

# Witney Congregational Church

Issue 12

August &  
September 2010

## R CROSS A D S

*Witney Congregational Church is a crossroads where we:*

*meet God in worship*

*meet one another in friendship*

*meet our community and world with the love of Jesus*



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# 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 <sup>st</sup> 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
Friday	6.00pm	WWW (Kick off) - 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month
	7.15pm	Y4J - 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month

## 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 200682 (Office)

## St ANDREW'S BOOKSHOP

☎ 01993 709429

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday 09.00 am - 5.00 pm



Well, what a month it's been! The weather has been more than reasonable and there's been plenty to celebrate in the sporting calendar - well nearly!! Notwithstanding the extremely dismal England performance, I personally feel that the best team won the Football World Cup on the day, and Andy Murray did his best and nearly pulled it off at Wimbledon. However, there is something to celebrate, as over the last couple of days we have been doing quite well at the European athletics Championships

Holiday time is with us again, and the increasing good weather has to be encouraging for most of us, even though some cannot bear the heat. Whatever your circumstances, hopefully it will be a chance for most people to take a break of some kind to relax and unwind from those everyday activities.

So, turning now to the contents, here is just a glimpse of some of the articles that have been submitted; There is the continuation of the series on exploration of the books of the OT; Susan Wass gives an update on her recent MK Moo Walk; there is a doxology on the Lord's Prayer; Nanna Blackman explains Gift Aid and Pat Smith gives an update on Mission, to name but a few.

As always, 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:

- CD\Memory Stick
- E-mail: [terrypowlesland@uwclub.net](mailto:terrypowlesland@uwclub.net)  
[jacquipowlesland@uwclub.net](mailto:jacquipowlesland@uwclub.net)
- Just plainly written on paper, which can be typed up.

**ESSENTIAL NOTE:** All contributions should be submitted ***NO LATER THAN the WEDNESDAY*** of the week in which the magazine will be published.

The magazine for the remainder of the year is due out on 3 Oct & 28 Nov

Your Editor



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**Daily Prayer Time:**  
Mon-Fri 9.30 am

**Services**  
10.30 am & 6.00pm and will normally be led by Rev Jason Boyd unless advised below

<b>Aug</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup>	am	Judi Holloway	
	pm	Judi Holloway	Joint Service at Congregational Church Communion
7 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Saturday Praise	
8 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	
	pm	Joint Service at High St Methodist Church	
15 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	Communion
	pm	Joint Service at Congregational Church	
22 <sup>nd</sup>	am	Morning Worship	
	pm	Joint Service at High St Methodist Church	
29 <sup>th</sup>	am	Karen Brusch	All-Age Worship
	Pm	Madley Park Residential Home	Nanna Blackman & Jacqui Powlesland
<b>Sep</b>			
4 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Saturday Praise	
5 <sup>th</sup>	am	Morning Worship	
	pm	Joint Service at Congregational Church Communion	
12 <sup>th</sup>	am	Karen Brusch	
	pm	Service at St Mary's Church Green & Witney Feast Service	
19 <sup>th</sup>	am	Harvest All-Age Worship	Communion
	pm	No evening service	
26 <sup>th</sup>	am	Back to Church Sunday	
	pm	Joint Service at High St Methodist Church	
<b>Oct</b>			
2 <sup>nd</sup>	11.00am	Saturday Praise	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	am	Morning Worship	
	pm	Joint Service at Congregational Church Communion	

The following events are given for your particular attention:

<b>Aug</b>			
11 <sup>th</sup>	Service of remembrance for Ruth Godfrey	1.00pm	
12 <sup>th</sup>	Fellowship Group	2.30pm	6 Swinbrook Court
14 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer Chain meeting	9.15am	
<b>Sep</b>			
3 <sup>rd</sup>	WWW	6.00pm	
	Y4J	7.15pm	

7 <sup>th</sup>	Deacons Meeting	7.30pm	
9 <sup>th</sup>	Fellowship Group	2.30pm	9 Pensclose
11 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer Chain meeting	9.15am	
14 <sup>th</sup>	Mission Group meeting	7.30pm	
17 <sup>th</sup>	WWW	6.00pm	
	Y4J	7.15pm	
19 <sup>th</sup>	Church family meal		
21 <sup>st</sup>	Church AGM	7.30pm	
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Witney Theological Society	7.30pm	St Mary's
25 <sup>th</sup>	Local Foundation Course at South Cerney		
<b>Oct</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup>	WWW	6.00pm	
	Y4J	7.15pm	

The following article has been submitted by Susan Wass, and is entitled:

### **MK Midnight Moo**

On Saturday night 17<sup>th</sup> July I and my daughter took part in the 10 mile midnight walk to raise funds for Willen Hospice in Milton Keynes. It was a still and mild night and about 2000 ladies took part wearing pink T shirts emblazoned with a face of Florence the cow. Many were dressed up too.

Karen and I completed the course around the Red Ways in MK in 3 hours 35 mins. The last mile was definitely telling on the legs, but we did it.



£200,000 was sponsored that night, enough to pay for 6 nurses for a year. So thank you to all in the church who sponsored me.

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

### **PhD research project**

The co-planning groups met over May and June. The hope was to begin in September. However, I am going through the Ethics Committee of the University of Chester in order to gain approval to go ahead. This process is necessary for the safety and well being of all involved in the research. It is not entirely certain when the decision will be made therefore it is not likely that there will be a September start.

I would like to thank all those who took part in the co-planning meetings. Twenty five people participated. Once Ethics Committee approval has been gained, information packs will be distributed to all regular participants in worship. I hope you will consider taking part in some way. The more people participating, the richer the insights will be. Thank you in advance...

## Minister's Letter

The cage is removed. The bars that held captive no longer exist and yet the animal still paces within the boundaries.

