



Jan – Feb
2016

outlook

Newsletter of **Highgate United Reformed Church**

St Martin's Procession

In November, dozens of children and adults assembled in Pond Square with their home-made lanterns. Anke re-enacted the story of St Martin with a hobby horse sword and cloak. Everyone then processed around the Square singing songs in both German and English. The evening concluded with warm freshly baked pretzels.



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Appreciation

Who does not need to feel appreciated? There may be some so confident of their worth and with such high self-esteem that they feel no need, but I imagine that they are relatively rare. Most of us tend to thrive when others express their appreciation by saying: 'Well done!' How many people have become either workaholics or dropouts because they never heard the words that really mattered: 'I'm proud of you'?

One of the original meanings of the Greek word for 'glory' (*doxa*) is the 'opinion' others have of you. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, this 'opinion' meaning of glory takes a back seat to other meanings such as 'splendour', 'power' and 'radiance'. In my preaching on the stories of Christ's birth over Christmas I encountered again the references to splendour, power and radiance, such as when the shepherds are encountered by the angel and see "the glory of God shining around them" and when the mysterious star guides the magi to the infant Jesus. But what I also noticed this time was the second part of the angels' message: "...and peace on earth to those in whom he delights!" I began to wonder if the reference to 'delight' was reaching back to the older meaning of glory as 'opinion'.

We can probably all recall the beaming smiles on the faces of parents and grandparents when a newborn child/grandchild is held. The baby is the object of undiluted delight and appreciation! What if the glory of God that was proclaimed by the angels and beheld by the shepherds and magi was more than an overwhelming divine radiance? What if it was also a manifestation of God's opinion of the infant Jesus, and God's opinion of those for whom Jesus was born, of delight and appreciation?

The Christmas story is good news because the infant Jesus communicates God's delight and appreciation to us and to the whole creation. This is the same Jesus who as an adult at his baptism receives the divine validation: "This is my son, the beloved, with him I am well pleased." Jesus receives these words of appreciation representatively: he receives them *on behalf*

of us. Not even our rejection of God and our rejection of one another can invalidate the essential truth of God's action: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..."

Just as a newborn infant does not have to earn the appreciation of its parents but has it as a gift, so we find in Jesus the most precious gift of all: God's appreciation of us and our appreciation of God. This is a cycle of glory in which God's appreciation of us in Christ overcomes our rejection and we express our appreciation of God and of one another: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to those in whom he delights!" One of the gospel gifts the Church has to offer to the world is that of showing to others the appreciation that God has shown to us.

Julian Templeton

Church Meeting

Sunday 28 February

Our Future Mission and Ministry

Those of you who have read minutes of recent Church Meetings will know that we have been exploring the possibility and practicality of consolidating our growth and mission by seeking full time ministry. Members of the Working Group have consulted other United Reformed Churches in the Synod who have already put in place full time ministry on a local basis. The Elders' Meeting believes that Church Meeting needs to discuss, pray, and see whether we can come to a common mind on whether we believe God wants us to put in place full time ministry on a local basis. The indications so far are that because of Thames North Synod's constraints on the deployment of Stipendiary Ministers, we may need to go outside of the United Reformed Church's stipendiary ministry in order to find a candidate able to serve full time. Since this would be a decision with consequences, it is important that as many of the congregation as possible are involved in making it. I therefore appeal to you: **please make every effort to attend the Church Meeting starting at 11:45 am on Sunday 28 February.**

I'm in the process arranging for childcare to be provided downstairs in the Hall (following-on from Fun Sunday) so that parents can be free to attend.

Julian Templeton

Persecuted Christians

In December the Bishop of Leeds wrote an article in *The Times* in which he concluded that Christians are the most persecuted of all world faiths. In Burma (Myanmar) religious and ethnic minorities endure intense intolerance, violence and discrimination. In 2015 two Kachin Christian women, volunteer teachers with the Kachin Baptist Convention were raped and murdered, allegedly by the army of Myanmar.

In Sudan conversion from Islam is punishable by death, and suspects are often first tortured. In Saudi Arabia any criticism of the government's interpretation of Islam will lead to imprisonment of three to 20 years. In 2015 the authorities in Iran raided several church services, imprisoning worshippers and church leaders, especially evangelical Christian converts. In Pakistan Christians represent only a tiny minority, but are often subjected to religiously motivated attacks and are injured or killed. In north east Nigeria Boko Haram for six years kill or kidnap thousands of villagers; churches are burned, girls' schools destroyed, and women and girls forced into sexual slavery.

