

Witney Congregational Church

Issue 19

October &
November 2011

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	1.30 pm	Tuesday	For under 5's parents and carers
Saturday Praise	11.00 am	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

Thursday	2.30pm	2 nd Thursday of each month at different homes
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. - 1 st & 3 rd Friday of the month
	7.00 pm	Y4J - 1 st & 3 rd 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



Despite the fact this is a bi-monthly publication; the time for writing another editorial seems to have come round rather quickly. Perhaps it is just a symptom of all our lives being busier than ever. Within our church, there has been much activity, especially over the last 3-4 weeks, with such things as: Messy church; a Wedding and an Ordination, with the latter two being accompanied with refreshments. It was, for me anyway, particularly good to see a change to the hot weather. However, with all the preparation for the events, it was at times just a bit overbearing.

I am sure we will all be busy soon in the lead up to Christmas - which is now less than three months away! Plenty of time I hear you say - or is there? According to my diary, the clocks are due to change on Sunday 30th October, and for some this heralds long periods of darkness.

So, turning now to the contents, here is just a glimpse of some of the articles that have been submitted; Pip Cartwright continues the series on the history of WCC; Karen Bruschi writes on radical forgiveness; there is the CF Mailing; an 8-year old boy explains about God and there is an article on all in the month of October 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 or 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 next edition is due on 4th December
Your Editor



30th October

Sticks

Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft.

Today, it's called golf.

Contents

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23. Radical forgiveness
24. All in the month of October

Pastor's Papers

Everyone wanted a piece of him. Jesus was jostled by streams of people queuing up to be healed. His critics were desperate to trip him up. They wanted to gather evidence that this man was a danger to the religious-political stability of the people of Israel. Jesus infuriated them with his well put questions that they couldn't answer without being made to look silly. With all these pressures on Jesus' time and energy I could understand if he had burned out. If I had been in his place I would have booked a holiday cruising on the Nile and getting some much needed R & R.

For most of us the slower pace of the summer has given way to the brisk step of routine. If we had holidays they are now a pleasant memory. If we were in sunny climes the tan is fading fast. A look at the diary shows wall to wall commitments. We can feel the stress levels rising! Though there's a part of us that is quite glad to be back to normal, there's another part that is thinking about booking the next break!

We live in the fast lane. It's not just working people who have busy lives. I hear from retired folk that they are busier now than when they were working! And it's true! How many families could cope if they didn't have retired grandparents who provide care? How many churches, charity shops and voluntary organisations would have to close down if it weren't for the energetic retired?

We live in the fast lane. Jesus lived in the fast lane. The Gospels leave us gasping for breath trying to keep up with this man on a mission. The secret

of Jesus' energy was the life of prayer. In Luke 6 Jesus has just healed a man and put the scribes and Pharisees in their place. He has a lot on his mind. He knows he's got to select a group of learners who will follow him and become the core group for the new community he is going to bring together. What does he do?

"Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). We know where he is and what he is doing when he's there. However, nothing is said about how he prayed or what he prayed to God. We do know that whatever occurred in the intimacy of the prayer on the mountain energised him to call the disciples and name the apostles.

Developing in the life of prayer is vital to being the people that God created us to be. In the midst of busy lives prayer reminds us that we have been created to love God with our whole being and to love our neighbour as ourselves. If you have lost the rhythm of prayer in your life - or perhaps you have never had such a rhythm - I would invite you to take on the discipline of prayer.

Here's a simple pattern. Begin in the morning when you wake up. Greet God. "Good morning Lord. Thank you for this day. Help me to receive it as a gift. May I be present to you and to all those I meet."

Then, during the day make a time and find a place for being still in God's presence. Select a short passage of scripture. Be quiet and invite the Spirit to speak to you. Read the passage two or three times, each time more slowly. What is God saying to you? Let God use your imagination and your senses as you

read. Then be silent. You may wish to repeat a word or phrase (e.g. - Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner; Jesus Christ light of the world, lighten my darkness etc...). Begin by taking ten minutes and then as you continue your practice let the time expand out to twenty or thirty minutes.

Before you go to sleep examine your day. This takes five to ten minutes. First, thank God for being the creator of everything that is. Thank him for the gift of Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection. Thank him for the Holy Spirit. Pray for the Spirit to guide your reflections. Second, allow your mind to think of all the things that have happened during the day which have been signs of God's love and grace at work in your life. Give thanks. Then allow your mind to think of things that have been said or done that have not demonstrated God's love and grace. Say sorry and gratefully receive God's forgiveness. Finally, think of what you will do tomorrow. Think of the people you may meet. Pray for grace to be present to God and present to every person and task.

Prayer is a lifestyle. I hope you will take up the challenge. If you want to explore even further, come to 'Open the Book'. We are meeting at 67 Pensclose at 7:30 pm on Thursday exploring the Bible Society's **lyfe** series. At the moment we are in the zone 'still lyfe' in which we are deepening our understanding and practice of the life of prayer.

Yours in Jesus Christ
Jason

B BIBLE
SOCIETY

Thank You

Alan & myself wish to send you sincere thanks for the lovely welcome we received following the Harvest Festival, also the fantastic meal so unexpected, accompanied by great fellowship

Special thanks to everyone who donated the wonderful food for the Gatehouse in Oxford

More and more people are coming for help - new faces every week. It is a great challenge for this special place to be kept going. It runs mainly on charity, as a result of prayer and hard work for many helpers.

On behalf of all our vulnerable and homeless friends, and the workers, we really do THANK YOU - For your help year after year - faithfulness and care really do matter to everyone so much

May God bless you all

Love & Best Wishes
Sylvia & Alan Fearneyhough

The Cow and the Bible

A religious farmer lost his Bible out in the field. A few days later he went to answer a noise at his door. Standing there was a cow, with his Bible in its mouth. The farmer raised his eyes to heaven and thanked the Lord for this miracle. "Not really," said the cow. "Your name was written inside."





