

In Touch



September 2015

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Minister

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From the Manse

As our minister, Charlie Gibbs is away on sabbatical at the moment, Bishop Peter Stephens has kindly shared with us his thoughts for the month.



Dear Friends,

In 1843 Richard Stephen Hawker, vicar of Morwenstow in North Cornwall, invited his congregation to receive holy communion on the first Sunday of October 'in the bread of the new corn'. Imagine their amazement when they entered the church that morning to find it decorated with fruit and flowers and vegetables. It was the first modern harvest festival.

If we go back three thousand years we can read of an earlier harvest festival. You can read about it in Deuteronomy 26. I quote just a few verses. When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you ... you shall take some of the fruit of the ground which you harvest from your land ... and you shall put it into a basket, and you shall go to the place which the Lord your God will choose.... And you shall go to the priest. ... Then the priest shall take the basket and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. You shall make response before the Lord your God, 'And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O Lord, have given me.' When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce ... you shall say, 'I have given the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.'

Farmers and shepherds came with gifts to the sanctuary. The shepherd came with the first lamb and fleece. The farmer came with the first sheaf of wheat and barley, the first loaf from the new grain, the first basket of olives and grapes, the first skins of wine and oil.

We do not come like them, for most of us are not farmers or shepherds, indeed we may not even grow fruit or vegetables in our garden. If we do grow them, we may well bring some and have a real sense of the harvest. But whether or not we are farmers or gardeners, we bring something in order to give thanks and to share with others. As we approach the time of harvest, let us think what it may mean for us to give thanks and to share.

The fundamental act of thanks is giving thanks to God, from whom ultimately the harvest comes. We are, however, not like farmers centuries ago, who could produce directly all that they needed for themselves and for their families. For our food and clothes and homes we are entirely, or almost entirely, dependent on others. Most things that we have, we get from a shop or business or supplier, so much so that our children could think that milk comes from containers rather than cows and eggs from cartons and not hens - and indeed from shops rather than farms. And, of course, the milk and eggs did not come directly from the farm to the shop, but - as with other things we buy they come through various stages, involving hosts of people, who preserve, package, and transport what we buy. Some things are transported across the world before we buy them in our local shop. We cannot give thanks to all of them, but we can give thanks to God for those to whom we cannot give thanks. And those of us who are working in the system can realise that we play our part in the work of God, from whom ultimately our harvest comes.

In all this we should also remember and give thanks to those who every day bring our food to the table at which we eat - often after an hour or two or three cooking and preparing it!

When we come to give thanks, as the farmers did in Israel, we are also like them to remember and share with 'the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow'. These were people who had no land on which to grow their food or people who had no one to look after them. That clearly applies to so many in our own country and in our world. They are the very poor and those seeking asylum in our own land, but perhaps even more the many millions in our world who are without the food or clothes or homes they need. Do we give them even one hundredth let alone the biblical tenth of what we have?

I could give you many examples of the needs of men and women and children in desperate need, but you can read about them every day in the newspapers. Perhaps most tragic of all now are the people of Syria, not least our Christian brothers and sisters, who have been driven from their homes by Islamic terrorists. They had the choice of abandoning their Christian faith and becoming Muslim, or being killed, or, if they wished to remain Christians, of leaving behind their homes and all their possessions and fleeing for their life. They did this and now are living at best in tents through the extreme cold of winter and the intense heat of summer. They are dependent on what food and drink is provided, as they have no means of earning a living. They are some of those who are for you and me 'the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow'. They need not our pence, but our pounds - and they need them not once or twice, but while they are in need and we have the means to help them in their need.

Different bodies can help in this - Christian Aid, the Methodist Relief and Development Fund, and not least Barnabas Fund which works with and for persecuted Christians across the world.

God bless you, Bishop Peter

P.S. The Reverend Charlie is away on his sabbatical and I have been asked to take his place this month. I join you in wishing him a time of refreshment in his ministry as he enters his last year with you as your minister. He will be greatly missed by us when he leaves.

St Martin's News

We continue to welcome family and friends to our chapel and have enjoyed a variety of ministers leading worship, including Prof. Peter Stephens.

We wish Rev Charlie a time of refreshment on his sabbatical away, and hope our family services will reach out to the wider community.

Val Thomas

Contact information for Rev Jane Wilcock

Whilst Rev Jane Wilcock is on St. Mary's helping to cover Rev C. Gibbs' sabbatical, she is willing for those needing pastoral support to contact her on her mobile phone number – **07883086191**.

Jane is here between August 21st and September 19th, and again from October 16th to the end of the month.

