

**Swindon Old Town Partnership of Churches
Anglican - United Reformed - Methodist - Est. 1969**

PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE

MARCH 2020

80 PENCE



Daffodil time on The Lawn, Swindon

One in Christ - Together in Mission



**BATH ROAD
METHODIST
CHURCH**

WELL-BEING DAY

Saturday 1st February



and Gemma came, too.

**More photos on
inside back cover.**



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WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER CHURCHES IN OLD TOWN

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Partnership Letter

Christ Church Vicarage

Dear Friends,

Stop, Look and Listen

My father John is in his 90th year having been born on 28th September 1930. A year ago he was diagnosed as living with advanced Alzheimer's. The last year was tricky for many reasons as we adjusted as a family to this news, supported Dad as best we could and arranged carers to visit through the day so Dad could stay at his home in Abingdon. We found the practical and spiritual wisdom shared at the Faith and Dementia course organised at Immanuel last February really helpful; particularly the importance of music and sensitive focused conversation and listening.

Over Christmas we decided, as a family, it would be best for Dad to come and live with us at the Vicarage for a season while we decided on the most enriching long term solution for his care. He joined us on Sunday 5th January. We are grateful for all the support and prayers we have received as we have adjusted to this new situation.

Dad has made it easy for us, as he is very appreciative and happy. He is thriving being in a family home again and has made great friends with our dog Rupert. We realise that we have been blessed to have the opportunity to provide tender loving care and that many families are less fortunate than ours. We remember them in our prayers.

Getting Dad ready in the morning when he gets up and in the evening as he goes to bed are times of stillness, peace and reflection as we work together as a team. Similarly, the importance of silence, alongside simple conversation over meals, is about sensitively thinking what is best for Dad. ➤





Dad loves listening to jazz, and he enjoys dancing along to the rhythm. He also loves trips out and driving through the beautiful Wiltshire countryside on our days off. Visiting Barbary Castle and looking out at the wonderful view over Swindon helps us to remember the joy of living life in the present moment. Please join us in praying for those living with dementia and for those who care for them at home and in residential homes.

Lent is a time to stop, look and listen as we think about what is really important in life and what it means to put God first as his disciples. It is a time in the church year where we are invited to pause and live in the present moment to reflect and prepare for Easter. Eating simply and using our earth's resources mindfully and responsibly have been part of our Christian tradition for centuries.

We invite our Partnership friends to join us at Christ Church on Ash Wednesday 26th February at 9am Morning Prayer and 7.30pm Choral Communion with the choirs. These services will include the opportunity to receive the sign of the cross in ashes on your forehead with the words; *'From dust you came and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ'*.

We pray for a renewal of Christian hope across our Partnership this Lent as we join together in the material that Martin Palmer and Celebration Earth have prepared for us around the central theme 'Finding Hope in the Whole of Creation'. There will be groups throughout the week in both daytime and evening.

We are looking forward to what God will teach us and what we will learn from each other; but above all how we can slow down, pause and reflect on the present moment. May God help you to stop, look and listen and be drawn closer to Jesus in the power of his spirit this Lent and as we prepare for Easter.

Every blessing to you all,

FAMILY EVENTS

BAPTISMS

We welcome into the family of the Church

BATH ROAD

Feb 2 Oakley James Curtis Young.
Feb 2 Morgan Bryan Mitchell Young

CHRIST CHURCH

Feb 2 Jackson Alfie Caskey
Feb 2 Beau Bear Tollafield

DEATHS

We extend our sympathy to the loved ones of

CHRIST CHURCH

Jan 15 Juliana Edwards, 76 years
Feb 8 Patricia 'Ann' Hayward, 74 years

IMMANUEL

Jan 22 Muriel Whitehead, 85 years

FLOODLIGHTING

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting of Christ Church in celebration of a birthday, wedding anniversary, special occasion, to advertise your Company, or in memory of a loved one, the minimum gift per evening is **£30.00**.

Cheques to be made payable to 'Christ Church PCC'. Please write to the PARISH OFFICE, COMMUNITY CENTRE AT CHRIST CHURCH, SWINDON, SN1 3HB at least a week before the date of the floodlighting. GIFT AID:

If you are a UK taxpayer and wish Christ Church to reclaim the tax, you may Gift Aid your donation.



PARTNERSHIP BIRTHDAY SERVICE
Sunday 8th March 10.00 am at Christ Church
Guest speaker:
The Rev'd. Dr. Mark Siddall

Mark writes...

Fifty one years of the Old Town Partnership is a great cause for celebration. Celebration is also the theme for the Lent Course for the partnership. 'Celebrating Creation' is the Lent Course written by Martin Palmer for the World Wildlife Fund. The course will look first at Christ, the King of Creation, then our separation from Creation and finally celebrate our reconciliation with God's Creation at Easter. I want to give you a story to support your Lenten journey to the Easter Celebration.

St Paul describes us as adopted children in the household (Oikos in Greek) of God. It is the Greek word Oikos which gives us the word Oikonomica (Economics) and Oikologia (Ecology). In the household of God there is no difference between economics and ecology because God's ecology is the source of wealth for our economy.

