

# **Methodist Church Circuit**





#### Some Thoughts from the Manse



By the time you read this letter for the month of May, these fine islands will be in 'full swing'! The faithful Scillonian will be coming to us six days a week bringing happy holiday makers to sample the delights of these beautiful islands, and the tripper boats will be there to take us to the off-islands to catch a glimpse of these tiny island communities. At our Methodist

chapels on St Martin's and St Mary's we are looking forward to greeting visitors to our worship, many of whom have been many times before and are like old friends. It is good for these visitors to have the opportunity to worship with us, and it is good for us to hear news of churches on the mainland and the wider picture of what it means to be 'church' in the world today.

Despite difficult times in the economy, many still see having a holiday as something to look forward to, and I expect that despite the rising costs we will still see many visitors coming to Scilly over the summer months. Indeed, I have been told that this year we have a 'record number' of cruise liners booked to come, bringing thousands of day trippers. Scillonians too like to travel; I know that several have been to New Zealand and other far-away places over the winter months and even Mary and I managed a trip to Falmouth! Of course, in Biblical times, people travelled far less. For most the only way to travel was to walk, and as we read the stories of Jesus in the Gospels we find that He and His disciples must have spent many long hours just walking from place to place. We know that on these long journeys Jesus would take the opportunity to speak with His disciples in the hope of preparing them for what lay ahead of them, and we know that wherever they stopped many would come to listen to Jesus speaking about the Kingdom of God, a subject that intrigued the people of the day.

Jesus' very last trip was the journey from Galilee in the north, through part of Perea and on into Judea via Jericho and Bethany into the city of Jerusalem, and it was on this final journey that Jesus again sought to prepare His followers for what lay ahead. It was on this final long journey to Jerusalem that Luke tells us of an un-named man asking the challenging question 'Lord, are only a few going to be saved?' This is certainly a question that is direct and to the point, and the answer that Jesus gave, I expect, was very challenging to those who first heard it and is a challenge to us today. And we may well ask, what does this question mean, what is it all about, and indeed, what does the answer that Jesus gave mean to us today? According to Luke, Jesus answered 'Make every effort to enter by the narrow door!' These are certainly words that call each of us to honestly and carefully examine our relationship with God, they are words about our discipleship and our walk of faith, and they are words that I expect have something to do with the work and the mission of our church today.

Things in the days of Jesus were of course very different to life as we experience it today. The people of Galilee and Judea were expecting some kind of significant event to bring hope and renewal to God's people. Each week in their synagogues they heard their teachers reminding them of the words spoken by past prophets; many ordinary people were waiting for God to intervene in their lives, and some were openly speaking among themselves of God's reign bringing justice and mercy to His people, and judgement upon the wicked. This then is the background to this intriguing question asked by an unnamed man as Jesus made His final journey to Jerusalem. On hearing Jesus' answer, no doubt some would have asked themselves whether they were doing the right things, saying the right things or even believing the right things.

And we too are challenged by this answer of Jesus. Just what 'effort' are we called to make? We have been told that our effort does not bring us salvation, we have been told that this is a gift from God, and that this is God's gift to us in Jesus who, according to Luke, spoke those very words. So can we work for a place in God's Kingdom? Can we gain God's favour by 'ticking boxes' and listing our good works? Surely the only need we have is to receive His promise of New Life, which is God's gift to us in Jesus. What then did Jesus mean when He said 'make every effort to enter through the narrow door'? We all know of our need to trust and follow, but maybe Jesus was saying this is just the beginning.

When Jesus called His first disciples they left all behind and followed. This required both commitment and effort. In John's Gospel we have the story of a religious teacher named Nicodemus coming to Jesus and he was told that the way to the Kingdom of Heaven is to be born anew, but as Jesus travelled through Galilee He had much more to say than this. On one occasion He said to a large crowd of followers 'If anyone would come after me, they must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow', and when a rich young man in Judea asked Him about Eternal Life, he was told by Jesus to sell his possessions and give his money to the poor. Yes, there is a call to receive but there is also a call to make every effort.