Imprisonment is a habit.

Human beings experience this phenomenon. Among many things of the mind that pen people in prisons are; low self-esteem, the need to be perfect, or a compulsion to receive approval. When these messages are replaced by the truth; that we are OK, that we don't have to get it right all the time, and that we don't have to be liked by everyone, we find it hard to live in the wide open spaces of freedom. It's hard to step outside of these deeply held beliefs. Prison feels safer. It may not be an ideal life but at least we know the routine. We have a bed and our meals provided. Freedom is frightening because we're not sure of how to live in it.

In Micah 7:14-15 the prophet pleads with the Lord: "Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock that belongs to you, which lives alone in a forest in the midst of a garden land; let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old. As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, show us marvellous things."

The people of God are sheep in a forest surrounded by lush pastures. The forest bed is not a good source of nourishment. But the forest is what they know. It feels secure. The pastures are inviting but terrifying. "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't."

It wasn't the first time that God's flock had deceived themselves. The plagues and the parting of the Red Sea opened out into the wilderness and the way to the land of promise. This was a terrifying journey. The people looked

back on slave years in Egypt with rose tinted glasses. They remembered fleshpots and bread, filtering out the crack of whips, aching backs, and the smell of death. With shepherd's crook the Lord guided them through the wilderness. Sometimes the staff was leading and at other times prodding.

The prophet sees the flock of God's people huddled in the woods surrounded by gardens. We imagine that he is pleading with the shepherd to hook his crook round the necks of his people to drag them out into the rich pasturelands of Bashan and Gilead. He knows that the path to freedom is a way opened up by God.

Let's spend a little time noticing the 'forest' that we live and having a good look at the garden land that God invites us to feed in. Jesus Christ has set us free but it is the task of a life time to learn to live in that freedom (Galatians 5:1). There is a strong pull to remain in our comfort zone rather than risk the uncertainties of taking flight on the winds of the Spirit.

Shalom  
Jason

## STEVE WRIGHT IN THE AFTERNOON (BBC RADIO 2)

**Wright:** Which jungle-swinging character, clad only in a loin cloth, did Johnny Weissmuller play?

**Contestant:** Jesus.

The following doxology has been submitted by Maureen Miles and is from 1 Chron 29:11, and reflects the Lord's Prayer

## **OUR FATHER**

When you use a name, you often make a statement about the nature of the relationship you have with its owner. That's why names are so powerful. In a formal relationship you are Mr, Mrs, etc. If it's a friend you usually call them by their first name. If it's a really close friend you might have a nickname. If it's a member of the family you might have a pet name, showing that it's a really close relationship.

Jesus used the name 'ABBA' - the name that Jewish children use, meaning 'daddy' to show the closeness of their relationship. The Jews had never heard the name used when addressing God before, thus showing the close relationship between God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. In Christ, we too share the privilege of knowing God as Father. See Eph 1:17-23

## **WHO ART IN HEAVEN**

We can sometimes think of Heaven as some place way out there in outer space. As a result God can seem remote, distant and hard to access. People will sometimes start a service by saying something like, 'God, as we come into your presence----'. I wonder if God might say something like, 'where do you think you've been all the time?' See Ps. 139:7-10; Matt 28:2A;

Where could we possibly go to be outside God's presence?

## **HALLOWED BE THY NAME**

Philippians 2:9-11; every knee shall bow those in Heaven, on earth and beneath the earth, (the entire universe). These days, the name Jesus is rarely hallowed

(honoured), but one day the knee of everyone who ever lived will bow in acknowledgement of His Kingdom, His Power and His Glory. Their tongues will confess His Lordship. God's name deserves to be honoured and praised.

## **THY KINGDOM COME**

Matt 13:18-23;31-35; 47-52

Although God's kingdom emerges from a small beginning, it's the most dynamic thing imaginable. Jesus described it as seed that's sown and yields a harvest, a tiny mustard seed that grows into a gigantic tree (v32), a small amount of yeast that makes a lump of dough rise (v33), and as a net that captures an abundance of fish (v47). It may start small, but this is no feeble, pathetic, easily overlooked, minority thing. No, this is vibrant, expanding, all-pervasive, forcefully advancing kingdom. People may dismiss it, but God's kingdom will grow and spread throughout the world (v23). When you think of the kingdom of God and pray for its advance, think unstoppable, think growth, think big!

## **THY WILL BE DONE**

Mark 14:32-42;

This must have been the hardest prayer that Jesus ever prayed. He knew the kind of death he was about to face was going to be the most horrific physically. The prospect of complete separation from the Father would have been the most unthinkable awful thing to the Son. Incredibly He prayed "Father --take this cup from me, yet not as I will, but what You will".

## **ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN**

How does this happen? See Mark 4:26-29;

Jesus gave us an example by washing his disciples feet. (John 13:1-17)

Jesus has given us the privilege of carrying on with the work of the kingdom. (Matt. 5:14-16)

### **GTVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD**

When we ask God for our daily bread how much do we expect God to supply? As much as we want or as much as we need?

Health experts say that a key to good nutrition is eating until we feel satisfied, not until we are stuffed full. In every area of life, there is a difference between genuine hunger and having a greedy appetite. So often, we just want a little more.

If we worry it's as if we're thinking that somehow God's provisions are going to dry up, or His love for us is going to go stale, or He's decided not to care about us anymore. (see 1 John 3: 1).

Because we are children of God we can trust Him. This means that instead of worrying, we can be free to seek God's Kingdom.

### **FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES**

If we don't forgive others, is it right to expect God to forgive us?. See Matt. 18:21-35

### **LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION**

God will never tempt us. (James 1:13); I Cor. 10:12,13

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**\* Amen \***

The following article, author unknown, has been extracted from Church News Service, and is entitled:

### **When I say I am a Christian**

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting, "I am saved!" I'm whispering, "I get lost; that is why I chose this way."