There is one story rooted in the soil and in our inheritance as adopted children in the household of God. That story is of the Prodigal Son, which is the story of greed and impatience separating us from the timely provision of the family farm, just as we have broken the bond between economy and ecology and broken up the household of God. Our return to the family farm, which supports all life, is cause for the ultimate celebration - the Celebration of God's Creation and our reconciliation with Christ, the King of Creation. The Old Town Partnership is a reflection of the household of God and must be celebrated in the same way. ■

Dr Siddall gained a PhD from the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton in 2003. He pursued research, working internationally on sea level change, rapid climate change and sedimentary records of climate change. He accepted a position at the University of Bristol where he taught at undergraduate, masters and PhD level until 2013. He gained a Masters degree in Ministry, Mission and Theology from St Mellitus college in 2018 and was ordained to the Anglican priesthood in 2019. He is currently a curate in the Draycot Benefice, Diocese of Bristol. He is passionate about the response of Christ's Church to Climate Change. ■



OLD TOWN PARTNERSHIP

LENT COURSE 2020

'CELEBRATION EARTH'

'Celebration Earth' has been put together by Martin Palmer and the World Wildlife Fund. This is a pilot scheme that will then be made available to Churches and Faith Communities across the world. In a world of increasing environmental anxiety about our future, our Lent course helps us to reflect upon the stories of hope at the heart of our faith tradition which we can share with our neighbours.

The six themes are:

- Christ the king of all creation
- The Arrogance of Humanity - The Fall
- Restoration
- Passion
- The Dream of the Rood
- Ecological Conversion

In praise of the Christmas Tree Festival

I take my hat off to everyone who organised and contributed trees to the Festival.

I was privileged to view those in Bath Road Church while enjoying the Thamesdown Ladies Choir Christmas Concert. Next, on an extremely wet and windy afternoon, I ventured forth to Immanuel Church where there was yet another imaginative display. Thank you to those giving up their time to ply me with tea and biscuits as I perused the many different trees; time, imagination and care had gone into them all. Lastly, I visited Christ Church where there was an amazing array of trees encircling the outside of the church. The evening again was wet and very windy so unfortunately this prevented me from doing a complete circle of the church. I am sorry that I didn't manage to visit St. Mary's on the day of the walk, however I am sure the church was enhanced by the contributions.

Well done to all, a fitting end to your 50th anniversary celebrations.

Elizabeth Hogg (Dorcan Church)

Our Partnership Project for 2020 DESAI MEMORIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL, NAIROBI

**Our aim is
to raise £10,000**



Our project was launched at the Partnership Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity held at Christ Church on Sunday 19th January.

Mike Welsh, the Head of Goddard Park Primary School, Park North, which is twinned with Desai, spoke about the needs of the school and the work undertaken so far in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Swindon Old Town.

Goddard Park's involvement began when the Headmaster's daughter Zoe was among a group of students from New College, Swindon who visited the school in 1996. On her return home she wrote this poem about her experience:

THE SIX CLASSROOMS

6 classrooms made from iron
6 classrooms built upon sewage infected land
6 classrooms with views which caused my heart to weep
6 classrooms of poorly clothed and dusty children
6 classrooms bare, no pens, reading books or learning tools
Computers what are they?
6 classrooms with young bodies crushed together struggling for space and air
6 classrooms full of happy and eager children with beaming smiles from ear to ear
6 classrooms bursting with children's laughter and song
6 classrooms filled with children proud to attend their community-created school
6 classrooms full of children with the desire to learn and the will to work.

The poem made such an impact upon the staff of Goddard Park School that they resolved to try and help, and have been doing so for several years now.►



The Rotary Club of Swindon Old Town helped to build the school (photograph above). It has 436 children from one of the world's poorest communities, the Kawangware slum in western Nairobi, Kenya. It is the only primary school and serves a population equivalent to that of Old Town, Swindon. All the teachers live in the slum area and are initially secondary school graduates who are then trained in Desai to teach.

Money is scarce. Parents have to pay for their children's education, they have to buy their water. Children are crowded into classrooms; each class has over 60 children, studying in very cramped conditions. The school has no electricity or regular water supply.

In the village, their homes are 10' by 10' corrugated tin shacks, crowded together. They cost between 2000 to 4000Ksh per month (about £16 to £32): weekly wage rates for those lucky enough to have jobs as security guards or house servants are little more than these figures. One toilet serves 15 families and they have a small wooden shower hut, not as we would know it with hot and cold running water but just providing privacy in which they pour a bowl of cold water over themselves.

Many more would like to go to school, but before this can happen four more classrooms and a toilet block need to be built, together with a kitchen for a school meal. Electricity and a regular water supply are also required,

We hope you will all feel inspired to come up with ideas for fundraising and give as much support as you can to the various events that Bath Road, Christ Church with St. Mary's and Immanuel undertake throughout the year. ■

Immanuel

Christingle Service, 26th January

Sunday morning saw Stuart Benjamin once again leading our worship and in characteristic manner he introduced us all to the background of the delightful family-based concept of the “Christingle”.

With its origins in 19th century southern Germany, the “christkindl” has become a much-loved way of introducing children (and adults too!) to the ideas of the all embracing love of God, the wonders of the world around us, and Jesus as the light of the world.

Immanuel’s congregation were quick to get involved and thronged to the front of the church to join in the somewhat messy task of creating their own christingles. By the end of morning, what was a very dull, grey day was certainly brightened by the glow of all the candles lit !

A rousing chorus of “Shine Jesus Shine” ended our service as we went out into a miserably wet day but with warmth in our hearts.

Thank you Stuart!



TEA SERVICE in Immanuel Church Hall Sunday 1st March, 4.00 pm to 5.30 pm

If you enjoy singing some of those favourite old hymns and songs, then come to our Tea Service. It’s a simple act of worship where you can enjoy good company and a ‘cuppa’ in an informal friendly atmosphere. Choose a favourite hymn and we will

all sing it! The next one will be on Sunday 10th May.