On August 11th a day's fundraising was held in the garden of The Palms by kind permission of June Lethbridge. Many visitors enjoyed the opportunity to explore the garden and enjoy refreshments kindly given by supporters. At the end of the day the total amount given amounted to nearly three hundred pounds for the Leprosy hospital at Anandaman in Nepal. During this year over £700 has been given and part of this amount will be doubled with matched funding by the Overseas Development Dept. This means we have raised over one thousand pounds this year. Thank you!

The hospital is in the area which suffered great damage as a result of the earthquake earlier this year. The hospital's garden was turned into an emergency response area. To date the dedicated medical team has treated nearly four thousand people in tents provided by UNICEF.

We give thanks that we have been able to help our brothers and sisters in Christ.

NCH Action for Children

Our hearty thanks to all of you who helped in any way with our Grand Book Sale and day of refreshments on Saturday August 1st in the Methodist Hall. The day has raised over £130 for the children's charity.



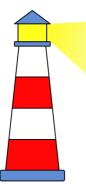
It turned out to be a sunny day and we feared that

support would be rather thin on the ground, but many of you came in to be with us, as did welcome visitors. Some of them had landed on St Mary's from a huge cruise liner here in the harbour. Lovely cakes and sandwiches had been made to accompany a range of drinks – a blessing on those who contributed.

When we came to pack up at the end of the event in late afternoon we found that quite a lot of the books had gone, praise be! However, we shall still need our next sale of them, as usual in the run-up to Christmas. Sadly the work of the charity continues to be much needed in our country today!

Gwen Clarkson Representative

Holiday Club



Our Holiday club theme this year was *Jesus, the Light of the World.* The chapel was split into three cabins. The pulpit became the lighthouse where the Skipper Gordon lived. Sonia came each day to bring the Skipper's lunch. As usual some mishap happened every day. On Friday the Skipper's lunch ended up on Sonia's head.

Thirty-five different children came over the week, with twenty something children coming each day. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday the children played games in the hall. The craft people June, Judi,

Anne, Val, Heather and Margaret came to work with the children on Tuesday and Thursday. They helped them make lighthouses, lighthouse keepers, collage, shells in a shell, a lighthouse scene and painted shells. The children really enjoyed making everything. Our two kitchen folk, Pam and Sylvia kept the children happy by serving refreshments each day. This year we were blessed by lots of mainland friends and family Phil, Esther, Becca, Ian and Andy who all played an important part in the Bible-based dramas along with June and Len. The cabin leaders Leigh, Vicki and Beryl with their supporters Becky, Emily and Lottie did a sterling job teaching in the cabins. Josh on the sound and computer and Ewan as the 'whatever is needed person' completed our team.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along and helped in any way, including those who lent things.

There are lots of pictures on our Chapel Facebook.

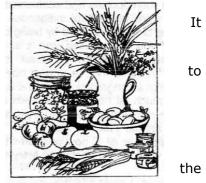
Seen in a church magazine

'Don't be surprised if you find mistakes in this magazine. We print something for everyone.....and some people are always looking for mistakes!!'

History of the Harvest Festival

The word Harvest comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *HOERFEST* meaning Autumn. then came to refer to the season for reaping and gathering grain and other grown products. The full moon nearest the autumnal equinox (usually about September 23rd) is called the Harvest Moon and in ancient traditions Harvest Festivals were held on or near the Sunday of the Harvest Moon.

Harvest Festival used to be celebrated at beginning of the harvest season on



August 1st and was called *Lammas* meaning *Loaf Mass*. Farmers made loaves of bread from the new wheat crop and gave them to their local church. They were then used as the communion bread during the special mass thanking God for the harvest. This custom ended when Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church and nowadays we have harvest festivals at the end of the season.

At the start of the harvest communities would appoint a strong and respected man of the village as their *Lord of the Harvest* and he would be responsible for negotiating the harvest wages and organizing the field workers. It was also his responsibility to bring in the last sheaf of corn to the farm and officially declare that the harvest was safely gathered in. The end of the harvest was celebrated with a big meal called a *harvest supper* when the *Lord of the Harvest* sat at the head of the table and a goose stuffed with apples was eaten along with a variety of vegetables. Goose Fairs were, and still are, held in English towns at this time of year.

In the early days there were many ceremonies and rituals at the start and end of the harvest, such as

- Church bells could be heard on each day of the harvest.
- A corn dolly was made from the last sheaf of corn harvested and this often had a place of honour at the banquet table and was kept until the following spring.
- The horse bringing in the last cartload was decorated with garlands of flowers and coloured ribbons.

A magnificent feast was held at the farmer's house and games played to celebrate the end of harvest.