Nearer to home, it was reported in November 2015 that in Bradford a father of six who had converted from Islam to Christianity had had his kneecap smashed in an alleged religious hate-crime.

Once we used to raise money for Christian Aid in Bangladesh; not any more. Terror is now spreading in Bangladesh; not long ago an Italian priest, also a doctor, was shot in the head as he cycled to church. Jihadists in Bangladesh hacked to death five writers, murdered an Italian aid worker and a Japanese farmer; a publisher was cut down at his office by a gang of men wielding cleavers and machetes.

Sadly this Christmas 2015 was a dismal time in Bethlehem. The Palestinian Authority, under Mahmoud Abbas, called for toned-down Christmas celebrations, saying festivities would be out of place after 10 weeks of confrontation and violence; in attacks 120 Palestinians have been killed, and 22 Israelis died. The Church of the Nativity, built on the site where Jesus was born, has seen few pilgrims. Local tour guides, drivers and residents struggle to earn a living from such small crowds. The city

relies on tourism, and now there is more damage to the fragile economy.

But today the Middle East not only faces so much violence and terrorism but also possible extinction of thousands of years of history and eradication of many ancient religions. May I recommend a wise book: *Heirs to Forgotten Kingdoms; Journeys into the Disappearing Religions of the Middle East* by Gerard Russell. (Paperback, Simon & Schuster, £9.99)

Marion Uglow

Help! I need somebody!

On the first Friday in March, 04.03.16, our church is hosting the Women's World Day of Prayer at 2:00 pm. The Christian Women of Cuba have put the service together. Their theme: **"Receive children. Receive me."**

Every four years it is our turn to host it for the Highgate churches. As the representative for our church on the WWDP committee, an ecumenical grouping of the Highgate and Muswell Hill churches, I ask you, our congregation, for help. Our Minister, Julian, has kindly offered to operate the computer and projector for the PowerPoint presentation that will accompany the reflections on the theme of this service.

But I need 3 more volunteers to help me with the smooth running of the service. If you are free on 4 March from 2 - 4 pm and able to help me, please phone (020 7485 7451) or speak to me after a Sunday service. I would be so grateful to have a team around me, I can't do this on my own.

Thanks and Happy New Year!

Christa Keeler

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



After a civil wedding, as is customary on the continent, Ben and Heike Crane celebrated their "bilingual" wedding in Germany on 5th September with 300 guests from four continents.



••••• Diary Dates •••••

January

- Sunday 10 10:30 am Epiphany 1, Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton, with Kidz Klub
 6:00 pm United Evening Worship for Christian Unity, Leader: Jonathan Trigg; Preacher: Julian Templeton, All Saints' Church, Talbot Road, N6 4QH
- Wed 13 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Thursday 14 8:15 pm Management Committee
- Friday 15 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation
- Sunday 17 10:30 am Worship led by Tony Alderman, with Kidz Klub
- Monday 18 2:00 pm Open Door Gathering, Pond Square Chapel
- Tuesday 19 11:00 am Highgate Theology and Fellowship Group, 'Salvation', Robert Willoughby, Upper Hall, St Michael's Church, South Grove, N6 6BJ
- Wed 20 11:00 am Ministry Steering Group
 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Friday 22 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation
- Sunday 24 10:30 am Worship led by Julian Templeton
 10:30 am Fun Sunday in Hall
- Tuesday 26 11:00 am Highgate Theology and Fellowship Group, 'Resurrection' Conrad Gempf, Upper Hall, St Michael's Church, South Grove, N6 6BJ
 7:45 pm Elders' Meeting, 10 Wood Lane
- Wed 27 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Friday 29 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation
- Sunday 31 10:30 am Worship led by Donald Macarthur, with Kidz Klub

February

- Wed 3 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
- Friday 5 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation
- Sun 7 10:30 am Worship led by Sally Bateman, with Kidz Klub
- Ash Wed 10 11:00 am Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes, St Michael's Church, South Grove, N6 6BJ
 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG

