

Witney Congregational Church

CORNERSTONE

March 2009



Our Church is, and will continue to be, a living, growing congregation where people of all ages will find God reflected in us: a beacon of God's love and grace to all.

Led by the Holy Spirit, and through inspiring, meaningful worship, we seek to build relationships within our fellowship and the local community.

Following the teachings of Jesus Christ we give ourselves in dedicated service to the wider community

**4 Welch Way Witney Oxon OX28 6JF
Tel 01993 709992**

**www.witneycongregational.org.uk
witneycongregational@tiscali.co.uk**

WHAT'S ON GUIDE

Witney Congregational Church offer a whole range of activities through which we seek to Worship, Work and Witness to the Lord Jesus Christ in this community today.

Further information can be obtained from the Church Administrator, Minister, Church Secretary or the leaders of the particular activities who are listed at the back of this magazine.

WORSHIP

Daily Worship	9.30 am	Mon-Fri	Short time of Prayer and Reading
Noah's Ark Service	2.00 pm	Tuesday	For under 5's parents and carers
Saturday Praise	11.00am	1 st Saturday of the month	
Sunday Services	10.30 am		
	6.00 pm		There is a crèche facility at both services

Communion is normally held twice during the month at the first Sunday evening and third Sunday morning services

PRAYER

The Church is open each morning for Prayer; also in the Garden Room on Sunday morning and evening prior to, and after, Worship - All welcome

STUDY & FELLOWSHIP

Friday 10.00 am Church

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Sunday 10.30 am Crèche, Noah's Ark & The K.I.C.K. on Sundays
Monday 10.00 am Noah's Ark - Infant Group for babies and pre-school children

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Tuesday Monthly Deacon's Meeting
Bi-Monthly Church Meeting
Thursday 10.00 am Rest & Chat (Coffee/Tea available)
Saturday 10.30 am Coffee Morning

SUNDAY LINK

Weekly bulletin for all Christians providing stimulating thought along with news and notices concerning our Church

WITNEY ECUMENICAL YOUTH TRUST (BASE 33)

4 Welch Way (Entrance - High Street) ☎ 01993 777870 Jude Levermore

St ANDREW'S BOOKSHOP ☎ 01993 709429

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday 09.00 am - 5.00 pm



Where does all the time go? The first of two editions of the magazine, which are due this month. Now don't laugh - British Summer time begins this month on the 29th. Doesn't seem like it with all this wet/windy weather that we have been experiencing!! - Though I must also add that it has been milder. Also, we have arrived at that part of the Christian calendar - Lent (the Anglo Saxon lencten - the lengthening month), which is a time for reflection and penitence, leading up to Easter. If we, as Christians, do not share the good news of Easter, then how will others know that they too can share in Jesus' resurrection.

Turning now to the contents, here is just a glimpse of some of the articles that have been submitted; Beryl Cartwright writes on the recent walk at Sherbourne; there is the CF Mailing; Also information on Christian Aid & Fairtrade and Rev Jason Boyd gives us an article on children to name but a few.

Many thanks to those who have contributed to this edition, but would also encourage anyone to consider submitting articles for the next edition by either:

- Floppy Disk/CD
- E-mail: terrypowlesland@hotmail.com or jacquipowlesland@uwclub.net
- Or, if you haven't got a PC, just plainly written on paper which can be typed up

For your information, the magazine for the remainder of the year is due on: 29th March; 3rd May; 31st May; 28th June; 30th Aug; 4th Oct; 1st Nov & 29th Nov

ESSENTIAL NOTE: In order to meet these deadlines, all contributions should be submitted **NO LATER THAN the WEDNESDAY** of the week in which the magazine will be published.

Your Editor

WOOD GREEN SCHOOL, WITNEY

Sunday, 15 March 2009

4.00 pm and 7.30 pm

This is the 20th musical by composer Roger Jones, and is coming to Witney as part of the national tour, supported locally by Witney Inter-Church Singers

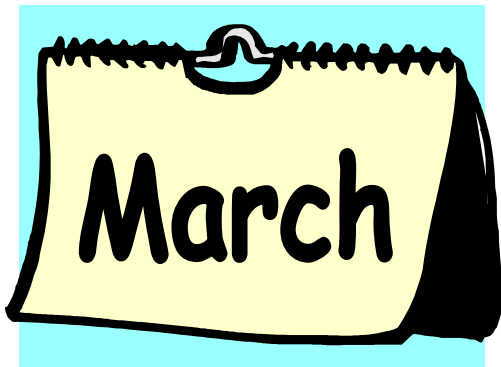
Tickets: £7.00 adults/£5.00 concessions

cmm Christian Music Ministries
www.cmm.org.uk

from St Andrew's Bookshop, Witney
or from choir members
or tel. 01993-771452

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Daily Prayer Time:

Mon-Fri 9.30 am

Services

10.30 am & 6.00pm and will be led by Rev Jason Boyd

The following events in **March** are given for your particular attention:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--------|-------|
| 3 rd | Deacon's meeting | | | |
| 5 th /12 th /19 th | Children & young people music group | 7.00 - 8.00pm | | |
| 6 th | Women's World Day of Prayer | (see below) | | |
| 7 th | Garden Rota meeting | 10.00am | | |
| | Saturday Praise | 11.00am | | |
| 12 th | Fellowship Group | 9 Pensclose | | |
| 13 th /20 th /27 th | Mar & 3 rd Apr | | | |
| | Lent Bible Study | 10.15 - 11.45am led by Canon Tim Partridge | | |
| 14 th | Prayer Chain meeting | 9.15am | | |
| | SWMA Assembly at Lockleaze, Bristol | | | |
| 15 th | The ROCK | 4.00 & 7.30pm at Woodgreen School | | |
| | Meditation | 7.30pm | | |
| 17 th | Church Meeting | 7.30pm | | |
| 22 nd | Mothering Sunday All-Age Worship | | | |
| 26 th | Pins & Needles | | | |
| 27 th | Skittles Evening | Leisure Centre | 7.30pm | £5.00 |
| 29 th | Sunday Diners | 1.00pm | | |
| | 6.00pm service at Madley Park Residential Home | | | |
| 30 th Mar - 3 rd Apr | Rev Jason Boyd - University of Wales (Lampeter) | | | |

