

CONTACT

CHISLEHURST METHODIST CHURCH
EASTER 2011

Maundy Thursday Holy Communion 12.45 Wesley Room

**Good Friday "Walk of Witness" starts 09.30 St. Mary's RC
Church**

Easter Day 1030 Holy Communion

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A couple of weeks ago I made an interesting visit to one of our local schools. I had been invited to Edgebury School to bless their new school garden and take assembly. Special guests at the blessing ceremony were the husband of the late Maureen Brown and their adult children, neighbours of Eileen Parish. Their garden backs on to the school and in Maureen's memory they had made a gift to the school for the

development of the garden. A dozen or so children had been selected to show the visitors around the garden and I was very fortunate to have as my enthusiastic guide Naomi Samuel a member of our Junior Church. In the garden are raised vegetable beds, some sown already with spring onions and radishes, and there were lots of daffodils in bloom from bulbs the children had planted last Autumn. The children were clearly enjoying their garden so much already and it was a wonderful example of the continuity of life, of new life emerging, following the pain of loss and bereavement, and of healing taking place through the joy of God's creation.



Junior Church enjoying making a banner for Easter

As we gathered for the blessing of the garden, Head teacher, teachers, pupils, PTA members, Chair of The Chislehurst Society and Maureen Brown's family we turned first to the east...

We turn to the East ...

In the east we see every morning
the rising of the sun
the sun which gives light, and warmth and power
for the sun in every growing thing...
We praise you O God.

We turn to the South...

In the south we think of countries much hotter than ours
in Africa, India, Peru and South Sea islands
growing exotic fruits juicy pineapples and mangoes, delicious bananas, cocoa for
chocolate
We praise you God for all the wonderful variety of foods grown for our delight.

We turn to the West

In the West each evening we see the setting of the sun
the world rests
but in the darkness of the soil
seeds put down roots essential for strong growth
We praise you O God for the rest of the night essential for healthy growth

We turn to the North
to our own country here in the northern hemisphere
for all the varieties of flowers and vegetables that we can grow
red roses and radishes, orange hot pokers and carrots, yellow daffodils and bright
green cabbages,
We praise you O God for the beauty of our world.
We thank you for the vision of our Maureen Brown Eco Garden and
for all those who have given and worked for its creation.
We pray that our whole school at Edgebury will be blessed by the garden and
that we will find here peace, joy, fun and delight in your creation.
Amen.

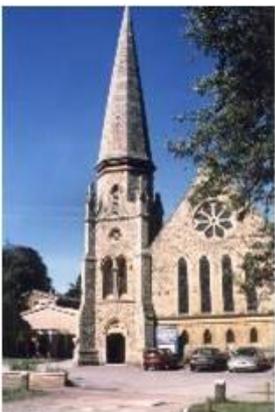
At an Easter assembly at Dorset Road School, Mottingham I
took in the egg cup and flowers shown in the photograph.
Traditionally in the Church, Easter was a time of Baptism.
People would prepare themselves during Lent and then be
baptised early on Easter Day. They were baptised into new life
with Christ on that Easter morning. The flowers, the egg shell,
the water and the egg cup which was given to me at my own
infant baptism, all speak in their own way of new life,
resurrection, renewal, celebration and joy. This can be ours this
Easter time and is God's gift to the whole world.



THE CHISLEHURST VISION

Barbara Calvert

Change and Continuity at our Church



The other day I had a phone call from a member at Orpington Methodist Church. They were calling to invite me to their house group to talk about *The Chislehurst Vision*. Initially I was bit taken aback wondering what sort of vision this was but then I realised they were eager to hear about the vision we have for the new life of our church here in Chislehurst. After all the hard work over several years, the end is in sight and we are thinking, reflecting, praying and planning for the new life of the church post refurbishment.

In some ways, life in the new church will be very different and in other ways it will be exactly the same. One of the favourite sayings of the Greek philosophers was:

Πάντα ῥεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει *Everything flows, nothing stands still.*

Other philosophers argued that nothing changes. And we can see in our own lives that both are true – everything changes, nothing changes. Initially it will feel strange and

unfamiliar coming in through a new entrance, new tiling on the floor, new lighting, our familiar pew corner gone, but in other ways life remains exactly the same. We will return to worship in a beautiful sacred space we know so well to live out 'Our Calling' of worship, service, learning and caring and evangelism. Our basic faith continues but there always has to be a refreshment of what that means.

At Easter we celebrate the new life of the resurrected Christ, not as a one off historical event but as a constant, ongoing experience of new birth and renewal. As the reopening of our new church draws nearer there is a growing excitement and sense of anticipation of all the possibilities that will be opened up for us of sharing one of the most beautiful Methodist Churches in the country with the whole community for generations to come.

Our vision of the transformation of our church from a private place of worship into a public sacred space for all is soon to become a reality.

Reopening Sunday 4th September 2011

The Church will reopen for our first service, our Covenant Service, on Sunday 4th September.

The Methodist Collection of Modern Christian Art

'Come and See'

Saturday 17th September – Saturday 29th October

We have selected twenty three wonderful pieces from this very prestigious art collection to celebrate the reopening of our church. The timing of the exhibition is to coincide with the Chislehurst Festival so we are planning to run our Café Imperial and be a major event/venue for the festival. We have arranged a programme of speakers during the weeks of the exhibition who will come with a variety of expertise to help us get the most out of these wonderful works of art.

Celebration Weekend Saturday/Sunday 1st/2nd October 2011

Saturday 1st October – a circuit celebration. The Orpington and Chislehurst Circuit have been very generous in their support of our church refurbishment. This is an opportunity to celebrate together with the whole circuit. The doors will open at 10am (as they will do every day of the art exhibition except Sundays and Mondays) and from 11 – 12noon we will have a celebration in music, song and dance. This will be followed by a buffet lunch for all. Gillian Pengelly, former president of Women's Network, will lead us in the dance and will also be running a dance workshop in the afternoon. From 4 – 6pm it will be Messy Church as our MC joins in the celebrations.

Sunday 2nd October – a Service of Holy Communion, Church Anniversary and Gift Day. Guest preacher: Rev'd Ken Street, former General Secretary of the Methodist Property Division.

