

Witney Congregational Church

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



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
Saturday Praise	11.00 am	1 st Saturday of the month	
Sunday Services	10.30 am		
	6.00 pm	1 st Sunday of the month	

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

PRAYER

The Church is open each morning for Prayer

STUDY & FELLOWSHIP

Thursday 2.30pm Church (2nd Thursday of each month)

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	7.00 pm	Y4J – Twice a 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 774402
01993 864853 (Office)

St ANDREW'S BOOKSHOP

Opening Hours: Monday – Saturday ☎ 01993 709429
09.00 am – 5.00 pm

CHURCH WEBSITE

For further information, please visit our website:

www.witneycongregational.org.uk



or, just plainly written on paper, which can be typed up.

The next 2-monthly edition, covering December & January is due on Sunday **6th December**

Your Editor

As I wrote the last summer edition, schools were getting near to finishing for the summer break, and as I write this, it is now not too many days until they return to school. **Doesn't time fly**, and I hope, whatever your circumstances, you managed to take a break of some kind, and are refreshed to tackle whatever lies ahead for us

According to my diary, the clocks are due to change on Sunday 25th of October, and for some this heralds long periods of darkness.

Remembrance Sunday this year falls on 8 November, and is a day for the nation to remember and honour those who have sacrificed themselves to secure and protect our freedom. Please do take the opportunity to attend the service that will take place at the War Memorial on Church Green, and afterwards at St Mary's Church

Turning now to those who have contributed to this edition; alongside the standard pages, Jo Matthews gives us a poem based on Acts 16: 1-10; There is the first of a new series beginning with the Feeding of the 5000; Canon David Winter reflects on Edith Cavell; there are several poems and a couple of Thank You notes to name but a few.

Many thanks for those who have contributed for this edition, but would encourage anyone to consider submitting article(s) for the next edition by either:
E-mail:

terrypowlesland@uwclub.net
jacquipowlesland@uwclub.net



1. Whose 2 faces can you see?



2. Whose 2 faces can you see?

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To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am
Anon



Daily Prayer Time:

Mon-Fri 9.30 am

Services

10.30 am weekly & 6.00pm on first Sunday of the month and will normally be led by Rev Jason Boyd unless advised below

Sept

5 th		Messy Church	10.00am	
6 th	am	Café Church	Rev Nigel Lindsay	
	pm	Evening Worship	Communion	
13 th	am	Rev Elaine Kinchin		
20 th	am	Rev Suzanne Knockels	Harvest with Communion	Mission Weekend
27 th	am	Morning Worship		

Oct

3 rd		Saturday praise	11.00am	
4 th	am	Morning Worship		
	pm	Evening Worship	Communion	
11 th	am	Morning Worship		
18 th	am	Morning Worship	Communion	
25 th	am	Morning Worship		

Nov

1 st	am	tbc		
	pm	tbc		
7 th		Saturday Praise	11.00am	
8 th	9.45am	All-Age Worship		
	11.00am	Civic Service at War Memorial followed by service at St Mary's Church		
15 th	am	Rev Graham Akers	Communion	
22 rd	am	Morning Worship		
28 th		Messy Church	10.00am	
29 th	am	Café Church		

Dec

6 th	am	Morning Worship	
	pm	WICS Concert	

The following events are given for your particular attention:

Sept

1 st	Lite Bite – A piece of the Word	12.15pm	Church
	Deacons Meeting	7.30pm	
4 th	Y4J and additional meeting dates tbc		
10 th	Fellowship Group	2.30pm	Church
12 th	Prayer Chain Meeting	9.15am	
14 th	Base 33 AGM	7.00pm	
18 th – 20 th	Church Mission Weekend		
29 th	Church AGM	7.30pm	

Oct

6 th	Lite Bite – A piece of the Word	12.15pm	Church
	Deacons Meeting	7.30pm	
8 th	Fellowship Group	2.30pm	Church

10 th	Prayer Chain Meeting	9.15am	
20 th	Base 33 Concert with more details to follow		
Nov			
3 rd	Lite Bite – A piece of the Word	12.15pm	Church
	Deacons Meeting date tbc	7.30pm	
12 th	Fellowship Group	2.30pm	Church
14 th	Prayer Chain Meeting	9.15am	
	Ministry Celebration Service	3.00pm	followed by a buffet
17 th	Church Meeting	7.30pm	
26 th	Christian Aid concert	7.30pm	Orpheus in the underworld
Dec			
1 st	Lite Bite – A piece of the Word	12.15pm	Church
	Deacons Meeting	7.30pm	
5 th	WICS Concert		