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak of this with pride. I'm confessing that I stumble and need someone to be my Guide.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging I am strong. I'm professing that I'm weak, and pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success. I'm admitting I have failed and cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect. My flaws are all too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain. I have my share of heartaches, which is why I cry his name.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I do not wish to judge. I have no authority; I only know I'm loved.

The following has been extracted from Church News Service, and is entitled:

## All in the month of: **AUGUST**

- 400 years ago - 1610 that English explorer Henry Hudson sailed into what is now called Hudson Bay, Canada
- 200 years ago - 1810 that Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, was born. This Italian statesman unified Italy and served as its first Prime Minister
- 175 years ago - 1835 that the 'New York Sun' newspaper published the 'Great Moon Hoax' - a series of articles that told of fantastic creatures living on the moon. The sales of the newspaper soared
- 150 years ago - 1860 that the first tramway in Europe opened - in Birkenhead, England
- 125 years ago - 1885 that the German engineer Gottlieb Daimler patented the world's first motorcycle
- 100 years ago - 1910 that Mother Teresa was born. This Macedonian-born Indian missionary won the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, and was beatified on 19 October 2003
- 90 years ago - 1920 that the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution came into effect, and for the first time ever American women were given the right to vote
- 80 years ago - 1930 that Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, was born. She died on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2002
- 70 years ago - 1940 that the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill paid tribute to the Royal Air Force in a famous House of Commons speech, saying, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."
- 60 years ago - 1950 that Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, was born
- 60 years ago - 1950 that the BBC transmitted the first ever live TV pictures across the Channel
- 50 years ago - 1960 that the following countries achieved independence: Dahomey (Benin), Niger, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), The Ivory Coast, Chad, Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), Cyprus, Gabon, and Senegal
- 40 years ago - 1970 that the Soviet Union launched Venera 7 to Venus. It would become the first spacecraft to transmit data from the surface of another planet
- 30 years ago - 1980 that Lech Walesa led a strike by shipyard workers in Gdansk, Poland. It led to the formation of the Solidarity movement
- 25 years ago - 1985 that a British Airtours 737 burst into flames at Manchester Airport after an engine caught fire and a fuel tank ruptured. 55 people were killed
- 20 years ago - 1990 that the Gulf War began when Iraq invaded Kuwait. On 7<sup>th</sup> August Operation Desert Shield was put in place when US President Bush sent American forces to Saudi Arabia to prevent an Iraqi invasion
- 15 years ago - 1995 that Carl Giles, well loved British cartoonist, died
- 10 years ago - 2000 that the Queen Mother celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 10 years ago - 2000 that the Russian nuclear submarine 'Kursk' sank in the Barents Sea when its hull was damaged by a series of explosions. All 118 crew members died

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

## **History of the Witney Congregational Church 1973-1974**

The last time I wrote an article on the history of the Witney Congregational Church, it was printed in the April 2008 Cornerstone. I apologise for the gap of over two years, however my biggest source of information came from the Minutes of the Deacons and Church Meetings. Somehow the Minutes of the Deacon and Church Meetings for most of the 1970's-1980's have gone missing and I had hoped that they would re-emerge. Sadly they have not. If anybody knows of their whereabouts we are desperately keen to be reunited with them. We have all the Church Minutes from 1806 to 1973 safely deposited in the County Archives in Oxford and it is tragic that such more recent historical documents have been mislaid or lost.

I have been asked to continue this research despite the lack of these important documents. So I will try to piece together our history since 1973 using information from the Newsletters of that time (thanks mainly to copies collected by the late Kathleen Collis) and personal memories of Church Members from those times. I was a Deacon at that time so hopefully, despite being so long ago (37 years ago) I can piece together the events that have shaped our present Church.

To set the scene: In 1973 we were worshipping in the large Dining Room at St Mary's Close, the home of

our Minister, the Rev. Clementine M. Gordon. Previously in April 1970 we had moved from our old church building in the High Street (where Somerfields Supermarket is today) to worship at St Mary's Close. Our Church Secretary was Mr Bob Richardson, a farmer, living near Ducklington and our Treasurer was Mr David Pearson (who still worships with us).

In October 1968 Miss Gordon agreed to undertake a part-time ministry at Witney Congregational Church for four years whilst she did research at Oxford. As part of the agreement she was able to take a long summer vacation to sail her catamaran. During these periods we had theology students from Oxford filling in for Miss Gordon as our Pastor. Interestingly we welcomed a student, Mr Richard Cleaves, for the summer of 1973. As many of you know he is now Rev. Dr. Richard Cleaves, Minister at our neighbouring Congregational Church at Highbury Church Cheltenham.

In July 1973 the Diaconate called an urgent Church Meeting as Miss Gordon had intimated that she would be giving up the pastorate in November 1973. This created a mini crisis in that we needed to find a new place to worship, appoint a new Minister and thus we needed to purchase a new Manse. The Diaconate was asked to explore the possibility of purchasing a Manse-Church. At the same time a Mr and Mrs M Hamblett of Manchester came to discuss the possibility of the pastorate, but eventually decided not to take up the offer. Miss Gordon generously offered the continued use of St Mary's for worship "until the right man and the right property was found".

A Housing Committee consisting of Mrs L Wheeler, Mr Gerald Hayes, Rev. Raymond Moody and Mr Philip Turner was set up to find a suitable property for a Manse or Manse-Church.

At the AGM in October Mr David Pearson stepped down. Mr Gerald Hayes became our Treasurer.

By December 1973 the Housing Committee had found a suitable property, Staple Hall, which was a historic 17<sup>th</sup> Century building (1668) situated on the corner of Bridge Street and Newland and opposite West End. By February 1974 we had purchased the property and rewiring of the electricity and decorating was planned. We moved in on March 18<sup>th</sup> 1974 and the first Service at Staple Hall was held on Sunday March 21<sup>st</sup> 1974.