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

Oct

1st 11.00am Saturday Praise
 2nd am No morning service
 4.00pm Ordination of Rev Judi Holloway
 9th am Morning Worship
 pm Joint Service at High St Methodist
 16th am Rev Judi Holloway Communion
 pm Joint Service at Congregational Church Rev Richard Donaghue
 23rd am Morning Worship
 pm CTiW United Service at High St Methodist
 30th am Morning Worship
 pm Madley Park Residential Home

Nov

5th 11.00am Saturday Praise
 6th am Morning Worship
 pm Joint Service at Congregational Church Communion
 13th am No Service
 10.30 - 10.45 Civic Service at War Memorial
 pm Joint Service at High St Methodist Church
 20th am Morning Worship Communion
 5.00pm Gather & eat with Christians at Congregational Church
 27th am Morning Worship
 pm Joint Service at High St Methodist Church

Dec

3rd am Messy Church
 4th am Cafe Church All-Age Worship
 pm Joint Service at Congregational Church Communion

The following events are given for your particular attention:

Oct

4th Open Meeting 7.00 for 7.30pm This is an open invitation to all congregations within Churches Together in Witney and District Churches to discuss concerns regarding the local Muslim community using our church.
 6th 'Lyfe' Bible Study 7.30pm Manse 67 Pensclose
 7th Y4J Venue tbc
 8th Prayer Chain meeting 9.15am
 13th Fellowship Group 2.30pm 7 Riverside Gardens
 21st www. & Y4J 6.00pm & 7.00pm respectively
 30th Word Cafe 12.00 noon

Nov

1 st	Deacons meeting	7.30pm	
3 rd	'Lyfe' Bible Study	7.30pm	Venue tbc
4 th	www. & Y4J joint	6.00pm	
5 th	SWMA Executive	10.30am	Stroud
10 th	Fellowship Group	2.30pm	9 Pensclose
	Lyfe' Bible Study	7.30pm	Venue tbc
12 th	Prayer Chain meeting	9.15am	
15 th	Church meeting	7.30pm	
17 th	Lyfe' Bible Study	7.30pm	Venue tbc
18 th	www. & Y4J	6.00pm & 7.00pm respectively	
24 th	Lyfe' Bible Study	7.30pm	Venue tbc
30 th	Base 33 AGM		

Dec

1 st	Christian Aid Concert (Pirates of Penzance)	7.30pm	
	Lyfe' Bible Study	7.30pm	Venue tbc
2 nd	www. & Y4J	6.00pm & 7.00pm respectively	
3 rd	CTiW Carols at Woolgate/Waitrose	12noon - 2.00pm	

ROTAS

WELCOMING TEAM

Oct	02	Ordination at 4.00pm	
	09	Jill & Robert McBride	
	16	Nanna Blackman & Iris Lindsay	
	23	Sharon Watson & Val Obriain	
	30	Theo Howells & Irene St Clair	
Nov	06	Pat & Ben Smith	
	13	Remembrance Sunday	No Service
	20	Beryl & Pip Cartwright	
	27	Susan Wass & Joan Currie	
Dec	04	Jill & Robert McBride	



COMMUNION

Oct	16 am	Susan Wass & Peter Gamston	
		Sharon Watson & Jacqui Powlesland	
		Preparation	Pat Smith
Nov	06 pm	Susan Wass & Jacqui Powlesland	
		Preparation	Iris Lindsay
	20 am	Nanna Blackman & Judi Holloway	
		Chris Esapa & Sharon Watson	
		Preparation	Susan Wass
Dec	04 pm	Nanna Blackman & Sharon Watson	
		Preparation	Iris Lindsay



FLOWERS

Oct	02	Ordination
	09	Joan Currie
	16	Alison Hazell
	23	Jacqui Powlesland
	30	Beryl Cartwright
Nov	06	Rita Hayes
	13	Judi Holloway
	20	Val Obriain
Dec	27	Jill McBride
	04	Rita Hayes



COFFEE

Oct	02	No morning service
	09	Linda McCormac & Sue Birdseye
	16	Marjorie Lee, Iris Lindsay & Judith Bungey
	23	Jill & Robert McBride
	30	Word Cafe
Nov	06	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Marian Walker
	13	No service - Remembrance Sunday
	20	Susan Wass & Irene St Clair
	27	Andy & Lyn Thomas
Dec	04	Cafe Church



REST & CHAT

Oct	06	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
	13	Marjorie Lee
	20	Pat Smith
	27	Jill & Robert McBride
Nov	03	Iris Lindsay & Joan Currie
	10	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
	17	Marjorie Lee
	24	Pat Smith
Dec	01	Jill & Robert McBride



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 - Thanks



News around the world

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

WCC launches online global theology library

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has launched the first online digital library covering theology and ecumenism, called *GlobeTheoLib*, in a bid to help close the information gap between the North and South.

"The time has come to launch a new model of ecumenical sharing of theological resources in order to prepare world Christianity for the 21st century," said WCC general secretary the Rev Olav Fykse Tveit in a statement.

ENInews reported that the library, which will initially contain nearly half a million articles, represents "a key to social development, church development and the integrity of the churches' witness," said the Rev Dietrich Werner, of WCC's programme on ecumenical theological education, at the launch at the WCC's headquarters in Geneva.

The library can be accessed at www.globethics.net/gtl and uses the electronic platform of *Globethics.net*, a Geneva-based organisation that manages a digital library on ethics containing more than 650,000 documents.

GlobeTheoLib is available free of charge to registered users and offers resources in ecumenism, biblical and

church studies, and contextual theologies, Werner said. He added that it will help promote the sharing of theological perspectives between fast-growing churches in the global South and established churches in the North.

It could become "the richest source for theological knowledge in our times," said Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov of the Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools.

GlobeTheoLib accepts documents in any language, but user languages are currently English, French, German, and Spanish. There are plans to add Greek, Russian, Indonesian, Chinese, Arabic and Portuguese, organisers said. Christoph Stuckelberger, executive director of *Globethics.net*, said the theological library offers "new possibilities for international networking, exchange and digital sharing."

Church or Jail? Alabama criminals get the choice

Authorities say that non-violent offenders in Bay Minette, Alabama now have a new choice: Go to jail, or go to church every Sunday for a year, the Associated Press reported.

Operation Restore Our Community begins next week. The city judge will let misdemeanour offenders choose to work off their sentences in jail and pay a fine; or go to church every Sunday for a year.

If offenders select church, they will be allowed to pick the place of worship but must check in weekly with the pastor and the police department.

If the one-year church attendance program is completed successfully, the offender's case will be dismissed.

Bay Minette Police Chief Mike Rowland says the programme could change the lives of people heading down the wrong path. So far, 56 churches are participating.