Premiere String Quartet

Musicians Rachel Threlfall and Martin Bloor (husband and wife) have recently moved to Chislehurst. They have performed one or two concerts at the Ripley Arts Centre and are keen to offer top quality musical concerts in the local area. Rachel and Martin

will be performing their first concert in our church on Friday 23rd September as part of the Chislehurst Festival and are now preparing for us a programme of concerts for 2012, with other musicians as well. We are anticipating the programme beginning with an afternoon's New Years Day Concert of Viennese music – followed of course by tea and Viennese gâteau!

Change and continuity into the future...

We have many other plans of course, and look forward to the whole church, young and old alike, sharing in the development of the new life of the church, not least of which concern the labyrinth which Jacqui wrote about in the last edition of *Contact*. We will be putting on special labyrinth prayer days and using the labyrinth in all sorts of inspiring and creative ways. So many exciting opportunities await us in using our church in new ways for generations to come. We are really encouraged to hear that the word is getting around Chislehurst that here, in the middle of the community, will be a church continuing to celebrate and worship and grow in mission and discipleship but also a church open and welcoming to serve the community.

The Church ultimately is not a building but a people committed to exploring what it means to be the people of God. What our heritage has given us is one of the most beautiful Methodist Churches in the country. But it has been hidden. Now we have the wonderful opportunity to share it and see its beauty and potential as never before.

“Come and See”

The Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art

The Methodist church collection of Modern Art was started way back in the early 1960's by Dr John Gibbs and Rev Douglas Woollen. Dr Gibbs thought the religious art and church furnishings were poor and he took it on himself to suggest an imaginative venture was commenced which would mean the Methodist Church had a collection of paintings, sculptures and church furnishings.

He called on Rev Douglas Woollen, who he knew was interested in visual arts, to put together a collection of contemporary religious works of art. Rev Woollen started his work in 1962 and visited galleries, contacted known artists and visited countless exhibitions.

The very first 'tour' visited thirty towns and was accompanied by an exhibition on church design and furnishings which were mostly photographs and design drawings, which makes me think of our own refurbishment and our gallery of 'then and now' photographs. We are moving forwards with the Collection.

The Collection was originally intended to be housed at Kingswood School in Bath ...how lucky we are that this decision was not permanent!

Today there are well over 40 works of art in the Collection, and it is growing all the time, this is not a static collection. The steering group (Barbara, Anthony and I) spent

time choosing 22 pieces from the Collection to visit Chislehurst in September and October this year. We have been meeting every other week to plan, and organise what we hope will be a great reopening of our church starting with this marvellous collection. Barbara and I spent a happy afternoon cutting up cereal packets to make model boards and planning which paintings to hang on the back of each other, which to share a board and which to hang alone, for best effect, unaware that another work was being added to the collection as we worked.

The new piece 'Christ Writes in the Dust' is by Clive Hicks-Jenkins a Welsh artist. We have asked for it to be included for us to display, and we had no sooner got over the excitement of adding this piece than another piece was commissioned which should be finished in August so we have asked for this one as well if it is available. This will be the first time these two paintings will have been shown together with the Collection to the public, and we feel very privileged to be allowed so to do, so don't miss this first time opportunity to see them at Chislehurst Methodist Church.

During the time the Collection is with us, there will be an exciting selection of events some of them are listed below, but watch out for others as they are announced. These will cover a wide range of themes, some visual, some hands on, some listening, but all extremely interesting and each one different.

At 10am on the 17th September the doors will open for you to view our choice of artwork. I will kick off events from 12-1pm with a walk and talk through the pieces which I'm entitling 'Come and See...a little bit more'. This will be a contemplative introduction to the Modern Art Collection with information and insights into some of the art works on display. I have done this on several occasions around the country but this will be the first time with the actual pieces in front of me so I am looking forward to being able to share this with you all.

On the 1st and 2nd October we will have a Celebration Weekend. On the Saturday a Circuit celebration with music and dance and we are hoping to have lots of involvement by local children, followed by lunch. In the afternoon we will be joined by Mrs Gillian Pengelly (former Women's Network President) to lead us in a workshop of European folk dance – Gill is very experienced in leading dance and this workshop will explore the use of simple circle dance and movement in celebration and worship using music and steps from a variety of cultures and traditions. No previous experience is needed.

More will be announced in the next *Contact*, but for now please keep your diaries free for the six weeks from 17th September to 29th October in order that you don't miss some really exciting 'firsts' for Chislehurst.

Following hot on the heels of the Collection, we will start taking bookings for 2012, not for the Olympics and not at prices of over £2,000! But for an exciting programme of events utilizing your new premises...watch this space...

Jacqui Hicks

CHURCH LUNCH Following the success of recent Church Lunches, there will be a lunch on Sunday 1 May on what promises to be a regal weekend. Coronation Chicken will be the main dish (a suitably royal vegetarian alternative will be on offer).

FAIR ON THE COMMON - SATURDAY 11TH JUNE 2011

The Church will have a stall at this annual event when we will hope to sell **CAKES:** large and small, biscuits, pies, puddings, sweets, jams, preserves, marmalade, chutney – all that sort of thing which you are so good at making, please **PLANTS:** grown on from the May sale **CRAFT** goods – some knitted and stitched items we know are in the pipeline : do you have a saleable speciality?
Details to follow in the weekly notices, but delivery to church on the Friday, or early Saturday morning. Get in touch with Adrienne (020 8467 2038) or Gillian (020 867 6906) with any enquiries in the meantime.

BRING AND BUY BOOK SALE

The Book Stall will be open on Thursday June 16th from 11.30am until 8pm
Tea or Coffee and comfy chairs will be available while you browse
Proceeds in aid of the Church refurbishment fund
Please tell your friends and neighbours

BOYS BRIGADE DO MODERN ART

Jacqui Hicks



Our three BB Company Section boys (William, Joe (pictured) and Liam) are in the process of creating large works of art inspired by The Entry into Jerusalem painting by Norman Adams from the Methodist Collection of Modern Art. The boys discussed Mr Adams work and thought about the Bible story of Jesus being welcomed into Jerusalem, then planned their artwork

to reflect what it would possibly be like if Jesus came to London and how he would be welcomed today.

The finished pieces will be displayed in church when we have the Art Collection on display later in the year.

This is part of the Spiritual section of Badge work the boys are doing at the moment.



