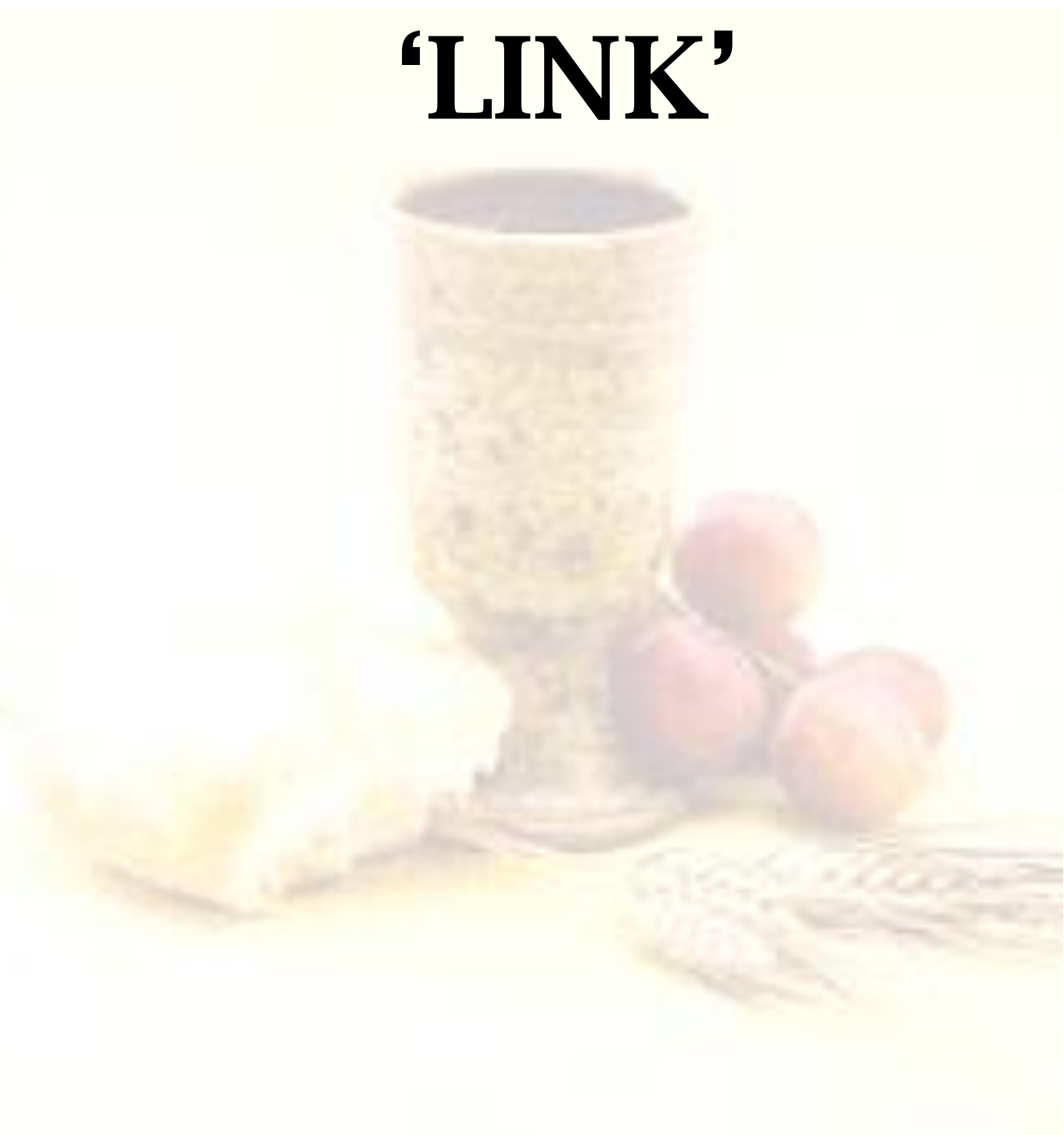


Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre

‘LINK’



January - February 2017

**Aylesbury Methodist
Church & Centre**

Buckingham Street

Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 2NQ

Registered Charity No. 1129749

Church Office: 01296 426526

e-mail: office@aylesburymethodists.org.uk

**Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre
Website**

www.aylesburymethodists.org.uk

(AMC Weekly Notice Sheet and LINK magazine can
now be found on the website)

Minister

Rev Helen Kirk

01296 488963

revhelenkirk@sky.com





In the week before Christmas, AMC gave away almost 400 angels, each individually knitted and labelled with a message of peace, hope and love to people who might be finding the Christmas season difficult. Subsequently we

have had some lovely responses from people who received an angel and somehow felt connected, loved and thought of by others.