The World Day of Prayer 2009 is being held on Friday 6th March at the Catholic Church. These services are open to everyone, so do come along for 1.45pm or 7.30pm, joining to worship the Lord as members in Christ throughout the world

If you are hesitant, or have any questions, please speak to Beryl Cartwright or myself - we will also help with transport - Marjorie Lee

Emmaus Course coming

Starting Thursday 30th April

Details to follow

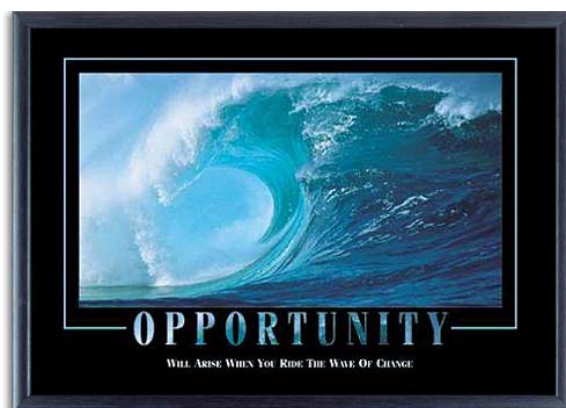
Get this in your diary and plan to come

Minister's Letter

"Lent God Change Us"

There is a statement by Cardinal Henry Newman that is posted on my filing cabinet. Because it is right in front of me, I often read it and allow it to challenge me. It reads: "To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often."

There are times however, when we do not want to change. We want our lives to stay the same. Why? It is because change requires energy. Change means that we have to readjust the way that we think and behave to meet new circumstances. We live in an era where change is happening at a breakneck pace. By the time we get our new computer out of the box it is already outdated. The cutting edge technology of videos has been displaced by the DVD. 35 mm cameras are being abandoned in favour of digital cameras. Socially, we have seen a massive shift in attitudes towards marriage, the family, and institutions in general.



(Opportunity will arise when you ride the wall of change)

Change is part of the Christian life. Paul writes, "And we all, who with unveiled

faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" 2 Corinthians 3:18 (TNIV). The Spirit changes us in shaping our thoughts, words, and deeds as we are being remade. The image of God in human beings which was marred by sin is being restored to wholeness.



Ironically, Christians often resist change. They want to think what they have always thought. They want the church organisation and building to remain as it has always been. Yet staying the same is not an option for us. Will we allow the Spirit of the Lord to change us that we might reflect his glory?

Yours in Jesus Christ
Jason C. Boyd



News around the world

The following information has been taken from CWM Website dated 27th February, so is up to date at the editing of this month's magazine

Madagascar - Church leaders hope agreement signals end to violence

Church leaders in Madagascar have high hopes that an end to violent unrest in Antananarivo is in sight after the country's leaders signed a peace agreement over the weekend.

Leaders of the Council of Christian Churches (FFKM) a group of two Protestant and two Roman Catholic Churches rallied President Marc Ravalomanana and his rival Andry Rajoelina into an agreement to stop fuelling violent demonstrations in the capital.

Riots erupted earlier this month following the sacking of former mayor, Andry Rajoelina. More than 68 people have been killed in the violence. Josiane Ravelosoa from the CWM-member Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar said: "We have at last a ray of hope for our country as the opposition leader accepted to meet Madagascar President last Saturday. All Christians have then left everything behind and we were having prayer chain and cell through the weekend."

Guyana - government rescues flood-struck farmers

Hundreds of Guyana farmers are being given a helping hand to combat the effects of damaging floods on the land, the Stabroek News reported.

Farmers from the Mahaica Creek region have received seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and other growing aids from the Ministry of Agriculture following a bout of very heavy rainfall in December and January.

Around US\$500,000 has been allocated to the project by Guyana government chiefs to help bail farmers out.

Among the chemicals and other planting materials being provided, each farmer has been given between 12 and 16 packets of crop seeds that will produce hundreds of seedlings each.

Centres have also been set up to provide pesticides and weedicides which farmers can collect.

Taiwanese children learn mother tongue at church retreat

Church leaders in Taiwan have staged a special retreat aimed at boosting children's knowledge of the Taiwanese language.

Organised by Taichung Soa-lok (Sha-lu) Presbyterian Church, the event was held earlier this month to enable children to learn more about their faith and the language at the same time.

Taiwan's main language is Mandarin, and this is the language most young people speak throughout the country. Although many young people in Taiwan can understand Taiwanese, they cannot speak it.

At the retreat children were encouraged to practice speaking and reading the language by taking part in bible studies, poetry readings and songs.

Zimbabwe - New government urged to tackle health and education

Zimbabwe's people have singled out health and education as priority issues

for the top of the new unity government's agenda following the swearing in of Morgan Tsvangirai.

Crippling school fees and a lack of proper sanitation supplies have prompted the calls for urgent action after Movement for Democratic Change leader Mr Tsvangirai became Prime Minister in the new power sharing government with President Robert Mugabe.

A CWM blog reporter said many Zimbabwean parents were finding it impossible to pay soaring school fees leaving many children without a proper education.

And in suburbs surrounding Harare a lack cleaning supplies have seen many families using just one bar of soap between them to wash their clothes.

Meanwhile uncollected waste and refuse is building up in and around Harare and the number of squatters living in unsanitary conditions is on the increase.

The new leadership has sparked fresh hopes among Zimbabweans that steps to tackle the various issues fuelling the Zimbabwe crisis - including the recent cholera outbreak - can now move ahead.