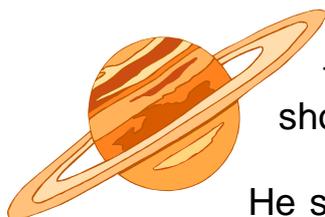
Image: **Norman Adams**
Christ's entry into Jerusalem from the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art.
© Trustees For Methodist Church Purposes, used by permission of Trustees of the Collection.

A PLANETARIUM? – IN THE CHURCH HALL ??

A mobile planetarium visited the church hall on the 8th February and several of the church members brought their children to join our BB Company and another BB Company to get more familiar with the amazing night sky that God created. Below are one boy's thoughts about the evening.

Astrodome – by William Cullen - Anchor Boy.

A man unzipped a huge black bubble in the hall and we went inside it. We sat on the floor and the grown-ups sat on chairs.



The man turned the lights off and showed us a film of a real rocket taking off. Then we were up in the stars watching for meteorites and shooting stars. I saw about 10 shooting stars.

He showed us lots of planets like Jupiter, Mars and Earth from the stars and we saw the Sun really close up.

One planet had a crater so big you could fit the Earth in it.

We saw lots of stars and one was a shape like a saucepan called The Plough and we found the North Star.

It was fantastic.

By William age 7

INGLEBY WAY HOUSEGROUP

In some respects, our housegroup still feels “new” despite the fact that it’s now been going for over two years. We started very small, and grew slowly in the first year, and then burgeoned when a sudden influx of newcomers to CMC joined us recently. Because we have some families with young children, making it difficult for both partners to attend evening meetings, we agreed to alternate one month of Sunday lunch with the next being a Friday evening study-cum-discussion-cum-scripture songs-cum-prayer workshop – oh! Not forgetting the obligatory hot chocolate finale!

Members are very welcome to any (or none!) of the sessions – the idea is to encourage one another and share the burdens of life, not add to them by demanding 100% attendance. We do have one rule – that members must feel free to express their doubts, fears and triumphs in an environment that is confidential, non-judgmental, AND supportive.

We generally have no difficulty getting people to talk, even when the subject is challenging: getting them to stop is an altogether different matter! The sessions are always lively, and members are generally surprised by the lateness of the hour before they feel ready to call a halt. If you would like to join us, please ask us for a list of dates for 2011. (Mike & Barbara Oakes – 020 8467 7708)

MONDAY FOCUS

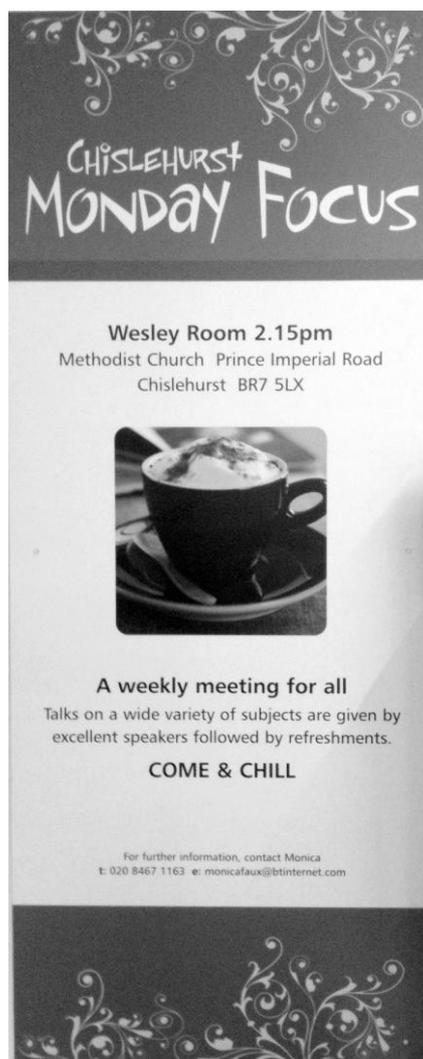
Monica Faux

The history of the Monday meeting dates back to the nineteenth century. In those far off days Monday was a particularly dreary day for women. It was always an unwritten rule that Mondays were WASH DAYS. It goes without saying that there were no short cuts, apart from sending washing to the laundry and of course that was not within many people's means.

Somebody in the Methodist Church had the divine inspiration that on a Monday afternoon there should be a women's meeting starting 3pm onwards. The meeting had a variety of names throughout the country - the Women's Bright Hour, the Women's Own, the Women's Fellowship etcetera. Older people will remember that generally schools did not come out until 4.30pm. and until the 1950's it was unusual for married women to have paid employment; thus these meetings were well supported.

However, once married women had careers the meetings lost the younger element and those who were still working at home formed Young Wives' groups. In 1989 when I arrived in Chislehurst both groups were thriving, and were affiliated to Network.

Over the years what has been remarkable is that there has never been a "rota". Chairman, treasurer, pianist, tea providers, washers-up attend every week - all essential to the success of the Monday meeting. Long may it continue!



CHISLEHURST
Monday Focus

Wesley Room 2.15pm
Methodist Church Prince Imperial Road
Chislehurst BR7 5LX



A weekly meeting for all
Talks on a wide variety of subjects are given by
excellent speakers followed by refreshments.

COME & CHILL

For further information, contact Monica
t: 020 8467 1163 e: monicafaux@btinternet.com

A few years ago I attended a meeting at Central Hall, Westminster on Fresh Expressions of Church. This inspired me to look afresh at our Monday meeting. First, I approached a publishing firm to discuss a poster. They were exceptionally helpful, pointing out that although the new title of Monday Focus was twenty-first century, the picture of a cup of tea with biscuits was decidedly not. They wanted a glass of wine and a bunch of grapes! We compromised with a cappuccino. On seeing the poster, Arthur pointed out that it was against the Trades' Descriptions Act. I promptly bought a packet marked 'cappuccino' – just in case, you understand, that it was requested! I also introduced committee meetings, which had not been active for some years. These were held in the Caffè Nero.

Next I was very keen for the meeting to be for everyone, not just lady pensioners. Our Lord Jesus Christ never encouraged segregation even though Judaism has always separated men and women in worship. Nowadays whenever a particular subject/speaker appeals, our numbers are added to by a wider age group. Everyone is made to feel very welcome.

I am currently putting together a programme for the Summer months. Our meeting is extremely appreciative of all the speakers who so generously give of their time and expertise, making my job so much easier. Many, many thanks.

IONA PILGRIMAGE Barbara and David will be leading a pilgrimage to the island of Iona from 3-10 June 2011. The art historian Kenneth Clarke regarded Iona as the most Holy place on earth – and he had visited plenty. It featured in his documentary “Civilisation”.