We usually only think about angels at Christmas. They are the deliverers of messages to Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph and the shepherds. What is interesting is that they nearly always begin by saying 'Do not be afraid'. Is that because they are particularly scary? Is it because it's a shock to find yourself conversing with an angel (how do you explain that to someone!); is it because they hold the promise of God's presence and so we should not be afraid, for God is with us?

It is possibly all of those things and yet also so much more. I wonder if it is also a command: that when we are told 'Do not fear', it is an instruction to live differently.

You see, fear disables our humanity. When we fear something we move away from it; we hide or lash out, but whatever our response is to fear, it always makes us less human. Fear is the root of much violence and division; fear makes us selfish and so we are unable to respond with compassion; fear suffocates our courage and so we fail to challenge injustice; fear opens chasms of difference that paralyses understanding. When we live with fear our world becomes smaller and we lose our God given potential.

'Do not be afraid'. A command that enabled Mary to open up her life to God, Elizabeth to have courage, Joseph to protect the vulnerable, and the shepherds to break free from their mundane lives and be filled with joy.

'Do not be afraid' is what Jesus asks of us as we accept his invitation to follow him on the adventure of being his disciple.

Maybe as the New Year begins it is a command we need to hear again. 'Do not be afraid' when our news is full of horrors and violence; 'Do not be afraid' when the loudest voices promote division and disharmony; 'Do not be afraid' when so much seems uncertain.

'Do not be afraid', for at the heart of God there is no fear, only love, for as the Bible reminds us 'Perfect love casts out fear.'

So as we begin 2017 may we take the angels' command to our hearts and aim to banish fear, for then we will begin to realise our God given potential and live with hope, compassion and courage in an incredible world filled with beauty and wonder and inhabited by so many amazing and diverse people.

May 2017 be a year of living fearlessly in the love of God. Happy New Year!





ANGELS

Thank you to all who knitted and crocheted the angels.

They were absolutely beautiful - nearly 400 of them, all slightly different in size, shape, colour and yarn - as you see in the photo. We never thought we would have such an amazing response!

The last few went to new homes on Christmas morning - to be given to friends, those needing a 'lift', or to be treasured for themselves.

Thanks also to Babs who wrote and tied on the 100s of labels - you can see the process in the photo!



Whenever your children are difficult, take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to His children. After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve.

The first thing God said to them was: "Don't." "Don't what?" Adam asked

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit," said God.

"Forbidden fruit? Really? Where is it?" Adam and Eve asked.

"Over there," said God, wondering why He hadn't stopped after making the elephants. A few minutes later God saw them having an apple break, and He was very angry.

"Didn't I tell you not to eat that fruit?" the First Parent asked.

"Uh-huh," replied Adam.

"Then why did you do it?" God asked exasperatedly. "I dunno," Adam answered.

God's punishment was that Adam and Eve had children of their own. Thus the pattern was set and it has never changed, but there is reassurance. If you have always tried to give your children wisdom to no avail, don't be hard on yourself. If God had trouble handling His children, what makes you think it should be easy for you?



Saturdays

4.00 - 6.00pm at
Aylesbury Methodist Church

*28th January, 25th February, 18th March,
20th May, 24th June 2017*

'Gods family, our family'

*An event for the whole family to enjoy.
Crafts, story, songs and food.*

All are welcome.

No charge - just a donation.

Contact the Church office to let us know
you're coming!

01296 426526 or office@aylesburymethodists.org.uk

FAIRTRADE IN 2017 - OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU AND OTHERS



Our Fairtrade Circuit status conveys responsibilities for each of us as individuals and as worshipping communities within the Circuit.

Responsibilities that give life, purpose, wellbeing and hope to individuals, families and communities. We may never meet these people but this also applies to many of the things to which we contribute, such as blood donations and Charity appeals.

What FAIRTRADE opportunities will be available to you in 2017?

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2017 27th Feb- 12th March

During this fortnight watch out for events and offers.

The theme this year is 'Put Fairtrade into your Break'. Why not share some Fairtrade snacks and drinks with colleagues and visitors. Take some Fairtrade products into work to share during breaks.

You could do this at any time of year. They don't last long at my works!

EASTER 2017

If you are buying Chocolate eggs, whatever the size, go for those made of Fairtrade chocolate. Certain lines of Egg even include the Easter story to add meaning to the experience of eating Britain's favourite sweet

VISITING A NATIONAL TRUST PROPERTY?

If you do you will now have the opportunity to drink Fairtrade tea and coffee as well as choose other Fairtrade products from their restaurants/coffee shops, following their commitment to use them.

DOING YOUR WEEKLY SHOPPING:

Look out for the Fairtrade symbol, visit Fairtrade websites (eg Traidcraft, Ethical superstore etc) or contact Rod Thorpe (Circuit Fairtrade contact).

I'm sure you can add more. Do remember to check the Circuit Website for news and info. Do share your positive experiences of Fairtrade goods with others and let me know if you have any feedback.