Matthew records Jesus as saying in His sermon on the mount 'Not everyone who calls me Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven', and the message begins to become clear. Making a commitment to Jesus is only the first step; from that point on our aim should always be to serve, to learn and to listen to the voice of God. We are called to 'make every effort' to grow in our faith, even in the face of setbacks, difficulties and adversity.

In the life of our church this effort should be seen by all, it should be visible in our love, in our gentleness, and in our forgiveness of others. If we don't make every effort our church will only be but a shadow of what it could be. If we don't go forward we will often go backwards; we are called to make every effort in our discipleship and in the life of our church, even here on the beautiful Isles of Scilly! On the same occasion that Jesus spoke of us making every effort he also said 'They will come from the East and from the West, and from the North and from the South, and they will take their place in the Kingdom of God'!

And maybe our worship during the summer months will give us a glimpse into this promise of God. In our worship we will be with the many visitors who travel from all over the world to visit these islands; we may not know them all but they, like us, are making every effort to give thanks to God for the sending of His Son. They are there to worship our sovereign God of love, and we rejoice in the rich fellowship we share with them; surely this is nothing less than a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven. I do hope that those of us on St Mary's will 'make every effort' to show our commitment to the things of Jesus and His work by being at our Annual Church Meeting on May 13<sup>th</sup>, and that our 'bring and share' lunch will be a 'foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven'; and hopefully some visitors to our islands will come along to share with us.

Mary and I will be away for two weeks in May but we trust that on Aldersgate Sunday we will celebrate our rich Methodist heritage and that on Pentecost Sunday we will again feel the gentle power of the Holy Spirit helping us to make every effort in proclaiming the mighty power of God's love which is freely given to us in Jesus. St Paul said 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God to bring salvation to all who will believe!'

I remain, by the grace of God, your Methodist minister on these fine islands for a while.

Charlie Gibbs

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Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully all over the world, answering that of God in every one.

George Fox

Greetings and a very big thank you to the Methodist community of the Isles of Scilly for making my recent visit so special. Coming as it did at a busy time in the life of Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) it was a real blessing for me to spend a few days getting to know many of you and some of your spectacular scenery at a more leisurely pace. Meeting new friends at Mary's house group, the coffee morning on Thursday, the Taizé service on Friday and then at worship on Palm Sunday morning in St Mary's and in the afternoon on St Martin's were all joyous occasions and highlighted for me yet again what a thrill and privilege it is to belong to our worldwide Methodist family where one can feel instantly at home, even in a new place.

Thank you too for letting me share something of my vision for MWiB, in which people like you play a vital part. It is, I hope, a means by which we can all become better-connected; with each other as women in Methodist and ecumenical churches around the British Isles, and with our wider global sisterhood. Having had the opportunity to visit both Zimbabwe and Ghana recently, it was good to bring the needs of our brothers and sisters in those lands to God in prayer with you, and it was heart-warming that you raised £79 for the Matthew Rusike Children's Home in Zimbabwe at the coffee morning.

MWiB organizes gatherings at all sorts of levels (I will be leading the Cornwall District residential conference in St Ives at the beginning of November this year, or how about coming to Italy in 2014 to meet European Methodist women?!) but it is about much more than meetings; stories and news can be shared through our guarterly mailing (do let me know if you would like to receive it directly) and our new website www.mwib.org.uk is opening up new possibilities all the time (I write a daily blog on the website, so you can keep a check on my travels). There is a Methodist Women in Britain Facebook page through which you could be joined to Methodist women in other island communities around these shores! Do let me have your feedback about what we are doing and ideas for anything we could do which would help to serve you as we all continue to work together to know Christ and to make him known. If you are thinking of coming over to the mainland at all during the Methodist Conference in Plymouth in June/July, you may like to know that the MWiB fringe event wil

be held at Plymouth Central Hall on Wednesday 4th July from 6:30pm. Mary has fliers with more details.

I return to my family life in Slough and my travels for MWiB with a refreshed spirit and precious memories of new companions met on this journey of faith, with all its twists and turns, joys and tears, green pastures and desert wanderings and I will be praying for you all as I travel on.