The week on Iona week will offer an experience of life in the community, living and worshipping together in the Abbey, exploring the island and the possibility of a boat trip to Staffa.

The theme of the week will be “*Colonies of heaven: Columba and Christianity*”, an exploration of the nature of Columba’s faith and how it is expressed and lived in prayer, presence, pastoral care, poetry and community. How do we build ‘colonies of heaven’? The week is led by the minister, writer, broadcaster and academic Ian Bradley.

ON THE WAY TO IONA – a reflection inspired by W.B.Yeats, The lake Isle of Innisfree in anticipation of our June pilgrimage to Iona

I will arise and go now, and go to Columba’s isle
And I shall have a room there
beside the Abbey grey
Twelve pilgrims will be travelling and
a baby small
To live with God by Iona’s distant
shore

And we shall have some peace
there, for peace comes dropping
slow
Dropping from the morning’s hymn
of praise within the Abbey walls
Where noon’s a time for thinking of
the centuries of prayer
And evenings full of peace and joy

We will arise and leave our busy days
To walk on lonely pathways around the island small
To take a boat and sail to Fingal’s cave
Have time to pray and find God in the deep hearts core.



Kathryn Paszyk

LENT REFLECTION

'I am . . . the bread of life, the light of the world, the gate, the good shepherd, the way, the vine'

During lent, the Thursday lunchtime services were penitential, fitting the Lenten season. They were also built around meditations based on the 'I am' sayings in John's gospel. John's technique is to use each 'I am' as a basis for both a meditation and a miracle. We stuck to the meditation.

It would, however, be quite a mistake if we were to treat these simple-sounding images in any casual or sentimental way. Each is a profound saying, encapsulating teaching which we find in the synoptic gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke. In John, the teaching of Jesus is both distilled into these basic images and at the same time is expressed in the form of meditations or discourses delivered to John's community in the early church. Each meditation is a reflection on who Jesus is, that is, on who the resurrected Jesus is known to be within the life of the resurrection community, in this case, John's congregation.

We remember the story in Jewish scripture, our Old Testament, when God refused to give Moses his name and yet revealed more than a name about himself. Moses wanted to be able to tell the Egyptians what his God was called in the hope that this would give him some authority over the Egyptians so that they might agree to release the tribes of Israel from their captivity. God refused, perhaps partly because to know a person's name gave you power over them. No-one, neither the Egyptians nor Moses, could have power over God. But what God did instead was to reveal something much more profound about what it was to be God. God said, 'I am what I am'. It is this expression which is deliberately echoed here in John's gospel. The writer makes it very clear that his faith relationship with the risen Christ confirms the faith shown by the disciples of Jesus - for example, Thomas who confessed to the risen Christ, 'my Lord and my God'. These 'I am' expressions are fundamental claims made about the identity of Jesus. In effect, they are saying, if you would know what God is like look to Jesus, for he is the self-expression of God. All this is an outworking of the claim of the opening words of the prologue of the gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God'.

It is God who is the bread of life, the one who fed the people in the wilderness. It is God who is the light of the world, the light that shines in the darkness and is never quenched. It is God who is the gate, providing access and safety for the people. It is God who is the good shepherd, as so many of the psalms illustrate. It is God who makes a highway so that we may have a way to travel along towards the presence of God. It is God who is the



vine, offering life-giving fruit to all who seek life from God. Although these 'I am' sayings are making claims about the risen Jesus, they are essentially pointing to the character of God. For the Jesus of John's gospel said, 'Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me'. Look to Jesus! and we catch a glimpse of God as bread and light, as gateway and shepherd, as the way and as the vine.

John's gospel is written for Christian followers and believers who want to discover more what it means to follow the way of Jesus. It is written so that we, the readers, might understand not only what God is like, but also what life God has called us to live. The life and teaching, the death and resurrection, of Jesus always points both ways: to what God is like and to what his followers are called to be like. In John's gospel, the call is for the followers of Jesus to be ourselves the bread of life, the light of the world, the gate of the sheep-fold, the good shepherd, the way to God and to be the bearer of the fruit of the vine, those fruits of the Spirit which Paul identified as 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'.

This exposes the radical cutting edge of the life of discipleship. It suggests a whole variety of little ways in which we can further the kingdom of God here in earth: feed the hungry, be a source of light in a period of darkness for a friend, be a way of opening up fresh possibilities for someone else, caring for a person in need, being a way forward – an enabler- for a group of people, and sharing the fruits of our own talents, experience, abilities and interests to enrich the whole body. All this is enabled and inspired by the God who shows us in Jesus what it is like to be truly human. The Lenten message becomes the Easter call.

David Calvert

FOR SALE – CAST IRON GRATINGS

As you may know, the cast iron gratings which covered the pipes forming the old heating system were salvaged when the church floor was removed and are available to buy. They are heavy, at about 30 lbs each for those which were in the aisles and which are mostly about 36" x 12". A similar larger pattern, slightly less heavy-duty is also available as well as various off-cuts. Of the overall total of 50, some 20 have been sold to date, as a result of which £353.00 has been given to the Refurbishment Fund

What to do with them? They need to be painted with Hammarite or similar. So far, they have been bought to be used as pure ornament; to be incorporated into a garden wall in France and to become part of a brick-built garden seat. You could use them as footpath, plant enclosure or plant trellis. Other suggestions welcome.

The 30 remaining are offered for £15.00 each or less and unless sold previously, samples will be at the Plant Sale in May. Contact Roland Beecher Bryant on 020 8467 6906 to see and buy

I have been asked for some reflections having recently decided to 'cease to be active' as a local preacher after over fifty years.

My local preaching began 'On Trial' in my 6th form years in the Dorchester Circuit in Dorset. So it was mainly preaching in chapels in villages in the Hardy country with such glorious names as Piddletrenthide, Winterbourne St Martin, Bere Regis, and Milton Abbas, and Tolpuddle. At Tolpuddle the preacher was following in the footsteps of some of the Tolpuddle Martyrs who had preached and worshipped there. Most of the congregations in all the chapels were still connected with agriculture in various ways.