••••• Diary Dates •••••

- Thursday 11 8:15 pm Management Committee
Friday 12 12:30 – 1 pm Meditation
Sunday 14 10:30 am **Lent 1**, Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton, with Kidz Klub
6:30 pm United Evening Worship for Lent, Leader: Bryce Wandrey; Preacher: Peter Vannozi, St Michael's Church, South Grove, N6 6BJ
Monday 15 2:00 pm Open Door Gathering, Pond Square Chapel
Wed 17 7:45 pm Lent Home Group, Psalm 100, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 19 12:30 pm Meditation for Lent, 'Testing'
Sunday 21 10:30 am **Lent 2**, Worship led by Roger Orme, with Kidz Klub
Wed 24 7:45 pm Lent Home Group, Psalm 130, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 26 12:30 pm Meditation for Lent, 'Finding Sanctuary'
Sunday 28 10:30 am **Lent 3**, Worship led by Julian Templeton
10:30 am Fun Sunday in Hall
11:45 am **Church Meeting**

March

- Wed 2 7:45 pm Lent Home Group, Psalm 13, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 4 12:30 pm Meditation for Lent, 'Silence'
2:00 pm Women's World Day of Prayer Service
Sunday 6 10:30 am **Lent 4**, Worship led by Geoffrey Roper, with Kidz Klub
Monday 7 **Deadline for submissions to next Outlook**
Wed 9 7:45 pm Lent Home Group, Psalm 23, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 11 12:30 pm Meditation for Lent, 'Contemplation'
Sunday 13 10:30 am **Lent 5**, Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Julian Templeton, with Kidz Klub
6:00 pm United Worship for the Passion, Leader: Peter Vannozi; Preacher: Fr Patrick, St Augustine's Church, Archway Road, N6 5BH

A 2016 Lent Course. 12-30pm-1-30pm.

Fridays February 19th to March 18th.

Finding Sanctuary in Meditation

Realising that Easter 2016 was an early one I started looking around for suitable material for the Meditation Group. I re-read 'Finding Sanctuary Monastic Steps for Everyday Life', the book that The Abbot of Worth Christopher Jamison had written about the sharing of the life of a Benedictine Monastery with five laymen over a five week period. I used his book because it clearly set out the issues of interest to people who meditate or who are curious about meditation. Lent is traditionally a season of reflection. I made links to the testing times of Jesus and the tests we face in our lives today. I linked the bible references on Spirituality to the many sometimes confusing interpretations of Spirituality to-day.

Course Format

- Week 1** Friday February 19th Testing Times. Julian will lead on the bible references. .
- Week 2** Friday February 26th, Finding Sanctuary.
- Week 3** Friday March 4th, Silence.
- Week 4** Friday March 11th Contemplation.
- Week 5** Friday March 18th Spirituality.
- Weeks 2-5** will be lead by group members.

We will begin each Meeting by meditating together prefaced by a short consideration of how we are helped in our meditation by our posture, breathing and use of our chosen prayer word. There will be a discussion after we have meditated.

In weeks 2-5 we will use the reference sheets of 'Considerations'; the facts, statements, queries, questions, elicited from the references.

Book References

Finding Sanctuary, Monastic Steps for Everyday Life, Christopher Jamieson, Abbot of Worth, 2006.

Christian Meditation, Your Daily Practice, Laurence Freeman, OSB, 1994.

The Cloud of Unknowing, 1961, Penguin Classics.

Historic Statements by the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Waldensian Church, Italy

On June 22nd the Pope made an historic visit to the main Waldensian Tempio in Turin. This had included a statement of regret by Pope Francis for the behaviour of the Roman Catholic Church in times past, behaviour which the Pope defined as "unchristian, even inhuman". He asked for forgiveness on behalf of his Church – a request which took the Waldensians by surprise

The Waldensian Synod sent Pope Francis a letter through its President, Marco Borno, which included the following:

The Synod of the Waldensian Church receives with profound respect the request for forgiveness for "actions which were unchristian, even inhuman", carried out in the past against our mothers and fathers in the Evangelical faith...

...This new situation does not allow us to substitute ourselves for those who paid with their blood, and with other great sufferings, for their witness to the Evangelical faith, and offer forgiveness on their behalf. However, "where sin increased, grace has abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20), and this grace of God we believe and confess, certain that God will want to make real his Word in the construction of new relationships between our Churches, inspired by the evangelical promise: "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

This letter was regarded by many in the news media, and by some Catholic bishops, as an 'unchristian' refusal to forgive. But on the closing day of the Synod there was an unexpected visit from Bishop Bruno Forte, who heads the Ecumenical Commission of the Italian Bishops' Conference. He spoke about hopes for 'reconciled diversity' within the whole Church and said that the Gospel message demands that the two churches – Roman Catholic and Waldensian – continue the struggle to find ways forward which might bring about reconciliation and a new partnership.