So what is a harvest festival today? It is a celebration of the food grown on the land. Thanksgiving ceremonies and celebrations for a successful harvest are both worldwide and very ancient. In Britain we have given thanks for successful harvests since pagan times and we now celebrate it by singing, praying and decorating our churches with baskets of fruit and food in a festival known as Harvest Festival. Nowadays it has changed somewhat and in many churches and schools gifts of tinned and packet foods are offered instead of fresh. Harvest Festival reminds Christians of all the good things God gives them and this makes them want to share with others who are not so fortunate and after the service the food displayed is distributed to people in need. The tradition of celebrating harvest in churches as we know it today began in 1843 when Rev Robert Harker invited his parishioners to a special thanksgiving service for the harvest at his church at Morwenstow in Cornwall. Victorian hymns such as We plough the fields and scatter, Come ve thankful people come and All things bright and beautiful helped to popularize his idea of harvest festival and spread the annual custom of decorating churches with home-grown produce for the Harvest Festival service.

In towns and villages on the coast where the main industry is fishing Harvest Festivals thank God for fish which had been caught in the sea and for the safety of the fishermen.

With thanks to Trinity Methodist Church, Royton



Observations on our Christian Faith

They stand best who kneel most. Anon

You are a Child of God. Please phone home! Anon

Prayer moves the hand which moves the world. Anon

Praying Hands

We are all familiar with this picture of praying hands which was painted by Albrecht Durer.

Albrecht was born in the fifteenth century, near Nuremberg one of eighteen children. Albrecht's father, a goldsmith by profession, worked long hours and took any other paying chore he could find in his neighbourhood in order merely to keep food on the table for his family.

Two of the children, Albrecht and Albert



were talented artists they both dreamt of pursuing their talent further, but they knew that their father would never be able to afford to send either of them to Nuremberg to study at the Academy.

So the two boys worked out a plan. One would work in the nearby mines and support his brother with his earnings whilst the other would attend the academy. Then when that bother had finished his studies in four years they would swap. Albrecht won the toss of the coin and attended the academy, planning to swap in four years and support his brother either with sales of his artwork or by labouring in the mines. Albert went down into the mine and, for the next four years, financed his brother, whose work at the academy was almost an immediate success. Albrecht's etchings, woodcuts, and his oils were often far better than those of most of his professors, and by the time he graduated, he was beginning to earn considerable fees for his commissioned works.

After four years the young artist returned to his village, Albrecht was ready to pay for his brother's time at the academy. The Durer family held a festive dinner to celebrate Albrecht's return. After the meal, Albrecht rose to drink a toast to his beloved brother thanking him for his support for the years of sacrifice that had enabled Albrecht to fulfil his ambition. His closing words were, 'And now, Albert, blessed brother of mine, now it is your turn. Now you can go to Nuremberg to pursue your dream, and I will take care of you.' Albert rose, and holding his hands close to his right cheek, he said 'No, brother. I cannot go to Nuremberg. It is too late for me. Look what four years in the mines have done to my hands! No, brother ... for me it is too late.' The bones in every finger had been smashed at least once, and were now suffering from arthritis, the thumbs were bent and twisted, such that it was difficult even to hold the glass toasting his brother, much less a brush.

Albrecht paid homage to his brother for all he had sacrificed and painstakingly sketched his brother's hands with palms together and thin fingers stretched skyward simply calling the drawing 'Hands'. Look carefully at the picture and note the crooked thumb and the gnarled hands that could not close due to the abuse the mines had wrought,

The world renamed his tribute of love 'The Praying Hands'.

George Jevons

September Prayer

Loving Father

Please help us with all the new things September brings: a new school year, new stages of life, with children moving on or out, new challenges for many as summer gives way to autumn. Help us in this season of change to know the constant reality of Jesus. Thank you for the new life He freely offers to all who turn to Him.

In Jesus' name Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

What we know of God encourages us to trust Him in all we don't know. Anon

The Kingdom of God is simply God's power enthroned in our hearts. Faith in the Kingdom of God is what makes us light of heart and what Christian joy is all about. *John Main*

The Lord's Prayer

A meditation seen in a Salvation Army publication from the 1980's.

Our Father, which art in Heaven. Help me to believe that there is a power to lift me up which is stronger than all the things that hold me down.

Hallowed be Thy name. Help me to be sensitive to what is beautiful and responsive to what is good so that day by day I may grow more sure of the holiness of life in which I want to trust.

Thy Kingdom come. Help me to be quick to see and ready to encourage whatever brings the better meaning of God into which otherwise might be the common round of an uninspired day.