Why not experience a change to normal worship...

COME TO A SERVICE OF CHORAL MATINS
sung by Immanuel Choir
SUNDAY 1st MARCH, 10.30 am at Immanuel

MUSIC

Te Deum and Jubilate - Stanford in B flat
Responses - Saunders
Anthem - If ye love me - Tallis
Well known hymns for you to sing

Ministry's Altar

Is it possible that our Pastors, ministers, youth leaders, Sunday School teachers and lay preachers want what we want? Close family ties, good health, financial security, fulfilling relationships, physical safety and comfortable surroundings. Maybe! But they also want to be part of something meaningful and to impact the world in a positive way.

The trouble is that they have embarked on a lifetime of ministry with the Lord to see a community transformation and His purposes fulfilled in a given people. Saying clearly to their Lord, "I am here by Your appointment. This is no accident. In Your time, while I am standing under Your shadow, I ask that You will do not only the incredible but also the impossible." They are not visiting for a weekend. Their total commitment is for the long haul.

Pray for them. Pray first that your heart will never become hardened or critical towards God's chosen leaders. That your own time with your Lord and the deeper studying of the scriptures will, at least, equal theirs. Recognise that both you and they must remain forever accountable and faithful to those held dear.

Give them all the honour and love and equal commitment as much as you can that they deserve. Our Lord is worthy of our total commitment too.

Barbara Fergusson, Immanuel



It's 15 years ago since we last sang Choral Matins at Immanuel. Many people said how much they loved the service and that they got a great deal from it.

Whilst we now have a variety of differing styles of worship across the partnership, which is great, I believe that this musical service still has a place.

It is now a service that is rarely sung throughout the UK as most churches no longer have a four part choir to sing some of the beautiful music written by some of the most well known composers of church music

Yet the service has a wonderful liturgy and is steeped in history. It is designed to help us reflect on faith and life, to offer prayers for ourselves and the world, as well as to send us out into the world better able to face what may come our way. In that sense, it mirrors Choral Evensong.

We have also been hearing recently that nationally more people are attending the services of Choral Evensong in Cathedrals during the week, having sought some peace and a time for reflection at the end of an often busy day. That must be telling us something surely.

So whilst it's Choral Matins this time - watch out for some Choral Evensong services at Immanuel which we plan to hold occasionally during the week along with members of Christ Church Choir and friends

We are still trying to decide the best time and day but we think we will try 6:15pm on a Wednesday possibly once every 6 to 8 weeks. There would not be a sermon and the service would simply flow with all the separate parts helping to make a whole. It normally lasts between 35 and 45 minutes. And all you have to do is to be there and sing a hymn.

Some folk may come from work and others from churches where the service no longer takes place. We have a large car park so that helps.

If you would support this suggestion or you want to suggest alternatives, please let me know on the email below.

email: revgeoff27@gmail.com

Organist and Choirmaster Immanuel United Reformed Church

Christian Aid Soup Lunch at Immanuel



It's that time of year again when we will be holding our annual Christian Aid Soup Lunch at 12 noon on Sunday 15th March, following the morning service. It's a great opportunity to have a chat, taste some lovely soup and raise money for Christian Aid.

Please contact Lindsey Miller (tel.01793 535855) if you would like to come along.

Baptists Together, The Church of Scotland, The Methodist Church, The United Reformed Church

An extract from an open letter from Churches in Britain to Churches in member states of the European Union...

Our Churches have contributed to and been enriched by the Christian tradition in Europe for centuries. The early evangelists to these islands came with the Roman Empire. They were followed by the missions of St. Augustine of Canterbury (who came originally from what is now Italy) and St. Columba of Iona (from what is now Ireland). The faith of Christians in these islands has from the earliest days had its roots in the European Church. The impact of the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands has contributed significantly to the Churches, societies and nations of our islands, an impact that is still felt to this day. We have congregations of our Churches in many cities in Europe and we maintain close fellowship with partner Churches across our continent. We are, and will always be, European Churches as part of the worldwide church. ■

**Swindon Choral Society presents
HANDEL'S MESSIAH
with professional orchestra and soloists
SATURDAY 21st MARCH 7.30 pm
Wyvern Theatre, Swindon.**

Tickets £20, accompanied children under 18 free, affiliated students £12
Tickets available on line from: <https://swindontheatres.co.uk>

Christ Church with St. Mary's



TEA/COFFEE and CHAT
at the Goddard Arms,
Tuesday 3rd March, 2.30pm to 4.00 pm.

ONLY £1.50, INCLUDING UNLIMITED REFILLS.

You can have a small dessert for an extra charge of £1.50. We meet in the side room of the Goddard Arms on the first Tuesday of each month. We meet informally and all are welcome whether you belong to a church or not.

Mothering Sunday, 22nd March *from 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm*

Christ Church Burial Board invites visitors to accept a daffodil in memory of their loved one and to lay the flower on their place of rest, either on a grave or in the Rose Garden.

Refreshments will be served in the large meeting room in the Community Centre.



With the end of the Seville Orange season, Margaret's production line has now also come to an end. As a result of her efforts, £114 has been raised and this will be divided between our own church funds and the Partnership Project for the Desai Primary School, Nairobi.

Thank you, Margaret, for all your hard work.

Brian Harris writes...