Church of England drives carbon-fast for Lent

Give up carbon - not chocolate this Lent. That's the message being put out by the Church of England as Christians across the globe gear up to observe the religious period in the run up to Easter.

As part of its new green drive, church leaders are urging people to cut down on their carbon footprint for Lent with a "carbon fast" as part of their Shrinking the Footprint campaign.

The eco-friendly move has been backed by the UK's Secretary of State

for Energy and Climate Change Ed Miliband and Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams.

Church of England's environmental adviser, David Shreeve said: "Reducing our demands on finite and often non-renewable resources should be an all-year aim, but it is good to have a special time to take stock of ourselves and our churches as Shrinking the Footprint is encouraging this year."

Jamaica - foster child drive challenges families

Families in Jamaica are being challenged to take on a foster child each in a new drive to slash the number of children living in care homes.

The Child Development Agency (CDA) has put out the call to mark Foster Care Week following reports that more than 2,000 children are living in residential homes in the country.

CDA chief executive officer Alison Anderson said that although there are many committed foster parents already supporting children in Jamaica, there are simply not enough to cope with demand. Of the 2,000 children in care, 350 are under the age of eight.

"Even though placements have been consistent over the last three years, settling at approximately 250 new placements per year, there has been no real growth in the programme," she said.

"They say Rome wasn't built in a day but we should all embark on a personal mission to see these children being placed in families, what a marked difference it would make in their lives!"



The following article has been submitted by Gerald Hayes, and is entitled:

The Elsie Auty Charitable Trust

At a recent meeting of the Trustees it was suggested that it might be appropriate for members of the Church to be reminded of the purpose and details of this charitable Trust and provide some of the history pertaining to the Trust and Elsie.

Elsie was born on 15th August 1896. Quite incredibly she outlived her husband, daughter and two sons before dying on 6th December 1992. Elsie had come to Witney in 1939 when her husband George became Minister, and after his untimely death in 1954, she remained a faithful and committed member for over 50 years. Elsie's mind was very astute, right up to the end of her life and her contributions at Church Meetings were always valued. Only a few months before her death she asked to see the plans for the proposed large extension to our premises and she made constructive suggestions and comments to the Minister and Church Treasurer before final decisions were made.

Following the death of her elder son in the Spring of 1992 she made arrangements as part of her will, that from the sale of her home an independent trust be established, the income from which should be used for the general upkeep of the Congregational Church in Witney. The terms to be incorporated in the trust deed were very specific and clearly set out in her will.

The Trustees are Mr. Gerald Hayes, for life, the Church Minister and Secretary; and in addition to these, Mr. Peter Sellman has been appointed on a three yearly term (current term expires on 30 June 2011).

The trust is totally separate from any Church influence or governance, and is in effect continuing Elsie's wish of maintaining her regular offering to the Church. The Trust is a registered charity and as such has to comply with the regulations issued by the Charity Commissioners and the Charity Laws of the country.

Since the Trusts inception in 1994 grants amounting in total to £66,000 have been paid to the Church this in effect has enabled much additional ministry to occur from resources not being needed elsewhere. The trust exists on the income it receives from its investments and like many other charities has been badly hit by the current downturn in the financial markets. Inevitably this will impinge on the amount likely to be given to the Church in the future. One of the objectives that the Trustees set itself in 1994 was that it would attempt to ensure that the value of the trust would increase in line with the rate of inflation consistent with the aim of providing the Church as high a grant as possible. Again the downturn means that the overall value of the trust is being eroded.

As a mark of remembering the contribution of the Auty Family, on dedicating the new premises in 1994, the Church provided two suitably inscribed lecterns and named in their memory the Auty Lounge.

Some of the longer serving Church members will remember Elsie's sister, Marjorie Tullett, and it is pleasing to be able to report that Marjorie celebrated her 103rd birthday last November. She still lives on her own in Clevedon, is relatively well and able to look after herself.

The following article has been submitted by Rev Jason Boyd, and is entitled:

God Created Children (and in the process grandchildren)

To those of us who have children in our lives, whether they are our own, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or students... here is something to make you chuckle.

Whenever your children are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to His own children.

After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve.

And the first thing he said was 'DON'T'
'Don't what?' Adam replied.
'Don't eat the forbidden fruit.' God said.
'Forbidden fruit? We have forbidden fruit? Hey Eve.. we have forbidden fruit!'
'No Way!'
'Yes way!'
'Do NOT eat the fruit' said God.
'Why?'
'Because I am your Father and I said so'
God replied, wondering why He hadn't stopped creation after making the elephants

A few minutes later, God saw His children having an apple break and He was ticked (annoyed)
'Didn't I tell you not to eat the fruit' God asked.
'Uh huh' Adam replied.
'Then why did you?' said the Father.
'I don't know,' said Eve.
'She started it' Adam said.
'Did not'
'Did too'

'DID NOT'

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus the pattern was set and it has never changed.

If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give children wisdom and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself.

If God had trouble raising children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?

Things to think about:

1. You spend the first two years of their life teaching them to walk and talk. Then you spend the next sixteen telling them to sit down and shut up.
2. Grandchildren are God's reward for not killing your own children.
3. Mothers of teens now know why some animals eat their young.
4. Children seldom misquote you. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said
5. The main purpose of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children more awful than your own
6. We childproofed our homes, but they are still getting in.

Advice for the day:

Be nice to your kids. They will choose your nursing home one day

AND FINALLY:

If you have a lot of tension and you get a headache, do what it says on the aspirin bottle:

Take two aspirin and keep away from children!!

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 23 February – 8 March 2009

Two billion people - a third of humanity - still survive on less than \$2 a day. Unfair trade rules keep them in poverty, but they face the global challenges of food shortages and climate change too.