ROTAS

WELCOMING TEAM

Sept	06	Pip & Beryl Cartwright
	13	Robert McBride & Lesley Barter
	20	Joan Currie & Susan Wass
	27	Nanna Blackman & Theo Howells
Oct	04	Pat Smith & Claire Woodward
	11	Mel Knapton & Irene St Clair
	18	Viviane Boyd & Cecily Lau
	25	Pip & Beryl Cartwright
Nov	01	Robert McBride & Lesley Barter
	08	Joan Currie & Susan Wass
	15	Nanna Blackman & Theo Howells
	22	Pat Smith & Claire Woodward
	29	Mel Knapton & Irene St Clair
Dec	06	Viviane Boyd & Cecily Lau



COMMUNION

Sept	06 pm	Lesley Barter
		Preparation Lesley Barter
	20 am	Susan Wass & Norline Martin
		Lesley Barter & Beryl Cartwright
		Preparation Beryl Cartwright
Oct	04 pm	Jacqui Powlesland
		Preparation Jacqui Powlesland
	18 am	Judi Holloway & Susan Wass
		Lesley Barter & Jacqui Powlesland
		Preparation Mel Knapton
Nov	01 pm	Beryl Cartwright
		Preparation Beryl Cartwright
	15 am	Norline Martin & Beryl Cartwright
		Jacqui Powlesland & Susan Wass
		Preparation Rita Hayes
Dec	06 pm	WICS Concert



FLOWERS

Sept	06	Beryl Cartwright
	13	Joan Currie
	20	Harvest
	27	Rita Hayes
Oct	04	Val Obriain
	11	Jacqui Powlesland
	18	Judi Holloway
	25	Beryl Cartwright
Nov	01	Joan Currie
	08	Rita Hayes
	15	Sonya Boyd
	22	Val Obriain
	29	Jacqui Powlesland
Dec	06	Judi Holloway



COFFEE

Sept	06	Café Church
	13	Viviane Boyd & Hilary Pratley
	20	Sue Birdseye & Irene St Clair
	27	Susan Wass & Judith Bungey
Oct	04	Mel Knapton & Clare Woodward
	11	Robert & Jill McBride
	18	Viviane Boyd & Hilary Pratley
	25	Sue Birdseye & Irene St Clair
Nov	01	Susan Wass & Judith Bungey
	08	Mel Knapton & Clare Woodward
	15	Robert & Jill McBride
	22	Viviane Boyd & Hilary Pratley
	29	Café Church
Dec	06	Sue Birdseye & Irene St Clair



REST & CHAT

Sept	03	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
	10	Robert & Jill McBride
	17	Beryl Cartwright
	24	Joan Currie & Iris Lindsay
Oct	01	Pat Smith
	08	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
	15	Robert & Jill McBride
	22	Beryl Cartwright
Nov	29	Joan Currie & Iris Lindsay
	05	Pat Smith
	12	Jean Stanley, Marina Bowerman & Irene St Clair
Dec	19	Robert & Jill McBride
	26	Beryl Cartwright
	03	Joan Currie & Iris Lindsay



As this is a 3-monthly rota, every effort has been made to meet individual circumstances. However, please change with someone else if the dates are not convenient for you

Don't forget!!



25th October

Sept 01 Theo Howells
Devon Squire
02 Jill McBride
Claire Woodward
09 Judith Bungey
28 John Garrett

Nov 11 Anneke Schunselaar
17 Elaine Gudem
18 AJ Hathaway
19 Nanna Blackman
Gavin Suter
22 Lincoln Squire
26 Ellie Rose Esapa
Elaine Kinchin
Hilary Pratley
27 Jeremy Boyd
29 Marina Bowerman



Oct 01 Naomi Boyd
08 Rita Hayes
Stephen Hopwood
10 Susan Wass
11 Michele Tomlin
13 Luke Lau
15 Chris Esapa
17 Anthony Hathaway
28 Karen Brusch
Andy Thomas

Dec 04 Charlotte Hayes
06 Sue Birdseye
07 Charlotte Hathaway

Faces answers:

No1:

Camilla Parker-Bowles and Margaret Thatcher

No 2:

Jeremy Clarkson and Piers Morgan

LEGO CHURCH



Come and join us.....