Rod Thorpe (Circuit Fairtrade contact)





6 THINGS PEOPLE GET WRONG ABOUT FAIRTRADE

by Patrick Say, Fairtrade Foundation (29th June 2016)

Most people are familiar with Fairtrade, so why do the same misconceptions about what it is and how it actually works keep cropping up?

We've all heard them. The mate in the pub who sagely informs you that Fairtrade doesn't really help farmers, that it's a marketing scam designed to get people to pay more for basic products or to 'make middle class people feel better about themselves'.



Anyone following the claims made by both sides during the EU Referendum would agree that sweeping unqualified statements are not exactly in short supply at the moment. But it would be unfair and inaccurate to dismiss all those questioning the way Fairtrade works as tin-foil hat wearing types. With a lot of seemingly contradictory information out there about Fairtrade online and falling consumer trust in brands and traditional advertising, it can be difficult to discern fact from fiction.

I work in the Fairtrade Foundation's Digital Team and over the last five years I've often seen the same misconceptions and inaccurate generalisations about Fairtrade crop up online. Here's a rundown of some of the most common we encounter:

Myth 1: "Fairtrade products are more expensive"



Are they though? The range of Fairtrade products is now huge, with over 5,000 Fairtrade certified products for sale in the UK, many of them supermarket own-label or inexpensive mainstream brands. Long gone are the days of Fairtrade products being the obscure and expensive preserve of 'yogurt eating vicars'.

All major supermarkets now have Fairtrade own-label tea and coffee ranges - Taste the Difference, Essential, Co-op 99 tea, Finest and Sainsbury's iconic Red Label tea - just 90p for a box of 80 teabags. [Three of the UK's top five favourite chocolates](#) - Cadbury Dairy Milk, Mars, and Maltesers are Fairtrade, along with 100% of bananas in Sainsbury's, Co-op and Waitrose. All the tea and coffee at high street giants Greggs is Fairtrade and they are currently trialling Fairtrade bananas in 350 outlets.

Those looking for a bargain will also note that discounters Lidl are selling Fairtrade roses. With more supermarkets and mainstream brands than ever selling Fairtrade, can you really afford to keep saying it's more expensive?

Myth 2: "Anyone can stick the Fairtrade badge on their product and claim it's ethical"

The idea that companies just slap the FAIRTRADE Mark on their products willy-nilly when they want to claim ethical credentials just doesn't hold up. The Mark is a registered certification label for products sourced from producers in developing countries. Products that display it *must* meet Fairtrade Standards, set by Fairtrade International.

These Standards apply to both producers (the farmers and workers) and traders (suppliers to the shop you buy from) and are agreed through research and consultation with Fairtrade stakeholders, including farmers' and workers' organisations, traders, independent experts and national Fairtrade organisations such as the Fairtrade Foundation in the UK.

If a company wants to get one of their products certified (and hence have the FAIRTRADE Mark displayed on their packaging) they have to first ensure that it meets all of the above Standards. Any company 'just slapping the Fairtrade badge on their product' without meeting the above standards for that product would be investigated and could even open themselves up to legal action.

Myth 3: "Only a small percentage of the price you pay for a Fairtrade product goes back to farmer"

This one comes up all the time and is based on the misunderstanding that Fairtrade farmers are paid a percentage of the retail price you pay for a product in a shop – this is not the case.

The retail price you pay as a consumer is determined entirely by the retailer.



While paying farmers and workers a percentage of the retail price might appear a good way to demonstrate the impact of Fairtrade from the consumer's perspective, it doesn't actually address the real inequities in conventional market arrangements.

The way Fairtrade works is that the producer organisation (such as a coffee co-operative) receives the Fairtrade price at the point where they sell to the next person in the supply chain (usually an exporter or importer). This is intended to ensure farmers can cover their costs no matter how low the world price for their commodity falls.

Myth 4: "Fairtrade locks farmers into a fixed price"

You may have read about the 'Fairtrade Minimum Price', this is indeed a real thing. But it's a safety net, calculated to cover farmers costs of production, and only coming into play in a worst case scenario. It is not something that locks farmers into a fixed price.

Let's use the example of Maria — a farmer from a Fairtrade coffee cooperative in Colombia — to explain.

In simple terms, if the market price of coffee falls below the Minimum Price set in the Fairtrade Standards, then under Fairtrade, Maria's cooperative would receive this guaranteed Fairtrade Minimum Price.

This safety net means Maria and other farmers in her coop can cover their production costs which helps them to predict their income and budget for the future. However — and this is really important — if the market price of coffee is above the Minimum Price, then the buyer must pay the higher price. And of course they can also negotiate higher prices on the basis of quality and other factors.