Fairtrade is a people's movement for change that aims to tip the balance of trade in favour of poor producers. We all need Fairtrade more than ever and we all have the power to create positive change for people and planet

When you choose and and with you know farmers like me, from Mali, can support my strength my community and protect our

fairtrade.org.uk MAKE IT HAPPEN CHOOSE FAIRTRADE



The following article has been submitted by Nigel Lindsay, and is entitled:

Five weeks with the Mara People - Part 1

Flying to Calcutta was exciting and the overcharging of the man at the prepay taxi desk at the air port and the con of the driver getting more money out of me was all part of going to somewhere new and not knowing the ropes. You can become hardened to everyone and start to distrust all. Staying at the Baptist Society Guest house not far from where Mother Teresa had done her work was good and the taxi journey to and from the airport gave me a good chance to see the streets of Calcutta and take a few photos without being afraid my camera would be taken. I wandered the streets both on route to Maraland and on my return journey. My feet got dirty and small children asked me for food, I gave one lad an orange I had just bought and before long I had given all I had bought away. You become hard and say no as they follow you up the street. Uncle, Uncle, you walk faster, Uncle, Uncle. People at the Guest house were working with the street families picking up children and giving them food, baths, education and then returning them to their parents on the street. One Woman and her daughter works as a teacher at the School Liz and Jacob went to and Robin now works in, she is out there for five week teaching. Small world!

But this was not where I was to be for my five-week placement. Back to the airport and a long wait and then a plane to Aizawl the main city of Mizoram

State North East India. I was met at the airport by Lachhua Lapi a senior pastor in the Congregational Church of India. He was to be my supervisor, translator and roommate for the next five weeks. You have to get special permission to go to Mizoram and so I had some official paperwork to do before a journey of about 15 hours in a truck to the city of Siaha. The scenery was brilliant, and the road near the edge, was up or down and never straight for more than about 50 metres. We did stop to sleep on the way, leaving about 5am in the morning before the heat of the sun, not that that made much difference as we did not get there till about 5pm.

I stayed in Lachhua House, mostly all built on stilts and on the side of mountains, but in the city many were on concrete stilts and in the villages they are wood and sometimes bamboo. I sort of checked under me before I went in. I am comparatively heavy and tall compared with many Mara people. Many came to greet me; the main subject of conversation was my lack of a wife, which they felt they could sort out. I had plans to do some training of Youth & children's work and some leadership training, but none of that happened. I did however have the chance to preach 20 times in about 9 different congregational Churches out of the remaining 18.

In the service they use a big drum to beat the tune and usually a young woman will call out the words in advance for those who do not have a book with the hymn. The pulpit is central and there is a platform where all the elders sit. I got used to having to sit in the pulpit or

on the platform. However, I resisted and occasionally managed to sit with the normal people. Lachhua would introduce me and I never knew what he said, but as the weeks went on he said more. I would then bring greetings from you in England and apologise for anything I may do that was not normal for them. I would start my preaching in the pulpit, but then escape down on to the platform and do the teaching in an interactive way with people involved and having visual demonstration of my points. For most they found this useful and so asked for more.

I spent 5 days in a village where I was said to be the first white man, and they built me a toilet - but I can tell more next time. I had the privilege of staying at the house built by the original missionaries in 1913 and spending 10 days with the granddaughter and her family (She is now 72). We got stuck on a road as they blasted it to make it wider and I did a tribal dance - but more about all that next time.

My thanks' for your prayers whilst I was away. I ask that you pray for the unity of the Mara Church.





The Mailing

Congregational Federation

Issue 2009/02

Bringing together independent free churches for mutual support through a vision of unity in creative diversity

Latest news and resources available from the Congregational Federation

Forthcoming Events

March

Pastoral Care Board 4th
Mission & Society Comm. 7th
Christian Ministries Comm. 14th
Finance & Support Services Comm. 21st

April

Council Meeting 3rd to 5th
CF Youth Easter Conference 9th - 13th
Easter Day 12th
Ministers Conference 14th - 17th
Training weekend levels 1 plus 17th - 19th

Here's looking at you!



Taking a fresh look at ourselves as we serve in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the 21st Century

A conference in 2009 for Congregational Federation Ministers, local leaders, Integrated Course students, and their families

Special points of interest:

- Incoming President offers to chat with you
- 38th CF Assembly to meet in Harrogate
- Global links - who are you in contact with?
- Honour & Respect - would you like to visit?
- News round up

Jill offers to chat with you

When I was asked to write a "president elect profile", I wrote: - For the past ten years I have worked as the church support worker for the South West area. I have been privileged to sit with many churches and respond to their concerns and aspirations. Many of our Federation churches need and deserve encouragement and help. I would love to have the chance to be that encourager and enabler, and use a presidential year to visit as many churches as possible – offering practical help and suggestions.

Perhaps a visit might enable some churches to reconnect with their communities? Experience has convinced me that there are positive ways forward for all our churches. Please give me the opportunity as your president in 2009, to be that envisioner. "Without vision the people perish".

I have been given your vote of confidence and am now ready to put

my pledge into action. I am unable to do this, however unless I received an invitation from your church. I would love to meet with as many of you as possible attend a church meeting, a children's group or any other church grouping or maybe take a service.

However just sitting over a cup of coffee and having the opportunity to talk about your fears, problems, hopes and dreams would be such a privilege.

Please give me that opportunity – I would love to meet YOU and YOUR CHURCH.



Harrogate awaits

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and churches of the North East Area are preparing to receive the May Assembly in Harrogate on May 9, 2009 and they warmly invite you to come and make it a

great success. Harrogate is a large, wealthy spa town in North Yorkshire, and a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors with its spa waters. The destination is ideal for making a



weekend break of it. More details are with Church Secretaries.

Going Global - what you have to offer?

The Inter Church Board is hoping to compile a database that will help Churches who want to know about particular countries or regions of the world.

For us to make this database it would be very helpful if individual Churches could tell us of any contacts that they have with Churches in other parts of the world. Please let us know if you have a relationship with a Church in another country. We should be grateful also to know if you have contact with any charity or missionary society other than CWM, Christian Aid or Tear Fund that works overseas.