With my love, Jill Baker, President, Methodist Women in Britain

#### Prayer Room

An article in *The Methodist Recorder* entitled 'Perfect Prayer Spaces' gave inspiration for the chapel vestry to be made available as a quiet place where people might feel more at ease for a time of private prayer and reflection than in the chapel itself. Soft furnishings have been introduced to brighten the room, making it a more inviting place of retreat. Various 'helps' for prayer are available and a CD player for suitable music is also planned. It is hoped that locals as well as visitors will find in this room a space where God's presence will bring the peace and quiet we all need at times.

Sylvia Michell

#### Looking up

Deliver us, we beseech Thee, from worldly cares and foolish desires, from vain hopes and causeless fears, and so dispose our hearts that death itself may not be dreadful to us. May our hearts be so firmly established in grace that nothing may affright us or shake our constancy. Amen.

John Wesley (1703 – 1791)

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It was good to welcome Canon Peter Walker and Len Michell for a united Mothering Sunday service at the Chapel. Together they led us in worship, when our thoughts were focused on Motherhood and Mother Church. The customary bunches of flowers were distributed to all members of the congregation by the young people who were present. Our thanks and appreciation goes to Mike Tetley, the St Martin's schoolchildren and other helpers who worked to provide the posies. Len, with the help of some old family photos and school exercise books, discussed with the young people the various people involved in their learning but with a special emphasis on their mothers' nurturing role.

The visit to Scilly of Jill Baker (National President of Methodist Women in Britain) was blessed with good weather and her delight at seeing the beauty of the islands and experiencing a jet boat ride was obvious, as too was Dorothy's. Those of us who heard her Palm Sunday message based on the theme of 'crowds' were similarly blessed. We were reminded of a Christian's calling to sometimes stand against the crowd even when it isn't easy, and of the wisdom to make time to withdraw from others in solitude to reconnect with Our Lord and gain some spiritual strength and peace.

Several years ago, during the time when Jeremy Dare was our minister, Dennis and Grace Ackhurst started to regularly worship with us at Easter. Therefore it felt like old times to have Grace and some of her family with us on Easter Day. With Charlie we celebrated Christ's resurrection with familiar readings and hymns and the Sacrament of Holy Communion, thus sharing with so many others around the world, the gift of redeeming grace. Charlie also led a Fellowship Evening on Maundy Thursday.

A few days after Easter, a Service of Thanksgiving was held for the life of Mary Haley. St Martin's folk and others from St Mary's and Bryher plus regular holidaymakers gathered (on a fresh, bright, sunny day such as Mary would have so enjoyed on her frequent walks) to recall her life and personality, and to give thanks for all that she had meant to her family and those who knew her. Mary's son-in-law, Jason Poat and friends Val and Graham took part in the service with readings and a tribute.

Finally the congregation on St Martin's would like to congratulate Sylvia and Len Michell on reaching their Golden Wedding

Anniversary recently. We hope you really enjoyed your celebrations with friends on St Mary's.

Heather

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#### **Editorial Team**

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This is the Circuit magazine but it needs your contributions to make sure everyone knows what is happening.

In Touch can be read on line. Just go to our Circuit website <u>www.scillymethodists.co.uk</u> and click on the link to the newsletter. Back numbers of In Touch can also be accessed. If you would prefer to read In Touch in this way please let us know and we can save the cost of a paper copy.

We have been very grateful in the past for gifts of stamps to help defray the cost of sending out In Touch. Now that postage has gone up we are again in need of help in this way. If you feel able to help please give stamps to Gwen.

Some material in this magazine was obtained from <u>www.parishpump.co.uk</u>. We thank them for providing material for magazine editors to use.

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Too often we forget to thank God for answered prayer. Praise is the proper punctuation mark for an answered prayer. Anon

#### Giving thanks for the past year and trusting in God for the year to come

Some thoughts on the past year by our minister

The membership of St Mary's Methodist Church at present stands at 56, and we rejoice that many who are not in membership regularly worship with us and support the mission and service of the Methodist Church in this island community. Membership of the Methodist Church is open to all who seek to serve and worship and be part of the world-wide Methodist Church. Our minister is always pleased to explore what it means to be a member, and we always welcome new members.