The piece “Can we call God ‘Mother’” in the February magazine reminded me of the following prayer that I came across at St John’s Episcopal Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh, and which I’ve used on occasion to conclude the intercessions during the 10.00 Sunday service at Christ Church. You might like to include it in the next issue of the magazine.

Come, Father,
Come, Mother,
Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Holy Spirit of God.

Give us for our hallowing:
Thoughts that pass into prayer,
Prayer that passes into love,
And love that passes into action.

Church of England launches energy rating tool for churches as Synod considers new ‘net zero’

The Church of England is launching an energy rating system similar to those used for household appliances. The aim is to help monitor the carbon footprint of its almost 40,000 buildings as General Synod has recently voted on a major new proposal to reach ‘net zero’ CO2 emissions.

In a first step, parishes are being offered a new rating tool which calculates their energy consumption. It will take into account factors including the type of power they use, whether they are on ‘green’ tariffs, the size of the building and usage.

The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam, the Church of England’s lead bishop for Environmental Affairs, said: “The Church of England has buildings in every architectural style and material from the past 1,500 years, posing some unique challenges when it comes to energy efficiency. However, churches are not museums; they are living buildings which serve their communities every day of the week, and being greener isn’t about doing less, it’s about equipping parishes to get smarter about energy consumption.”

“Christians are called to safeguard God’s creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Faced with the reality of catastrophic climate change, which will affect the world’s most vulnerable people the soonest, radical and immediate action is our only option.” ■

Joan Oxborrow
15th July 1926 - 6th December 2019

Christ Church was full on the 23rd January for the Thanksgiving Service for the life of Joan Oxborrow. Tributes were paid to her by all her family and many of us learned a lot about Joan's life that we previously had not known.

Bernard read from a book that Joan herself had written, which was the story of her life, and it was from her own words that we gathered what an interesting life she led before she even came to Swindon.

Born in 1926 in a farming village in Dorset, Joan grew up in the village shop and post office but then gained a scholarship to Lord Digby's School for girls at Sherborne. Joan recalled the declaration of war in 1939 and how she and others had to retreat to the cellar of the school during an air raid when bombs, intended for Bristol, were dropped in Sherborne.

On leaving school she went into nursing. Most of her nursing career was done in prisons and that gave Joan a wealth of experience in dealing with people in traumatic circumstances, including being at Holloway prison when the last woman to be hanged was in the prison hospital.

Having qualified as a midwife, Joan served in a prison where there was a special part for pregnant girls who were always transferred, accompanied by Joan, to a hospital outside the prison to give birth so that the address on the baby's birth certificate would not be the prison!

Joan met and married Bernard in 1956 and when his firm transferred to Swindon, they moved here under the London Expansion Scheme. And that was when most of us first met Joan; I met her when she brought young William to the Sunday school we held at Lawn School each Sunday afternoon. Joan was a member of the Young Wives Group and then Mothers' Union. She was such a bubbly, happy person and wherever she was, there was laughter. After bringing up her family, Joan returned to nursing at Stratton St. Margaret Hospital until she retired in 1986. ►



Each member of her family took part in the service, and over tea afterwards conversations reminisced about Joan – she will be remembered for her kindness, for her laughter and for her interest in people. Even in her long illness, she had a smile that was infectious. She died as she had lived, full of faith, and we all send our love to Bernard and his family.

Margaret Williams



SWINDON MUSIC FESTIVAL

The 111th Swindon Music Festival starts in Christ Church on Friday 20 March at 6.30pm

with the church organ classes. Each organist will play two contrasting pieces and then the adjudicator will make comments on their performances.

The evening will continue with adult choir classes. In the church choir class, starting at around 8.15pm, Christ Church Choir will be singing the hymn “Thy hand O God has guided” and “O Sing Joyfully” by Adrian Batten. St. Sampson’s Church Choir, Cricklade will be singing the hymn “I the Lord of sea and sky” and “Make we joy now in this fest” by Ian Assersohn. The evening will continue with the adult choirs class and conclude with two classes for solo singers.

The adjudicator for the Friday evening will be Adrian Goss, a pianist, organist and choral director and chair of the Adjudicators Council.

The Festival continues on Saturday 21st March and from Monday 23 to Saturday 28 March in the Arts Centre in Devizes Road, Old Town.

The provisional timetable is:

Saturday	21	Guitar, Strings, Brass, Junior Vocal, Adult Vocal
Monday	23	Woodwind, Junior Piano, Strings, Adult Piano
Tuesday	24	Junior Piano, Electronic Keyboard, Adult Piano
Wednesday	25	Junior Piano, Beatrice Plaum Challenge Cup (Piano), Instrumental Championship
Thursday	26	Junior & Senior Vocal
Friday	27	Junior & Senior Vocal, Junior Vocal Championship
Saturday	28	Senior Vocal, Senior Vocal Championship, Supreme Championship

BOOK REVIEW: 'Learning to Walk in the Dark'

Like most people, I love the lights on the Christmas trees and the candles at the carol services. But in December, while I was sitting in my light-filled house and the candlelit church, I realised that only too often as Christians we think that light = good and dark = bad. There are scripture verses that we can quote to prove our hypothesis (e.g. Psalm 18:28; Luke 1:79; John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:46; Ephesians 5:8; 1 John 2:9). Yet if we go back to our creation story we read that the "Spirit of God was hovering over the formless mass cloaked in darkness" (Gen 1:2 NLV). God was in the darkness before light was created.

Whilst I can understand we need to define good and evil, I believe that we do ourselves a disservice if we continue to see things in such a dualistic way.

