

Triangle

The quarterly magazine of the
Methodist Churches of Spring-
dale, Wombourne and Gospel Ash



Spring 2011

Message from the Manse

Rev Robert Ely

How do you approach the beginning of Lent? It can be dominated by negative thoughts of giving up chocolate, or alcohol, or cake, or whatever you decide it will be this year. Such self-denial has its place. We can have too much of things which are not terribly good for us: to give one of them up for a while can be a helpful way of reminding ourselves of our real priorities in life. (Years ago I gave up sugar in my tea for Lent, and I haven't had sugar in tea since then.) But if we feel that anything is getting in the way of our Christian discipleship, then why wait for Lent to put it into its proper place? Jesus spoke urgently about the need to be disciplined in our living. "If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away!" he said. (*Matthew 5 v.30*) Exaggeration of course, but he makes his point.

I would like us to be much more positive about Lent than just thinking about what we might give up. The forty days leading up to Easter (which is very late this year) have traditionally been used for thinking about ourselves and our Christian lives. Am I nearer to God than I was a year ago? What have I learnt? Have I made progress in my prayer life? This can be uncomfortable, but let's move on to doing something positive to mark Lent. There are house groups in Penn, and a course of meetings in Wombourne designed to help us reflect on our faith. Perhaps, like me, you have books on your shelves that you would like to read, but have never found the time? Perhaps God is prompting you to spend a little more time in prayer, or in reading your bible? Or perhaps you feel called to something more practical, and you have an elderly neighbour who would appreciate a few hours of your time, or a hand with the shopping or cleaning?

Let us use this season of Lent to grow in our Christian faith.

With Christian greetings,

Robert

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Springdale Vestry News

Judy Staley, Senior Steward



Longer days and birds singing herald the onset of Spring. Lent and the glorious message of Easter will soon be upon us. Time seems to have flown since we celebrated Advent and Christmas. The Winter has been long and cold but we have a God for all seasons. At the Toy Service in December 'The Haven' representative opened our eyes to the difficult circumstances faced by many moms and children in their care. Their needs are ongoing. Perhaps we could help throughout the year? The Christmas Fair was a great success thanks to the efforts of many people, especially Jacqueline Fyfe for co-ordinating. Junior Church Nativity gave us a timely reminder of the true spirit of Christmas. Thanks to the young people and leaders for giving us such a wonderful act of worship. Christmas Services were spread over three days in 2010, thanks to the peculiarities of the calendar! The Services were very well attended by all ages. Preachers, readers, musicians and all the congregations joined in the joyous praise of the birth of our Lord.

This year we had two Covenant Services enabling many to take part. Hopefully this will be repeated next year. This most solemn and moving of services is so special to Methodism.

Weekly meetings and activities continue to thrive. The Youth Club, previously meeting fortnightly, now meets weekly with approximately fifteen young people (aged 13+) attending. One week is called Chat, meaning Conversation, here alternate Thursdays, when discussion on many topics are ably and interestingly led by Nicola, Sarah and Helen. Please remember them all in your prayers.

As we approach Lent and prepare ourselves for Easter the Ecumenical House Groups will be starting. This year a 'York Course' will be followed and will involve finding how Jesus' message of reconciliation with God

can be a transforming power. Helen Cook is able to give you more details.

The Development Fund is having a 'big push'. Please support and give what you can so that our new building can start. Thanks must go to all members of the committee for their time, energy and dedication.

The Annual Church Meeting will be on Sunday 27 March at 4.30pm. The meeting is open to all the worshipping community. Come and exchange your ideas and views about the life of our church. Transport can be arranged.

This will be my last Vestry News. Bernard will follow as Senior Steward on May 1st. I would like to thank the team of stewards for their help, support and dedication over the last twelve months. It has been an honour to serve and a humbling experience to work for the Springdale Fellowship and our Lord. We are hoping that new stewards will join the team in the near future.

God Bless you all in everything you do.

Wombourne Vestry News

Brenda Shuttleworth



As snowdrops and crocuses flourish in the garden, it is difficult to remember just how difficult things were in Advent, with such cold temperatures and snow underfoot on several Sundays in December. As Phil and I cleared the church drive of snow and put down grit one Saturday teatime at the beginning of the month, I remember thinking that we probably wouldn't be worrying about that again in 2010. How wrong can you be!

However all our services during Advent went ahead as planned although with several familiar faces missing. I don't think we sang *In The*

Bleak Midwinter at our carol service but it would have been an appropriate choice. In our evening services during Advent we used material written by Magnet, *The Promise of Advent*, for our evening reflective services, being guided by Latin American-style images on our journey to Bethlehem with the prophets, John the Baptist and Mary.

Our thanks go to Robert and Denis for their visits to the household, sharing in Holy communion with many and offering gifts sent with love from the church family.

Our covenant service was particularly special this year as we dedicated a beautiful brass candlestick with its peace candle. This was donated to the church by Jean Knight and her family in memory of Les, a loyal disciple of Christ in this church family. The candle is now lit at the start of our services each Sunday and we say the 'Peace Prayer' together.