In the past year we have continued to serve this island community. We have met each week for worship in our chapel, shared worship with our friends from the Parish Church and held a monthly act of worship at Park House. In addition to this we have set out in mission and service in various ways. On every Monday throughout the year we have met to pray for this island community, the wider world and the mission of our church. At this weekly meeting prayers are said for the sick and those in need, and those who attend have found friendship and a commitment by our church to offer care and support to the people of Scilly. The members of our church have supported the minister in the chaplaincy of St Mary's hospital, in visiting the sick and caring for the relatives of those in hospital. We have also set out to offer care to the elderly and to ensure that the house-bound are visited. This we consider to be an important part of our mission and service to the wider community.

On a Wednesday we have continued to host our 'At Home' meetings in the Wesley Room, offering a place of welcome and friendship for all, and again seeking to engage with those who care for the elderly. We are thankful to those who help with this important meeting.

We have set out to encourage 'discipleship'. This has been done through preaching and meeting for fellowship and study. On Friday evenings we have met for study and encouragement. Each week a theme has been followed and led by our minister and other invited leaders. Study notes have been written by our minister to be used at the meeting and for personal devotion at home – these are available to all free of charge. These Friday evening meetings resource our discipleship and encourage each of us in following our Christian faith. After a short break in the summer these meetings will continue and all will be welcome.

In addition to our Friday meetings there are three other house-groups which meet on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and offer

support, friendship and study. We see these meetings as an important part of church life.

Work with children is also an important part of our mission and service. Through the winter months our Saturday Seekers has seen good numbers, with games, craft work, and sound Biblical teaching being the elements that have been used to encourage children in a life of faith. Plans are in place for another Holiday Club this year. New helpers for both Saturday Seekers and our Holiday Club are always made welcome.

Our monthly Children's Church is now in its second year. This, in many ways, is unique and sets out to provide a worshipping place for children, while at the same time having a slot for adults to be challenged in discipleship. We are thankful to the leaders of this venture, and for the use of modern resources which bring a wider vision to the life of our church.

An important part of our mission and service is to the visitors and holiday makers who we welcome each year. Many enjoy our early morning worship at 9.15, and others come to our 11am service. It is good that over the summer months we can resource two morning services giving choice and flexibility to both residents and visitors. We are thankful to those who lead our worship and music, and that we can offer different styles of worship by having two services most Sunday mornings with refreshments after each.

We have also met on Sunday evenings in the Wesley Room during the winter. This is a good venue for teaching and sharing in Holy Communion. During the summer we welcome many visitors to our evening worship in the Chapel. The Songs of Praise services have proved very popular with holiday makers and more are planned for this year. After each evening service refreshments have been provided at the Manse. This has been well received by visitors who share with us what is going on in their churches on the mainland.

It has been a great delight to us all that two of our members have set out to do the Methodist 'Faith and Worship' course. This will take about three years to complete and, if successful, at the end we will have two more Local Preachers. We wish Mary Ratcliffe and David Pender every blessing as they set out on this long road of study.

Last September we put in place the tithing scheme, which means that one tenth of our weekly freewill offering will be given to other good causes. At the end of August this year we will know just what this figure is, and this means that at our 2013 Annual Meeting we can decide to whom this money will be given.

In December last we had a gift day for our church which raised  $\pm 3000$  in all. This was a wonderful result and we give thanks for the generosity of our members and for the gifts sent to us from the mainland. Our treasurer has reminded us of the cost of maintaining a paid ministry and of keeping our building in good order. In addition to this the cost of heating in the winter has been high.

In the last year there has been a shortfall in the money raised compared with our outgoings. This clearly cannot go on for very long as most of our capital has been used in the recent refurbishment of our hall. Please do speak to our minister or our treasurer if you can offer help with this pressing matter. We go forward trusting in God's provision and are greatly encouraged by those who give sacrificially week by week to further the mission and service of our church.

We give thanks that our property is in such good order and that our property committee have worked so hard to keep on top of things. Our Chapel is one of the largest buildings on St Mary's; it is used by many in the community and has provided us with a place of worship for many generations. We will always need help in maintaining this historic chapel: in the coming year we plan to redecorate the hall and there is routine maintenance work needed all the time. If you can help, please let our minister now. Our building is often the first point of contact with the wider community; because of this its upkeep is part of our mission and deserves our time and effort.