South Korean visit to North Korea eases tensions

A four-day visit to North Korea by representatives of South Korean religious bodies could signal an easing of tension between the two nations, observers have said.

Led by Roman Catholic Archbishop Kim Hee-joong of Kwangju, the 24-member delivered wishes for peace from South Korea's faith community, held talks with religious counterparts and participated in joint prayer meetings.

The group represented Buddhist, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Confucian and others, ENInews reported.

The Korean Conference of Religions for Peace visited the North Korean capital of Pyongyang and other cities from 21 to 24 September.

On 22 September, the group held talks with Kim Yong Nam, president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly (parliament), "in a compatriotic atmosphere," the official Korean Central News Agency said. Bishop Peter Kang of Cheju, president of the Episcopal Conference of South Korea, told the Fides Catholic news service that the visit will keep communications open with the North.

"But we need to be realistic ... Religions will continue to bring humanitarian aid to the population of the North who suffer from hunger, and this is the interest of Pyongyang. Believers in the North are closely

monitored and religious freedom is denied," he told Fides.

Exchanges between faith groups in the two countries were fairly common until recent years. "From 2005 to 2007, they were frequently visiting each other during the time of [South Korea's then-President] Roh Mu Hyun's administration," Yoshinori Shinohara, an official of the Japanese Committee of the World Conference of Religions for Peace based in Tokyo, said.

But he said that after Lee Myung-Bak became president of South Korea, the situation continued to be tense, following the sinking of the South Korean navy vessel Cheonan in March last year. "One of the aims is to deepen their friendship by repeating such mutual visits."

Himalayan earthquake death toll rises

A pastor's wife was killed and churches and schools destroyed in the 18 September earthquake that killed more than 100 people in the Himalaya mountain, reports Anto Akkara.

Among the six dozen dead in the Indian state of Sikkim was 28-year old Nirmala Tamang, wife of a pastor of the Believers Church. "The young woman died when the church wall collapsed on her," Rev B Rokken, coordinator of the Believers Church, told ENInews from the shattered capital of Gangtok.

The 6.9-magnitude quake hit mountainous, remote regions of Bhutan, Tibet, India and Nepal and the death toll was reported to be as high as 120.

"In terms of casualties, the outside world will say it is a not big earthquake. But when you see the devastation around, one wonders how

lucky the people were," the Rev. Roshan Thapa, treasurer of the Eastern Himalaya diocese of the Church of North India (CNI), told ENInews from Darjeeling, India, just south of Sikkim.

"The historic Macfarlane church and its famous bell tower has come down in Kalimpong. Several schools and churches along with hundreds of houses have been damaged even here in Darjeeling while the devastation has been the worst in Sikkim," said Thapa. Roman Catholic bishop Stephen Lepcha, of the Darjeeling diocese, told ENInews the landslides and clogged roads are preventing even the army from reaching trapped victims.

Army relief workers had to be airdropped to inaccessible areas and the injured airlifted as roads had gone down in widespread landslides. Lepcha also mourned the death of two army personnel who were trying to rescue trapped people on 20 September. "This shows how risky it is to carry out even relief work," he said.

PCW calls for mission beyond church walls

Leaders of the Presbyterian Church of Wales have warned that the church must reach its communities outside church walls if it has any chance of successfully responding to today's needs.

Outgoing moderator Rev Iain Hodgins and his successor Rev Robert Owen Roberts spoke out on the issue at the PCW's general assembly in Lampeter, stating that the church must avoid "naval-gazing" and instead "look out in love" to communities in Wales and beyond.

In his valedictory address, Mr

Hodgins highlighted the need for the church to speak graciously to avoid alienating people who don't attend church.

"I am convinced that in every area, village, town or city there are opportunities to make the most of for the gospel," he said.

"If we are to make the most of every opportunity, we need to speak in a way that encourages outsiders to consider Christ. Sometimes as Christians, our words can turn people away from the Saviour. We can be as ungracious as the disciples were when the mothers brought 'young children to Jesus'. Our words, and the way we say them can make all the difference when opportunity comes our way to speak for Christ."

Drawing on his experiences from a recent visit to the PCW's 'daughter' church, the Mizoram Synod of the Presbyterian Church of India, he also stressed the importance of prayer. "If the children of our mission field are praying for us in Wales, shouldn't the Prayer Meeting and experience of prayer be much more on our agenda than it is. Yet in how many our chapels, is the solitary Sunday service the only meeting of the week?" he said.

As the PCW celebrates 200 years since it ordained its first ministers, incoming moderator Rev Roberts told the assembly in his inaugural speech that looking backwards was pointless.

He said: "As we see the signs of economic, social and spiritual emergencies around us, the church's place is to continue to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ's ability to deal with every emergency. Many want a better world and a just peaceful society. Many

people are without hope and are searching for meaning in their lives. "The Lord Jesus Christ has the answers. Throughout history, we can see how Jesus has changed people, and through this changed society."

He added: "The history of the Presbyterian Church and the ferment surrounding its origins prove that. The Lord stood with his church and gave it the strength to encourage people to respond to his call. At a time when church membership is falling, the Lord still stands by us. My prayer is that many more people discover the faith, commitment and confidence of the early followers and that the spirit of the early Methodists will take hold of us."

Leprosy makes a comeback

Mamysoa realised she had a problem after she stepped too close to the fire. "I burned my foot quite badly, but it hardly hurt at all".

The 20-year-old housekeeper recently became one of five new cases of leprosy that Abdoul Zamandrahengo detects every month from his tiny public clinic in Antalaha, a small town on Madagascar's east coast.

Zamandrahengo's clinic has become a centre for the treatment of leprosy in the region. "It's my own fault," he told IRIN. "When I came here, I was told there were no new cases. Then I trained environmental workers to look for signs. These rangers go far into the forest and to the remote villages. They tell potential patients as far as 200km away to come to Antalaha and see me."

Leprosy is often called the disease of the poor, as healthy, well-fed

people are rarely affected. It is caused by the bacillus, *Mycobacterium leprae*, which are transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the disease is not highly infectious but can be spread by living in close quarters with someone who has gone untreated. A weakened immune system caused by poor nutrition and health care can make someone who has been exposed more vulnerable. Without treatment, the disease can cause progressive and permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes.