Bring your family and spend an enjoyable, relaxing and FREE time together

- Building with Lego
- Meeting new people
- Having FUN
- Free refreshments




Something for all the family...Parents, Grandparents, children....FUN FOR ALL AGES

When: Sat.19TH September 10am-12pm

Venue: Witney Congregational Church, 4 Welch Way, Witney, OX28 6JF Tel. 01993 709992

Pastor's Paper

Mission Possible! Imagine. You receive your envelope. With excitement (and perhaps a trembling hand?) you tear along the seal. This is your mission. What will it be? Are you up to it?

This is your invitation to ***Mission Possible***. Put the date in your diary now. Everyone in the church is needed to tackle the mission. What is the mission? Well... that's for us to discover together from the 18-20 September. Whether you are old or young or in between...whether you are a member or someone who calls this church your family...whether you are a regular participant in the Church Meeting or haven't been for ages (perhaps for reasons you'd rather not talk about!), ***everyone*** is needed for ***Mission Possible***. And if you can't take part in this weekend because you are away or have other commitments, don't worry. This is just the beginning of a time of listening to God and paying attention to how the Spirit is moving us.

At the last Church Meeting a number of people volunteered (there was NO arm twisting!) to participate in a planning group to answer this question. Lesley Barter, Kathy Shaw, Judi Holloway, Juliane Schunselaar, Jacqui Powlesland, and Beryl Cartwright put their hands up and got together to brainstorm. One person asked, "What's the purpose of the weekend? What's the big idea? What's holding it all together?"

This weekend began as a 'Church Weekend at Home'. Then the discussions at Church Meeting about our giving to mission (in particular the way in which we allocate the annual tithe) together with our commitment to give £20 per member to the work of the South-West Midlands Area prompted an idea that we should have a social evening to consider how belonging to SWMA is part of our mission. So, on Friday, 18 September, at 6 pm, we are going to

have a social gathering over a fish and chip supper and Revd. Dr. Richard Cleaves will enthuse us about the part we can play in the SWMA. He will highlight the way in which the churches support one another in the area. He will speak about the exciting work Joy Howell (SWMA's Children's and Youth Work Coordinator) is doing. It is the area that employs Joy and supports her in the exercise of her calling.

On the Saturday from 10 am - 12 pm, we will see Joy at work as she leads us in a Lego Church event. Our hope is that lots of those on the fringes of the church or without any church connections will come and encounter the love of Jesus. Then we will share fellowship over our packed lunches as we go into the garden for the afternoon. A myriad of hands-on creative activities are being planned that will help us to explore ***Mission Possible***.

On Sunday morning, Suzanne Nockels will be enthusing about LEAF churches (information on LEAF follows this paper). How do we listen to God, to ourselves, to one another, and to our community? How do we engage with what the Spirit is saying to us? What steps do we take to put our faith into action? Suzanne will be sharing stories from other LEAF churches and what it might mean for us if we decided we want to become a LEAF church. Over our Harvest Lunch, Suzanne will give us one or two simple questions to discuss. Hopefully this will help us in our thinking and praying as we prepare for our Church Meeting (AGM) on the 29 September. Is becoming a LEAF church the right thing for us? It is important that we have a deep sense that LEAF will enable us to hear what the Spirit is saying to us. If not, then we can explore different avenues.

Mission Possible is the beginning of a process. It is the moment when we huddle together in prayer and wait for the Father to send his Spirit afresh. As your pastor ***Mission Possible*** is an important

time to pause for reflection. In my letter in the last issue I asked the question, “And then what? Where do I go from here with all of you?”

There are two aspects to the “What now?” question. First, having completed my/our PhD, there is a readjustment for me both in my ministry and in my home life. I am clear in terms of ministry, I will expand my involvement in schools and I am looking to develop innovative worship spaces which will reach out to the non-churched. I will continue to develop academically as I serve the CF as a tutor, seek to have my thesis published, and continue to write articles for journal publication. Not least, I will be concentrating on home life and creating space for Viviane to pursue her own interests.