On 19 February the church hosted a concert given by the Wolverhampton Orpheus Male Voice Choir who kindly donated in excess of £200 to the church. The following day Bob Hughes led our Men's Sunday service, recalling how King David inspired great loyalty from his closest friends and how we owe our loyalty to Christ.

At the time of writing Lent and Easter still seem a little way off but we will soon be sharing that journey to Jerusalem with Christ and rejoicing once more on Easter morning.

It suddenly occurs to me that this will be the last time I write an article for Triangle as steward. How quickly this last four years have gone -- it has been a joy and a privilege to be part of the leadership team at Wombourne and I would like to thank everybody for their love and support.

Services at Springdale, Wombourne and Gospel Ash

10.30am	6.30pm	Springdale	Wombourne	Gospel Ash (3pm)
6 March	am	Ryan (HC)	Beaumont	
	pm	Newton	Lavender (URC)	McKinlay
13 March	am	Baldwin & Cooks	Bruce (HMA)	
	pm	Caddick	Wallace	Beaumont
20 March	am	French	Ely (HC)	
	pm	Gould	OA	Popple
27 March	am	Ely	Campion	
	pm	Ely (HC)	LA	Lavender
3 April	am	McKinlay	Ely (CR)	
	pm	B Shuttleworth	Ely (URC)	Ely (HC)
10 April	am	Ely (B)	Lavender (AA)	
	pm	Reynolds-Tyson	Ely (HC)	Dale
17 April	am	Shuttleworth	Ely (HC)	
	pm	Ely (HC)	OA	Brookes
24 April	am	Ely (HC)	Beaumont	
	pm	Biddlestone	Ely (HC)	Ely (HC)
1 May	am	Rider	Ely	
	pm	Ely	T Ely (URC)	Singleton
8 May	am	Ely (HC)	Dale (AA)	
	pm	Singleton	Ely (HC)	Ely
15 May	am	T Ely	Ely (HC)	
	pm	Ely (HC)	OA	Beaumont
22 May	am	Ely (JCA)	Cheadle	
	pm	Circuit Service	Circuit Service	Ely (HC)
29 May	am	Campion	Arora	
	pm	Hides	Reynolds-Tyson	LA

What Are Saints?

Bernard Davis

What are saints? Are they men and women who ne'er fail the Lord?
With much reflection and meditation we must take stock.
Should they be martyrs who are killed by stones, axes or sword?
Peter denied Jesus three times yet he became the rock.

Our Father wants us to lovingly evolve throughout life.
When I was a child I thought, spoke and acted like a child.
Life is a great challenge, take up your cross, there will be strife.
Am I as mature as God desires or been by the world beguiled?

Does being christened with a saint's name ensure you're saintly?
Joseph, Francis, Patrick, Philip and Bernard; all saints names.
Maybe we five brothers led lives that are just but faintly?
As children we had to learn to play and not to cheat at games.

We said our night prayers kneeling before a blazing coal fire.
Our church was full of statues of women and men.
We all had to learn that to be like them we must aspire.
How I longed to be a priest, praying again and again.

We five boys grew up and went our own ways; no prayers at night.
My love for God was false. From the world I ran far away.
I wanted God's spirit for selfish ends; not the real fight.
At seminary Father God made it plain, "Don't stay!"

I look back through time and see the hand of a caring God.
He has infinite patience and has sustained my whole life.
Scruples and fears and doubts for my back must not be a rod.
He brought me through many crises giving me a kind wife.

I doubt whether I have the patience of a holy man.
Perhaps I'm just a grumpy old man with the world at odds.
Throughout my life have I truly ever done all I can?
Or have I chased money, fame, pleasure and ease - all false gods?

Still Saint Paul regarded as saints the believers in Christ.
So I toddle on through life with my aching horse's feet
Knowing that Christ's sacrifice saving us can't be over-priced.
I believe and trust that when death comes our Saviour I'll meet.

Easter - Calvary Clover

Jackie Neilson

One of the plants associated with the Christian Calendar is the yellow flower, known as the Calvary Clover. Its traditionally sown on Good Friday, and produces 11 seeds which represent the 11 faithful disciples, never 12. When the seed pod is opened it reveals a miniature cross of thorns and a scourge. The Calvary Clover is grown in Mediterranean countries and southern England. Each leaf has a blood red mark (legend says it grew at the foot of The Cross and the leaves are spotted with the blood of Christ), a constant reminder to us of what happened on Good Friday.

Jesus Foretelling His Betrayal

D. Elwyn Davies - Gospel Stories in Rhyme

The Passover now was near,
And the End was coming fast.
Jesus and His Twelve Disciples
Sat at their Supper. Last.

Jesus knew what was to happen,
He was sent. And he would send;
He had loved His own so faithful,
Even to the very end.

Jesus knew of the betrayal
And that God was on His side;
He'd return to him in heaven,
And with Him He would abide.