This is something that people often don't pick up on, assuming that under Fairtrade farmers receive a fixed, flat rate that can never change, even if the market price of the crop they're growing is high.

It's also worth remembering that in addition to the receiving Minimum Price or market price, Fairtrade producers receive a bonus-type payment called the 'Fairtrade Premium'. This is an extra sum of money that they decide democratically how best to spend. Some might spend it on improved training and farming techniques, others on building schools and medical clinics. Fairtrade doesn't dictate what it's spent on, it's entirely up to the producers, but in the interests of transparency Premium spending is audited.

Myth 5: "Our company ALWAYS pays farmers more than Fairtrade"

Occasionally we see companies making claims like 'we always pay our farmers more than Fairtrade'. But in light of the Minimum Price/market price explanation above, what do statements like this really mean?

Do they mean they pay more than the Fairtrade Minimum Price? What if the market price of the commodity is high and Fairtrade farmers are receiving the market price?

It's also worth remembering that when companies make claims like this without independent third party verification, we as consumers are essentially having to take them at their word. PACT coffee who claim on their website to "always pay our farmers 25% more than the Fairtrade rate" admit themselves that they currently

have no independent third party verification to ensure this happens or for the monitoring of conditions on the ground for the farmers they source from. The FAIRTRADE Mark on a product means that the Fairtrade ingredients in that product have been independently verified by FLOCERT an independent certifier accredited by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). FLOCERT can and do suspend or, in some cases, even decertify Fairtrade producer organisations if their audit shows that Fairtrade Standards are not being complied with. So when it comes to Fairtrade products, when we say that buying is supporting farmers to get a better deal, you don't just have to take our word for it.

Myth 6: "Fairtrade doesn't encourage farmers to improve quality"



This myth is occasionally levelled at Fairtrade coffee farmers. The argument goes that the safety net of the Fairtrade Minimum Price means there is little or no incentive for farmers to improve the quality of their crop.

But as mentioned above, producer groups are not tied in to receiving the Minimum Price — higher quality produce

can and does attract higher prices — so there is genuine incentive for Fairtrade farmers to innovate and improve quality.

In addition to the price they receive for their coffee, Fairtrade farmers also earn a Fairtrade Premium to invest in projects that will benefit their business or community. Coffee farmers must invest 25 per cent of this back into initiatives to improve quality and productivity, which are fundamental ways of increasing farmers' incomes.

Over the years, many Fairtrade coffee producers have won Cup of Excellence awards and several Fairtrade retail products, including coffees from Bewley's UK Grumpy Mule brand, Cafédirect, Wicked Coffee, Bailies Coffee Company, Percol, Tesco Finest and Asda Extra Special, have also won various taste awards — which is testament to the quality achieved. In total Fairtrade coffees have won over 28 Great Taste Awards in the last 3 years.

We'd like to claim them, but it's the farmers and the coffee manufacturers who deserve the accolades!



A HUG!



Feels good.

Dispels loneliness.

Overcomes fears.

Builds self-esteem (Wow! They actually want to hug me!)

Slows down ageing - huggers stay younger longer.

Eases tension.

Fights insomnia.

Keeps arm and shoulder muscles in condition!!

Is ecologically sound - does not upset the environment.

Is democratic - anyone is eligible for a hug.

Is portable.

Affirms physical being

Is energy-efficient and saves heat.

Makes impossible days possible.

Makes happy days happier.

A hug makes you feel good all over!!!

ALFAN
Foundation



Youth Concert

What? : The **Alfan Foundation** are hosting a musical fundraising event, that will have a mixed group of highly talented young musicians, including violinists, pianists, guitarists and more to entertain you.

When? : **Saturday 18th February, 7.30pm**

Where? : Aylesbury Methodist Church

There will be an interval of approximately 20 minutes, with refreshments.

We really hope you can come and support our event this February, for teacher workshops and to send the much-needed resources to the children we support.

Tickets will be on sale in the next coming weeks.