A surge in new leprosy cases in this remote region of Madagascar could not have come at a worse time. Once a prosperous vanilla-exporting town, Antalaha has suffered the economic consequences of two years of political instability that began with the March 2009 coup in which Andry Rajoelina, with the support of the military, deposed President Marc Ravalomanana. Numerous foreign aid and trade benefits on which the country was heavily reliant, particularly for the funding of social sectors, have since been suspended.

Six to 12 months of treatment with multidrug therapy - a combination of two antibiotics and an anti-inflammatory (medicines that WHO distributes for free) - stops the disease from spreading, but there are other obstacles to overcome.

Eradicated?

The main one, according to medical workers, is that the Malagasy authorities declared that leprosy had been eradicated from the country in 2010, a decision that makes

Zamandrahengo fume with frustration. "This is the work of someone who is behind a desk. Everyone here in the field knows that there are new cases," he told IRIN. "Instead of helping us, they say that I don't know how to diagnose leprosy and that I hand out too much medicine."

Diagnosing the illness can be tricky in a tropical climate that causes many dermatological problems. Another of Zamandrahengo's patients, a 26-year-old farmer presented with a skin problem that initially looked more like a symptom of syphilis, said the doctor. "But he also had bumps around the earlobes and that is a typical sign of leprosy."

Official figures notwithstanding, WHO continues to send drugs to treat the disease to the provinces. "The problem is that they only send the exact amount of treatment for existing cases," said Gregoire Detoef of the Foullereau Foundation, an NGO that works to help leprosy patients all over the country. "So often it takes time for treatment to reach the new patients." Although the treatment stops the disease from spreading, many leprosy patients need care for the rest of their lives. After losing feeling in affected limbs, people with leprosy often end up with severe wounds on their hands and feet. "A woman who is cooking will just pick up the pot from the fire and burn her hands without noticing," Detoef said. "A man who is walking home can step on sticks and rocks and hurt his feet."

In addition to medicine to treat the disease, leprosy patients need bandages to dress their wounds. But these basic items are often lacking in health centres. "We went into the

villages to show health workers how to dress wounds," said Odile Valat, a French nurse who volunteers for three months a year in the region. "We told them to cut one piece of gauze into eight parts, but they didn't even have one gauze. So then we started with boiling pieces of cloth."

Traditionally, leprosy patients have been housed in special villages and taken care of by local NGOs. "People here know what leprosy is, and they used to ostracize the lepers," said Valat. Now that there is treatment that also prevents patients from infecting others, this policy has changed and newer patients stay in their own villages and receive treatment at home.

This shift in approach has been accompanied by its own set of problems. While the patients in the two remaining leprosy villages in Antalaha enjoy free health care and schooling for their children and grandchildren - and earn a living by working in the village plant nurseries, all supported by local aid workers - the newer patients often struggle with the consequences of their disease without any assistance. Families may lack the means to support a non-productive member of the household and patients with families of their own, cannot support them.

One of Zamandrahengo's patients, an elderly man, can no longer work as a result of his leprosy. "He has 10 children and can't afford school fees for them," said the doctor. "I try to get money from anybody who visits here to help him out. It's hard work, to help all of these people."





Congregational Federation

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Federation Mailing

Autumn 2011

(for Churches, Areas Secretaries, Personal Members, Contacts and Associates)

Friends,

This is the third quarter's mailing of 2011 and contains information for you and our churches about the latest news and developments within the Congregational Federation. Take a look at the CF website at www.congregational.org.uk

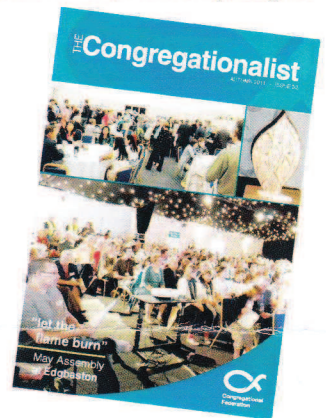
Below you will find reference to a range of matters and where you can find the information (either enclosed, under separate cover, or on our website) If for any reason you do not have access to the internet, then no problem just give us a call and we will send copies of whatever you need.

I will also distribute this information via email assuming we have your details, do remember please update us with any changes you make in this regard.

The Congregationalist

The all new second edition has now been distributed – sent under separate cover. New additional subscriptions are coming in all the time – have folk in your church ordered more yet? **If you haven't already please subscribe!**

You can also read more from the articles in extra portions of the magazine on line at www.congregational.org.uk/congregationalist



Mission matters – Community Project Awards 2012

Could this be you this time? – The Community Project Awards recognise local schemes that make a positive impact in their community. The scheme gives projects an opportunity to

- Receive recognition for their project
- Benefit from the award of £2000
- Have the opportunity to share with others the work they are doing
- Be featured in a short film about their work, which will provide them with further publicity

It has been launched in the latest edition of The Congregationalist. CF Mission Development Officer Judith Mbaabu constantly updates information on the website with all sorts of resources available to churches to better engage in mission. Take a look for these and much more at www.congregational.org.uk/mission

Welcome to Scotland in 2012

CF 40th anniversary Assembly – Our friends in Scotland write "We are now able to tell you about the exciting venue for the 2012 Assembly, May 11/12 when we will be welcoming friends from all over the UK to our beautiful country. Our venue is The Vine, Dunfermline. It is the home of a large and flourishing independent church, with a congregation of several hundred every Sunday. The building itself is a converted warehouse, which has been very comprehensively redesigned to provide not only all the space needed for their activities, but state of the art accommodation and facilities for conferences and meetings of all kinds. The Scottish Liberal Democrats held their Conference here both in 2009 and 2010, the Dunfermline Choral Union hold regular concerts here and the feedback on their web site is unfailingly positive. They are providing the catering for us. The parking facilities are extensive, and the Vine is easily accessed from the M80, the train, and from Edinburgh Airport. Nearer the time, there will be full details mailed to the churches and specific travel details to those who decide to be at the Assembly. We will also send you details of hotels and B&B's. Two hotels nearby offer preferential rates to Vine visitors.