Preaching in small village chapels could be hard work. In one the preacher was expected to play and footpump the leaky harmonium as well as lead the service and preach. This involved a jacking in the box performance between the harmonium and the pulpit. In another chapel cows from the field outside looked through the windows. And they appeared to be in larger numbers and rather more interested in the sermon than the congregation. And in a third the organist had a very limited repertoire of hymns from which she and not the preacher made the selection.

Following Dorchester, I preached in the Cambridge Circuit while at University, again mainly in village chapels. And next from Hinde Street in central London from where we went out to chapels in Hertfordshire. From 1965 the preaching has been mainly in London suburban Methodism, first in the Bromley Circuit, then Chislehurst, and, most recently, with the Circuits merger, taking the word to 'heathen lands afar' in the old Orpington circuit.

It is a well known fact that all good sermons have three points. Indeed, looking back, I think all my sermons for fifty years were around only four points in total though I have spent rather a long time making them - about 200 hours at 20 minutes a month for 50 years. Here are my four points, I promise for the last time:

This is God's world and we should rejoice in it – the physical and the spiritual, the secular as well as the sacred;

Jesus is the model we seek to follow. He calls us to love God and our neighbours, and points us towards love, peace and justice for all;

As Jesus demonstrated in his life, our faith is not about following detailed doctrines, rules or creeds but about living. And that applies both to how we live our daily lives and to all our relationships and also to the big issues in the world in which we live today. We always need to put our preaching and our worship in that context;

So as Christians we do not retreat from the pressures and issues of the world but seek to make the world a better place by living out our faith in a spirit of optimism and hope.

Over the last fifty years the scene for us has become much more challenging in this country. Many churches have closed. Membership has fallen dramatically across the Methodist Church. Our congregations have become smaller and older. And outside the church there have been equally dramatic changes in living standards, in social attitudes, in the nature of work, in leisure time activities, and recently most of all in

information and communications. In my early years of preaching local churches were not just for worship but were often the major social centre in the community for adults and for young people. Now there are many other competing attractions and activities, and not least on Sundays. We have to adjust to the changing world around us – not adjusting our message but the means of conveying it and the way we operate, taking account of all the changes around us. What is encouraging for us at Chislehurst is the way that the refurbishment process is making us face up to the kind of church we need and want to be in the future.

To end on a lighter note, the best feedback a preacher receives is the collection of comments received over handshakes as the congregation departs at the end of the service. Those made to me most frequently over the years have been ‘lovely hymns’ - which probably means that I have unimaginatively selected hymns just from the old favourites. And ‘At least I could hear you’, which I hope does not mean ‘Pity about the content’.

And finally, a fellow local preacher suggested to me that what the Circuit would most miss from my preaching would be the regular news updates on Plymouth Argyle. I do understand this concern and weighed it carefully in the balance before making my decision. But, fear not, just go to PAFC.com and you will find all you need and more.

A CREED FOR THE 21ST CENTURY?

In the “Methodist Recorder” in recent weeks one correspondent, Alan Bartley, has asserted that the Nicene Creed must be regarded as the definitive doctrine of Christianity. In the March 17th issue, page 7, David Booth whom I understand is a minister, has challenged this. In doing so he cites an alternative version of the creed which he came across in a Lutheran church. When I read it out to Ruth and Roger Dawe’s house group the initial reaction was quite favourable, but of course it needs careful study. Members of the group would be interested to hear the views of other members of our church. Here it is:

‘We believe in God, who made the world, who loves it and smiles upon it. We believe in Jesus Christ, who has shown us the human face of God, and a love that refused to be limited, who calls us to a life that even death cannot end. We believe in the Holy Spirit through whom God reaches us, surprising, prompting us and questioning us; who is the life breath of creation; and the source of nurture, humour and hope.

We believe in ourselves as people made in the divine image, capable of great creativity and great destruction, but called to choose between them. We believe that Christ leads us now, calling us to a life that is absurd by the standards of the world; calling us to resist evil, including anything that would degrade or destroy another and to create and protect love, justice, freedom and peace.’

Food for thought?

John Sennett

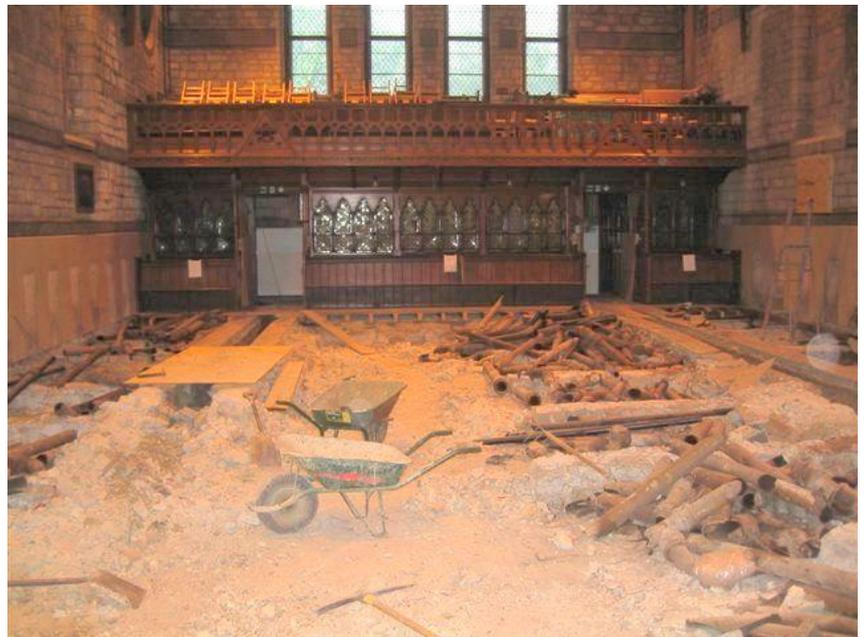
REFURBISHMENT - A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE by Thomas Cowie

I joined the church refurbishment team quite late on; in fact most of the hard work building the metaphorical foundations had already been done. The vision had been created, the reality had been researched and the funds had been raised. None of which was easy or without ardour. By the time I joined the team much work had been completed, such as; the new kitchen, new toilets, new double glazing, upstairs hall refurbishment and already many lessons had been learnt.

Towards the end of the summer last year we knew we did not have all of the money required to do everything we wanted to and we had to look long and hard at the project to decide whether to wait for all the funds, continue piecemeal or to divide the remaining works into tangible phases. We agreed that progress was important as too much effort had been expended to allow the project to stall. However the decision on how to proceed had to be tempered with the consideration that every penny in our funding was hard earned and had to be spent wisely.