Please see **Viv Kemp** or **Anne Hanson**

www.alfanfoundation.org.uk

Twitter: @alfanfannie

Facebook: Alfan Foundation

Instagram: @alfanfoundation



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun 15 Jan	8.45am 10.30am	Rev Helen Kirk - Holy Communion Service Mr David Neville - Morning Worship
Sun 22 Jan	10.30am	Rev Helen Kirk - Morning Worship
Tues 24 Jan	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship: Rev Helen Kirk
Thurs 26 Jan	7.30pm	Bible Study
Sat 28 Jan	4.00 - 6.00pm 7.00pm	Messy Church Karibuni Quiz Night at Fairford Leys Community Centre
Sun 29 Jan	10.30am	Mr David Neville - Morning Worship
Sat 4 Feb	8.00pm	SOS: 'Our Tunes' Evening at the Kemp's
Sun 5 Feb	10.30am	Rev Helen Kirk - Holy Communion Service
Tues 7 Feb	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship: Rosemarie & Robert Bucknell - slides on the Orkneys
Wed 8 Feb	2.00 - 3.30pm	Bible Study
Sun 12 Feb	10.30am	Mr Ken Harris - Morning Worship
Wed 15 Feb	2.00 - 3.30pm	Bible Study
Sat 18 Feb	7.30pm	Alfan Foundation Youth Concert
Sun 19 Feb	8.45am 10.30am	Rev Keith Edwards - Holy Communion Service Mr Peter Honeyball - Morning Worship
Tues 21 Feb	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship: Mr Peter Honeyball - talk
Thurs 23 Feb	7.30 - 9.00pm	Bible Study
Sat 25 Feb	4.00 - 6.00pm	Messy Church
Sun 26 Feb	10.30am	Rev Helen Kirk - Morning Worship
Frid 3 March	Women's World Day of Prayer - venues & times available nearer the date	
Sun 5 March	10.30am	Rev Helen Kirk - Holy Communion Service
Tues 7 March	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship: Mr Ken Harris - talk
Sun 12 March	10.30am	Mr Arthur Sara - Family & Parade Service
Wed 15 March	2.00 - 3.30pm	Bible Study
Sat 18 March	4.00 - 6.00pm	Messy Church
Sun 19 March	8.45am 10.30am	Rev Helen Kirk - Holy Communion Service Aylesbury Creativity Group - Morning Worship
Tues 21 March	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship: Rev Wallace Edwards
Thurs 23 March	7.30 - 9.00pm	Bible Study
Sat 25 March	6.00pm	Caribbean Evening
Sun 26 March	10.30am	Rev Helen Kirk - Morning Worship
Sun 2 April	6.00pm	Circuit Choral Service - Olivet to Calvary
Tues 4 April	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship: Charles Pope Ladies' Choir
Sat 29 April	'Celebration of Talents' entertainment extravaganza	

Aylesbury Bible Study 2017
 Wednesday 2.00 - 3.30pm & Thursday 7.30 – 9.00pm
Focusing on Paul's letter to the church in Philippi



January	Wed 11 th & Thurs 26 th	Philippians 2: 18-30 'Taking a lead'
February	Wed 8 th & Thurs 23 rd	Phil 3:1-11 'Putting our trust in ... ?'
March	Wed 15 th & Thurs 23 rd	Phil 3:12-4:1 'Pressing on towards the goal'
May	Wed 17 th & Thurs 18 th	Phil 4:2-9: 'How to survive a local church'
June	Wed 14 th & Thurs 22 nd	Phil 4:10-23: 'Caring and sharing'

If you are looking for some challenging discussion,
 some help to understand the nitty gritty of the Bible,
 or you just want the opportunity to ask all the questions
 you've never dared to ask, please come along.

**You don't have to commit to all the sessions;
 just come to what you can.
 All are welcome**

The next LINK magazine will be the
 March - April 2017 issue.

**Please send in all contributions by
 Friday 3rd March 2017.**



To make sure I receive them, please send them to both addresses below:

Jennie Torpey: jennietorpey@ntlworld.com

AMC Office: office@aylesburymethodists.org.uk

or I can type them up for you if you let me have them in time.

J TEAM



Welcome to the J Team pages

As we welcome in the New Year, we remember Christmas being a time to celebrate and that God came through Jesus to be with us. We don't need to let the joy leave us just because Christmas is over, we can remember all year long that He is with us.

One way we can get closer to God this year is through prayer. You can use your own words to pray, you can also use the Lord's prayer, or learn some prayers. Here is a prayer you could use at mealtimes:

"God is great, God is good,
let us thank Him for our food,
by His hands, we are fed,
give us Lord our daily bread." Amen

The 5 Finger Prayer

Another
idea for
prayers:

Thumb: Those closest to you, your family.

Pointer: Those that point you in the right direction (teachers, doctors, priests) ask for wisdom & support.

Index: (tallest) Those that lead us, (Government) ask for guidance & wisdom.

Ring: (weakest) Those that are weak, in trouble, or in pain. We cannot pray too much for them.

Pinkie: (smallest) Our prayers for ourselves & our own needs.



At Christmas we also heard about angels, how they spoke to Mary and to the shepherds. The bible tells many stories about angels. Can you remember any, or find some in the bible?

All about Angels

Find these words in the puzzle.

Angels come from **HEAVEN** to bring a **MESSAGE** from **GOD**.

CHERUBIM, **SERAPHIM**, and **ARCHANGELS** are kinds of angels.

GABRIEL and **MICHAEL** are two angels who are mentioned in the Bible.