For those who have followed our history since 1662, research revealed that after the ejection from St Mary's in 1662 our Church worshipped 'underground' until 1672. In 1672 Frances Hubert M.A. obtained a licence to preach at the house, Staple Hall. The self same house where our Church was born in 1672. Witney Independent (Congregational) Church, we started anew in 1974.

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

### **Snippets from our History The Picture of Christ in the Auty Lounge**

Jacqui Powlesland told me that a few weeks ago an American, the Rev. James S Duren, his wife and grand-daughter

called in. He was our Minister here at Witney 1964-1965. In passing he enquired about a picture of Christ which he presented to the Church when he left. Jacqui showed them the picture that now hangs in the Auty Lounge.



This presentation event was recorded in the Church Newsletter for August 1965.

"At the Farewell Party in honour of the Rev. and Mrs Duren, Mr A. E. Sellman, Church Secretary, presented them with a Witney blanket. Rev. Duren then presented to the Church a picture depicting the face of Christ. This is to be hung in the church".

### **Celebrating 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1662 - 2012**

We are one of the churches that will be reaching this milestone. The General Secretaries of the Congregational Federation and the United Reform Church, have invited representatives to a meeting where ideas can be shared.

Rev Jason Boyd and Pip Cartwright will be attending this meeting on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September at Nottingham - so be prepared for idea-sharing when they return





## News around the world

The following information has been taken from CWM Website dated 30<sup>th</sup> July, so is up to date at the editing of this month's magazine

### Changes at CWM:

#### New CWM general secretary

Rev Dr Collin Cowan has been selected to be CWM's new general secretary.



Dr Cowan, general secretary of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), will begin his new role at the start of 2011.

In his acceptance speech to CWM's trustees, meeting in Hong Kong, he expressed humility and gratitude for the vote of confidence the organisation had shown in calling him to such an esteemed position.

Dr Cowan, 52, said he intends to promote a "partnership of peace", and would be committed to making CWM an "agent of peace-making". He also welcomed the opportunity to develop a close-knit working team with existing staff at CWM and paid tribute to the present general secretary Rev Dr Des

van der Water, who completes his term at the end of 2010.

He said that he expected to be held accountable to the highest level of performance by the Trustees as he embarks upon an exciting new era for CWM.

The appointment comes at a critical time for CWM. The charity is undertaking a major review of its life, work and mission, and its trustees are currently discussing a new strategy that will take CWM forward into the next decade.

In his new role Dr Cowan will be looking to spearhead the implementation of this strategy alongside CWM's 31 member churches worldwide.

#### Farewell to CWM's Elizabeth Joy

CWM's Elizabeth Joy ends her term this year, and the Trustees took time out from meeting business to stage a special farewell for their outgoing Executive Secretary for Mission Education, Elizabeth Joy.



Trustees from the six CWM regions took turns to offer songs, stories and messages of thanks and blessings to Mrs Joy at an informal evening gathering during the Trustee Body Meeting in Hong Kong.

General Secretary Rev Dr Des van der Water paid tribute to Mrs Joy's commitment to her eight years of work with CWM - especially in the areas of gender justice and youth participation in mission.

"Elizabeth was the first person that I recruited here at CWM," he said. "I am very glad to have worked with her over the years. Her passion in the areas of gender justice and youth participation in mission has been widely recognised within CWM and beyond.

"She has always been highly committed to CWM's mission cause and we wish her well in her new role beyond CWM and in her continued studies." Mrs Joy will leave her post at the end of 2010

### **CWM's new Moderator & Treasurer**

The CWM Assembly has appointed Rev Dr Prince Dibeela as Moderator to lead CWM's Trustee Body for the next three years, and Rev Eric So as Treasurer.

Speaking to the Assembly, Dr Dibeela, the general secretary of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, thanked God that as a teenager he came to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. "From that time," he said. "I have not looked back in my faith."



He also noted his gratitude for the influence of CWM on his own faith journey. His involvement with CWM began in 1987 as a youth delegate. Dr Dibeela's engagement with CWM has included theological education, the Community of Women and Men in Mission, and missionary service. CWM, he said, had opened his experience of the Christian church beyond the local to global perspectives.

"I sense in my heart that CWM is on the brink of something new," he said in regard to the development of a CWM strategy for the next 10 years. In his leadership values, he wants to encourage CWM to adopt a listening heart.



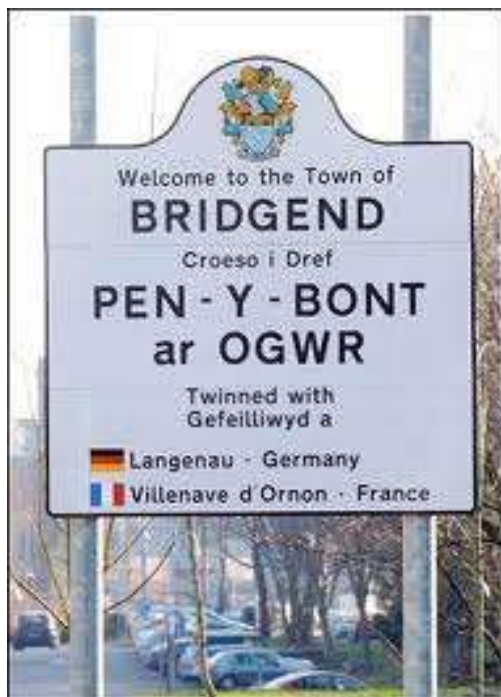
CWM's new Treasurer Rev Eric So, general secretary of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China, comes to his new post with a background in theology and in industry. He committed to lead CWM's finances with "good and faithful" as his watchwords.