Second, just after my arrival in Witney, we firmed up our mission statement, a process largely completed during the ministry of Revd. Norman Francis. Is it time for us to revisit this mission statement and our vision? (see Mission Statement following the LEAF information). Do we need to remind ourselves of what we discerned then? Does this still represent who we are? If it does then how are we enacting it? If it does not then do we need to refocus our vision?

The “What now?” question demands that we take the time to listen for the answer. Our instinct is to rush towards the answer and the actions. My hope is that we will begin simply with that which matters most: Be still and know that I am God. And then out of the stillness to move according to the Spirit’s prompting.

Shalom
Jason

What is the LEAF Church Programme?

The LEAF Church Programme begins with four workshop sessions that could be used as part of a Bible study, Sunday worship, house groups or a church away day. These sessions are designed to help your church identify its God-given mission and the resources that might help. They also lead up to the creation of a church learning plan that the church can work through and reflect upon over 12 months.

For example, your church might decide to reach out to elderly people in the village. The learning plan might then include getting in touch with local agencies, looking at the vital role older people have in the Bible, disability awareness, food hygiene courses to host a Christmas lunch or be-friending skills to make the most of home-visits. Each church’s learning plan would be unique just as each church is unique. If you’d like help with funding some of the resources and recognition as a LEAF church at May Assembly you can submit your learning plan to the Learning and Development Group.

There are two routes through the programme; a self-directed branch and a supported branch. We hope that materials for the self-directed branch will be available for download next year along with a Facebook support group. The supported branch includes a fully funded learning plan and the on-going assistance of the Learning and Development Enabler. At present we have a number of churches going down this branch.

LEAF stands for **Listening, Engaging and Acting in Faith.**

Our Mission

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

Why does Witney Congregational Church consider itself a Crossroads?

- It is our geographical location.
- It describes our current ministry of people coming and going some stopping and staying.
- It describes the encounter with Christ...will we follow him or not....we will choose the Way of the Cross....?
- It describes an open community where we allow people to stop and stay, to pause and move on, or to simply pass through.
- It describes a community of faith that allows people to approach faith from different directions with respect and common purpose

Aspirations:

In worship

Our church fellowship desires:

- to be a living, growing congregation, open to people of all ages.

We long to enjoy:

- inspiring meaningful Spirit-led worship inclusive of the various needs for each member and user-friendly for people coming in.

In Christian Friendship

Our life together will reflect God's love and grace:

- through serving one another and those in our community and world.

In outreach

We open our building to the community:

- We develop outreach into the community through school chaplaincy, nursing, home ministry and

neighbourhood groups (e.g. exploring faith – Alpha or Emmaus, Pilots etc)

We commit ourselves to prayer and practical support:

- of the Congregational Federation, Council for World Mission and other groups touching the world with the love of Christ.

The following poem, extracted from Kathleen Partridge's Happy Thoughts book, has been submitted by Bill Elliott, and is entitled:

Peacemaking

Making peace along the byways, in the little lanes of life

Smooth out the minor matters that are always making strife

Speak nicely to a stranger and be thoughtful to a friend

There are many little differences a pleasant word will mend

In every homely circle there is someone who must be

A peacemaker, a diplomat to help the rest agree

And even if we cannot spread our wings and travel far

There's such a lot of quiet work to do just where we are

So many dismal moods to cheer and sunbeams to release

The world has room for many more disciples of the peace



PRAYER LETTER No 171

Journeys Travelling Pathways Deviations

These words have varying meanings depending on the context in which they are used. Life is a journey. We make physical journeys everyday by foot, car, bus, train, or plane whether to work, school, leisure, appointments, holiday etc;. We encounter many people, many incidents, take wrong pathways. Do we believe that God is with us in every situation whether good or bad?

Sometimes we forget that God is with us all the time in our everyday lives but later remember that God intervened in a situation to remind us that although we deviate from God's path He will bring us back to the right road. This can be literally or metaphorically.