Dunfermline, the ancient capital of Scotland, is a town with a long distinguished history going back to 1010. 8 Kings are reputed to be buried here, including, for certain, Robert the Bruce. The Abbey dates back to the 12th Century. Andrew Carnegie, the great philanthropist, was born here. Scotland is lovely in May, with everything beginning to blossom. Why not combine your visit to the Assembly with a few days exploring: Edinburgh is only 25 miles distant, and the east Coast is bracing and beautiful. There are five Federation churches within reach if you stay over until Sunday – Kirkcaldy Pathhead, Kirkcaldy West End, Musselburgh, Perth, and Tillicoultry. They look forward to welcoming you." You can visit the vine website: www.thevinechurch.com P.T.O.

Details of a CF President's Houseparty around the Assembly and based in Stirling will also be available in the next mailing – watch out for more details and put the weekend in your diaries now for being in Scotland in May next year.

Church Statistics (Church Secretaries only)

Important needing your attention – enclosed with this letter is the current information we have concerning your church on our database, and which if unchanged will appear in the 2012 CF Year Book. Can you please check all the information and confirm or amend as necessary. **Please note we are looking for some new information this year as follows:**

- Do you have a church website if so and the web address is not shown please add it in
- Numbers of children/Young People in church organized activities are now needed in two categories - those under age of 10 and CF-Xtra (ages 10 to 29)
- Protection Verifier – For Criminal Record checks – must include date of birth
- CF- Xtra - **NEW** - Your named adult person to receive information concerning youth provision (for ages 10 to 29) – must have email.

I do hope you will be able to make use of some of these current resources. Remember, no internet – no problem! Just give us a call for more information on any of the matters referred to and we will be delighted to send it to you.

Be assured of my prayers and support for you and your fellowship.

Every blessing



Michael Heaney
General Secretary



Oct	01	Naomi Boyd	Nov	11	Anneke Schunselaar
	06	Mark Hazell		17	Elaine Gundem
	07	James Hazell		19	Nanna Blackman
	08	Rita Hayes			Gavin Suter
		Stephen Hopwood		26	Ellie Rose Esapa
	10	Susan Wass			Hilary Pratley
	11	Michele Tomlin		27	Jeremy Boyd
	13	Luke Lau		29	Marina Bowerman
	15	Chris Esapa			Holly Hazell
	25	Linda McCormac			
	26	Hannah Hayes			
	28	Karen Bruschi			
		Andy Thomas			

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

History of Witney Congregational Church 1986-1988

During the ministry of the Rev. Bob Henry the Church grew in ministry and 8 adults were baptised at the Cote Fellowship Baptistery. Several young families joined to supplement the long established members so that the Junior Church and YPF flourished.

But it must not be forgotten that we were blessed with a number of 'older comers' whose experience and wisdom was invaluable. They came having served other churches in many capacities. Norman (and Eileen) Chapman led some unforgettable bible studies. Bill and Beatrice Hardcastle (parents of John Hardcastle) worked in the background organising 'Rest and Chat' and keeping us cheerful. Jim (and Monica) Davidson served on the Diaconate and helped practically around the church buildings. Cliff and Nell Puleston were much loved people who took interest in the young people and were active in most things. Jack and Florence Field were staunch members and proved to be most influential. All were sincere active Christians, bringing a deep faith and commitment and proved to be fantastic role models for all the younger generations.

At the start of 1986 Mr Cliff Puleston had taken on the mantle as temporary Church Secretary. The Treasurer was Mr Tony Clark and the Deacons were Mrs Beryl Cartwright (Sunday School Leader and Easter

Extra organiser), Miss Mary Witt (organist, Leader of Pilots and Tuesday Fellowship), Mr Jim Davidson, Mr Robert May and two younger Deacons, Mr Paul Keates and Mr Graham Lee who, with Dr Richard Paradine, ran the YPF. The Women's' Guild was led by Mrs Linda Wheeler and Mrs Kathleen Collis.

The YPF (Young Peoples Fellowship) had an active social calendar which included joint meetings with the young people at High Street Methodists, Elim Pentecostal Church, Welcome Church and the Carterton churches. They took Church Services at smaller churches in the District and also organised an 'Odd Job Team' to help pensioners and older members of the Church.

The Church outing to the Severn Valley Railways was enjoyed by all ages and the Junior Church organised a picnic and the traditional visit to the Pantomime and Party afterwards.

It was at this time that Choruses were becoming more popular in Church Services. Mission Praise was introduced and under the leadership of Mr Pip Cartwright, with Mrs Doreen Richards on the piano, a small choir sang new unfamiliar choruses before the Morning Service. Despite the cramped conditions, after Service Coffee and Tea was served. The Mother and Toddlers Group became very popular and once a month a speaker was booked to give a short talk to the mothers on health and safety issues whilst the Toddlers were entertained elsewhere.

At the AGM Mr Jack Field agreed to become the Church Secretary, Miss Mary Witt asked to stand down and two new Deacons, Mr John Hardcastle and Mr Ernie Gascoigne were voted on.

Towards the end of the year Mrs Elsie Auty celebrated her 90th birthday.

Most of the Church activities continued through 1987 including three bible study groups (Development Groups). The Junior Church Picnic was held on White Horse Hill. It was a whole Church family event and was so enjoyable that many remember it to this day.

Perhaps the most significant development was the opening of the Neighbourhood Centre in September. The idea was for the Churches in central Witney to be open daily from 9am to 5pm to offer coffee and tea, and crèche facilities and organise short courses on anything which was needed or of interest to the general public. It was mainly based in our Church and organised chiefly by Mrs Pam Rubley and Mrs Sheila Gascoigne. It was all run by enthusiastic volunteers and proved to be popular.

In June, Graham and Sue Lee and family left for central South Wales. They felt called by God to develop a Christian Conference Centre, particularly for young people, which they called the Kingfisher Centre. They left their comfortable home in Long Hanborough and bought a small holding in South Wales. The farmhouse and buildings needed renovating so they lived in a caravan. For several years our YPF used their facilities for their annual camp. Mr Luke Taylor was elected onto the Diaconate in Mr Graham Lee's place.