Please tell us too if you have

members of your congregation who have specialist knowledge of other countries, particularly if this concerns Christians in those countries. These people may be from those countries, now working or settled in Britain. Alternatively they might be people whose work has taken them to those countries (e.g. former or practicing diplomats, journalist, politicians, business people, etc).

We should be very grateful if you could give this information to the Rev Christopher Gillham, Crosslyn House, Spittal, Haverfordwest, SA62 5QT. Telephone number 01437 741260, email tabernacle@haverfordw4est.freeserve.co.uk



Take a holiday and enjoy the
**INTERNATIONAL
CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP
2009 FAMILY CONFERENCE**
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA
Thursday 23rd to Wednesday 29th July

For further details see the information sent to all churches or contact the Rev. Barry Osborne, 4 Clarence Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7NE. Email barry@ruralmissions.org.uk

**£200 grant available
for any CF church
member to attend**

Honour & Respect - more than an appeal for money

In the nine months of the Federations partnership appeal with Christian Aid for One Respe in the Dominican Republic more than £7,000 has been donated. This is wonderful and we would encourage churches who have not as yet contributed to prayerfully consider making a gift.

Would you be interested in visiting the project? – part of a small group to observe, experience *[in a very limited*



way] and report on the life of those who are helped by One Respe.

The group is expected to go during the late Autumn of this year and will be led by Geoff Daintree, from Christian Aid.

It is intended that the group should

include individuals of different ages and experiences within the Federation. Those who are selected will be required to contribute to the churches' awareness and knowledge of the work of One Respe through, for example, presentations at meetings and articles for publication and circulation to Federation churches.

If you would be keen to be considered for inclusion in this group please contact Rev Michael Heaney at the Nottingham office.

News round up

2008 CF Year Book - These are now available from the Federation offices. Copies have been circulated to all churches. As always information is constantly changing and it is good to hear from you with any amendments which take place during the year.

Inevitably it is also the case that occasional errors take place in the data entries. Our current President the Rev Wayne Hawkins took up his new post as Mission Enabler for the CWM European Region in September 2008. His Ministry status is fully recognised in this capacity following on from his time at Southam and should have been recorded accordingly - sorry Wayne!

Mexborough - Sadly the existing Church is to close, for various reasons. The final service of worship will take place on Sunday 22 March. Friends old and new are welcome to attend the closing service. Following this the Federation Ltd as Trustees will take responsibility for the premises and are currently exploring options for the church's future.

A New Face Programme - CWM have an opportunity for cross cultural learning for Ministers through this initiative. This next one in the Autumn takes place in Guyana. Ministers should ask the office for more details or visit to the CF website



The Congregational Federation
8 Castle Gate Nottingham NG1 7AS
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E-mail: admin@congregational.org.uk

Visit the Website for more copies of this Mailing and much more at www.congregational.org.uk



PRAYER LETTER No 130

LENT

*Create in me a new heart, O God
And renew a right spirit in me,
Wash me, cleanse me, purify me,
Make my heart as white as snow*

Psalm 51 & S&H of Fellowship74

Lent is the period of 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Saturday. Lent reminds us of the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert praying and fasting when he was tempted by the Devil.

Lent is a time when Christians usually 'give up' or sacrifice something as well as fasting and praying in preparation for Holy Week and Easter Day.

Why not make this Lent a time where the words in italic above really mean something to you.

During the recent snow I wore my very muddy, dirty, walking boots. After all the walking in the snow my boots became so clean. I mentioned this to a friend who walked with me this week and she gave me some information about snow and cleaning.

Apparently if you drag a piece of stained or dirty laundry across the snow it becomes clean. During Lent can we be aware of the things that 'stain and taint' us.

Keep in mind the line '**Make my heart as white as snow**' as you journey through this Lenten time.

As we think about the words in the song above may the words in the prayer below be part of our daily Christian living.

God be in my head and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes and in my looking;
God be in my mouth and in my speaking;
God be in my heart and in my thinking.

Sarum Primer (1558)

May God Bless you all,
Beryl

Please note that for up-to-date prayer requests contact Beryl Cartwright (703717)

April

Wednesday 1

£4 could pay for a day's food for a family in Bangladesh, made homeless by floods, until they can re-establish their lives. If you buy a meal out today, give £4 in thanks that you have that choice.

Thursday 2

Today is International Children's Book Day. 93 million children of primary-school age are not in school. Give 30p for every book you pick up today.

Friday 3

As your countdown to Easter is nearing its end, there are only 241 days left in the countdown to the Copenhagen climate change negotiations. Order campaign action cards today (ref F1674) from orders@christian-aid.org or 0870 078 7788, to give out in your church or workplace.

Saturday 4

300,000 people will be collecting door to door for Christian Aid Week next month. Give 5p for every step they would need to take from the pavement to your front door.

Sunday 5

Today is Palm Sunday, when we remember Jesus being cheered by crowds as he entered Jerusalem. Pray for all who are alone today.

Monday 6

Millions of people have no chance to make choices about their future. Give £1 if you chose a different job to your parents.

Tuesday 7

£2.75 could buy a hairdresser's cape for a training project in Jamaica, giving practical skills to young men who would otherwise be involved in violence. Give 50p for every time you have had your hair cut in the last year.

Wednesday 8

Tonight, Jews celebrate Passover. Pray for the Israeli doctors and nurses who, as volunteers, will be travelling into the Palestinian West Bank to give medical care to communities with little or no access to medical services.

Thursday 9

A child dies from hunger every five seconds. Give 15p for every slice of bread you eat today.

Friday 10, Good Friday

God so loved the world that he gave his son to die for us. Remember today all who have had their children taken from them and pray that God will give them strength.

Saturday 11

This morning, 923 million people will wake up to another day of hunger. Give 15p for each packet of breakfast cereal in your cupboard.