This happened to us a few times travelling to and from France and during our holiday. Bearing in mind that when travelling in the car we do not have a Sat Nav but rely on maps (road or O.S), Pip's innate compass skills and the sun when it is shining !!!!!. Travelling down to our overnight accommodation in France we were on the Caen Peripherique (similar to the M25) when without any notice the road was coned off and all traffic had to exit the carriageway. There were no electronic signs or deviation signs so we just followed the French cars thinking the drivers must know a route through. All the traffic ended up in a huge Industrial Estate where there was no exit to a main carriageway and all drivers of cars, vans, lorries had to manoeuvre a 3 point turn in a narrow lane to find the way back! Many side roads and lanes were barricaded with hay bales. Eventually we found ourselves on the road south which was the one we needed had the Peripherique not been closed. However once we got onto the Motorway after a few miles this was closed, again no explanation but we soon found out that it was due to the French Farmers' Protests who were blockading many road junctions by setting fire to tyres and using tractors to barr routes thus closing many of the Main through routes. We had to continue our journey using minor roads but still encountering more blockades.

We sympathised with the Farmers in their dispute even though it considerably disrupted our journey and made us late at our overnight stop. It made us realise how fortunate we are and that we take so much for granted. We recognise that Farmers need a realistic price for the foods and milk they produce for our consumption. We were so thankful that despite the disruptions and time delays we had a safe journey.

Another incident during our stay was quite incredible. Fiona, Ian and family had joined us for a week of the holiday and one day we decided to go to the Zoo at Royan about 2 hours drive from where we were staying. Although we were able to travel in convoy with the 2 cars most of the way, we got separated at a large roundabout taking different exits and due to road configurations was unable to get back on the same road. We had decided before setting off that if we did get separated we would meet at the Ticket Office outside the Zoo. We were driving for another 30 minutes before we got into the vicinity of the Zoo where there were many large car parks and cars parked all along the roads. It was so crowded we didn't know whether we could get a parking place. However we entered one car park and

decided to hover and wait until someone left. We didn't have to wait long as one family were just leaving so we parked in their space.(no parking fees) As we made our way out of the car park we saw Fiona Ian and family just getting out of their car having parked about 10 cars away from us!!! It was incredible with literally hundreds of cars parked in several areas it was amazing that we had found each other so quickly. We did recognise that God had a hand in it.

After a relaxing holiday we found ourselves back on the Caen Peripherique heading for the Car Ferry, this time there were no blockades but as we were coming up to a crucial junction where we needed to get into the right lane an emergency vehicle lights flashing ,siren blaring was coming up behind us and before we knew it we had taken the wrong lane and ended up on the PIAGE (Motorway) going to Paris not the Car Ferry at Ouistrum. This was definitely the wrong exit !!! Having a quick look at the map I saw a spur coming off the A13 Peage to a main road leading us back to the Periphergue instead of going 30 miles to the next available exit !! Despite problems at the unmanned Toll booth we managed to eventually pay our dues and get to the Ferry in time.

The last incident occurred on the ferry crossing from Caen to Portsmouth. Unfortunately a passenger was taken seriously ill and had to be airlifted off the Ferry. This was a long procedure as the Captain had to reduce the speed considerably to a standstill so the helicopter could land. This took time and consequently the 6 hour ferry crossing took 8 hours. This was nothing compared to the trauma of the passenger and whoever he or she was travelling with. The long delay here was a lesson in patience.

Life is full of pathways, journeys, incidents, deviations and we can go through life making mistakes or adjustments according to the situation and hopefully coming back to the right path. Do we recognise that God is with us in the small inconveniences as well as the big traumas in our lives? These problems, inconveniences, deviations whatever they may be help us to recognise our mistakes, our intolerances, our impatience and hopefully encourages us to be more patient , think of others and to recognise God's guidance in our lives through other people and many incidents.

Many times in Jesus' Ministry He was waylaid by people distracting Him 'en route' to a destination either by wanting to be healed or asking Him to come somewhere else not on His route to heal somebody. He was patient and didn't seem to mind his itinerary being disrupted.

Thank God that He is with us as we journey through life, encountering the everyday experiences and the painful episodes. Pray for His guidance to keep us on the right track and to bring us back when we deviate from His pathways whatever life throws at us.

Every Blessing

Beryl

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

The following article, written by Canon David Winter, has been extracted from Parish Pump, and looks back on a most courageous nurse of WW1, and is entitled:

PATRIOTISM IS NOT ENOUGH: A tribute to Edith Cavell

In September 1915, at the height of the battles in Belgium and Flanders, a British nurse working in a Belgian hospital was arrested by the Germans and charged with treason.

Edith Cavell had resided and worked in Belgium for seven years after training at the London Hospital in Whitechapel (now the 'Royal London') and working in several hospitals in England. Now, as the brutal conflict raged around her and the German army occupied most of Belgium, she determined to do all she could to save the lives of those caught up in the fighting, whatever their nationality.