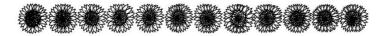
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Help me to believe that ideals of the spirit are not far off dreams but a power to command my loyalty and direct my life here on earth.

<u>Give us this day our daily bread.</u> Open the way for me to earn an honest living, but never let me forget the needs of others. Help me to alleviate their needs in your name.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Make me patient and sympathetic with the short comings of others, especially those I love. Help me to keep a very watchful eye on my own weaknesses. Keep my eyes lifted to the highest so that I may be kept humble. When seeing the failures of others, make me forgiving, because I know how much there is of which I need to be forgiven.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Let me not go this day within reach of evil which I cannot resist, but if in the path of duty I must go where temptation is, give me strength of spirit to meet it without fear.

For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. And so, in my heart may I carry the knowledge that Thy greatness is above and around me, and that Thy grace through Jesus Christ my Master is sufficient for all my needs.



Many well-known hymns have been written by interesting people. An example was Julia Ward Howe, born in 1819, the daughter of a stockbroker father and poet mother.

She married a much older man, Dr Samuel Howe, but their marriage was somewhat unhappy because Samuel did not wish his wife to spread her wings. But Julia was determined and attended lectures, studied foreign languages and wrote.

The turning point in her life came when she wrote the muchloved hymn which became known as 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic'. This rousing composition, whose famous first line is '*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord'*, was written to encourage the soldiers of the North who were fighting for the freedom of slaves during the American Civil War.

After the publication of this hymn in 1862, Julia became well known both as a writer and a speaker and she devoted herself to various good causes, including the improvement of educational and political opportunities for women.

She was 91 years old when she died and it was said of her 'she could always discover sunlight behind the shadows and the clouds'.

With thanks to Trinity Methodist Church, Royton

Birthday Greetings

This month we send our love and best wishes to Patti Brooks, Angela Jenkins, Lois Morris, Flora Newrick, Mary Ratcliffe, Vicki Smith and Sue Williams.

Happy Birthday to you To Jesus be true God bless you and keep you Happy Birthday to you!



The Starfish

One day a man was walking along a beach. The sun was shining and it was a beautiful day. Off in the distance he could see a person going back and forth between the surf's edge and the beach. Back and forth this person went. As the man approached, he could see that there were hundreds of starfish stranded on the sand as the result of the natural action of the tide.

The man was struck by the apparent futility of the task. There were far too many starfish. Many of them were sure to perish. As he approached, the person continued the task of picking up starfish one by one and throwing them into the surf.

As he came up to the person, he said: "You must be crazy. There are thousands of miles of beach covered with starfish. You can't possibly make a difference." The person looked at the man. He then stooped down and picked up one more starfish and threw it back into the ocean. He turned back to the man and said: "It sure made a difference to that one!"

Women's Institute turns 100

100 years ago this month, on the 16th of September 1915, a small group of women met in Anglesey, and the Women's Institute was born. With the First World War raging, they had priorities: to encourage women to keep the rural communities going, and to produce food.

As the years have gone by, the WI has acted like social jam across the UK – sweetening and enriching the life of rural communities. It has acted like social eggs and flour, combining together women of good intent to produce some excellent community efforts of substance.

Nowadays the WI still excels in excellent food – but also offers classes on everything from floral arrangements to astronomy, dancing to earthquakes. As the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK, with 212,000 members in around 6,600 local WIs, it has a lot to celebrate. See more at: <u>www.thewi.org.uk</u>

If biblical headlines were written by today's modern media...

On Red Sea crossing: WETLANDS TRAMPLED IN LABOUR STRIKE Pursuing Environmentalists Killed

On David vs. Goliath: HATE CRIME KILLS BELOVED CHAMPION Psychologist Questions Influence of Rock

On Elijah on Mt. Carmel: FIRE SENDS RELIGIOUS RIGHT EXTREMIST INTO FRENZY 400 Killed

On the birth of Christ: HOTELS FULL, ANIMALS LEFT HOMELESS Animal Rights Activists Enraged by Insensitive Couple

On feeding the 5,000: ITINERANT PREACHER STEALS CHILD'S LUNCH Disciples Mystified Over Behaviour

On healing the 10 lepers: LOCAL DOCTOR'S PRACTICE RUINED "Faith Healer" Causes Bankruptcy

On healing of the Gadarene demoniac: MADMAN'S FRIEND CAUSES STAMPEDE Local Farmer's Investment Lost

On raising Lazarus from the dead: FUNDAMENTALIST PREACHER RAISES A STINK Reading of Will now to be Delayed

Operation Christmas Child launches a search for everyone who has ever packed a Shoebox

As part of this year's Operation Christmas Child campaign, the charity Samaritan's Purse is launching a nation-wide search for anyone who has ever packed a shoebox with them. It wants to hear from them.