A	R	C	H	A	N	G	E	L	S
A	K	H	O	B	Z	I	P	A	E
U	H	E	A	V	E	N	T	X	R
J	M	R	E	G	O	D	Y	H	A
O	C	U	Q	G	I	R	F	S	P
G	A	B	R	I	E	L	L	W	H
V	M	I	C	H	A	E	L	N	I
D	E	M	E	S	S	A	G	E	M

Colouring In



John 3:16

for God so lo **V**ed the world
that He g **A**ve His
on **L**y Son that
whoever b **E**lieves
i **N**Him
should no **T**
per **I**sh but have
eter **N**al
lif **E**

One of my favourite charities is Medecins San Frontieres - Doctors without borders. As a former Army nurse, I would have been privileged to have served in war torn countries, helping to save lives that are forgotten daily. Northern Ireland was the furthest that we would be sent to in the 1970s. I applaud every volunteer who goes to help.

Master Creator

Father God, You gave me eyes
That I may see all Your beautiful creation.
So that I may see my brothers and sisters;
Not only those that walk beside me daily and
Maybe sit with me at the workplace.

But so I can see my brothers and sisters
Who are starving because the crops have failed;
Disease is rife because the only water
Is undrinkable.

Father God, You gave me ears
That I may hear beautiful music and singing.
The wind rustles; the leaves and
The meadows whisper
Your words to me.

But I can also hear children crying in pain,
As another bomb is dropped,
And another bullet is fired,
And another life ends.

Father God You gave me legs
That I may walk and run throughout this earth;
To climb the highest mountains
To see the glory of your creation.
Help me to walk in the mud and rubble
Of a bomb site that is now a tomb,
So that lives can be saved.

Father God, You gave me hands
To use for work, and
To close in prayer to Your Holy Name.
They can touch and feel
Each of my brothers and sisters.
Let my hands be used to carry Your children,
Lifted high, far from the pain of
War or famine.

Let my hands dry the tears
That fall from a mother's eyes
As another baby is lost
To the enemy.

Father God, You gave to me a voice
So that I can talk to my brothers and sisters,
And tell them about You -
Tell them about Your Awesome Love,
Sing hymns of Praise,
And tell everyone
Of Your Glory.

So, Father God, thank You
For all of me.
When You created humankind
You knew exactly what You were doing.
But then You are the
Master Creator.

© 2017 Babs



Whitechapel Mission.



In the Autumn, the Mission normally receives vast quantities of food from Church Harvest Festivals, mainly from the London Churches and those in easy reach like our own. This year the London churches were directed to collect food donations for the 'Jungle ' in Calais, leaving Whitechapel very short of goods to see them through the winter.

The rise in rough sleepers is already having an impact on the numbers who are turning to the Mission for a meal; this has already stretched its resources, and they find themselves very short of basics so early in the winter.

We are therefore asking for your help, and on Sunday 22nd January Peter and I will be in the vestibule to receive any item from the list below you feel you can donate.

Also, should you find after receiving Christmas gifts that you have one warm jumper too many or socks and gloves, we would love to take them off your hands.



Your budget might only allow you to buy 1 tin of beans, but every gift is welcome.
Thanking you in advance,
Ruth and Peter Watkins

Baked Beans
Plum Tomatoes
Sugar
Biscuits
Squash



Please buy the cheapest to make your money go further - supermarket own brands are great.



ADVENTURES WITH MY SUITCASE

Next time I book a coach tour holiday, I've a good mind to use a different name. The writer, P.G.Wodehouse, invented a character called Psmith. Perhaps I should become Angela Psmith in future. After all the psalms begin with a P.

It happens nearly every time. I wait patiently for my case to be delivered to my room or I go out for a short stroll but when my luggage fails to arrive after about an hour I venture to the hotel reception to see what has happened to it. There the receptionist, manager and/or the coach driver suddenly panic in varying degrees.

Last Christmas, I predicted difficulties, with a laugh, to a lady, over our welcoming glass of mulled wine. Sure enough, I was soon back downstairs, confronting a puzzled porter left with one lonely suitcase on his trolley.

"That's mine," I said.

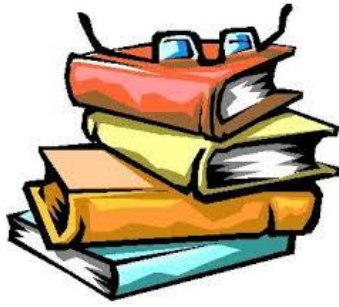
"Thank Goodness," he said, with a sigh of relief, "I've just had it rejected by Mr and Mrs Smith, on the top floor. The trouble was they had decided to share a case and he had obviously been convinced that they must have two.

Very often the hotel staff try hard to be matchmakers. It's not so bad when they leave Mr Smith's holdall by my door, but annoying when my things are left forgotten in a distant corner at the back, beside his.