Barbara Brown Taylor, an Episcopalian priest from the USA, has written a fascinating book entitled *'Learning to Walk in the Dark'*. In it she explores how and why 'darkness' (and some of the words people associate with it - night, nightmare, ghost, cave, vampire, doubt, depression, death, fear) has gained such a negative press. She starts with the premise that darkness, for her, is shorthand for anything that scares her and that she wants no part of it. She then explores different aspects – such as 'the fear of the Lord', dark emotions, blindness, the 'dark night of the soul' – in her search for making meaning of those universal human experiences.

I learnt so much from reading this book – about how I relate to God, to my faith, to other people. I'll leave you with a couple of my favourite quotes.

'Here is some good news you can use: even when light fades and darkness falls...God does not turn the world over to some other deity. Even when you cannot see where you are going and no one answers your call, this is not sufficient proof that you are alone. There is a divine presence that transcends all your ideas about it....darkness is not dark to God; the night is as bright as the day.'

'..new life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark'.

Darkness - Light - Not either/or but both/and

'Learning to Walk in the Dark', Barbara Brown Taylor, Canterbury Press
(A New York Times Bestseller)

Recommended reading for Lent (or at any other time!)

Bath Road

Bath Road's that bit greener...and getting greener again

Last year we changed energy supplier and are now on 100% renewable energy.

We have just received notification that we lowered the church's carbon impact by 2,501kg of carbon dioxide (CO₂); that's the equivalent of the CO₂ absorbed by nine 60 feet high trees. If that doesn't seem much, but think, over a decade that's 90 trees - an impressive small wood. And if every church in the country did the same, that's a very large forest indeed.



And we are not finished...

Thanks to a donation alongside funding from our weekly financial giving, we are converting the lights in our stairwells, Upper Room and various other places to LED equivalents. Many of the fittings were approaching end-of-life anyway so that's a three-for-one: improved lighting, reduced maintenance and saving the planet that little bit extra.

Steve Sparkes

Property & Finance Committee

“All is in God’s hands’

Some of us in the Partnership will recall the visit of 2 Tanzanian agricultural students, Moses and Barnabas, about 35 years ago. Sponsored by Bath Road Church, their visit was for about 3 months to see how we did things here in the hope of giving them fresh insights that would be of benefit to their farming community in Tanzania.

They came with nothing but left us enriched by the experience. I remember well their simple but solid faith "All is in God's hands".

Recently, Moses wrote to say that Barnabas had passed away. He was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2018 and had been attending a special hospital in Dar-es-salaam for patients with cancer. He was reportedly doing fine and on palliative care but sadly passed away in June. He has left a widow Prenciana, a son Mukiza and daughter Peace.

Eric Sparkes

WELL-BEING WEEKEND

The Well-Being weekend started on Saturday 1st February. I couldn't understand the significance of the title and when I read the activities that were to take place I thought, this isn't for me; what could I manage to do with my poor eyesight. However, because my friends were all going, I decided I would go as well.

When I arrived, I was surprised to see about 40 other people aged between 3 and 94, and there was a real feeling of welcome in the air. It started with a service held in the church, led by Helen, at which she read the poem 'Enjoy Life'. After this we all went down to the hall to take up our various activities.

I looked around and I wondered what could I do? Gary assured me that I could do yoga sitting in a chair. I was the first to arrive and Jennie, who led the yoga, said that was fine, she was quite willing to begin with just me, but quite soon afterwards another 9 turned up. 7 of us did activities from a chair but 3 brave ones were quite happy to do their yoga as a floor exercise. Jennie had such a lovely soft voice. With the lights turned off, we all followed her instructions, concentrating especially on our breathing. This took about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. It was so relaxing, I just can't describe it. And I wasn't the only one, we all felt more relaxed afterwards.

Next came a coffee break, then we went our various ways. I decided to look around to see what was happening. In the hall there was a group painting, some doing especially bright colourful butterflies; another group were making pom poms. In the other hall there was table tennis; board games were also available.

I decided, with a bit of persuasion from Allison, to try my hand at pom pom making as her friend Rachel was willing to help me. I remember doing this as a young child, when we took the cardboard tops of two bottles of milk and threaded the wool through the hole in the middle. These days, of course, they don't use cardboard, they had a little machine that I held in my hand and wrapped the wool around. When I had completed this, Rachel proceeded to cut it and make it into a little ball and I am very pleased with my efforts.

Everyone there was visibly engaged with something of their choice until lunchtime when we all sat round the tables enjoying lasagne followed by Vienetta ice cream. The activities continued in the afternoon.

On Sunday morning, I arrived at church to find a large congregation as there were two baptisms. The service was conducted by Kate Trowbridge and it

seemed to link up well with our weekend. After church we moved on to the Goddards for lunch.

We are so thankful to those who organised the weekend. The feeling of fellowship and the memories will remain with me and others for a long time.

Margaret Jones

ENJOY LIFE

Life's too short to be wasted.
It passes just once, so make the most
out of it.

Live life the way you want it to be.
Live it to the fullest, feel free!

Live as the sun shines in the sky,
Live as high as the birds can fly.
Live as the colours of a rainbow,
Live as far as the clouds can go.

Never waste it with worthless doubts
and fears,
With insecurities and useless tears.
Remember that what couldn't tear
you makes you strong.
Put away frustrations, sing your own
song!

Believe in what you can do.
The world is round; it's all up to you.
Think fast, act now!
Time is gold; it couldn't be renewed.