We agreed to proceed by dividing the remaining works into two key phases, the main church space and the new foyer extension. This allowed us to maintain progress and realise some of the benefits of the works as soon as possible. We decided to deliver the works comprising the main building works to the church with one main contract, with separate contracts for specialist work items. The specialist suppliers are for the new lighting systems, the new Audio/Visual systems and the floor and Labyrinth tiles. Having agreed how to proceed, the works started in January this year.

Once the church had been stripped of pews, fixtures and fittings, we gave it over to our builders in January this year. Very quickly they excavated the whole floor area. There was no small degree of concern when some of our team came into the church following these works; it looked like we had destroyed our beautiful church. Gladly the works have continued at pace and already it feels like our church is coming back to life, the new side door has been cut, the new floor slab is installed, the new electrical cabling is in, the under floor heating is installed, the new stage area is built and we have a floor again in the church.



We can see the remaining works within the main church space is coming together and much of it has already been contracted and ordered and we are on track for completion of the works within the church ready for reopening in September this year.

With this in mind our efforts are refocusing on the next phase which is to procure and build the new foyer area. At this time we have about a third of the funds for the new foyer and by early May, if we are successful with a number of grant applications we may have over two thirds of the funds, if people remain as hard working and as generous with the fund raising we should exceed this and be well on our way to keep up the progress and maintain the vision.



The new floor

WALKING WITH ALICE

We've had a series of excellent walks arranged and led by Alice with John over the last few months – and there's more to come!

In the course of the last 2 years we have done about 6 walks, none of them too strenuous. Generally, each walk covers about 4-5 miles. It isn't often that we get 'lost' – and when we do it adds to the fun, and of course is only very temporary. Soon order is restored and we all fall back into line.



We meet in the church car park and to get to the setting off point, we double up in cars. So you don't need to have a car to join in: anyone without a car is very welcome to come. It is good fellowship, with varied ages, not all retired: some even still working! Somehow, we always manage to end up in a pub for a light lunch before returning. This is a sure sign of good management.

If anyone else is interested in coming please speak to either Alice or John Sennett.

WESTMINSTER WOMEN'S OUTREACH INAUGURAL CONFERENCE

by Janet Woolett

The Inaugural Conference took place on Saturday 20th November last year at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster

The first speaker was Baroness Kathleen Richardson, who has been a Methodist Minister for 30 years and was the first woman to be elected President of Conference. She welcomed everyone to the Outreach Conference and talked about "*Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Family*".

After a coffee break, there were four more speakers, who talked about "*The Role of Women in Bringing Forgiveness where Gun and Knife Crime is Concerned*." The first speaker was Richard Taylor, father of Damilola Taylor, who had flown back to the UK from Nigeria to speak at the meeting. He and his wife Gloria set up the Damilola Taylor Trust after the murder of their son. The Trust delivers motivational talks in schools and in the community, steering youths away from crime and aims to create safer streets.

The next speaker was Ejios Ubiribo, an activist journalist, whose brother, Junior, was shot in 2002. She is a member of the Trident Independent Advisory Group, which helps the Metropolitan Police special task force that deals with gun crime in the black community. She spoke about how the women in her family persuaded the men not to seek retribution, thus avoiding a further cycle of murder and revenge. She uses her personal experience to give a real and honest voice to the complex issues surrounding violent crime, including class, racial equality and social justice.

The third speaker was Tracey Ford, whose son was murdered two years ago. Tracey broke down when talking about her son, but continued bravely. She is a journalist who writes for major newspapers about gun and knife crime, as well as running a financial consultancy business.

The final speaker was a man in his forties, who was a former "Yardie" gang member, but is now a married man with a family. He also sits on the Trident IAG, which advises the police about how to tackle gun and knife crime. He spoke about how his brother was badly injured by skinheads in the 1970's and how his anger drove him to form a gang at age 13 to fight white kids. This gang subsequently went on to fight other black teenagers and terrorise the neighbourhood.

He was the most challenging of the speakers and pointed out that the Church could be doing a lot more to help educate disadvantaged kids and give them support. He talked about how he had been mentored by the first black MP, who had helped him deal with his anger and turn away from crime.

There were several themes that came out on the day. One was the high number of one parent families in the black community, (about 56%,) which is double the number of white one parent families. One of the points that was raised was the absence of role models for young black kids, who resort to violence, and the fact that some of the

violent perpetrators are in care and lack love and the support of a family. There were opportunities for members of the audience to ask questions and several spoke about their own experience of violent crime in countries such as South Africa and Jamaica.

In the afternoon there was a service followed by a *Theological Reflection on Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, led by Revd Marcia de Costa. This was followed by more hymns and a closing prayer.

The next conference is taking place at Methodist Central Hall on Saturday 25th June, from 10.00 to 16.00. Conference speakers include Revd. Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Grace Owen, Pastor Jen Baker, Revd Katei Kirby and Revd. Cham Kaur-Mann.

The cost is £10.00. There are crèche facilities and a cafe or people can bring a packed lunch. More details are available from Ollie McEwen : tel 020 7654 3809, email: ollie.mcewen@mchw.org.uk . I have a booking form with further details of the programme

PLANT SALE 2011

The Plant Sale is only a month away on Saturday 14th May from 10 am until 12 noon. You have split and potted up those overcrowded perennials, haven't you? Looked at the cuttings you took in hopes last autumn? Sowed seeds – vegetables especially. Sorted out the shed as you promised yourself you would.....? Potted up that lovely self-sown plant that's in the wrong place. There is still time to do all those things, especially as the weather warms up more quickly in the coming weeks.



All sorts of plants – annuals, shrubs, flowers, bulbs, herbs, trees, vegetables, indoor/conservatory, herbaceous perennials and garden bric-a-brac will be most welcome for the Sale and should be brought to the Church Hall on **Friday 13th May** between **2 - 4 pm or 6 - 8 pm**. Saturday is really too late as things can get a bit hectic on the morning. Please name **every** pot but don't put any prices on them. If these times are not convenient or you need transport or any other information, please get in touch with Adrienne on 020 8467 2038 or Gillian on 020 8467 6906.

Fliers and posters will be available at church to distribute amongst friends and neighbours. This has always been a very successful event and we look forward to another queue at the door at opening time and to a good sum being raised for the Refurbishment Fund.