Sadly on the 22nd October 1987 Mrs Linda Wheeler died. For many years she **was** Witney Congregational Church. She was determined that the Congregational Church should continue in Witney. For many, many years she

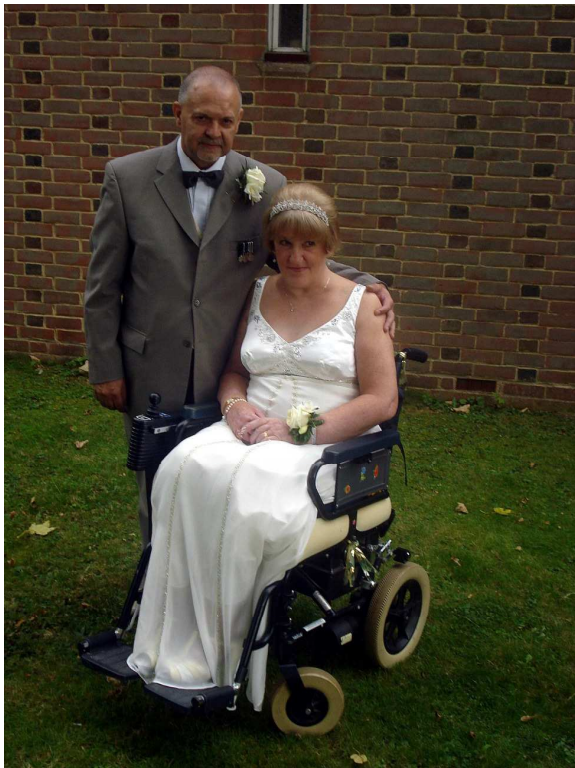
was a Deacon and was the Editor of the Church Newsletter. She was chairperson and organiser of the Women's Guild and strived to keep the church going when it was at its lowest ebb. She was related to the Sellman family who have served the church so well over the years. Her activity was not just devoted to the church, but she was involved with many organisations in the Town. She was sorely missed.

1988 was a shock year. In January Cliff and Nell Puleston left our church to live near their family in Reading. For the ten years they were with us they gave so much of their love and energy. They, too, were sadly missed.

Also in January the Rev. Bob Henry announced that he had accepted the call to Kilmarnock Congregational Church in Scotland and he and his family would be leaving in February. Bob originally preached at our old church building at Staple Hall when he was a student at Swansea University studying for the Ministry. He was inducted in 1978 and had been at the helm as we got established in our new premises at Field House. With his wife, Ann, Bob had worked tirelessly to build up the church, both in members and young people. As Cliff Puleston said "The Church's outlook has now become its outreach and has grown to a major evangelising movement in the town". This firm foundation was going to be needed in the following interregnum.

Over the last few weeks much has been going on at Witney Congregational church:

On Saturday 24th September there was the wedding of Dave Wesson and Miriam Barlow followed by a buffet reception



There was the ordination of Rev Judi Holloway as a minister exercised through chaplaincy on Sunday 2nd October



The presiding minister was Rev Jason Boyd, assisted by Rev Michael Heaney, General Secretary of the Congregational Federation and Rev Dr Janet Wootton, Director of Training

Studies at the Congregational Federation.

The congregation included other ministers from the churches in Witney and beyond and in total the congregation was approximately 200 people. This was followed by a buffet meal

The following poem, author unknown, has been submitted by Audrey Elliott, and is entitled:

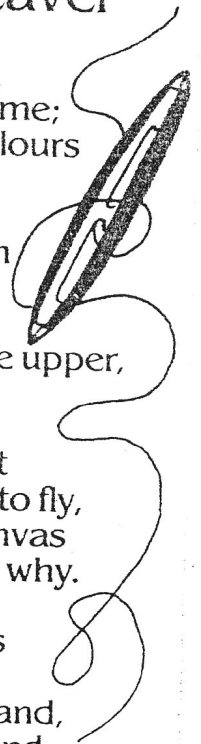
The Divine Weaver

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me;
I cannot choose the colours
He worketh steadily.

Oftentimes He weaveth
sorrow
And I in foolish pride,
Forget that He seeth the upper,
And I the under side.

Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as
needful
In the weaver's skilful hand,
As the threads of gold and
silver
In the pattern He has planned.





PRAYER LETTER

No 149

Harvest - What does it mean for you?

Our weather has been very strange this year, a very dry warm spring, a cold wet summer and now a very warm start to autumn.

Harvest time is seeing the fruits of labour, crops ready for harvesting to be eaten or made into edible products, stored for later consumption in the following months or years.

I love to grow tomatoes and runner beans from seed. This year the tomatoes have produced good fruit. However, the beans have been a failure. I have been disappointed. From planting a double row of beans and two wigwams we have, so far, had three servings. In good years we can expect to eat 'home-grown beans' from August until early October. So what went wrong this year? I am not sure, it could be a variety of reasons, dry spell at the wrong time, wet spell and no sun, wrong position in the garden, not enough nutrients in the soil or lack of bees to pollinate. Whatever it was my plants suffered. Despite this disappointment, the shops and markets are full of produce, not only from our own islands but from around the world, which are readily available to buy. Do we really appreciate foods so readily accessible to us? We are not reliant on what we grow in our gardens to sustain us.

Now, think of the millions of people suffering in the Horn of Africa, parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia where it hasn't rained for several years and water supplies are drying up leaving the **whole region** in serious drought. These people rely on their own smallholdings to grow crops to feed their families for the whole year. Nomadic peoples in the Region are finding that their usual grazing lands are now barren therefore unable to continue their way of life. Not only have crops failed but peoples' animals, cows and goats have died as a result of the drought, consequently this has caused millions of people to leave their villages areas travelling hundreds of miles to seek food aid and water in the refugee camps.

All plants need the right attention and right conditions to grow and thrive whether grown in our own gardens, on smallholdings or large farms.

What do we think when we say the familiar line in the Lord's Prayer?

'Give us this day our daily bread'

How can we help those caught up in the Food Crisis in The Horn of Africa ?

Continue to pray for those who are starving and support the Aid Agencies working to feed and heal these starving malnourished people. Pray for those seeking to find other ways to purify and conserve water in that region.

All this relates to the physical side of life. What about the spiritual side of life? Have we the right conditions for growth in our Christian journey? If we find ourselves in a spiritual drought or desert where can we find our spiritual food or who are our aid agencies? The answers can be found all around us but we need to recognise and understand that God is waiting and providing us with "our daily spiritual bread", through creation, reading the Bible, praying, worshipping, fellowship with Christians and others whom God chooses to use to help us through 'the drought times'.

Wherever you are on your faith journey read **Psalm 23 to remind you of God's grace, love and mercy.**

Every Blessing
Beryl

The following has been extracted from Church News Service, and was written by an 8 year old for a homework assignment, and is entitled:

How would you explain God?

