clock precisely....

The Rectory, St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

It is a great shame that your church doesn't have chandeliers – although in your low-ceilinged converted cinema, any chandelier more than a few feet tall would also be embedded in your floor carpeting. But I find that there is nothing like watching the standard bearers on Remembrance Sunday parading up the aisle with their flags and getting them caught up in our brass candelabra.

One year, the procession ground to a halt while a bearer fought to retrieve his flag, and was obliged to leave it flying in the centre of the church while he presented me with an empty pole. I always feel obliged to tell parishioners the previous week, that since all the candelabra will inevitably be sent spinning, not to stare at them, or they may leave the church hypnotised. On the other hand, Miss Simpson generally leaves the church looking like that.

Major Hastings always arrives bejewelled with so many medals that every time he kneels for prayer, it sounds as if he is taking the collection. Their weight increases his stoop by at least ten degrees, to the point where some feel we should support him with a personal flying buttress.

Since the trumpeter playing the Last Post can be of varying quality, your idea of broadcasting it from London into your church is inspired. However, your worries about whether your radio will be good enough need not trouble you. If you tell your congregation that they are about to hear the broadcast silence and you then simply not switch the thing on, no one will be able to tell the slightest difference whether the silence is being broadcast or not. In fact, they will even congratulate you on hitting 11am at exactly the right moment.

I always use subterfuge; I have the church clock disconnected and then when we reach the time for silence, irrespective of the true time, I get a churchwarden to toll the bell eleven times. This way, I have apparently come to the exact moment without a hitch for the last 30 years.

You will also find that preaching about warfare and of man's inhumanity to man will give you greater insights into the working of your church council. The only difference is that on committees – sadly – the use of machine guns is rather frowned on.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 'Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders — in vain' (Psalm 127:1) (6)
 4 Season of the year (Psalm 84:6) (6)
 7 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. — here and keep watch with me' (Matthew 26:38) (4)
 8 It came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour on the first Good Friday (Luke 23:44) (8)
 9 Paul invariably did this in the synagogues he visited on his missionary journeys (Acts 17:2) (8)
 13 'It is God who works in you to will and to — according to his good purpose' (Philippians 2:13) (3)
 16 Members of the Church of Scotland (13)
 17 'Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain side and — down' (Matthew 5:1) (3)
 19 Mock(Luke14:29)(8)
 24 Disgrace(Psalm44:13)(8)
 25 First month of the Hebrew calendar (Exodus13:4)(4)
 26 Christianity of the Britons before Augustine arrived from Rome(6)

- 27 Mean (Numbers 35:23) (6)

Down

- 1 'Whoever finds his life will — it' (Matthew 10:39) (4)
 2 'My lord the king, let the — — on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt' (2 Samuel 14:9) (5,4)
 3 O raid (anag.) (5)
 4 'If two of you on earth — about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven' (Matthew 18:19) (5)
 5 Take care of (1 Samuel 17:15) (4)
 6 What the older son heard as he came near the house the day his prodigal brother came home (Luke 15:25) (5)

- 10 'Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with — judgment' (Romans 12:3) (5)
 11 Do ten(anag.)(5)
 12 Architectural style first used in Greek temples in the sixth century BC (5)
 13 Capable of being used(1Kings7:36)(9)
 14 'Each one should — his own actions'(Galatians6:4)(4)
 15 Among the items imported by Solomon's fleet of trading ships (1 Kings 10:22) (4)
 18 'But I am afraid that just — was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray' (2 Corinthians 11:3) (2,3)
 20 Outstanding 18th-century hymn writer, — Watts(5)
 21 One of the four sons of Asher (Genesis46:17)(5)
 22 Be distressed(Proverbs24:19)(4)
 23 He was the father of Gaal, who threatened rebellion against Abimelech (Judges 9:28) (4)

Answers over page

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SUDUKU

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INTER-MEDIATE

**Answers
over page**

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CROSSWORD & SUDOKU ANSWERS

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EASY

INTER-MEDIATE

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9	7	3	4	6	2	5	1	8

Big catering headache!