On a personal note, I now reflect on my feelings as I come towards the end of my third year of ministry to the people of Scilly. The total winter population of St Mary's is much smaller than many villages on the mainland. A Methodist church in a village on the mainland would be part of a much larger circuit, it would be sharing the cost of ministry with several other churches, it would be able to call on resources from a wider community and it would be possible for people to travel to other places of worship if they were so minded. This is not the case here; our circuit is made up of just two small churches, the only resources we have are the people who live here with the gifts they have for mission and service, and the money needed to fulfil our ministry falls upon those few of us who are focused on our church and understand the difficulties of 'being church' on a tiny island thirty miles from Lands End.

The above we can do little about; indeed even if we were to call on people from the mainland to bring resources, the cost would be great, and in addition to this there is always the problem of accommodation etc. Above all else we need a conviction that God wants us here to fulfil His purposes! This at times will call us to live sacrificial lives, and it will mean that we must be open to the Holy Spirit showing us what we must be doing. We will need great wisdom in seeing just what our priorities must be in the days ahead! With God's help we may be amazed at what the future holds, after all Jesus did say 'Nothing is impossible with God'.

#### Charlie Gibbs

Life's evening will take its character from the day that has preceded it. I have found the paradox that if I love until it hurts, then there is no hurt, but only more love. *Mother Teresa* 

Sounds and signs from heaven, How to describe them? A roaring mighty windstorm -Tongues of fire -

Words are too weak, Too one-dimensional. We need the Lord's own linguist To describe them

Through transformed lives Only when he fills us Can we understand, Only when he fills us Can we pour out the joy, The love and the laughter,



The power and the praise.

Only when he fills us Can we speak and show. Come Holy Spirit Transform us into Sounds and Signs from heaven.

By Daphne Kitching

#### Thanks

Len and Sylvia Michell wish to thank everyone who helped to make their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 11<sup>th</sup> April such a time of goodwill, happiness and Christian fellowship. The totally unexpected meeting with friends, both at home and from away, after the Easter Day morning service, complete with an anniversary cake, was such an exciting time for us, and in the days after, we received many cards and good wishes – may you feel God's blessing with you, as indeed we have felt His blessing and guidance over the past fifty years.

#### Christian Aid Week 13 – 19 May

This year Christian Aid Week tells the story of change within a community in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is a place with vast natural resources of fertile land and mineral wealth, but in spite of this abundance, its turbulent past has left the country with deep challenges. These challenges have meant that many people's lives are defined by hunger, and their prospects limited by the urgency of finding enough to eat. In a society where women and young people are widely marginalized, decision-making can be weighted against people who are naturally more vulnerable in society, and the cycle of hunger and poverty continues.

A group of three Christian Aid supporters – Mike, Peter and Llinos – travelled to Gbap (pronounced Bap) in rural Sierra Leone in summer 2011. There, they saw first-hand the work of Christian Aid's partner, the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone (MCSL), who encouraged the people of Gbap to set up a village development committee. MCSL also gave local farmers some simple tools that hugely increased the amount they could grow. Now that the community is free to think beyond their immediate hunger, their lives have changed beyond measure. For more details, and to give, please visit: <u>http://www.caweek.org/</u>

This year the churches on St Mary's raised £800 for Christian Aid through the Lent Lunches. This is a brilliant effort – thanks go to all who participated.

#### **Birthdays in May**



We send our greetings this month to Dorothy Beedell, Mervyn Bird, Andy Brooks, Chris Hensleigh, Michael Jenkins, Nick Jenkins, Harriet Pender and Emma Roberts. May you all have a very happy day.

#### A cascade of prayer along with the Olympic torch

The Olympic Torch relay starts at Land's End on 19 May. It will be carried on a 70-day journey across the UK, arriving at the Olympic Stadium on 27 July for the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony.

As the torch begins its journey across the UK, so too will a prayer relay. Christian leaders will launch a cascade of prayer at Land's End. They will then travel to the next main torch-stopping place (Plymouth). Here they will bring prayers of blessing and hand on a symbolic prayer baton to Christian leaders there. This simple process will continue day by day. That means, the next day, Plymouth leaders will travel to Exeter – and so on through the 70 days.