"One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grown-ups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

"God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.

"God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere, which keeps him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your Mum and Dad's head asking him for something they said you couldn't have.

"Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in my town. At least there aren't any who come to our church.

"Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and

kind, like his Father and he told his Father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.

"His Dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his Dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.

"You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.

"You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God. Don't skip church or do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway."

"If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp or to school, but God can. It is good to know he's around you when you're scared in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids."

"But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases. And...that's why I believe in God."

The following article, written by Don Axcell, Executive Director of Christian Police Association, has been extracted from Church News Service, and is entitled:

Policing our lawless society

The scenes of violence and mindless criminality seen on the streets of our major cities this past summer is perhaps only to be expected. For a number of decades we have experienced a decline in moral standards and an absence of discipline that has resulted in breakdown within our society.

Two or three generations have grown up in a blame culture where every problem has to be anyone else's fault - except their own. Accepting personal responsibility for our actions has become the exception rather than the rule. Many young people have grown up with no respect for their parents, no respect for school teachers and no respect for any figure of authority. The result of this is that they demand respect as a right rather than as something to be earned.

When people have come to a mind-set that says 'what's yours is mine and what's mine is my own' there is a real breakdown in social norms. Whatever area is targeted by this mass criminality, it is normally those who come from socially deprived areas and who are under-educated who are responsible.

I do not want to pinpoint particular reasons for this breakdown as there are others more qualified than I who will do so. Rather, I want to look at that group in society who are expected to sort out the grievances of all and sundry to the satisfaction of

everyone. An impossible task? Yes! Who are they? The men and women of the Police Service.

It is the police who have to be berated and not shout back. It is the police who have to stand between the good and the bad and take insult and accusation from both sides, knowing that there will always be one party who will go away dissatisfied. It is the police who will have to face the rocks, rubble and petrol bombs thrown at them with the knowledge that some of them are going to be injured as a result.

Since Robert Peel set out his principles for policing in the early 19th century, it has been accepted that in the UK policing is by the consent of the public. As a result, there have always been efforts to work with the public to maintain the peace and protect life and property. In recent years the Police Service have tried to achieve this through the introduction of Safer Neighbourhood Teams - small groups of police officers and community support officers tasked with getting to know their local community better and responding to their needs. This has had varying degrees of success.

The Christian Police Association (founded in 1883) has recognised that community relations is important and so have adopted the strap line 'Reaching out... building bridges'. Members of the CPA across the country have been encouraging the Christian community to work with the Police Service to improve community relations and develop safer, stronger communities. Much of this work now falls under their Coact Project (www.coact.org.uk).

So we recognise that as we have seen the breakdown of society in certain areas, it is the Christian

community who can, and are already making strides towards building it up again.

In the meantime, it is the officers who go out on the streets whom we need to remember in prayer and give our support to. They do not know from one minute to the next what dangers they will face or when they will be able to return home. Waiting anxiously for them will be families and loved ones waiting for a phone call or the dreaded knock on the door to inform them that someone will not be coming home any time soon.

My prayer is that each person reading this will pledge themselves to do all in their power to restore a godly society to this beloved land of ours.

The following 2 poems have been written and submitted by Sharon Watson, and are entitled:

Masks and Wide armed

Introduction

It's not without a little trepidation that I have decided to put the following 2 poems into this edition of *Crossroads*. I just feel prompted to do it somehow! I've only recently started putting pen to paper and writing poetry but it seems very 'right' somehow and I enjoy it immensely. I hope you will enjoy the reading of them too!

The first poem, 'Masks' arose from an image I woke up with one morning of a cupboard full of masks; rather like a wardrobe full of clothes with the accompanying choice of what to wear. The second poem, 'Wide-armed' speaks

for itself, I think. The 'she' of the first verse is our lovely Melissa

Masks

In my mind cupboard
The masks hang.
Waiting for an outing.
Ready to attach themselves
To awaken and become

Some so familiar
Moulded by the years of use.
Cosy, known
Lightweight they slip on,
My presentation to the world.
Settling over my face, my heart.
Concealing them,
Me

Me?

I gradually become the mask I wear,
Flesh changing too?
Identities knitting
Believing the deception?
The comfort of it whispers so
Like a well, oft worn jacket
It becomes me

Masks on ready
I live up to expectations.
Take on the role
Dancing others' dances
A different beat to my own.
Being as others see me.
Where's the truth?

Can I close the cupboard,
Boldly lay aside the masks?
Choosing to see freely, wide-eyed
And be seen as I am?
Pared down, flawed
Yet real.

Who am I?

Wide-armed

Arms flung wide open
She runs towards me
Tinkling laughter
Smiling delight

I respond
Arms agape, heart open, ready to catch
To swing her up and around
Whirling joyously together

Next morning walking,
My habitual glance at Jesus
Up there on the wall
Crossless he hangs

I see again ...

Arms wide open
Agape
Mirroring her to me,
Me to her.
His arms ready to embrace,
To hold

And my arms?
Are they open to him,
my heart too?
Do I run joyously into outflung everwide
arms?
Am I ready to be lifted up today,
To be caught, swung round and held in a
Whirring of trust, life and love?

The arms wait, wide for me,
For you

The following article, written by Jim Currin, who is a Church Army Evangelist and Secretary for Evangelisation at Churches Together in England, has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

Fishers of men... and women!

I love the Bible. To be more specific, I love the Gospels. The amazing array of diverse characters Jesus met on the sea shore, along the road and up the mountain. It is a joy to read—especially when you see how Jesus deals with them. First there are the fishermen, fed up with a hard night's work and nothing to show for it. Do you remember the conversation with the carpenter and his call to leave their nets? Next, Jesus heals, and almost instantly his fame spreads and 'they brought him all the sick' (Matthew 4:24, NRSV). Then, when the crowd wanted to know more, he spoke the beautiful words of the Beatitudes. He didn't point the finger at people, but pointed the people to God and simply said where they would find blessing. It's amazing stuff!

As followers of Jesus today we are called to be 'fishers of men' (not 'vicious old men' as I once heard a child sing!) Human nature hasn't changed and two thousand years later people still want to see miracles and be blessed. We are the means by which that is most likely to happen, and the way to do it is to follow the example of Jesus himself. Meeting people where they are, having a conversation, praying and trusting the Holy Spirit—then offering beautiful words to those who ask. It's a great joy when it happens naturally.