Value experiences, learn from
mistakes.
Improve for the better, live for others.
Do what is right and what is best.
Always be yourself, unique from the
rest.

Laugh as if there is no tomorrow.
Dance as though you'll never get
through,
Love with all your heart and soul.
Sing like you're on top of the world.

Forget the money, the root of all evil.
Treasure your loved ones; you're
lucky they're still there.
Strengthen your faith, live with God.
The best things in life are for free,
so why not?!

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/enjoy-life>

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

**Friday 6th March, 10.30 am at
Bath Road Methodist Church**

**Theme:
'RISE! TAKE YOUR MAT AND WALK'
prepared by the women of Zimbabwe**





Another Planet?

Exploring the future of the natural world.

This was the title of a talk that four of us from Bath Road, Penny & Robert Manders and George & Dorothy Kennedy, attended at the New Room in Bristol on 16th January. The talk was the first of series called “Wes Talks” looking at topical issues that were also of concern to John Wesley.

The talk was given by Mary Colwell who is a nature writer and producer based in Bristol and was excellent. The talk addressed climate change and the environment and was therefore very much in keeping with our upcoming Lent Course.

Mary started by presenting the well-known graph of rising global temperatures related to carbon dioxide (CO₂, a “greenhouse” gas) level in the atmosphere since the start of the industrial age. The graph also went back millennia to illustrate that it is a relatively recent issue related to human activity. Mary went on to say that to most people a graph like that would be off-putting or meaningless. In her view the best way of getting the message across is to tell stories in a way that people can understand, which is what she seeks to do. She then did this by presenting a series of images of the consequences of global warming – including the bush fires in Australia, melting glaciers and the record flooding in Venice.

Looking to the future, Mary said that one of the big problems was population growth and the fact that much of this growth will take place in developing countries that are aspiring to a more “western” lifestyle. She said that this would put even more pressure on the environment and fragile eco-systems, illustrated by the clearance of forests to rear livestock

Mary said that the first part of her talk might be seen as being very negative, so she went on to present some more positive stories. These included the case of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, a small wading bird from south-east Asia that was on the verge of extinction due to changes in land use on its migration route. Eggs had been brought back to this country and hatched so that the numbers can be increased in the wild. She also quoted the example of her own particular passion, the Curlew (the subject of her book “Curlew Moon”, which I would highly recommend) where measures are being taken to protect their breeding habitats. ➤

Mary quoted from the latter part of the book of Job, where God confronts Job with his lack of understanding of the complexity of creation, to illustrate our similar lack of understanding of the inter-connectedness of the natural world. She concluded by encouraging us all to tell the stories, urging people to take action and make changes and help save the planet.

The third Wes Talk is on 19th March and is "Sit Down Next to Me: Does non-violent protest work?". It will be given by John Cooper [Fellowship of Reconciliation] and Maggie Moss [Extinction Rebellion]. The talk will be from 6pm to 7.30pm (more details available on the website: newroombristol.org.uk/events).

George Kennedy



The Phoenix Players present

'LAYING THE GHOST'

by Simon Williams

at

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Swindon**

**Wednesday 29th April to
Saturday 2nd May at 7.30 pm**

Margot Buchanan, a former actress, is living, not very gracefully, in a retirement home as is her friend Freda who happens to be psychic. Margo's ex-husband and co-star Leo, a charming Lothario, visits her on her birthday unaware that both his girl friend and current wife have the same idea. With too many women, a tabloid journalist keen for an exposé and nowhere to hide, Leo has a fatal heart attack. Fortunately there is Freda....the scene is set for a little chaos and a lot of hilarity.

The cast includes some Phoenix favourites and newcomers and is a show not to be missed.

Tickets cost £12. Concession £10

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A New Start

The story of Noah taken from Genesis shows how God gave the world a new start

As you would expect, an ark was made using junk materials and a paper plate, together with animal pictures on lollipop sticks. This was a reminder that it would have been very difficult to build such a large ark by hand but it kept all Noah's family and the animals safe.

We also used lollipop sticks to make the shape of an ark with animal stickers decorating it. This was to illustrate that the ark was very small in contrast to the size of the flood.

Perhaps the most popular way of making an ark was using mini-sausages, cheese and cucumber slices to produce an edible ark, only some of which lasted until they were taken home!

The story of Noah continued by folding paper to make a dove together with its olive branch, both of which have become a symbol of peace.

Then we made rainbows, some using paint, others using streamers ready to be used in worship, plus the opportunity to make one using Hama Beads, with a reminder that whenever we see a rainbow we should remember God giving the earth a new start.

Before we all enjoyed our afternoon tea of sandwiches and cakes our short act of worship retold the story of Noah using rain sticks which had been made and the rainbow streamers. It was good to share the afternoon with a number of friends both new and old.

We meet on the third Sunday in the month at King William Street School. Our next meeting is on Sunday 15th March at 3.30 pm and we look forward to welcoming you.



WHY WE NEED FAIR TRADE



24th February – 8th March is Fairtrade Fortnight where we are encouraged to buy (more) fair trade goods, usually by seeking out products bearing the Fairtrade mark. This could mean at your regular supermarket - the Co-op are particularly good for this, and Sainsbury's are quite good too (though maybe not to such an extent as they were).

It could mean buying more from your church's Traidcraft stall (if it has one). Or get hold of one of their catalogues and have a good browse at the wide range of goods available or visit their website and shop direct – see the article on Traidcraft elsewhere in this issue. It could mean digging around on the internet for small food or clothing companies that value their small-scale producers. Not all will carry the Fairtrade logo because that is only granted by the Fairtrade Foundation to specific types of product which conform to a set of standards for that item (tea, coffee, cotton, etc). Other items may just be described as having been traded fairly, but either way it is the concept of trading fairly that matters.