His primary concern, he said, is to ensure that CWM's resources are managed skilfully to ensure that they help build up the kingdom of God.

Each made special mention of their predecessors, outgoing Moderator Rev Dr Roderick Hewitt, and Treasurer Rev Robin Thompson for their leading CWM with excellence and diligence for the past six years

**Mission that bleeds:** Being prepared to absorb some of the pain that damaged young people experience can be the start of mission and the road to healing.

**Paint a bleak picture:** The British media has taken an interest in the Welsh town of Bridgend just once in the past 10 years. Early in 2008 police and social services picked up on a worrying trend in suicides among the young that seemed to indicate that they may be part of a copycat cycle. The tragedy of these young people is part of a wider tragedy of post-industrial decline in South Wales.



The former mining town, population 39,000, has struggled to attract new industries. Nine per cent of the population claims unemployment benefit, the second highest in Wales, with many on incapacity benefit. As a coastal town with high unemployment rates, a high rate of suicide among young males might be expected.



It is here, on the edges of economically and socially deprived Wales, that Dr Sangkhuma with his wife, Rini, from the Hmar Tribe in Mizoram has lived and worked as a CWM missionary with his family for the past 10 years.

"My gospel is 'build me a people'", he says simply. As a pastor, initially working with the Union of Welsh Independents, then with the Presbyterian Church of Wales, he has taken on the challenge of immersing himself into the life of Bridgend and Maesteg, where he is based.

**Into prison:** One key area of his work is with young people held in young offenders institutions, where he volunteers as a chaplain. Parc Prison in Bridgend - a prison of around 1,000 inmates - has 200 young offenders. All of them are kept in a single block. The prisoners are from all parts of the world, many from Eastern Europe. The young offenders are largely from the surrounding area.

Sangkhuma's work is to meet with the young people, to offer them his time, to show compassion and friendship. For an hour at a time Sangkhuma spends time with small groups of young offenders. Here, he believes, his foreignness is an asset.

From the outset he is identified as someone who is very different to parents and authority figures that they may have. Rather than approach them with a view to build up some kind of relationship, he decided to make himself available and to see whoever would come.

So each week he sees around 15 to 20 young people. They do want to talk about their problems. Many are suffering loneliness, he says. Most of them face unemployment, they are discriminated against.

**Family:** At the root of many of their problems is the damage caused by family brokenness. They feel they have no future. They feel guilty about the things they have done, but they have few resources to do anything other than continue making silly mistakes. The root of many of the problems for young people in Wales is that as they have grown up, they have never had an experience of love in their lives. They do not recognise any love from their mother and father. As a result, they really do not understand what love is. Forgiveness is also a huge issue within these families and for the wider community. It is very easy to take on hurts and to harbour them. "I believe we take hurt too easily," says Sangkhuma. "We must find a forgiving spirit with honesty and openness. That is the only way that a wrongdoing can end.

"I treat them as a person - like my own children," Sangkhuma says. He has four children who are of the same age as many in the young offenders unit. "I accept them as my own child. If you have a heart for them, showing acceptance it is easy."

"What matters is approaching with love and with recognition. The fact that I have given my time to them is important. Just my willingness to be with them shows that they have worth." And this non-confrontational approach bears fruit, Sangkhuma says. "Very often they will share without reservation. That is from my encounter with young people."

For that reason he does not enter the prison showing off his credentials as a minister. He does not usually bring a Bible with him. "If I bring along the Bible, open it and read and pray, that could create a barrier," he says. "I know the Bible without reading from it, and I can pray without praying out loud."

Rather he waits and lets the young people dictate what they talk about and what questions they ask. "When I feel there is a time to enter into a discussion about spiritual matters, I just speak just the word. "When they feel that someone like me is willing to move closer and is willing to take on their hurts, it does make a difference. In fact the hurting sentiment may be the starting point for building a relationship."

**Being Jesus:** For Sangkhuma, his work with young offenders is more than taking the opportunity to be a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on. He considers his work among hurting young people to be part of his calling to be Jesus to the people around him. And it is Jesus as a model of humility and suffering that he finds most meaningful and inspiring in his work. "I don't like to suffer. But suffering is my background in India. In that context, suffering is number one," he

says. "For all that Easter day is important in our church, Good Friday is more significant for us. It's the bleeding part."

"My work is just to communicate the real gospel, the real word of God. In a sense I am representing Christ, I am being Jesus to them. They need to know Jesus' love and care. We cannot forget that Jesus suffered for us. And if we are clothing ourselves in humility and love we can do the same for others. "I have a burden for them. If I can shoulder the burdens that they are carrying, it is a relief."

**Restoration:** When the young people are released from prison the relationship often continues. Sangkhuma often offers to talk to parents, teachers and other people in positions of responsibility. Sometimes he asks if he can take a situation to a probation officer.

Since 1991 the Llynfi Valley Council of Churches has been running a project called the Courthouse. It was set up to help young people to grow physically, mentally and spiritually in order to combat the high rates of criminal and antisocial behaviour in the area.

The project is working with around 150 at risk and violent youth. The approach is restorative - dealing less with broken laws than with broken lives.

"We are encouraged to get involved in the restorative justice by supporting victims of crime, mentoring young people, visiting them in their homes," Sangkhuma says.

"These all show Christian compassion, the kind of compassion that deals with the real opportunities and

real life events. We deal with not only broken laws, but also broken lives."

So when offenders are released there is still an opportunity for churches to have a connection with them. Many are on electronic tags so that the authorities can track them. Police officers are still checking them out.

Young people come in to the Courthouse to drink a cup of tea or coffee free of charge. In the mentoring programme they can talk about what they are doing, and be assured that they can open themselves without being judged. The project is also running NVQ courses in computer basic training, Sangkhuma says.