Bible Sketchbook



Thousands followed Jesus

What a catering head-ache! Thousands of people following Jesus with nothing to eat. Jesus told his followers "You feed them." Impossible - all they could find were two fishes and five small loaves. Undaunted Jesus gave thanks to God, blessed the food and gave it to his followers to give out. They trusted Jesus, and amazingly, at least 5,000 were fed with 12 baskets left over. His followers trusted Jesus to provide; how about you?

Read more in Matthew 14: 13-21



A boy had five loaves and two fishes

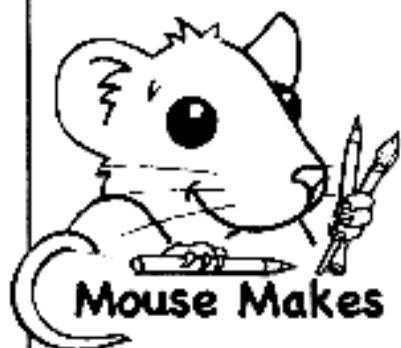


Jesus lifted the food up to heaven and blessed it...



...then his followers gave out the food and there was enough for everybody!

W. Mather ©

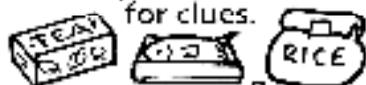


Mouse Makes

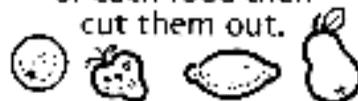
Where in the world
does your food
come from?



Look on the labels,
boxes, packets and cans
for clues.



Draw small pictures
of each food then
cut them out.



Stick your food pictures
onto a map of the world
over the country
they came from.



TO MAKE the harvest banner
Colour in then cut out. Hang
up in the kitchen or attach
to your harvest offering





DIFFERENT HARVESTS

The beginning of autumn and the time of harvest is here again – a time when we thank God for all his blessings.

The Harvest Festival service in churches and schools are full of tins of beans and boxes of fruit and vegetables. There are flowers and lots of different sights and smells. Harvest Festival is a very popular service but while we are busy saying 'thank you' we have to remember that there are lots of different harvests.



Very few people work on the land nowadays and most people don't grow their own food but buy it from

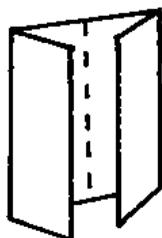
the supermarket. Perhaps our harvest isn't one that others can easily see. We might not make or grown things but we can offer whatever we do to God as our harvest.

Outside, the trees are beginning to lose their leaves but you can

MAKE YOUR OWN FOREST

Take a piece of stiff card or thin paper and fold it in half, creasing it down the centre. Then open it out and fold both sides to the centre crease.

Fold the paper as shown and draw half a tree on the top fold. Cut round the tree then glue the centre faces together. This makes a three sided tree.

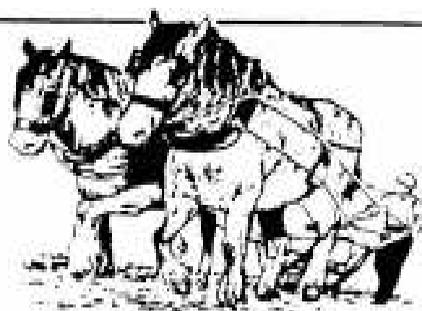


You can paint the tree before gluing it or afterwards. A forest of them would look good as name cards for a party or you could make just one as a different birthday card for a friend.

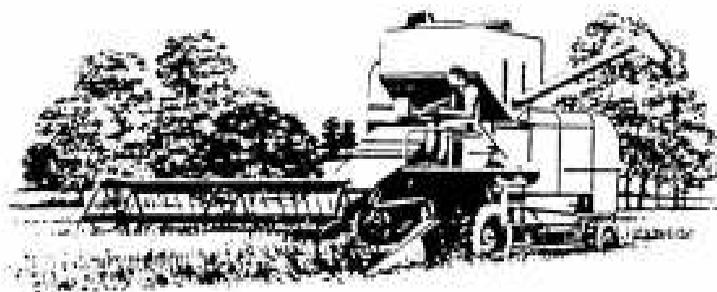


What is a tree's least favourite month?

Sep-timber.



TIMES CHANGE



HARVEST FESTIVAL GOES ON