



Jan – March
2014

outlook

Newsletter of **Highgate United Reformed Church**

Another New Baby!

We are surely blessed at Highgate. We had two gorgeous babies born in time for our previous edition of Outlook, and in time for Carla to play baby Jesus in the Nativity. Amy and Spencer are the proud parents of Roman Lewis Anthony Bygrave, who was born on 17 December, weighing 10lb 6oz.



I am pleased to announce that both Amy and baby are doing very well. Gracie and Marley are very proud of their new brother as of course, are grandparents Julian and Laura!

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Seasonal Faith

It was after moving from the southern to the northern hemisphere that I began to realise why some of the festivals of the Christian Year have been put where they now occur in our calendar. The first Christian missionaries to northern Europe probably realised quite soon that attempting to abolish the existing pagan festivals was going to be very difficult and unpopular. Sensibly, they engaged in a 'baptising' exercise, replacing the midwinter Solstice with Christmas. However, the medieval Church was not nearly attentive enough to seasonal conditions when it imposed the fast of Lent. Fasting from some vegetables could have been feasible (and popular with children), coinciding with the leanest time of the year for locally-grown crops; but fasting from one of the few ready sources of protein—meat—was always going to be unpopular, especially in sausage-loving Switzerland and haggis-loving Scotland (both of which, coincidentally or not, had the most thoroughgoing of the Reformations).

In the southern hemisphere, the Christian festivals coincide with different seasons. Christmas and Epiphany are celebrated at the height of summer, when the light and heat of the sun predominate. Easter is celebrated in the autumn, when the leaves on deciduous trees change colour and fall. Naturally enough, then, Christian inhabitants of the southern hemisphere don't associate Christmas with cold temperatures and hot, stodgy food; and neither do they associate Easter with daffodils and new-born lambs.

As I write this article, I am looking out of my study window onto the trees and lake of Greenhill Gardens. Apart from a few evergreens, all the trees have lost their leaves. Winter is a time of waiting but also a revealing time. The trunks and branches and structure of the trees are clearly visible. Winter can also be a revealing time for us. Without ready recourse to outdoor activities, are we forced to confront our inability to wait patiently? The trees are conserving their energies in preparation for spring growth and summer fruitfulness. Should we also conserve our energies now in preparation for the growth and fruitfulness of God's Kingdom?

There's a hymn written by New Zealander Shirley Murray that makes links between the seasons, human activity, and faith:

Our life has its seasons, and God has
the reasons
why spring follows winter, and new
leaves grow,
for there's a connection with our
resurrection
that flowers will bud after frost and
snow,

*so there's never a time to stop
believing,*

*there's never a time for hope to die,
there's never a time to stop loving,
these three things go on.*

There's a time to be planting,
a time to be plucking,
a time to be laughing,
a time to weep,
a time to be building,
a time to be breaking,
a time to be waking,
a time to sleep,

*but there's never a time to stop
believing . . .*

Although urbanised developed-world peoples try to operate on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week basis, there is an important sense in which we neglect the seasonal ebb-and-flow at our peril. Try as we might, we cannot escape our biology and inter-connectedness with the natural world and its seasonal fluctuations. For example, I can't understand why we can't all agree to start work and school one hour later than normal from December to February. Wouldn't we all be less tired and therefore more productive?

Our practice of faith, too, must have its winter respite and dying down—punctuated with celebrations of light and sociality—in order to harbour the energies necessary for the resurrection of spring growth and the fruitfulness of summer and autumn. The Christian calendar recognises this in its festivals and seasons of waiting and growth. Above all, in the weekly demarcation of Sabbath, the Jewish and Christian calendars recognise the human need for regular rest and worship. We are not machines but creatures of the natural world. That is how we have evolved by God's long process of providence. Let us enjoy and celebrate the varied seasonal existence that God has given us in our latitude.

Julian Templeton

'One Snowy Night' Junior Church Outing at Jacksons Lane Theatre



A number of children and parents from Junior Church enjoyed this delightful show. It was an adaptation of Nick Butterworth's multi-million selling book *A Tale from Percy's Park – One Snowy Night*. The heart-warming story had songs to sing along to and furry puppet friends to meet. All the children, especially baby Carla behaved impeccably throughout and Marley's loud giggles had us all in stitches.

Visiting Ministers

We have already welcomed Rev Donald Macarthur on 5 January and I'm glad to say he will return on 11 May and 13 July to take two Communion services while Julian is on his sabbatical.

We welcome Rev Robert Courtney on 2 February for the third of his series of sermons on Membership and an Elder from St John's, New Barnet, Andrew Mills, on 16 February. This will be Andrew's third annual visit to us.

Sally Bateman from Muswell Hill, who is now training for the ministry, will lead worship on 2 March. Rev Roger Orme, Associate minister, will take our services on 19 January and 16 March.