"Young people just out of prison are very vulnerable. It is all too easy to get back into trouble if they are out at night. To help them avoid that, we invite them to our house in the evenings. When they have no hope, they can end up doing things that later they regret. "Sometimes it can be distressing to engage with young people in the way that I do, to open myself to their pain. It happens at quite a deep level. In this way I can find relief for their burdens." My gospel is 'build me a people'

We cannot forget that Jesus suffered for us. And if we are clothing ourselves in humility and love we can do the same for others





## PRAYER LETTER

No 142

### The Big Society - Use Your Gifts

David Cameron's 'Big Society' is not a new idea. In Paul's letter to the Romans Chap 12, Paul emphasized the role that everyone has to play in working together by recognising their gifts and using them for the benefit of the whole community. This is social cohesion as opposed to individualism.

The words, thoughts & prayers of well-known writers taken from Christian Aid's daily reading publication '365 ways to make a difference' - 29 July, may help us to focus on how we can play our part in what we perceive as 'The Big Society' - Every Blessing Beryl



*[Do not] think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.*

Romans 12.3-8



'God has created me to do some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission - I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

'I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good. I shall do his work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it, if I do but keep his commandments. Therefore I will trust him.

'Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what he is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirit sink, hide my future from me - still he knows what he is about.'

Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-90)



There are two ways of using your gifts. One - wait until a church asks you to help and then do it grudgingly. Two - analyze whether you have space in your life to be generous with the things God has made you good at. Which makes more sense?



*Dearest Lord, teach me to serve thee as thou deservest: to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to seek reward save that of knowing that I do thy will.*

Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)

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

The following article, extracted from 'The Congregationalist', has been submitted by Jacqui Powlesland, and reports on:

## Rev Jason Boyd's PhD research

One estimate says at least 250,000 sermons are preached every Sunday in the UK. It is an immense public relations and teaching effort, in which Congregationalists take a leading role.

It involves hours of study, preparation, prayer, writing and re-writing. It engages some of the finest minds of the best-educated academics, the most earnest spirits, and the utmost enthusiasm, of a huge army of clergy and lay people

A commercial organisation able to command such a body of skill, time and effort, addressing around 10 million willing listeners, would expect serious success. So what does all this preaching achieve?

Time after time in the 17th Century diaries of Samuel Pepys, this bright man notes that he attended church on the Lord's Day and slept through dull and boring sermons. Is it any different now? Do today's sermons 'work' in any noticeable way?

Jason Boyd, Minister of Witney Congregational Church, Oxford, is going to find out. He has secured a £6000 scholarship from the Bible Society for PhD research to discover with all those who regularly attend worship (members and non-members) what happens when a sermon is preached as part of our worship?

Jason writes in his church 'Crossroads' magazine: 'My hunch is

that preachers and congregations have clear ideas about what a sermon is and does. Books written for preachers present theological underpinnings and tips for how to construct and deliver the sermon'. But 'who has asked the congregation what they experience and think about the sermon, or the preachers what they experience and think?'

Listeners will be asked to keep journals and video diaries, hold discussions and conduct interviews as part of the project. 'My aim,' says Jason 'is to enable preachers and congregations to engage in effective dialogue and raise confidence in the Bible as a book to be lived and shared.'

## Church weekend away 19-21<sup>st</sup> November 2010



This promises to be a good weekend for fun & fellowship. So if you haven't yet done anything about it, places are still available for this event and booking forms are held in the church office



The following article has been submitted by Pat Smith, and is entitled:

## Mission

A letter was recently distributed to members and adherents asking me to convene a meeting of those interested in evaluating the missionary and charity interests of the church, and the following questions were asked:

1. Which societies, charities and agencies do you personally support or have an interest in?
2. Which societies, charities and agencies would you like the church to be supporting?
3. Would you like to be part of the group which meets to discuss the way forward regarding missionary support in our church? If so, would you be able to make a meeting on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm?

Thank you to those who have already responded, and this is a reminder to those who may wish to be involved



This mission was supported last year by taking part in a Walk of Hope. Nanna and I did the walk and many of you kindly sponsored us.

This year there are 2 Walks of Hope planned that we could join and the following information has been extracted from Leprosy Mission website:

- **Buscot Village, Cotswolds**  
**Saturday 18 September 10.00am**

Starts and finishes in the National Trust car park in the village of Buscot, taking in 5.5 miles of beautiful water-meadow countryside along the banks of the rivers Leach, Coln and Thames.

- **Abingdon**  
**Saturday 16 October 10.00am**  
A walk here is a pleasure and a delight. Abingdon is near the rivers Thames and Ock with riverside gardens and a picturesque lock. The start/end location has not been established yet.

If you are interested in doing the walk(s) or would like to know more details please ask me

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

## Open Doors Great Big Tea party

On a lovely sunny Saturday afternoon in June we hosted a 'Great Big Tea Party' which was held in the Church Lounge and Courtyard.

A good number of people came and enjoyed the delicious homemade scones with jam and cream and strawberries.

I would like to thank all those who supported this event and those who helped. £65 was raised and donated to Open Doors for their work in supporting persecuted Christians in many parts of the world.



The following article has been submitted by Nanna Blackman, our church Treasurer, and is entitled:

## **Gift Aid - How the Church can benefit**

The diaconate asked me to explain how Gift Aid works. Below is a summary of how we can claim Gift Aid for donations to the Church. It may seem complicated, so if you would rather have it explained just come and ask me about it.