She provided shelter and medical care for Germans, Belgians, French and British troops. In the latter two cases she also – and this was the core of her offence – assisted them in escaping from areas occupied by the German forces and making their way back to their homelands.

Her motivation for this was entirely Christian. The daughter of a vicar, she had enthusiastically embraced the faith for herself, and now saw that the time had come to put the principles of the gospel to practical effect. Her own home became a secret staging post for escapees, but she did this not to 'take sides' but out of concern for the young men involved. She took a high view of her vocation as a nurse, seeing it as a calling that transcended racial and national barriers. For her, healing and rescue were simply part of the calling to be a good neighbour.

Those arguments didn't, of course, carry much weight with the German occupying power. As a Belgian resident, she was charged with treason, an offence which carried a death penalty. Her trial was widely reported, and there were many diplomatic moves made on her behalf, especially by the Americans (then neutrals in the conflict), but they fell on deaf ears.

She was found guilty and sentenced to death. On 12th October 1915, at the age of 49, she was executed by a firing squad, to world-wide condemnation. Nor was Edith Cavell's death to be forgotten. After the War her body was brought back to Britain and a service of commemoration held in Westminster Abbey. Her body was reburied in the grounds of Norwich cathedral, near the village of her birth.

A statue which stands in St Martin's Place, Trafalgar Square, London commemorates the life of this woman who gave herself totally to her calling – a pioneer of modern nursing methods as well as an heroic war-time figure. The statue records her most famous saying, words which capture the heart of her commitment: 'Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.'

Christian Aid helps Gaza

One year after war devastated large parts of the Gaza strip, Christian Aid has announced that: "Thanks to the generosity of the British public and the tremendous work of our partners in Gaza, the [Christian Aid Gaza Crisis Appeal](#) has reached 115,000 people and continues to help tens of thousands more by providing water, food, shelter, agricultural rehabilitation, counselling and healthcare.

The following article, written by Paul Hardingham, has been extracted from Parish Pump and is the beginning of a 10-part series and is entitled:

Most popular Bible Stories: The Feeding of the 5000

This month sees the start a new series on Scripture Union's Top Ten *Must Know Stories*. These were voted by parents and teachers as the most important Bible stories to share with the next generation. We begin with the feeding of the 5000, a story found in all four gospels and telling us important truths about Jesus and our relationship with Him.

Jesus and His disciples were confronted with a huge crowd (at least 10,000 including the women and children) in a lonely place with no food! When the disciples suggested that He send them away, Jesus challenged them: *'you give them something to eat'* (Matthew 14:16). When we see the spiritual needs of own community, Jesus challenges us with the same words! So how do we respond?

Look with compassion: *'When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them'* (14). Do we see people in the same way, as those in all kinds of need, often lacking meaning and purpose in their lives? Unless we *feel* the needs as Jesus did, we cannot respond to those we meet at work, school, or in our community.

Respond in obedience: The disciples simply offered what they had to Jesus: *'Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.'* (19).



When meeting the needs of others we simply offer to Jesus what we have, however insignificant it may seem, for Him to multiply to feed the crowd. He will use our plans, skills, time and energy. However, it is often only when we come to the end of ourselves, that God's power can be released through us.

Thanks

I just wanted to thank you all for your support, thoughts, prayers and cards over the last few years, to tell you how much I appreciated it, and to let you know that I have finally started my job up in Newcastle.

I am settling into the new city and the new job and I am really enjoying it so far. I will stay in touch and I am sure I will see you soon when I am back visiting Witney

Love Finn Obriain

A nervous new minister turned up at his Church to deliver his first service. He waited and waited, but no one came. He thought for a while and then put an announcement in the parish magazine: *'It is with great sadness that the death of the village church is announced. As it has lived a long life in this community, a funeral and memorial service will be held next Sunday. All welcome.'*

Morbidly curious, the congregation turned up, and was fascinated to see pews draped in black, the Vicar wearing his funeral stole, and even an open coffin on two trestles. Curious, they queued to peer into the coffin. Inside was a large mirror...