John Thompson

WINTER SHELTER IN HIGHGATE

This year Pond Square hosted the winter shelter for eight Sunday evenings and Monday mornings, providing warmth, welcome, a delicious supper, a bed for the night and breakfast.

Volunteers came from St Michael's, All Saints, HURC and beyond. On Sunday 15th December it was a full Christmas dinner with all the trimmings with a magnificent turkey provided by Karen Sennett and Mark Rogers, demonstrating they are dab hands in the kitchen as well as setting up beds and tables!

A new group of churches in Camden borough has now taken over hosting the shelters until the end of March. For those interested in how some of our guests have fared in recent weeks here is a short report from Becky, shelter coordinator at C4WS:

"Twenty people who have stayed with us since 1st November have now moved into permanent accommodation, which is a fantastic result. Merry, who had been with us since the beginning of November, moved into her first choice hostel for young people in Elephant and Castle, and Elmoeiz, who'd only been with us a week, moved into a privately rented studio in Tottenham. Both moved in with starter packs and food hampers which are very generously donated to us by the Hampstead Wells Trust every year. The starter packs contain essential home-establishment items such as pots and pans, cutlery, toasters, kettles, microwaves etc., so they are good to go in their new homes.

Please keep Scott, Glen, Iraj and Yasir in your thoughts, who have been with us quite a while now, and whom we are hoping will move on into permanent accommodation soon.

Over the last few weeks we have been staggering the switch-over from the November-December churches to the January-March churches. The guests have done a good job of adapting to the new schedule. Many thanks once again to St Mary the Virgin Primrose Hill, All Hallows Gospel Oak, Bloomsbury Baptist Church, Rosslyn Hill Chapel, HTSC and Pond Square URC for all their wonderful shelter support over the last couple of months."

Patricia Judd

••••• **Diary Dates** •••••

January

- Sunday 19 10:30 am Worship led by Roger Orme, with Kidz Klub
Monday 20 2:00 pm Open Door Gathering, Pond Square Chapel
Tuesday 21 4:00 pm Making Melodies
Wed 22 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 24 12:30 – 1 pm Christian Meditation
Sunday 26 10:30 am Worship led by Julian Templeton
10:30 am Fun Sunday in Hall
Tuesday 28 4:00 pm Making Melodies
Wed 29 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 31 12:30 – 1 pm Christian Meditation

February

- Sunday 2 10:30 am Worship led by Robert Courtney, with Kidz Klub
Monday 3 2:00 pm Open Door Gathering at Trees, 2-4 Broadlands Road, N6
Tuesday 4 4:00 pm Making Melodies
Wed 5 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
8:15 pm Management Committee
Friday 7 12:30 – 1 pm Christian Meditation
Sun 9 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion led by Julian Templeton,
with Kidz Klub
Tuesday 11 4:00 pm Making Melodies
Wed 12 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 14 12:30 – 1 pm Christian Meditation
Sunday 16 10:30 am Worship led by Andrew Mills, with Kidz Klub
Monday 17 2:00 pm Open Door Gathering, Pond Square Chapel
Wed 19 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 21 12:20 – 1 pm Christian Meditation
Sunday 23 10:30 am Worship led by Julian Templeton
10:30 am Fun Sunday in Hall
Tuesday 25 4:00 pm Making Melodies
8:00 pm Elders' Meeting

Wed 26 7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 28 12:30 – 1 pm Christian Meditation

March

Sunday 2 10:30 am Worship led by Sally Bateman, with Kidz Klub
Monday 3
2:00 pm Open Door Gathering at Trees, 2-4 Broadlands Road, N6
Tuesday 4 4:00 pm Making Melodies
Wed 5
7:45 pm Home Group, 14 Southwood Park, N6 5SG
Friday 7 10:30 am Women's World Day of Prayer St James Church,
Muswell Hill, N10 3DB
12:30 – 1 pm Christian Meditation
2:00 pm Women's World Day of Prayer St Michael's Church,
Highgate, N6 6BJ
Sunday 9 10:30 am Lent 1, Worship with Holy Communion led by Julian
Templeton, with Kidz Klub

* Please note that the next **Church Meeting** will be held after worship on
Sunday 23 March

Story of a Homeless Man

Benjy (not real name) was evicted from his property when the family member he was living with passed away. Suffering with severe physical health problems he was given immediate respite in hospital for a couple of nights but then had nowhere else to go. He arrived at C4WS in complete crisis but after a couple of days settling in and recuperating was able to realise that he had somewhere safe and welcoming to go to each night. This enabled him, with the support of C4WS staff, to challenge the decision made on his eviction and secure interim accommodation within a few weeks. Benjy said that he never thought he was someone who would experience homelessness and that when it happened he had no idea where to go or what to do. C4WS provided immediate support and respite and is continuing to help him around permanent housing options.