The advent of computers and key cards has caused even more confusion. On one occasion, I had gone to bed early, on the first night of my holiday, only to have my door opened and the light switched on by two apologetic female guests. We had been given the wrong keys when we arrived. We exchanged them that evening, but next morning the computer had to be reprogrammed to allow us to re-enter our new rooms.

Then, there was the day when I felt like Goldilocks. I used my key card to enter a room which had other people's belongings in it. After that card had been sorted out, I entered a second room, only to find other people already there. Returning to reception for the third time, I saw that my case was still waiting to be carried to my room. That day, I took no chances; when I was assigned to the room that was to be truly mine, I picked up my case and took it there myself.

Angela M. Smith.



Tales from a College Manager

A series of 9 tales

2. The Long Weekend

Life as a college lecturer is very different to that of a schoolteacher. The college day is a 12-hour day starting at 09.00 and ending at 21.00. It's divided into three 4-hour sessions of Morning, Afternoon and Evening giving fifteen sessions per week. The college lecturer has to be employed for ten of these sessions or 40 hours per week (Employment Law). Of these 40 hours, the maximum number of teaching hours is 25 with 5 hours for meal breaks and 10 hours for preparation of lessons or marking of students' work. As the lecturer progresses up the salary scale and obtains promotion to course leader, section leader and head of department, his salary is increased but his teaching hours are cut in order for him to undertake staff supervisory duties. Every lecturer is allowed to select the ten sessions that he wishes to work in college. It's a mathematical nightmare for the College Manager who is responsible for the production of a college timetable.

Fortunately, most lecturers are happy with teaching full-time students in a nine-to-five job from Monday to Friday. However, there is a group of specialist lecturers that require a different pattern such as the one shown below.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning		////////////////////	////////////////////	////////////////////	////////////////////
Afternoon	////////////////////	////////////////////	////////////////////	////////////////////	
Evening	////////////////////		////////////////////		

This group consists of industrial experts such as engineers and computer programmers that are required for evening classes in Motor Vehicle Maintenance or to cater for specific needs of local firms. They feel that they are entitled to a long weekend from Friday 13.00 to Monday 13.00. My personal timetable often included this long weekend but somehow I never benefited from the Travel Industry's long weekend breaks - a device that I am sure they invented to meet our needs.

Even today, if you walk through an FE college on a Friday afternoon, you will find that most of the classrooms are empty. This is not because lecturers don't want to work on that afternoon but because local Training Managers don't want to release their trainees on Fridays in case they 'bunk-off' to watch the cricket at Lords or undertake some other more interesting activity. In my time, the most popular 'Day Release' for Training Managers was Wednesday. Alternatively, the 'Day Release' was split into two halves on Monday/Wednesday afternoons or Tuesday/Thursday afternoons. By forcing the trainees to work every morning in the week, the Training Managers had much more control over their attendance at college.

The mission of an FE college is to prepare students with the skills necessary for full-time employment. It therefore follows that Teaching Staff should be recruited from the Local Industrial/Commercial Base.

My appointment from a Sixth Form College by my first Head of Department was frowned upon by the local FE Inspector. In spite of the fact that I had been running computer clubs in schools for six years and that I possessed an 'Ed Cert' (a very rare teaching qualification for college lecturers in the 1970s), the LEA were reluctant to accept the college's decision. Their objections included the fact that I had no computer qualifications nor had ever worked in business, so how was it possible for me to carry out my duties as a Course Leader of Computer Studies in a Business Studies Department?

It was decided that I should enrol on an M.Sc. course at Hatfield Polytechnic as soon as possible. This 'Day Release' course included 2 years at Hatfield studying computers followed by 1 year working in a local computer department. The LEA would pay my course fees providing I squeezed my ten sessions into four working days - no long weekend for me at the start of my college career. It was hard work but I was pleased I did it because 2 years after my graduation I was granted my sabbatical term to improve my COBOL programming skills. The priesthood is not the only place where staff require sabbaticals after 5 years in the job. Unfortunately this perk had disappeared by the time I had completed 10 years in the Further Education sector.

Dave Rogers

(Coming next LINK: 'Night Duty')

Trees

In 1990, when I moved to where I now live, I planted 2 trees in the front of the house. Both were saplings. I planted them either side of the driveway. I really love trees and have, in the past, planted a plum tree that I cultivated from a damson plum stone and two rowan trees - one, alas I had to give away - but I have heard that it is thriving. I also planted a very large ash tree that dominates my back garden, but is a magnet for most of the birds in the area, who all play very nicely together in amongst its branches.



The trees that are in my front garden are a beautiful pink Magnolia and a Chinese Cherry tree. Both were planted at the same time. They were at the same stage of development. They were also given the same amount of care, hydration, pruning, food and love. I even made sure that I had hung bird feeders on each tree (the same amount, of course). I always chatted to both trees whenever I was gardening;

sometimes I even sang to them - not so good an idea, as I am not very tuneful!