Samaritan's Purse UK Executive Director Simon Barrington explains: 'Where and when did they pack it? What they included, was there something particularly special they remember about their experience? We want to hear their stories of the impact it's had on them and why they got involved.'

In the two decades since Operation Christmas Child began, 124 million children who have received shoebox gifts in Jesus' name. 'It's a great way for all of us to make a difference in a child's life, to share God's love, to let them know they are not forgotten.'

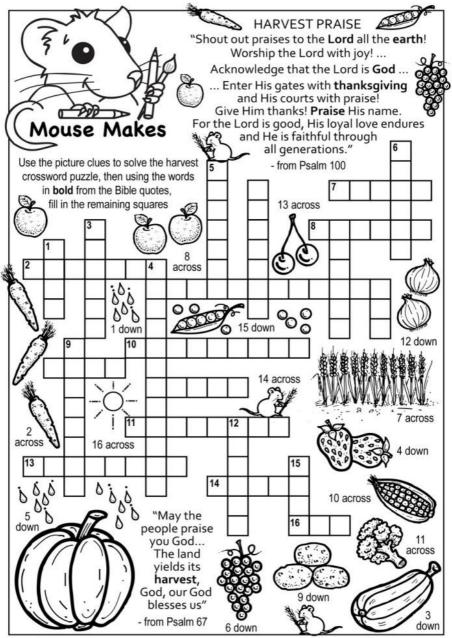
Samaritan's Purse plans to capture and share stories and photographs of everyone who's ever been involved, and to bring to life online and through social media, what Operation Christmas Child has meant to so many people.

There is also encouragement for everyone who has ever done a shoebox to get involved in this year's campaign: 'Last year we were able to distribute more than 10 million shoebox gifts to children all over the world, some of whom live in the darkest of places. This year we want to reach a million more precious children with a simple shoebox gift. With your help and prayers, we will.' Tell us your story and help us to find everyone who has ever packed a shoebox! Go to www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/yourshoeboxstory

What goes into the box is fun, what comes out is eternal.

Keep it short

The minister stood up and said: 'Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. You'll be glad to know that when I asked my secretary to type this sermon out for me I asked her to eliminate anything that was dull or confusing. So, in conclusion....'



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Editorial Team

Anne Gurre.anne.gurr@gmail.comVal Parkermartinandval.parker@gmail.comMary Ratcliffemaryratcliffe@live.com

This is the Circuit magazine but it needs your contributions to make sure everyone knows what is happening. Please send your contributions to the editor by 15^{th} of the month.

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.

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.



"Well, no, I'm not dressing like this to create common ground with today's youth culture – I've always worn a hoody."

PRAYER CHAIN

In the first instance please contact me, Mary Ratcliffe 423030 or Revd. Charles Gibbs 422406. I will then pass on the prayer request to the first name in each of the groups.

Mervyn & Stephanie Bird	423117
Sue Williams	422605
Merryn & Vicki Smith	423360
Claire Jenkins	423546
Margaret Snowball	422896
Gordon Bird	422550
Sonia Crompton	422854
Barbara Hasler	422208
Margaret Crane	422596
Len & Sylvia Michell	422409
Pamela Thomas	423115
June Lethbridge	422404
Beryl Read	422977
Gwen Clarkson	423106

For the Prayer Chain to be effective it is essential that requests are forwarded to the person in the column beneath your name, if that person is not available please ring the next person on the list.

If anyone else would like to join in this special ministry please contact Mary Ratcliffe on 423030. We thank God that we can be channels of His grace.

SEPTEMBER SERVICES

St Mary's

6th	9.15am 11.00am 8.00pm	All Age Worship Team Rev Jane Wilcock <i>Holy Communion</i> Barbara Hasler
13th	9.15am 11.00am 8.00pm	Beryl Read and Len Michell Gordon Bird Rev Jane Wilcock
20th	10.30am 8.00pm	Mary Ratcliffe and Beryl Read Harvest Thanksgiving Gordon Bird Harvest Thanksgiving
27th	9.15am 11.00am 8.00pm	Rev Margaret Barnes and Vicki Smith Rev Margaret Barnes Rev Margaret Barnes and Philip Lethbridge Songs of Praise
St Martin's		
6th	6.00pm	Rev Jane Wilcock Harvest Thanksgiving
13th	11.00am	Rev Jane Wilcock
20th	11.00am	Len Michell
27th	6.00pm	Mike Owens
Park House		
6th	4.00pm	Len Michell