Sunday 12, Easter Sunday

Hallelujah! Jesus is risen! Praise God for all his blessings as you think back over the last seven weeks. Give a final gift of your choice.

Thank you for counting your blessings!

Please return this form as soon as possible to **Count Your Blessings, Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT** or to your local Christian Aid office.

Title _____ Initial _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

I enclose a cheque for the sum of £ _____, (payable to Christian Aid) raised by counting my blessings. (This includes £ _____ from a separate *Children's Count Your Blessings*.)

Please tick here if you would like a receipt for the total amount.

Please tick here for a children's thank you certificate in the name of _____

Gift Aid declaration

If you are a UK taxpayer, we can receive 28p from the government for every £1 you contribute – at no cost to you.

I want all donations I have made to Christian Aid in the past six years, and any donations I make in the future, to be Gift-Aided until I notify you otherwise. I pay income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax amount the charity reclaims on my donations. (This is currently 25p for every £1 donated. The government will pay an additional 3p on every £1 you give until 5 April 2011.)

Signed _____ Date _____

I would like to receive a prayer diary three times a year.

I would like to receive worship resources for Christian Aid Week.

If you already receive information from Christian Aid we will continue to send it unless you tell us not to, by writing to us at **PO Box 100, London, SE1 7RT**.

If you are new to Christian Aid, please tick here if you do not want to receive information from us.

If taking part in *Count Your Blessings* has made an impression on you, Christian Aid would love to hear from you. Please send reflections with your donation, and mark them for the attention of Max Khanna.

More copies of this resource are available from **www.christianaid.org.uk/lent**

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Christian Aid 2008

Count your blessings: Lent 2009

It's easier to give up something for Lent if you've got something to start with. Far too many people in the world don't even have life's basics.

As we face the financial challenges of each day, it's easy to forget that the everyday things we have around us would be unimaginable riches to many people. Instead of giving up alcohol or chocolate this Lent, join us to count some of the blessings that surround us all. From our riches we can give something back, in thanks to God.

Make your response count this Lent through the money you give, through the prayers you offer and through the actions you take. The box by each day is to keep a note of daily totals or to tick as you give, act and pray for change.

For a children's version of *Count Your Blessings* and church sermon notes, visit www.christianaid.org.uk/lent

Please photocopy this resource for your church, friends and family.

A006784



We believe in life before death

February

Wednesday 25, Ash Wednesday

Rich countries gave ten times as much money to support banks last October as they had given in ten years to help poor countries with their debts. Give ten coins of your choice as you pray for justice for poor people.

Thursday 26

The UK spends £10.2 billion each year on food that ends up being thrown away. Give 10p for every cookbook you own.

Friday 27

Fairtrade Fortnight started on Monday and dozens of shops, including well-known high-street retailers, now sell products made of fair-trade cotton.

Put a note in your wallet or purse to look for a fair-trade cotton product next time you go clothes shopping.

Saturday 28

Only one in five people in Mali can read. Give 25p for each personal letter, text and email you read today.

March

Sunday 1

If rich countries do not cut their carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 up to three billion people will suffer acute water shortages. Come to Christian Aid's climate campaign event at Coventry Cathedral on 19 March – email campaigns@christian-aid.org or call 020 7523 2264 for more information.

Monday 2

One in eight people in the world does not have access to safe water. Give 50p if you have a bath or shower today.

Tuesday 3

£7.50 could pay for a mobile phone top-up card in El Salvador, held by local emergency committees to help isolated communities communicate during an emergency. Give 10p for each personal call or text you make on your mobile today.

Wednesday 4

Eight million fair-trade hot drinks are enjoyed in the UK every day. Give 50p for every packet of non-fair-trade tea, coffee or hot chocolate in your home.

Thursday 5

£1.50 could buy small, stimulating, children's educational toys for use in training sessions with mothers in Peru. Give £1.50 if you have toys in your home.

Friday 6

Today is Women's World Day of Prayer. Read Romans 12:5 and pray for five women you know.

Saturday 7

The controversial planned coal-fired power station in Kent will produce as much carbon dioxide each year as the entire country of Rwanda. Give 10p for every item in the room you are in now that is currently plugged in.

Sunday 8

There are now more than 4,000 Fairtrade churches in the UK, but that's still only 1 in 10. Check today whether your church serves fair-trade tea and coffee – and if it does, ask them to add fair-trade sugar, juice and biscuits too.

Monday 9

£3.50 could buy a garden fork in Burundi to enable someone to cultivate land and grow food to eat and sell. Give 10p for every garden tool you own.

Tuesday 10

In Peru, one in four people has no access to primary healthcare. Give 25p if you are registered with a GP and another 25p if you can name your GP.

Wednesday 11

200 million people are affected by disasters around the world each year. Give 20p for every insurance policy you have.

Thursday 12

While a quarter of the world's population do not have enough food, more than 40% of the world's grain harvest is fed to livestock. Give 40p if you have eaten meat today.

Friday 13

£4 is the cost per person for a group of mothers, children and young people to leave the violent shantytown they live in, in Colombia, and escape for a day. Give 40p for each holiday you had last year.

Saturday 14

There are 8.4 million refugees in the world today and 6.6 million other people who have fled their homes, largely because of wars and violence. Give 20p for every suitcase or rucksack you own.

Sunday 15

Even on the UK minimum wage of £5.73 an hour, you would be in the richest 11% of the world. Give 20p for each debit or credit card you have.

Monday 16

Angola exported nearly US\$30 billion of oil in 2007, yet 70% of its citizens live in abject poverty – on less than US\$2 (£1.30) a day. Give £1.30 for each car you own.

Tuesday 17

Someone will die in the next 12 seconds from an HIV-related illness, yet a month's supply of life-saving ARV drugs costs only £15. Give 10p for each family photo displayed around your home.

Wednesday 18

40% of people in the world do not have access to sanitation. Give 10p every time you flush the toilet today.