The following article, extracted from Shirley Baptist Church, Southampton magazine, has been submitted by Jo Matthews, and is entitled:

Quite an intriguing solution

A farmer died leaving his 17 horses to his three sons. When his sons opened up the will it read: 'My eldest son should get half of total horses; my middle son should be given one third of the total horses; my youngest son should be given one ninth of the total horses'

As it's impossible to divide 17 by 2, 3 or 9, the sons started to fight with each other until, realising that was not what the father would have wanted, they decided to go to a farmer friend who they considered quite smart, to see if he could help

The farmer read the will patiently, and, after giving the matter due thought, he brought over one of his own horses and added it to the 17 thereby increasing the total number of horses to 18. He then proceeded to divide the horses according to the father's will:

- Half of 18 = 9, so he gave the eldest son 9 horses
- $1/3$ of 18 = 6, so he gave the middle son 6 horses
- $1/9$ of 18 = 2, so he gave the youngest son 2 horses

Now add up how many horses they have. The total is 17! This left one horse over, so the farmer took his horse back to the farm – problem solved!

Moral: the attitude of negotiation and problem solving is to find the 18th horse; ie; the common ground. Once a person is able to find the 18th horse the issue is resolved. It is difficult at times. However, to reach a solution, the first step is to believe that there is a solution. If we think

that there is no solution, we won't be able to reach any!

That's what I call clever mathematics

Thank You

I would like to say thank you to all the Church family for your support and kind words during the period of my Mum's illness and bereavement following her death

My Mum always felt part of the Church family when she visited Witney for family occasions and holidays, and loved to come to Saturday Coffee Mornings meeting people and sharing time to talk with them too

It's been a hectic year for myself and family, so I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for all the support, prayers and kindness within the Church and those outside of the Church family too

Irene St Clair

The following poem, written by Anne Smith, has been submitted by Maureen Miles, and is entitled:

My Garden

I love to work in my garden, although
sometimes I find it a chore
I'm unable to see the time coming when I
can't do the work anymore

In winter the garden seems silent with
sparse colour and not much on show
But then spring awakens, buds open and
so many plants start to grow

The garden is lovely in springtime when
snowdrops and daffodils glow
Yet it's lovelier still in the summer when
baskets and tubs are on show

When autumn arrives, it is cooler, but
trees are are a sight to behold
Leaves yellow or orange are falling some
changing from green into gold

I hope that I'll still be digging my garden
and pray that I'm able to tend
Please God, keep me mobile and active so
I still find it easy to bend

The following poem, written & submitted
by Jo Matthews, is based on Acts 16: 1-10,
and is entitled:

TROAS

We saw changed lives and wonders done,
All kinds of folk for Christ were won;
now it was Bithynia's turn
But we had something strange to learn ...

Our minds were set, our hearts were
keen,
Much blessing followed where we'd been,
But as we were about to go
The Spirit of the Lord said 'No!'

But Lord, we cried, this can't be true!
Thousands could be won for You!
The harvest's white, the labourers few,
So little time, so much to do!
You must agree that it is so.
Oh Lord, we're here – please let us go!
The Spirit of the Lord said 'No!'

We all went down to Troas beach,
Bithynia now beyond our reach,
And in the beauty we found there

We felt refreshed, and our next prayer
Was quiet and trusting. We could share
All that the Lord our God had done,
And knew, sure as the setting sun
Would rise again, that we could rest
In this alone – His will is best.

Across the sea that very night
Came news of Macedonia's plight,
And now we knew, oh yes, we knew
Exactly what we had to do!

Frustrations and complaints were past
For action was allowed at last!
So off we went with hearts aglow,
When the Spirit of the Lord said 'Go!'

Off to school

Mother to young daughter after first day
at school: "Well, dear, what did they teach
you today?"
Daughter: "Not much. I've got to go back
again tomorrow."

Free

A mother asked her son, as they waited
for the bus, to tell the driver he was four
years old. That way he would ride for
free.

So as they got into the bus, and
the driver asked Jimmy how old he was,
the little boy replied solemnly: "I am four
years old."

"And do you know when you will
be five years old?" asked the smiling
driver.

"Oh yes, that's easy," replied
Jimmy – "just as soon as I get off the bus."

The following article, written by Richard Bewes, has been extracted from Parish Pump, and reflects on how one man's bad dream awoke a whole civilisation, and is entitled:

The most productive nightmare of all time?

1600 years ago, Europe's top scholar was an Italian called Jerome; he loved the works of Cicero. One night he dreamt that he had died, and reached the gates of heaven. The gate-keeper spoke to him: 'Who are you?'