Committed to Making a Difference:

Thames North Synod
makes Church Growth
its Priority

At the meeting of the Thames North Synod in November at High Cross United Reformed Church Tottenham, the Moderator, Andrew Prasad, argued that the church has been too focused on buildings and reminded representatives that the true church is made up of people gathering together to worship with the common purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ. He proposed, and the Synod agreed, to:

1. Urge the churches and Synod Committees/Groups to pray and to engage in church growth by making it a core priority in their decisions and actions.
2. Consolidate the Synod's work around church growth investing its resources of people, staff, money and structures; this to be reviewed in three years.
3. Commit the Mission Fund in 2014 for church growth.
4. Ask the Mission Initiative Group to work with the churches and Committees to implement 1, 2 and 3.

The move comes against a backdrop of several restructuring exercises in recent years, none of which have succeeded in reversing a historic trend of numerical decline. A local church needs a certain number of Christians/members in order to function effectively and reach out to its local community. Almost one third of Thames North churches are functioning below critical mass (the minimum number of people and resources required to be sustainable). The Church's core functions are to worship God, spread the good news of Jesus Christ, and extend God's Kingdom. The growth of the Kingdom comes from God, but we must play our role in planting and watering (1 Corinthians 3:6). Discipling and social action must go hand in hand.

The plan consists of three strands: First, local churches and wider Synod committees/groups praying for growth and making it a core priority in their decisions and actions. Second, consolidation of Synod resources around church growth, in particular staff time, financial investment and in the priority placed upon it by the Synod's committees and working groups. Third, a newly created mission fund, which was introduced earlier this year, with £300,000 to invest in mission projects of local churches with the focus for 2014 being on church growth.

Julian Templeton

Iveta is received into Membership

On Sunday 12 January, Iveta Olejkova was received into church membership by a reaffirmation of faith. She shared what had led her to join our congregation and was warmly welcomed by both Minister and people. Iveta works with John Thompson to find leaders of worship on the Sundays our ministers are elsewhere and does very much more besides!



News of Friends

As always, it was good to catch up on news from the Cranes, David Harker and Betty and Donald Richter. Betty and Donald will be moving home this year and we send every good wish for health and happiness to them all.

Thank You

Our thanks to Jean Gapp who sent us a donation which included money for flowers in January for our church in memory of the Buchanan family.

Pam Furse



'Streams in the Desert'



Friday
7th March
Women's
World Day
of Prayer
All are welcome



Praying for Egypt

All around the world, services like this take place on the first Friday of March. A different country prepares the outline each year, and in 2014 we travel with prayer, music and readings to **Egypt**.

10.30 am

St. James's Church (C.E.)

St. James's Lane / Muswell Hill Rd

Muswell Hill, N10 3DB

2.00 pm

St. Michael's Church (C.E.)

South Grove,

Highgate, N6 6BJ

The speaker at both services will be from the Coptic Orthodox Church UK. There will be opportunity over refreshments afterwards to look at displays giving a flavour of Egypt and its culture.

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A SULLIVAN SERVICE IN APRIL

On Sunday 6th April 2014, Sue Chinn and Robert Manning will be collaborating with our friend Peter Horton in a service which will feature hymn-tunes by Arthur Sullivan (of 'Gilbert and Sullivan' fame). The address will be about Sullivan and church music, and will be given by Peter, who is an expert in this area.

Sullivan wrote a unison setting of George Herbert's poem 'Sweet Day'; Robert is hoping to get some singers together to perform this as an anthem. The music is not difficult, but will require some practice; Robert is planning to offer 'note-bashing' sessions after some of our services in March.

Robert Manning

The Home Group

The Home Group has continued its weekly gatherings on Wednesdays throughout January.

Currently, we are using a Study Guide to read The Acts of the Apostles. This gives an exciting insight into Paul's Missionary Journeys and the life of the early church. No previous Bible knowledge or preparation is necessary. The atmosphere is very relaxed and friendly. During Lent we plan to follow a Study Guide, details will be given later.

Generally, our meetings are held at 14, Southwood Lawn Road, N6 5SG, unless notified otherwise at the previous Sunday morning service. We start at 7.45pm and aim to finish at 9.45pm. Light refreshments are provided at the start and end of the evening. If you would like to join us, we shall be delighted. Lifts, door-to-door, can be arranged.

Please contact **Roger Orme**: 07966956160 or 020 8458 2144.

Early Spring Clean?

We will be holding a Jumble Sale before Easter in aid of church funds. If you have any items you would like to donate please bring them to church and leave them near the vestry with a note for Patricia.



Breaking News

On the Sunday before Christmas, a reporter and cameraman brought us some breaking news about a baby born in a stable! Innkeeper, angels and wise men were interviewed while animals looked on.