Thursday 19

14p could pay for a reusable milk bottle for a dairy project in Haiti that gives farmers better access to local markets and improves their income. Give 14p each time you drink milk today.

Friday 20

60p could buy 1,000 HIV campaign leaflets in Tanzania. Give 5p for each piece of paper pinned to your kitchen or office noticeboard at home.

Saturday 21

Today is the first day of spring. If it is not stopped, climate change will melt the massive glaciers in the Himalayas, on which more than a billion people rely for water for drinking, washing and agriculture. Give £1 if you have seen spring flowers today.

Sunday 22

Today is Mothering Sunday. By 2010, one in three children in Africa will have lost one or both parents to HIV-related illnesses. Give 20p for every mother in your extended family.

Monday 23

Last Christmas people in the UK threw away 20,000 tonnes of cards. Give 10p for each thing you throw away today.

Tuesday 24

25p could pay for a 'flower mirror', for a project building confidence for women in Guatemala, many of whom have never seen their own reflection before. Give 25p for every mirror in your home.

Wednesday 25

£5 could buy a uniform for a primary school child in Burundi. Give 20p for every wardrobe in your home.

Thursday 26

In the next minute, five people will learn for the first time that they are HIV-positive. Pray for five people who are suffering today.

Friday 27

If global temperatures rise by more than 2°C, 18% of Bangladesh will be underwater. Give 50p each time you use a washing machine or dishwasher today.

Saturday 28

A large UK supermarket stocks 30,000 different products, while many people in the world eat the same food every day. Give 20p for each different food you ate at your most recent meal.

Sunday 29

Someone born today in the UK could expect to live to the age of 79, while someone born today in Angola could only expect to live to 41. Give 1p for every year of your life.

Monday 30

£5 could provide a loan to a street child in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to enable them to set up a small business, such as shining shoes. Give 50p if you are currently paying back any loans.

Tuesday 31

In Senegal, each person is responsible for emitting 0.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. In the UK the figure is 9.2 tonnes. Yet people in Senegal are suffering from desertification as a result of climate change. Give 25p for each item around your home currently on standby.

The following article, written by Emilia Larson, has been submitted by Maureen Miles, and is entitled:

May you always have an angel by your side

May you always have an angel by your side

Watching out for you in all the things you do

Reminding you to keep believing in brighter days

Finding ways for your wishes and dreams to take you to beautiful places

Giving you hope that is certain as the sun

Giving you the strength of serenity as your guide

May you always have love and comfort and courage

And may you always have an angel by your side

Submitted by Rev Jason Boyd:

Ken Johnston placed his service sheet in my hands after worship on the 22nd February. The sermon that day was entitled: "Speechless".

Writing in Scots dialect, Ken noted, "Hurrah! Ah'v nivvor hord a silent sormon before." My response: Nor will is it ever likely to happen!!!! 😊


The following article, written by Rev Paul Hardingham, has been extracted from Church News Service, and offers the following for Lent...


Finding God in Each Moment of the Day

Do you know the popular series of books entitled *Where's Wally?* These books are filled with very detailed cartoon drawings in each of which is hidden Wally. He is dressed in a red and white striped ski cap and glasses and the challenge is to find Wally. You have to search for some time to pick him out of the crowd, but Wally is always there!

In many ways, like finding Wally, we need to develop the skill of identifying God's presence in our daily lives. One approach that can help us to find God throughout the day is to do a daily review of our day with God. It can provide us with a means of seeing where God has been at work during our day.

It's an opportunity of remembering how

 CONGREGATIONAL FEDERATION
SPRING ASSEMBLY 2009



IT'S GOOD TO TALK
SATURDAY 14TH MARCH
10AM-4PM

ST JAMES CHURCH ROMNEY AVE
LOCKLEAZE
BRISTOL BS7 9TD

TEL: 0117-9515118
EMAIL: info@stj.org.uk

God has been at work and how we have responded to him. As the psalmist says, 'On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night' (Ps 63:6).

What does this look like in practice?
Here is a step by step guide:

1. Be still for a moment, and quiet your mind.
2. Acknowledge that Jesus is present. Invite him to guide you.
3. Recall the beginning of the day, when you first woke up. Watch that scene, as if on film. What is your reaction to what you see? Talk to God about it.
4. Continue through the film of your day, going from scene to scene. As you reflect on each one, some scenes may fill you with gratitude, others with regret. Speak directly to God about this. You may also want to pray for those you encountered during the day.
5. End your review with a prayer of thanksgiving for God's mercy and love. Ask him to refresh you as you sleep.

As you begin reviewing your day with God regularly, you can expect to see two things beginning to happen:

- ❖ Firstly, you will become more aware of recurring negative patterns in your life, which will challenge these wrong attitudes and habits and increase your desire to grow and change.
- ❖ Secondly, you will become more aware of God's presence in the ordinary moments of your life. And when you start experiencing the reality of God's presence with you every day, it's not ordinary any more!

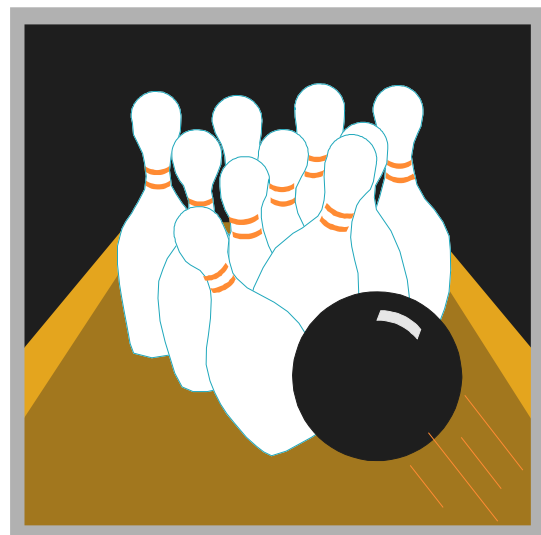
The following poem has been written and submitted by Florence Smith, and is entitled:

First there is

First there are letters, then there are words
Giving sense to the meaning of language
Helping each other to get our voice heard

First there is hope, then there is joy
When your plans reach fulfilment
Satisfaction reigns for your soul to enjoy

First there is seeking, finding truth
feels so good
Imagine the radiance and also the beauty
Your soul will discover in service for God!