You may ask why do we need fair trade at all? This is what Traidcraft's website says:

“By way of a definition, 'fair trade' is used to describe trading partnerships where companies in developed countries pay fair prices to producers in developing countries. In reality, however, fair trade is about much more than just pricing. It's about supporting producers to grow their own businesses, helping them to have an impact on their own communities, giving them direct access to markets, and bypassing corrupt local businesses and shady government officials along the way.

“Fair trade is about addressing a global imbalance of power and treating growers and artisans as equals. It's about fighting discrimination, looking out for child welfare and ensuring that artisans have access to the safe working conditions we all deserve, wherever we spend our days.

“Fair trade is about giving artisans and growers a voice, and listening to that voice.

“Simply put, fair trade is about equality and making the world a fairer place. It's about developing trading partnerships to help producers in developing countries achieve better trading conditions. It's a movement that prides itself on transparency, respect and greater fairness across international trade.” ➤

You can find out more about Traidcraft on their website [w.traidcraftshop.co.uk](http://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk), where you can read about the origins and aims of the company. Find out more about the Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade Week at www.fairtrade.org.uk.

Dorothy and George Kennedy

Noel Hunt writes about the food we eat

There has been increasing coverage of the food we eat in the media over the last few years and the effect of its production, waste disposal and packaging on our planet. I don't intend to pass judgement on any of these but I ask the question, do you know what is in the food you are eating?

Food is mentioned in the bible quite a lot. Then, as now, it was an important part of social and formal occasions, from wedding banquets to locusts in the desert and, of course, The Last Supper. The communion service 'sharing in the one loaf' and 'drinking from the one true vine' is not as straightforward as it used to be, as I'm sure any communion steward or server will tell you; particularly in our Ecumenical Partnership with bread or wafer, wine or alcohol free.

There are many reasons why some people choose carefully what they eat, be it religious, ethical, fashionable and so on. Other reasons are less out of choice and more of necessity: allergies, intolerances and for medical reasons.

Most of the fish, meat and dairy counters in our supermarkets have a very general hygiene notice that states foods "may contain contaminants". To be fair, whenever I have asked about this it is usually regarding cross contamination from other foods on the counter. However, few are happy to say that their sliced ham (for example) won't contain..... just that it shouldn't. To which I agree it shouldn't but that isn't the same as it doesn't.

One of the intolerances I have needed to get accustomed to is gluten. I used to just pick things off the shelf without a second thought as to if or why a product might contain gluten.

The more I look at food labels, the more I find myself saying, "why is that in there?" I tend not to get far with the follow on question of "what is that doing to my body in the long term" as my grasp of biology is not great. So just to get you thinking, which of the following, generally speaking, does not contain Gluten? (*Answers next month*)

crisps, sausages, corn flakes, Heinz vegetable soup, stock cubes, fish and chips, beef gravy granules, Heinz baked beans, Marmite.



You may remember that Traidcraft, the pioneers of fair trade, were thinking of closing at the end of 2018, having been hit hard by the drop in the pound due to

Brexit and the general economic uncertainty. After a period of consultation, they announced that they would be continuing, although on a smaller scale. They laid off most of their staff, leaving just nine to carry on, with a vision to “re-establish Traidcraft as a company you could not live without”. So what has happened since?

In 2019, as they celebrated 40 years of trading, business has done so well that they are now employing thirty-one people at their Gateshead HQ. They cut costs by establishing relationships with other fair trade and ethical companies such as Tropical Wholefoods and Thought Clothing. They dispatched a total of 56,694 orders in the year – in fact, sales of sugar exceeded expectations and they ran out at the end of the year (more will be arriving about the time you read this). Not only did sales do well but they have received “Great Taste” awards for three of their line of teas: Breakfast Blend, Earl Grey Tea and decaffeinated and also for their Chilean Nectar Set Honey.

Traidcraft are also constantly moving to make the business more sustainable, most recently by replacing more of their plastic packaging with alternatives such as cardboard packets for the cookies and compostable wrapping on toilet rolls and kitchen rolls. Very shortly the sweets will also come in compostable packets!

By the time you read this, Traidcraft’s Spring catalogue will be out with new products. You can find out more about Traidcraft on their website www.traidcraftshop.co.uk, where you can read about the company and the origins and aims of fair trade, keep up-to-date with their blog and order all their product range online if you prefer to shop that way rather than through a church stall.

This is a quote from the website:

“Ultimately, fair trade comes down to doing the right thing, and here at Traidcraft we strive to do all we can to make that happen. As the UK’s original fair trade pioneers, we have a clear commitment to fair trade. Through selling fair trade products, we are able to highlight the necessary change required from a retail perspective and challenge the conventional routes of trade other businesses take — by putting people first.”

Dorothy and George Kennedy

With the Swindon Music Festival taking place this month, it seemed an appropriate time to include the following which was found in a booklet at the Temple Church in London.

Reasons briefly set downe by th'auctor, to perswade every one to learne to sing...

First, it is a knowledge easely taught, and quickly learned, where there is a good Master, and an apt Scoller.