Adrienne and Gillian

PENPICTURE OF PETER ILES

You may remember the film where someone just makes it into the Tube carriage before the doors close. What happens next determines the course of their life. Just to ram the point home, a second narrative details what would have happened had they failed to beat the doors and got left on the platform.

Something like this was the experience of Peter Iles, our subject for this issue's penpic. Only it didn't happen directly to him, but to his grandfather and his father, then a lad of 12. Grandfather worked in London, building Aston Martins. However, in post-war austerity Britain there wasn't too much demand for this magnificent queen of the road, so he decided to take the Australian shilling and emigrate. Unfortunately (?) the ship broke down at Port Elizabeth, which is why Peter is South African born and bred, and not Australian. And being South African has profoundly shaped his life ever since.

Brought up in a suburb of Pretoria, together with an older sister and a younger brother, Peter enjoyed a happy and secure childhood, cycling eight kms to school and back every day. He matriculated in 1988, aged 17, at a crucial point in his country's political development. The foundations of apartheid were crumbling, and Prime Minister F.W. de Klerk was pursuing a negotiated transition which ultimately resulted in Nelson Mandela's accession to power.

Peter was better prepared than most for the new South Africa. He had attended the prestigious Pretoria Boys High School, to which many embassy children of a variety of ethnic backgrounds were sent. So when he went off to do his military service, he didn't have the same problems as some in relating to the 50% of his new colleagues who were black or coloured. Another film comes to mind: *Invicta*, a triumphant and touching record of how the South Africans won the World Cup at rugby for the whole of South Africa. The story within a story tells how Mandela's black bodyguards and the white security staff of the previous president learned gradually to respect each other and work together to protect him.

Peter decided to continue in the Navy, where he was offered the opportunity of being promoted to officer status and graduating as an electrical engineer. Of his eight years' service, the last two were the most eventful. The task was to service the South African research station in Antarctica. The sight of icebergs pales after a while. In fact, it pales after you've seen the first one. Other exciting events were a lot less benign. There was the time when his colleague lost his life in a 'white-out', where you can't see beyond your nose through the driving snow. Or when his ice-breaker vessel pranged the following ship with its ice-knife as it got stuck in reverse gear. But he also remembers days of perfect sunlit clarity in those vast and silent wastes, with whales and emperor penguins close by.

And then there was Theoda. The officers had decided that their mess needed a bit of a makeover, so they invited the local design school where she was studying to send along its students to make some suggestions. The visit was arranged for a Friday evening, which is the traditional time for officers' choir practice. Now, this choir was not

quite your Beckenham Chorale. Reflecting their strict Dutch Reformed traditions, it was not considered appropriate to broadcast the fact that officers were enjoying pre-dinner drinks, so they called it 'choir practice' instead. Not many were fooled, but propriety was observed. Anyway, the cliché came true, eyes met across the crowded mess, and that was that.

But there was a touch of the Romeos and Juliets about their romance. The Montagues (a.k.a. the Iles) were English-speaking, and recent immigrants to boot. The Capulets (a.k.a. the Solms) came from generations of Afrikaaner farmers, and, to put it mildly, there has always been a bit of a history between these two groups. Theoda's family was strict and conservative Dutch Reformed, while Peter was third generation Methodist. Peter won them over in the end, though, not least by the effort he made to brush up his conversational Afrikaans.

It's very expensive for South Africans to travel abroad, but Theoda desperately wanted to see the world before settling down. Peter couldn't leave his job, so off she flew on her own to London, where six months' worth of Londoners' company astonishingly persuaded her she wanted to stay. Over followed our hero to join her, but London's streets weren't paved with gold as far as he was concerned. In fact, they turned out to be brass, as the only job he could get in a recession was as a hotel porter, applying Brasso to the fittings. However, you can't keep a good man down, let alone an officer and a gentleman, so he soon got work which used his engineering skills. Now he's involved in the print business, where he installs and troubleshoots hardware and software which creates images for magazines and mass-market books. Or something.

He's nearly got used to London's weather, the power drinking, the cosmopolitanism, and the lack of leisure time. And they've explored Britain's and continental Europe's historical and cultural heritage. But now, with their first baby due in two and a half months' time, it's noses to the grindstone time again. Having had to totally renovate their house in Empress Drive to make it habitable, they're now going hell for leather transforming the office into a nursery. You can just imagine Theoda, home stylist of Woman and Home's interior design department, sitting comfortably and offering appropriate advice. Or perhaps not.

There's quite a little South African cell forming in our church at present. Nicola and Les Dann, we hope, will re-join us some time soon from Mauritius, where they are temporarily posted. Derek Coetzee has joined us recently, instantly turning his hand to stacking chairs! And now Peter and Theoda have put down some roots with us. With compatriots such as Mandela and Tutu, they can teach us a lot about inclusiveness and reconciliation. As we read in the letter to the Galatians, 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus'.

Peter Herriot

GOULASH

Sue Cope

For those of you who enjoyed the food we had at the Italian Evening... here is the recipe for the Goulash. I had to adapt a Delia recipe to make it suitable for a public performance... otherwise hot it up by using *Hot smoked Paprika*

Serves 6

Italian Evening Goulash with Dumplings

Ingredients

Plate 1

1 lb (450g) braising steak cut into 1 cm pieces

1 tablespoon Olive oil

1 large onion chopped small

In a jar put:

1 tblspn flour

2 tablespoons mild paprika (not hot for a public do)

¼ teaspn dried marjoram

½ teaspn caraway seeds

In a pan make:

2½ pints or 2.5 litres vegetable or beef stock & add...

1 14oz (450gm) tinned Italian tomatoes

Serve with: 5 floz (150 mls) **soured cream**

Plate 2

1¼lb (560g) potatoes peeled and cut into 1 cm cubes

1 teaspn tomato puree + Salt & pepper to taste

1 large red pepper deseeded and chopped

In a bowl weigh:

4 oz(110g) self raising flour + extra for dusting

Three fingers of salt

2oz (55g) vegetable suet or Atoxa light

Method

Heat the oil in a casserole pan

Brown the meat in the hot oil, return to the plate.

Cook the onion over a medium heat for about 5 minutes or until lightly browned.

Return the meat.

Add the contents of jar 1; stir well and cook for 1 minute before adding the tomatoes and stock

When it come to the boil simmer gently for 45 mins

Take the lid off and stir in the contents of plate 2 bring back to a simmer and cook gently , covered for 10 mins stirring occasionally....