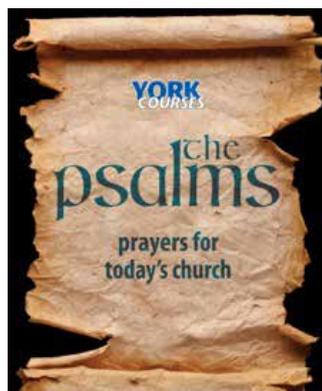
(Extracted from the United Reformed Church *Waldensian Fellowship* Newsletter, submitted by Roger Scopes)

Home Group

During the next few months, the Home Group will continue its weekly gatherings on Wednesdays, 7.45pm to 9.45pm. We shall take a fortnight's break over Easter from Wednesday, 23rd. March and resume on Wednesday 6th. April.

Normally our meetings focus on the Lectionary Readings for the following Sunday. Invariably, these prompt interesting comment and discussion, all of which is very informal. No previous knowledge of the Bible is required. We also sing a hymn, share news and pray together for the needs of the world, the community and individuals. The evening concludes with light refreshments. **All are most welcome.**

During Lent, we shall follow a York Course consisting of five sessions reflecting on the Psalms. Contributors on a CD include John Bell of the Iona Community, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Jane Leach, Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge, Timothy Radcliffe, a Dominican Friar and Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford.



The Psalms were the prayer book of Jesus. They address many of the problems we face today: violence, injustice, anger and bewilderment. With such a varied and experienced panel to guide us, I am sure everyone will find something of value from this course.

There is a warm invitation to any member of Churches Together in Highgate to join us for any of these five Wednesday Lent meetings, from 17th. February until 16th. March inclusive.

Apart from the occasional exception, all our meetings will take place at 14, Southwood Park, Southwood Lawn Road, N6 5SG.

Lifts, door-to-door, can be arranged - please contact

Roger Orme 07966956160 or 020 8458 2144.

Revised Common Lectionary

10 Jan	Epiphany Matthew 2:1-12; Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:1-12; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
17 Jan	John 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10
24 Jan	Luke 4:14-21; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19
31 Jan	Luke 4:21-30; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6
7 Feb	Luke 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13); Psalm 138
14 Feb	Lent 1 , Luke 4:1-13; Romans 10:8b-13; Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91, 1-2, 9-16
21 Feb	Lent 2 , Luke 13:31-35; Philippians 3:14 - 4:1; Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27
28 Feb	Lent 3 , Luke 13:1-9; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8
6 Mar	Lent 4 , Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32

Children from Junior Church waiting patiently downstairs before their wonderful performance of The Nativity performed in front of a large and appreciative congregation.



Many of you give regularly and generously to the Church through standing orders or regular cheques.

As I am sure you know the Church is able to claim Gift Aid from HM Revenue & Customs at the rate of 25p for every £1 we receive in these givings to the church.

In 2014 this Gift Aid was worth £2,978. We have to submit annual claims to HMRC listing individual

givers and total amounts. We are required to have available signed declarations from each individual listed on our claim. In September last year HM Revenue & Customs published a revised format for these Gift Aid Declarations and this seemed like an appropriate opportunity to bring up to date our current files and forms. I appreciate many of you will have signed forms previously but I am hoping that you will help me with this housekeeping by completing and returning the very simple new form I will hand out or mail to you.

The regular givings, especially by standing order, are helpful for the Church by providing a regular and stable income, and helpful for the Church Treasurer as they arrive directly in the Church Bank account, don't need counting or banking, and are easier to access, sort and report to HMRC for Gift Aid claims. Hopefully they are also easier and more convenient for the givers as well. If there are members, regular attendees, or readers of Outlook who were not aware of the option to set up a standing order for giving to the church and would like to set one up then please talk to me or send me an email and I would obviously be delighted to help.

In 2016 we at Pond Square Chapel are likely setting out on an exciting and more individual approach to God's Ministry and Mission in our local community with the intention of putting in place a locally paid full time minister. One of the important enablers of this approach will be our ability to pay for it. The Church is blessed in its givers and their giving but I would be remiss as Treasurer if I failed to suggest that the start of a new year is a good time for individuals to consider reviewing their individual giving to the Church.

Robert Gorrie

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