Gift Aid allows the Church (and other charities) to claim 25 pence for every £1 donated. In addition, until 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 the government contributes a further 3 pence for every £1 donated. Thus

<i>if you donate</i>	<i>The church can claim tax back</i>	<i>HMRC contributes a further</i>	<i>Making the donation worth</i>
<i>£1</i>	<i>£0.25</i>	<i>£0.03</i>	<i>£1.28</i>
<i>£5</i>	<i>£1.24</i>	<i>£0.15</i>	<i>£6.40</i>
<i>£25</i>	<i>£6.25</i>	<i>£0.75</i>	<i>£32.00</i>
<i>£30</i>	<i>£7.50</i>	<i>£0.90</i>	<i>£38.40</i>
<i>£40</i>	<i>£10.00</i>	<i>£1.20</i>	<i>£51.20</i>

As you can see, it soon adds up.

Last financial year the Church received £2,696 from HMRC in Gift Aid and additional contributions. This is money we would not otherwise have at our disposal.

If you are a tax payer you can allow the Church to obtain gift aid on donations you make to the Church.

### **There are some simple rules:**

1. You must pay income tax equal to the amount of gift aid the Church is claiming, in any one tax year.
2. The donation must be directly traceable back to you.
3. You must fill out a gift aid declaration, giving the Church permission to seek to claim the gift aid.

### **Are you paying enough income tax?**

Perhaps the table above can give you an indication whether you are paying enough income tax to cover the gift aid. For example, if you pay £6.25 in income tax the Church can claim gift aid on up to £25.

### **The donation(s) must traceable**

We trace donations, confidentially, in a number of ways:

- The envelope scheme; individuals are issued with an envelope number and envelopes for each week. When an envelope is received either in the Offering or by the Church Office, the number and the donation are recorded. The only record of which name has which number is held by the Treasurer and is only used for Gift Aid purposes.

- Using cheques; a cheque received in the Offering or in the Church Office are registered, confidentially.
- Identified donations; there are many ways of doing this:
  - Take an offering envelope in the foyer or any envelope and write your name on it.
  - Make a specific donation to the Church Office, where it will be registered.
  - Approach one of the Deacons

In each of the above cases you must register your permission for the Church to claim Gift Aid against your donations in general or that donation in particular.

All donations, whether gift aided or not, are treated in the strictest confidence. Your offering is between you and God and we intend to keep it that way.

### **Registering your permission for the Church to claim Gift Aid**

Our current system is for individuals to fill in a gift aid form.

The Gift Aid form is available from the Church Office; they are in the Treasurer's pigeon hole. Just take one, fill it in, put it back in the Treasurer's pigeon hole and it will be logged and applied against future donations. If you want it applied retrospectively to past donations within the last financial year please make a note of this on the form.

### **No longer paying tax?**

Please note; if you cease to pay income tax, just let the treasurer know and your gift aid form will be annulled, from the start of the tax year in which you ceased to pay tax. A note, email or verbal communication is all that is needed.

If this is all too much to take in, just come and talk to me and we'll go through it.

**Make the most of the money your charity receives with Gift Aid**



The following article is a continuation in a series by Rev Paul Hardingham, and is entitled:

## **What's the Big Idea?**

### **An introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Numbers**

The book of Numbers takes its name from the census of the people with which it opens. It records the 38 year period of Israel's wandering in the desert, on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Traditionally the book has been ascribed to Moses, although it was probably added to by editors in later periods.

Numbers tells the story of Israel's journey from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab, across the Jordan from Canaan. They are coming to terms with their identity as God's people and call to be his servant people. It's a very honest account of a group of people learning what it means to become a community together, which is always a slow and messy business. So jobs have to be assigned, leaders appointed and lists maintained.

However, the people who had been rescued from slavery in Egypt responded not with faith, gratitude and obedience but with unbelief, ingratitude and rebellion. Therefore, the book is also about God's judgement upon a disobedient people. As a result of their refusal to undertake the conquest of Canaan (ch 14), they were condemned to live the rest of their lives in the desert. Only their children would actually enter the Promised Land.

However, God in his grace doesn't give up on his people. Through a series of oracles Balaam, a pagan prophet from Moab, proclaims God's blessings on his people. So God demonstrates that he has

ongoing purposes for his people, and is still willing to bring them into his land of promise.

The book is powerful reminder that even when we disobey God, his purposes for us remain. We can find ourselves in a company of men and women who sin a lot, but God can use our experience to show us what it means to be the people of God in our own generation and enter into his life. Numbers reminds us what it is means to be included within the people of God - ie a community that honours God, lives out love and justice in daily affairs, learns how to deal with sin in ourselves and others, and follows God's commands into a future of blessing.

In the words of Aaron's blessing: The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.' (6:24-26).

\*\*\*\*\*

The following has been extracted from The Congregationalist

An old weary dog wandered into the garden. I could tell from his collar and well-fed belly that he had a home. He followed me into the house and fell asleep in a corner. An hour later he went to the door to be let out.

The next day he was back, and resumed his position to sleep for an hour. This continued for several weeks. Curious, I pinned a note to his collar: Every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap.

Next day he arrived with a different note on his collar: He lives in a house with 10 children and he's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?

The following article has been extracted from Church News Service, and is entitled:

### **'The Jesus Accounts' Fact or Fiction?**

A new documentary that will equip Christians to take on the sceptics over the trustworthiness of the Bible - is being released this summer.

By throwing light on scholarly, scientific and historical evidence that supports the trustworthiness of the ancient manuscripts, eyewitness accounts and more, the 30-minute documentary provides an invaluable tool that shows how the four canonical gospels can be trusted.

The Jesus Accounts has been praised by leading clergy such as Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, former Bishop of Rochester, and Mark Meynell, Senior Associate Minister of All Souls Church, Langham Place in London. "It will prove a fantastic resource for serious enquirers and scholars alike, because it carefully examines the historical evidence and draws on the expertise on renowned scholars. I hope it will be widely used."

Bishop Nazir-Ali says: "We have an unprecedented number of manuscripts, whether papyrus or parchment, available to us. This means we can be confident that the text is in fact the text written down by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John."