For the dumplings weigh the flour and salt into a bowl; add seasoning and mix with 6-8 tablespoons of cold water. Use a knife to bring it together. It should be soft but not either too sticky or dry.

Make 12 small dumplings by dividing equally on a floured board or guessing with a teaspoon.

Pop them in the pan. Do not press them down but let them float. Put the lid back on and simmer for a further 25 minutes.

Serve by ladling into a warmed deep bowl.

I used pasta plates which hold about 1 pint of liquid.

Decorate with the soured cream and paprika on top.

Bon appetito!



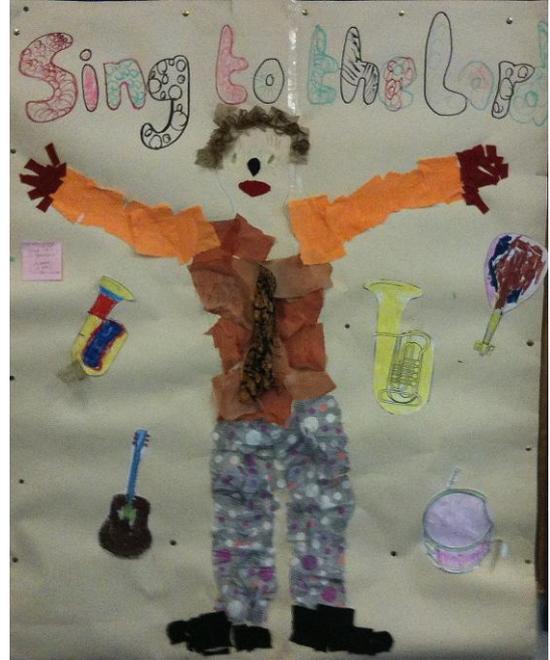
We started Messy Church 10 months ago and it has been great fun – if sometimes exhausting! We have on average 40 parents and children each time some who we are enjoying getting to know as Messy Church ‘regulars’. We produce a monthly newsletter which goes to all our Messy Church families by email. The newsletter always includes our Messy Church Prayer:

We have on average 40 parents and children each time some who we are enjoying getting to know as Messy Church ‘regulars’. We produce a monthly newsletter which goes to all our Messy Church families by email. The newsletter always includes our Messy Church Prayer:

Loving God,
we thank you that your word tells us
that your kingdom belongs
to those who are still growing.

We thank you for Messy Church.
We pray that we will all grow together
and together discover more of
what it means to follow Jesus today.

Bless our time together this day,
in Jesus name we pray,
Amen.



Our themes in 2010 were: Noah's Ark, Jesus and the great catch of fish, Travelling On (The Good Samaritan), Fruits and Seeds, Lights and Candles, Messy Christmas (which sadly had to be cancelled because of the snow). In 2011 we have attached 'messy' to all our themes... a Messy Party, Messy Music, Messy Mothers and baby Moses.

On Tuesday 19th April we are holding a special holiday time Messy Easter. On May 7th our theme will be Messy Builders (the House on the Rock) and that leaves one more to finish the year on 25th June a Messy Picnic (Feeding of the 5,000).

We have a strong leadership team – Catherine, Jane, Helen and Dorothy, creative additional workshop leaders Thomas, Laurent, Adrienne and Gillian – who also helps Elaine and me with the singing in our praise time, cooks – Sue and Janet, other essential general dogs-bodies Sam, Sue S., Peter, Barbara and...I hope I haven't missed anyone, but if I have you know that it is the team effort of us all working together that makes Messy Church possible so thank you to everyone.

Thank you to the Taylor family Simon and Maria and children Jeremiah aged 3 and Jacob 6 months who live in Imperial Way, Chislehurst for their comment:

'We like to come to Messy Church because the great care taken to plan and organise the broad and interesting range of activities goes to create a warm, friendly and fun environment which our children enjoy being a part of. It is very good that they get to share food at the end.'

As parents and new to the area, we have found the atmosphere very welcoming.'

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2011

Sunday 15th May to the following Saturday the 22nd

This year Chislehurst Methodist Church is not participating in the house to house collection as we have done for many years. It has proved increasingly difficult to recruit people to do the house to house work. Last year, we varied the method: we delivered but did not collect the Christian Aid envelopes. Instead, the households were invited to return the red envelopes to the manse or the church. This raised quite a lot of money, but in truth the vast majority of the envelopes were never returned - and the exercise was financially expensive. We are not the only church which has decided to review its activity in Christian Aid week, as finding volunteers is proving very difficult all round: many previous collectors are no longer able to continue.

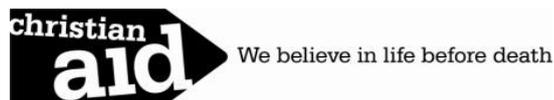
So, this year we have decided that we shall raise money for Christian Aid in a different way. We shall shake tins outside Sainsbury's on the final two days of the Christian Aid week, that is, Friday 21st May and Saturday 22nd. We have received permission from Sainsbury's and have authorisation to do this on these two days only. We are therefore seeking collectors. We hope that many who used to do the house to house will join in this new scheme and that we shall be able to staff many of the hours of each of these two days.

Therefore there will be a recruitment list, divided into hours for each day, put up in the church foyer for people to sign up. Some will be able to do only one hour; others might be able to do more or separate one hour sessions. Tins and other necessities will be provided for the collectors and I shall be around to receive and exchange the tins as they become full(ish) and generally enable the process to work smoothly.

Please sign up. We hope to have a collector or two at both back and front entrances to Sainsbury's most of the working hours of these days. Once you've signed up I'll be glad to brief you further about the rules of the game – though it's simply shaking a tin at the right time and place – and smiling a thank you.

As a Methodist Church we are fully committed to supporting the vital work of Christian Aid, as we are also the work of Methodist organizations such as Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF), Action for Children and Methodist Housing Association (MHA). Our church raises funds for Christian Aid on other occasions too, such as Christmas and Lent. But it is good to join with all the other churches to raise money for Christian Aid during this special week, as this is the chief fund raising source from the churches each year.

David Calvert



DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

SATURDAY 16 JULY 7PM Ethiopian Evening led by Sam and Tsion following their visit home to Ethiopia a few months ago. Ethiopian supper and illustrated talk. Proceeds to Christian Aid.