We have just had an 'open gardens' afternoon with a Bible picture in ten gardens with a trail and quiz sheet. I offered cards for the website www.christianity.org.uk and small Gospels of Luke for the 'Year of the Bible'. I was really surprised and encouraged at the interest in the trail and the Bible story. We don't have to be pushy, but we do have to be present. Pray for the people you know and take the opportunity to listen to their story and then tell them about yours—in the bigger picture of God's story found in the Bible.

The following poem, author unknown, has been submitted by Maureen Miles and is entitled:

Pennies from Heaven

Today I found a penny
Just laying on the ground.
But it's a very special one
This little coin I've found.

These pennies come from heaven
My Grandma always said.
Oh, how I loved that story
When she tucked me into bed

They throw a penny down,
Maybe just to cheer you up
Or make you smile and not frown.

So don't pass by that penny
When you're feeling blue.
Could be it's from heaven
That an Angel's thrown to you.

Thanks

Just a letter of thanks from both of us to all church members who attended our wedding on 24th September, and would like to thank the church for the wedding present we received from the membership.

We would like to record our thanks to the following members involved in our wedding preparation and service Sue Birdseye, Jason for the wonderful service, Karen for playing the organ, Judi for helping us sign the register in the proper place, Jacqui and her team of helpers for the wonderful spread that was put on, and to Terry for putting the words on the screen and the CD on at the correct times.

For without all of you, our day would have not been as successful as it was.

Dave & Miriam

Witney Congregational Church will be running a First Aid Course on Thursday 3 November from 9am-4pm



Cost: £55 includes cost of book, an HSE approved Emergency at Work and First Aid Certificate and Training.

If anyone is interested in attending please could they contact the Church Office

The following article has been submitted by Karen Bruschi, and was recently shared on a Sunday morning, and many people wished to have a copy, and is entitled:

Radical Forgiveness

A South African woman stood in an emotionally charged courtroom, listening to white police officers acknowledge the atrocities they had perpetrated in the name of apartheid.

Officer van de Broek acknowledged his responsibility in the death of her son. Along with others, he had shot her 18-year-old son at point-blank range. He and the others partied while they burned his body, turning it over and over on the fire until it was reduced to ashes.

Eight years later, van de Broek and others arrived to seize her husband. A few [hours] later, shortly after midnight, van de Broek came to fetch the woman. He took her to a woodpile where her husband lay bound. She was forced to watch as they poured gasoline over his body and ignited the flames that consumed his body. The last words she heard her husband say were "Forgive them."

Now, van de Broek stood before her awaiting judgment. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission asked her what she wanted.

"I want three things," she said calmly. "I want Mr. van de Broek to take me to the place where they burned my husband's body. I would like to gather up the dust and give him a decent burial.

"Second, Mr. van de Broek took all my family away from me, and I still have a lot of love to give. Twice a month, I would like for him to come to

the ghetto and spend a day with me so I can be a mother to him.

"Third, I would like Mr. van de Broek to know that he is forgiven by God, and that I forgive him, too. I would like someone to lead me to where he is seated, so I can embrace him and he can know my forgiveness is real."

As the elderly woman was led across the courtroom, van de Broek fainted, overwhelmed. Someone began singing "Amazing Grace." Gradually everyone joined in. This woman understood that to be reconciled with God and to be reconciled with neighbours and enemies is to be free indeed.

Stories

As part of his talk at a banquet, a minister told some jokes and a few funny stories. Since he planned to use the same anecdotes at a meeting the next day, he asked reporters covering the event not to include them in their articles.

Reading the paper the following morning, he noticed that one well-meaning cub reporter had ended his story on the banquet with the observation "The minister told a number of stories that cannot be published."

The two window panes were arguing as to which one was made of the better glass. One said to the other, "Well, you may think you are a better glass, but I know what you are trying to prove. Believe me, I can see right through you."

ALL IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

200 years ago 1811: Franz Liszt, Hungarian piano virtuoso and composer, was born.

175 years ago 1836: British naturalist Charles Darwin returned from his five-year voyage to South America aboard 'HMS Beagle'.

125 years ago 1886: The Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour was dedicated by US President Grover Cleveland.

100 years ago 1911: The first escalator on the London Underground began operating at Earl's Court station.

100 years ago 1911: American aviation pioneer Orville Wright tested his new glider at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, and remained in flight for 9 minutes 45 seconds - a world record that stood for more than 10 years.

75 years ago 1936: The Jarrow March began. 200 men set off from Jarrow in north-east England to Westminster in London to draw attention to the severe unemployment and poverty in their area following the closure of a shipyard.

70 years ago 1941: Battle of Moscow began. Nazi Germany launched a major offensive against the Soviet capital; one of the largest and most important battles of World War II.

65 years ago 1946: Hermann Goering, Nazi leader, was sentenced to death at the Nuremberg trials, but poisoned himself with cyanide before the execution could take place.

60 years ago 1951: Zebra crossings were officially introduced in Britain; the first was in Slough.

50 years ago 1961: US President John F Kennedy advised Americans to build bomb shelters to protect themselves

from nuclear fallout in the event of an attack by the Soviet Union.

40 years ago 1971: British TV series 'Upstairs, Downstairs' was first broadcast.

40 years ago 1971: IRA bomb exploded near the top of the Post Office Tower (now the BT Tower) in London, causing extensive damage.

25 years ago 1986: 'Big Bang Day' took place; when the British financial market was deregulated and the London Stock Exchange switched to a computerised trading system.

25 years ago 1986: M25 orbital motorway around Greater London was officially opened by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

15 years ago 1996: British racing driver Damon Hill won the 1996 Formula One world championship, clinching victory in the final race of the season in Japan.

10 years ago 2001: USA launched its military offensive in Afghanistan following the Sept 11th terrorist attack.

10 years ago 2001: The 'United We Stand: What More Can I Give?' benefit concert was held at RFK Stadium in Washington DC, USA, to raise money for victims of the Sept 11th terrorist attack.

Accident

As my five-year-old son and I were heading to McDonald's one day, we passed a car accident. Usually when we see something terrible like that, we say a prayer for whoever might be hurt, so I pointed and said to my son, "We should pray." From the back seat I heard his earnest voice: "Dear God, please don't let those cars block the entrance to McDonald's."