It means each community receives and releases prayers of blessing. It is up to the churches in each place that receives the baton to decide when and how the prayer chain of blessing is moved on. The More than Gold local link person can be contacted through torch@morethangold.org.uk.

#### Some unfortunate church notices

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

In the past decade we have been hit with an extraordinary explosion of choice in almost every area of our lives. Fancy a coffee? Is that cappuccino, latte, flat white, Americano or espresso; skinny, full-fat, double or single shot, small, medium or large?

Want to watch some television? On Freeview you have over a hundred choices; many more than that on cable. You will find programmes you never dreamed of, even in your worst nightmares. Do you like computer games? The choice is endless. What about music on your iPod? You can download more music that you will ever have time to listen to in your lifetime. Want to play with your laptop or iPad? There are hundreds of thousands of apps you can choose from...

No one is still these days. We surf, we text, we email, we listen to iPods. We may all live in the same house, but we seldom sit and share an experience together; instead we roost around the house, each absorbed and tapping at our electronic devices.

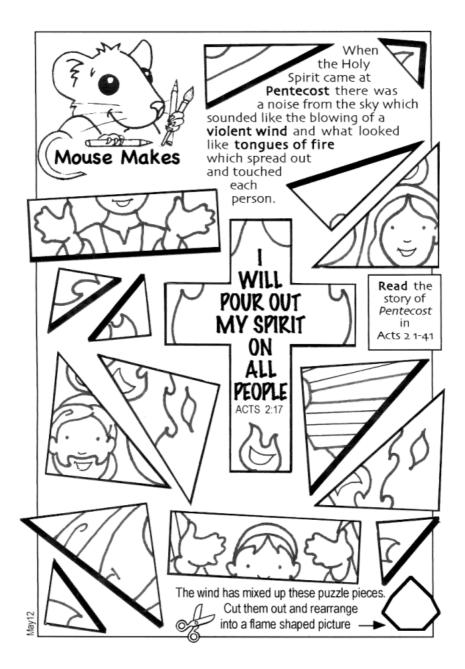
We all seem to be living in a state of permanent distraction, and some dislocation from those physically closest to us. We can find anything on the internet, but we can't find time to appreciate it. We have 400 friends on Facebook, but how many true friends in the flesh? We pay more attention to our emails than members of our own family...

One writer has recently wisely observed that if we don't slow down, we will 'carry on twitching aimlessly to the beat of endless distraction, gradually choosing ourselves sick'. The Bible urges us to take time to 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth'. Psalm 46:10

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Evil urges us to the selfish, envious or idle choice, but it is only when that choice is made that sins begin.

Philip Pare



## **DON'T FORGET**

## St Mary's Annual Church Meeting

## 12 noon Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May

Review of the past year by our minister An opportunity to ask questions and share our ideas for the year ahead

Election of those to serve on our Church Council

### Election of Church Stewards

We would welcome those who can serve in the coming year as Church Stewards or on the Church Council. Please do speak to our minister to find out more. This is a good way to help the mission of our church. Please put all names forward before the meeting.

#### The meeting will be followed by a Bring and Share lunch

If you can contribute food please tell Beryl Read

We thank God for His past provision to His Church here on St Mary's, and trust Him for all that is to come.

#### MAY SERVICES

### <u>St Mary's</u>

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6th	10.00 am 11.00 am 8.00 pm	Children's Church Rev. Charlie Gibbs Mary Ratcliffe
13th	10.30 am 8.00 pm	Rev. Charlie Gibb Holy Communion Rev. Charlie Gibbs Songs of Praise
20th	Aldersgate 9.15 am 11.00 am 8.00 pm	Mary Ratcliffe and Neil Didlick Len Michell Gordon Bird
27th	Pentecost 9.15 am 11.00 am 8.00 pm	David Pender and Neil Didlick Mary Ratcliffe Barbara Hasler
<u>St Martin's</u>		
6th	6.00 pm	Rev. Charlie Gibbs Holy Communion
13th	11.00 am	Christopher Savill
20th	Aldersgate 11.00 am	Barbara Hasler
27th	Pentecost 11.00 am	Len Michell