2. The exercise of singing is delightfull to Nature, & good to preserve the health of Man.
3. It doth strengthen all parts of the brest, & doth open the pipes.
4. It is a singular good remedie for a stutting & stamering in the speech.
5. It is the best meanes to procure a perfect pronounciation, & to make a good Orator.
6. It is the onely way to know where Nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voice: which giuft is so rare, as there is not one among a thousand, that hath it: and in many, that excellent giuft is lost, because they want Art to expresse Nature.
7. There is not any Musicke of Instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the voyces of Men, where the voyces are good, and the same well sorted and ordered.
8. The better the voyce is, the meeter it is to honour and serve God therewith: and the voyce of man is chiefly to be employed to that ende.

Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum

Since singing is so good a thing,
I wish all men would learne to sing.

William Byrd (1543-1623)

Psalmes, Sonets and Songs of Sadnes and Pietie, 1588, Preface

PARTNERSHIP DIARY FOR MARCH

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---|
| 01 Sun | | Lent 1 |
| | 8.00 am | Christ Church, 1662 Holy Communion |
| | 9.00 am | St. Mary's, Holy Communion |
| | 10.00 am | Bath Road, Morning Service, Geoff Rhodes |
| | 10.00 am | Christ Church, All Age Service |
| | 10.30 am | Immanuel, Choral Matins |
| | 6.30 pm | Bath Road, Evening Service, Rev'd. Mark Barrett |
| | 6.30 pm | Christ Church, Holy Communion Service |
| | 6.30 pm | Immanuel, Evening Service, |
| 03 Tues | 2.30 pm | Tea/Coffee and Chat at the Goddard Arms Hotel |
| 04 Wed | 10.30 am | Christ Church, Holy Communion |
| 07 Sat | 7.30 am | Christ Church, Men's Breakfast |
| | 9.00 am | to 11.00 am Bath Road Community Breakfast |
| 08 Sun | | Lent 2 |
| | 8.00 am | Christ Church, Holy Communion |
| | 9.00 am | St. Mary's, Morning Prayer |
| | 10.00 am | Partnership Birthday Service at Christ Church |
| | 3.00 pm | Methodist Circuit Service at Christchurch, Marlborough |
| | | No evening service at Bath Road. |
| | 6.30 pm | Christ Church, Book of Common Prayer Evensong |
| | 6.30 pm | Immanuel, Evening Service, Rev'd. Robert Jordan |
| 11 Wed | 10.30 am | Christ Church, Holy Communion |
| 15 Sun | | Lent 3 |
| | 8.00 am | Christ Church, Holy Communion |
| | 9.00 am | St. Mary's, Holy Communion |
| | 10.00 am | Bath Road, Morning Service, Rev'd. Tony Barnes |
| | 10.00 am | Christ Church, Informal Holy Communion |
| | 10.30 am | Immanuel, Morning Service, Rev'd. Robert Jordan, |
| | | followed at 12 noon with Soup Lunch for Christian Aid. |
| | 3.30 pm | Messy Church at King William Street School |
| | 6.30 pm | Bath Road, Evening Service, Worship Leaders |
| | 6.30 pm | Christ Church, Healing Service |
| | 6.30 pm | Immanuel, Holy Communion, Rev'd. Robert Jordan |
| 18 Wed | 10.30 am | Christ Church, Holy Communion |
| | 7.30 pm | Healing Prayer Group at 39 Sandown Avenue |
| 20 Fri | 6.30 pm | Swindon Music Festival at Christ Church, <i>see page 16</i> |

22 Sun**Mothering Sunday**

8.00 am	Christ Church, Holy Communion
9.00 am	St. Mary's, Informal Holy Communion
10.00 am	Bath Road, Morning Service, Eric Hewitt
10.00 am	Christ Church, Family Holy Communion
10.30 am	Immanuel, Morning Service, Bryan Elkington
1.00 pm	Christ Church, Holy Baptism
6.00 pm	Unplugged Youth Musicians' fundraising concert at Christ Church in place of the normal evening service.
6.30 pm	Bath Road, Evening Service, Rev'd. Mark Barrett
6.30 pm	Immanuel Evening Service, Rev'd. Robert Jordan

25 Wed 10.30 am Christ Church, Holy Communion

29 Sun**Passion Sunday**

8.00 am	Christ Church, Holy Communion
9.00 am	St. Mary's, Holy Communion
10.00 am	Bath Road, Morning Service, Worship Leaders
10.00 am	Christ Church, Family Holy Communion
10.30 am	Immanuel, Morning Service, Rev'd. Tony Barnes
1.00 pm	Christ Church, Holy Baptism
6.30 pm	Bath Road, Evening Service, Godfrey Room
6.30 pm	Christ Church, Songs of Praise
6.30 pm	Immanuel Evening Service, Brian Eyles

WEEKLY EVENTS

WALKING FOR HEALTH, every Monday, 10.30 am, starting and finishing at Christ Church, followed by refreshments. Excluding Bank Holidays.

OPEN HOUSE every Monday morning, at Bath Road Methodist Church between 10.30 am and 12 noon. Excluding Bank Holidays.
Come and join us for drinks and a chat.

BRIGHT LIGHTS PARENT & TODDLER GROUP, every Monday during term time, 1.30 pm to 3.00 pm in the Community Centre at Christ Church.

AFTERNOON GROUP every Tuesday, 2.00 pm-4.00 pm in the Community Centre at Christ Church for tea, cake and chat, activities or a speaker.

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Bath Road Methodist Church Well-Being Day



Preparing lunch but time for a chat as well.



Our enjoyable and relaxing weekend concluded with lunch at the Goddard Arms Hotel on the Sunday.

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