But, I treated them equally, as I did my two children. Obviously, there were some differences that I had to accommodate in growing them. In the early stages, they were hard work. One was fine to be left to its own devices, whereas the Magnolia was very needy, wanting to be fussed about.

When the blossom was out, the Cherry tree would let go of the blooms with gay abandon - letting the wind blow them everywhere.

The Magnolia tree was so different; it almost preened itself as passers-by made comments on its beauty. Haughtily tossing back the flowers, as if it was a crowning head of hair.



The two trees stand about 18ft apart. Their branches nearly touch each other over the driveway. Each goes about its own business of showing off God's beautiful creation in its own way. Although each is part of the Garden Family, neither one is interested in the other.

How many of us have children that are just like my Magnolia and Cherry? Children that are so close, but neither interested in the other. Sometimes, I hope and pray that their branches might just touch, even for a little while and then they will really get to know each other.



KARIBUNI QUIZ NIGHT 2017

JOIN US ON THE

28TH JANUARY

7pm

Tickets £10

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Karibuni Children: Transforming Young Kenyan Lives



THE NEW YEAR

'With God all things are possible'
Matthew 19:26

Jon Gordon offers practical New Year's resolutions:

- 1) 'Stay positive. You can listen to the cynics and believe success is impossible, or believe "with God all things are possible."' 2) Each day when you awake complete this statement: "My purpose is _____." 3) Take a morning walk of gratitude. It creates a fertile mind for success. You can't be stressed and thankful at the same time, and when you combine gratitude with physical exercise you give yourself a double-boost of positive energy and natural anti-depressants. 4) Instead of being disappointed about where you are, think optimistically about where you're going. 5) Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a college-kid with a maxed-out charge card! 6) Believe that everything happens for a reason, and good things come from challenging experiences. 7) Don't waste energy on gossip...past issues...negative thoughts...and things you can't control. Invest in the positive, present moment. 8) Mentor someone and be mentored by someone. 9) Live with the 3 E's: Energy. Enthusiasm. Empathy. 10) Remember there's no substitute for hard work. 11) Zoom-Focus: ask yourself, "What are the three most important things I need to do today?" 12) Implement the "No complaining" rule. Complaining is like vomiting; afterwards you feel better but people around you feel sick! 13) Read more books than you did last year. 14) Get more rest. You can't replace sleep with a double latte!
- 15) Before bed complete these statements: "I'm thankful for____" "Today I accomplished____" 16) Think of your mind like a garden. If you weed the negative and feed the positive for one day it doesn't do much, but when you do it every day you create a magnificent garden.'

Source: The Word for Today, a daily devotional, produced free of charge by United Christian Broadcasters. For your regular quarterly copy write to UCB at FREEPOST RLTX-ABUL-GRAR, United Christian Broadcasters, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JF, or telephone 0845 60 40 401.

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**Invitation to join the Circuit Choir for the forthcoming
Circuit Choral Service**

OLIVET TO CALVARY by J H Maunder

**Passion Sunday Evening, 2nd April 2017, 6.00 pm
at Aylesbury Methodist Church
and on Palm Sunday Evening, 9th April 2017, 6.30 pm
at Tring Parish Church.**

**Singers will be most welcome, music scores will be provided.
Rehearsals will take place on most Friday evenings at 8.00 p.m., mainly
at Aylesbury Methodist Church.
A precise schedule will be issued early January.**

**To confirm your interest and for more information,
please contact
Brenda Horne on 01296 428580
e-mail: brendaj.horne@gmail.com**



as long as it takes

**Our next event is our
Charity Stall
with
Tombola and Children's Lucky Dip
in Market Square
on Saturday 22nd July.**

**If you have any donations of unwanted gifts/tombola prizes or items
suitable for the Lucky Dip,
please give them to:**

**Jennie Torpey (581414), Pauline Noble (484940)
or Sandie Steeden (331278)**

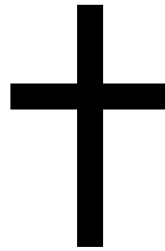


*Vale of Aylesbury
Methodist Circuit*

OLIVET TO CALVARY

by

J H MAUNDER



**An act of worship for Congregation and Choir
recalling some of the incidents in the last days
of the Saviour's life on earth.**

**Presented by the Circuit Choir together with
the Choir of Tring Parish Church and friends
from other local churches and choirs under
the direction of Cliff Brown**

Led by the Rev Helen Kirk

**Aylesbury Methodist Church
Sunday 2nd April 2017 @ 6.00 pm**

**(Repeated at Sts. Peter & Paul, Tring on
Sunday 9th April @ 6.30 pm)**

EVERYONE WELCOME

Refreshments will be served in the Hall after the service.