At a time when the reliability of scriptures is being challenged, it is hoped that the documentary will serve as a powerful tool to churches, scholars, ministers and lay-people reaching out to their communities with the power of the gospel.

The following article, extracted from 'The Congregationalist', has been submitted by Jean Howell, and is entitled:

### **The Bottles**

A row of bottles on my shelf  
Caused me to analyse myself  
One yellow pill I have to pop  
Goes to my heart so it won't stop  
A little white one that I take  
Goes to my hands so they won't shake  
The blue ones that I use a lot  
Tell me that I'm happy when I'm not  
The purple pill goes to my brain  
And tells me that I have no pain

The capsules tell me not to wheeze  
Or cough or choke or even sneeze  
The red ones, smallest of them all  
Go to my blood so I won't fall  
The orange ones, so big and bright  
Prevent my leg cramps in the night  
Such an array of brilliant pills  
Help to cure all kinds of ills  
But what I'd really like to know  
Is what tells each one where to go!

### **A funny!**

#### **Daryl Denham's drivetime (Virgin radio)**

Daryl Denham: In which country would you spend shekels?

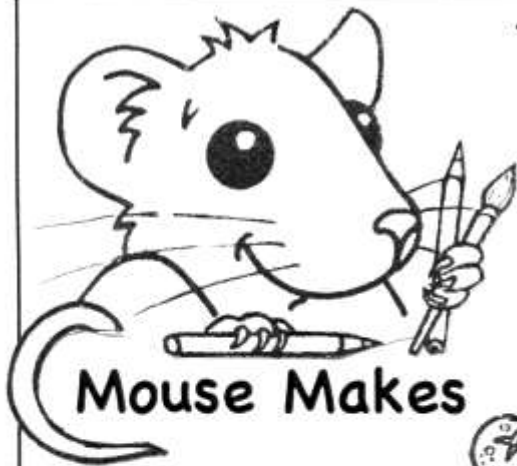
Contestant: Holland?

Daryl Denham: Try the next letter of the alphabet.

Contestant: Iceland? Ireland?

Daryl Denham: (helpfully) It's a bad line, did you say Israel?

Contestant: No.



## Mouse Makes

Read the full story of the feeding of the 5000 in John 6:1-15.

## The Large Crowd and The Big Picnic

Thousands of people had followed Jesus to the other side of the lake to listen to his teaching.

All that the disciples had to feed them was **five** loaves of barley bread and **two** fish but Jesus took the bread and fish and gave thanks to God. They all had as much as they could eat and there were still **12** baskets of bread left over!



Find these words on the picnic rug:

- BARLEY • MIRACLE • CROWD • TEACH •
- GRASS • GATHER • BASKETS • SHARE •
- BREAD • LOAVES • FEAST • SIT • TWO •
- DISCIPLES
- ATE • SAT
- HUNGRY
- BOY • EAT
- FIVE
- FISH
- JESUS
- PIECES
- GOD
- FULL
- FEED
- TWELVE
- THANKED



# ROTAS

## WELCOMING TEAM

Aug	01	Pat & Ben Smith
	08	Joan Currie & Irene Jephcott
	15	Iris Lindsay & Susan Wass
	22	Jill & Robert McBride
	29	Val Obriain & Theo Howells
Sep	05	Nanna Blackman & Irene St Clair
	12	Beryl & Pip Cartwright
	19	Pat & Ben Smith
Oct	26	Joan Currie & Susan Wass
	03	Jill & Robert McBride



## COMMUNION

Aug	01 pm	Jacqui Powlesland	
		Preparation	Iris Lindsay
	15 am	Elaine Gudem & Chris Esapa	
		Peter Gamston & Nanna Blackman	
Sep	05 pm	Pat Smith & Jacqui Powlesland	
		Preparation	Iris Lindsay
	19 am	Judi Holloway & Jacqui Powlesland	
		Pat Smith & Peter Gamston	
Oct	03 pm	tbc	
		Preparation	Iris Lindsay



## FLOWERS

Aug	01	Judi Holloway
	08	Val Obriain
	15	Rita Hayes
	22	Joan Currie
	29	Beryl Cartwright
Sep	05	Jill McBride
	12	Pat Smith
	19	Harvest
	26	Jacqui Powlesland
Oct	03	Alison Hazell



## COFFEE

Aug	01	Susan Wass & Irene St Clair
	08	Jill & Robert McBride
	15	Pat & Ben Smith
	22	Marjorie Lee, Iris Lindsay & Judith Bungey
	29	Sue Birdseye & Linda McCormac



## ROTAS

<b>Sep</b>	05	Peter Gamston & Gwen Mee
	12	Susan Wass & Irene St Clair
	19	Church Family Lunch
	26	Pat & Ben Smith
<b>Oct</b>	03	Marjorie Lee, Iris Lindsay & Judith Bungey



### REST & CHAT

<b>Aug</b>	05	Jill & Robert McBride
	12	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
	19	Marjorie Lee
	26	Pat Smith & Gwen Mee
<b>Sep</b>	02	Iris Lindsay & Joan Currie
	09	Jill & Robert McBride
	16	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
	23	Marjorie Lee
<b>Oct</b>	30	Pat Smith & Gwen Mee
	07	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



<b>Aug</b>	04	Andrew Watson
	13	Melissa Gudem
	22	John Gamston
	24	Fiona Hayes
<b>Sep</b>	01	Theo Howells
	02	Jill McBride Claire Woodward
	09	Judith Bungey
	10	Shannon Gough
	13	Michael Watson
	25	Ian Hayes
28	John Garrett	

### Congratulations

On the safe arrival on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, of twins Henry & Arabella



Grandson & Granddaughter for Linda & John McCormac