Skittles Evening

Witney Leisure Centre
Friday 27th March - 7.30pm
Cost £5.00

The following article has been submitted by Beryl Cartwright, and is entitled:

Sherbourne Walk

On Sunday 22nd February, 17 of us plus 2 dogs set off for the Snowdrop Walk through the Sherbourne National Trust Estate. The weather was warm and sunny and soon coats were undone or being carried; such a welcome relief after the cold frosty weather of late.

The children enjoyed the freedom of the woods running freely along the paths and through the trees looking out for the different sculptures.

We noticed that since our last visit some of the old trees had been felled giving clearer views of the 'Big House'. As we passed through the Churchyard yellow winter aconites and purple crocuses gave a splendid display under the great trees. Before we reached the main area of snowdrops the children had fun on the 'climbing tree'. This enormous tree has some very low branches which are easily accessible for climbing and also one low branch has a beautiful carving of the life cycle of a beetle.



We eventually came to the area of the woods where the snowdrops were

growing in abundance. Looking through the bare winter trees the ground was carpeted in clusters of white drooping heads of the delicate flower. It was a beautiful sight.



After we had oohed and aahed at the snowdrops and Terry had handed out the jelly babies we made our way back to the cars passing the famous 'Ice House' and more sculptures in the trees.



Once again it was a wonderful time enjoying chatting to each other whilst walking and enjoying such beautiful things in the natural world.



The following notes of thanks are from the folk at Cumnock who came down to be at Rev Jason Boyd's Induction service, and is simply entitled:

Thanks from Cumnock

Blyth Mitchell - Hi Jacqui and all the good people of Witney Congregational! Having recovered from the long journey to Oxfordshire I'm taking time to thank you all for the wonderful reception and hospitality you extended to all the visitors from Cumnock. We in this part of Scotland often take pride in our friendliness but this was outdone by the good people of Witney.



As you no doubt gathered, we have a great love for Jason and his family and it eased some of the pain of losing him to see that he has found a good new home with wonderful folk.

Could you extend my personal thanks to everyone and an extra little thank you to the Cartwrights for sharing their home with us and to Pip for his taxi service to Oxford.

Edith & Jimmy Stewart - Jason, Viviane & children, Pip & Beryl, Terry & Jacqui, Val & all members of Witney Congregational Church. Just a note to thank you all for the wonderful weekend we had

Christine Torrance - Jacqui, a big thanks to you and all the lovely friends we met over the weekend. We had a lovely time and also a big thanks for the wheelchair

Margaret Milburn - Jacqui, I write to thank you so much for giving us such an unforgettable weekend. Your hospitality was truly amazing and *everyone* made us feel really welcome. All of you must have worked extremely hard, before, during and after we had gone - and must all be very tired by now

I am delighted to see Jason Minister of such a lovely church and among such friendly people. Parting with him, Viviane and the children is very painful, but I am certain that Witney is where God wants them to be.

It was good to meet you all, and I'd like to do so again at some future date. May God's richest blessing be on you all and again - many thanks

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mar	08	Joan Currie
	09	John Watson
	11	John Jephcott
	13	Anna Thomas
	14	Arthur Carter
	15	Doris Hall
	16	Ben Smith
	19	Beryl Cartwright
	22	Peter Sellman
	26	Zoe St Clair
Apr	04	Amy Morrow

The following snippet of information, via retired Waitrose (John Lewis) employee, has been submitted by Joyce Kearsey, and is entitled:

Free Directory Enquiries

0800 100 100

Before you get your required number, you have to listen to a short advert, but it's FREE



cf Congregational Federation Youth



DATE: 9th April – 13th April

AGE: 13-26

WHERE: Taunton

COST: £35 (early bird price £30 if you book before 16th March)

We will be looking at different ways to cope and deal with our problems and how Christianity can help.

OVER 18? – please note you will need an enhanced criminal records certificate to come to this event.

Contact Stephen immediately if you think you need one.



For more information about CFYouth or the family discount please contact the Director of Youth and Children's work, Stephen Haward on 0115 9111452 or email stephen.haward@congregational.org.uk

ROTAS

DEACON & STEWARDS

Mar	01	Beryl & Pip Cartwright
	08	Nanna Blackman & Irene Jephcott
	15	Susan Wass & Joan Currie
	22	Pat Smith & Theo Howells
	29	Jill & Robert McBride
Apr	05	Beryl & Pip Cartwright



COMMUNION

Mar	01 pm	Jacqui Powlesland	
		Preparation	Iris Lindsay
	15 am	Dave Wesson & Pat Smith	
		Judi Holloway & Jacqui Powlesland	
Apr	05 pm	Susan Wass	
		Preparation	Iris Lindsay



FLOWERS

Mar	01	Alison Hazell
	08	Jacqui Powlesland
	15	Joan Currie
	22	Beryl Cartwright
	29	Judi Holloway
Apr	05	Val Obriain



COFFEE

Mar	01	Peter Gamston & Gwen Mee
	08	Susan Wass & Irene St Clair
	15	Jill & Robert McBride
	22	Pat & Ben Smith
	29	Val Obriain & Sarah Hopwood
Apr	05	Marjorie Lee, Iris Lindsay & Judith Bungey
	Note:	Reserve Irene St Clair



REST & CHAT

Mar	05	Jill & Robert McBride
	12	Pat Smith & Gwen Mee
	19	Marjorie Lee
	26	Jean Stanley
Apr	02	Iris Lindsay & Joan Currie



Every effort has been made on the rota list to meet individual circumstances. However, please change with someone else if the dates are not convenient for you - Thank You