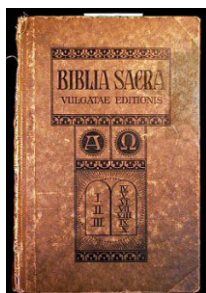
"*Christianus sum.*" replied Jerome. "I'm a Christian."

"No." said the gatekeeper. "You're not a Christian. You're a Ciceronian!" He went on to explain: "You see, here in heaven we judge people by what they were *most*, when they lived on earth. And you dedicated everything to the classics and the works of Cicero. So we judge you not to be a Christian, but a *Ciceronian*. You cannot enter."

Jerome woke with a start, and made his resolve. Not only did he begin truly to follow Christ, but he bent his academic ability into translating the Bible into the common language of Europe, Latin. It took him years. His translation became known as the *Vulgate* version.

That Bible served Europe for a thousand years. With the Bible's message becoming the foundation of European civilisation, its culture became united.

Once you take Christianity and the Bible out of Europe - and all that we would be left with is a collection of squabbling, heathen tribes. It's time for Europe - like Jerome - to be woken up again.



Through our planes, partners and pilots, MAF seeks to bring God's love to some of the world's most inaccessible areas.

This year's Day of Prayer will focus on how we're bringing hope to thousands of remote and impoverished communities by providing practical help, physical healing and the life-giving words of the Gospel. Hope that provides those struggling to survive day after day with a future – now and eternally.

For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. *Jeremiah 29:11*

We look forward to praising God for answering our prayers, as well as committing our current requests to Him.

Observations on our Christian faith

They stand best who kneel most. *Anon*

You are a Child of God. Please phone home! *Anon*

Prayer moves the hand which moves the world. *Anon*

What we know of God encourages us to trust Him in all we don't know. *Anon*



South Asia Floods

Hundreds have been killed over the last few weeks as monsoon rains devastate countries in South Asia.

We have secured a grant from the [UK's Start Fund](#) that will allow us to reach thousands more vulnerable people across flood affected areas in India and Pakistan. The death toll rises across India, Pakistan and Myanmar as aid workers reach communities in more remote areas. Hundreds have been killed and millions affected by widespread flooding across the region caused by the heavy monsoon rains further exacerbated by the passing of Cyclone Komen.

Ram Kishan, our Regional Emergency Manager for South Asia commented that: 'Manipur in southern India was now battling with the worst floods in 200 years'.

Livelihoods have been destroyed as acres of farmland sit submerged under flood water - in Myanmar alone more than 1 million acres of farmland have been flooded, disrupting the planting season and posing risks to longer-term food security.

Myanmar

We have already released £50,000 to local partners in Myanmar, the Metta Development Foundation and Gender Development Initiative (GDI).

Through our partners we have reached 8,000 people in Chin State and Magway Region providing food clean drinking water and hygiene kits.

In Hakha and Falam (Chin State), landslides have destroyed roads and bridges, wiping out power lines making it difficult to reach those people stranded.

Through our partners GDI and with the support of the Myanmar government, we are using air force helicopters to deliver relief materials to those stranded.

India

Through our partner organisation [Indo-Global Social Service Society \(IGSSS\)](#), we are working in some of the worst affected parts of West Bengal in the east of India, where people are living in the open, without shelter or clean water.

With this money, IGSSS will be able to provide tarpaulins, mosquito nets, hygiene kits and water purifying equipment to more than 10,000 of West Bengalis most affected people, such as Dalits and those with disabled or older family members.

Pakistan

Through our partners Community World Service Asia, we have distributed emergency food supplies to more than 100 families in some of the worst affected areas in Sindh province.

The New Start money will allow us to distribute food packs containing flour, cooking oil, lentils, sugar, tea and matches, to a further 6,800 people. Ram Kishan, Christian Aid's Regional Emergency Manager for South Asia, said: 'These new and additional funds will allow our Christian Aid and local partners in Pakistan and India to reach thousands of already poor women, men and children who have lost almost everything.'

Neill Garvie, our Pakistan Programme Manager, warned: 'The threat of increased flooding from further monsoon rain, rising flood levels and glacial melt from rising temperatures here is severe, and people are in great need. 'Many still have not recovered from the catastrophic floods of 2010.