John 13.v1-3



Psalm 23 (for slimmers)

Passed to me, author unknown. Jackie Neilson

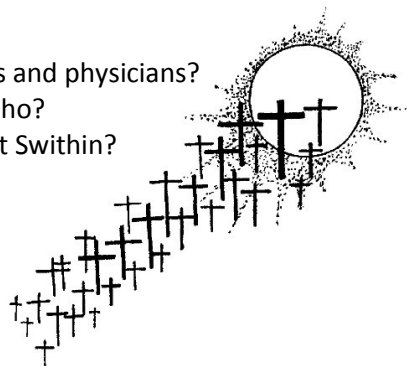
Strict is my diet; I must not want;
It maketh me lie down at night hungry;
It leadeth me to pass the refrigerator, it tireth my will-power;
It leadeth me in the paths of starvation for my figure's sake.
Yea though I walk through the aisles of pastas,
I will buy no chocolate éclairs, for they are fattening;
The cakes and the pies they tempt me.
Before me is set a table with green beans and lettuce;
It filleth my stomach with liquids, my day's quota runneth over.
Surely calories and weight charts will follow me all the days of my life
And dwell in the fear of the scales for ever.

Saints Revisited - a quiz

Jackie Neilson

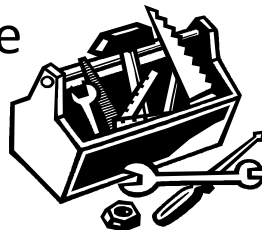
- 1 What saint is said to have divided his cloak with a beggar?
- 2 Which saint is associated with fireworks?
- 3 What saint is patron of shoemakers?
- 4 Which saint is associated with a handkerchief?
- 5 St Kentigern is patron saint of which city?
- 6 When is St Peter's Day?
- 7 Name St Crispin's Day?
- 8 Name the patron saint of painters and physicians?
- 9 The patron saint of penitents is who?
- 10 Which cathedral has a shrine to St Swithin?

(Answers can be found on page 27)



Tools for the Journey

Wombourne Churches Together Lent Programme



During Lent the Churches in Wombourne are joining together to explore some of the basic tools of being a Christian and how we might use those tools to grow in faith.

If you want to find out why these things are important, or to know more about them then why not join us at our sessions. The sessions are on a Tuesday, either in the afternoon or evening (both sessions cover the same topic) and each session is stand-alone so come to as many as you can manage:

- March 15th **Desire and need** — why do we need God?
- March 22nd **The Bible** — how does God speak to us?
- March 29th **Prayer** — how do we communicate with God?
- April 5th **Holy Communion** — how does God feed us?
- April 12th **Living as God's people** — how do we make a difference?

When & Where:

Tuesday afternoons: 2-4pm
at Wombourne Methodist Church, Common Road

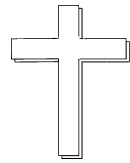
or

Tuesday Evenings: 7.30-9.30pm
at United Reform Church, High Street

Iconic Worship

Pre-Service Meditation at Gospel Ash Methodist Church

Rev. W. O Stubbs



I cannot remember ever arriving late for a Worship Service, in fact I was often far too early and had time to fill. Retirement has not changed this; I am now there in my usual pew with time to fill. When Dorothy was the organist I loved to listen and watch; sometimes feeling angry with those who will chat aloud while waiting for worship to begin-then I reminded myself that this is the only time in the week when we meet with time to talk. So it is quite important that we get together and perhaps deepen our Christian awareness of each other, but please, “Not so Loud”.

I like to use that waiting time for meditation on the things I have built up in my mind and call “ICON”, that is objects that point me to Jesus and cause me to give thanks for the work of grace in the lives of those who once sat where I now sit. In the Rostrum Area at Gospel Ash there are seven such objects. I fix my eyes on each one and let them speak.

The first is the wooden cross, which hangs on the wall above the Preacher in what is called the Apse (the slight recess for the Pulpit). It was designed and created by Major Day and it is a perfect piece of carpentry and has in it all the skill that Major had and all the love that he felt for Christ and His Church. I give thanks for the quiet sincerity and Godliness that I remember in Major. Next time you sit and wait, take a look at the way the Cross is formed. Major lived all his life in that cottage, just as you enter Highgate Common, the home where he and Lil, his wife, raised their family. He was the carpenter for Enville Estate.

The second icon is the pulpit-remember, as you gaze, what the preacher sees on entering the Church is quite different from that of the person in the pew who has all those “Aids to Worship”. The preacher is

usually ushered from the vestry up those three steps to behold human faces. Sometimes they have a look of hopeful expectancy, others a dull indifference, but always a challenge to the “Called man or woman of God”. (The Preacher)

The pulpit at Gospel Ash is full of interest, because it was designed and made by John Gibson of Heathton, and meets all the preachers requirements. He was the Patriarch and father of the Gibson clan, who have been at the heart of Gospel Ash Methodist Church for nearly a hundred years. He was a carpenter by trade and is remembered for all the work he did in the complete woodwork of the Church. This belonged to his early working life, but for many years he was farming and lived and raised his family at Whittimere Farm, handy for Chapel. I look at that pulpit and see what meticulous workmanship is there. Surely John was doing this to the glory of Jesus his Saviour and Lord. He is said to have been “quite a character”. Anyone who can remember him will recall to mind that watch, worn across his waistcoat pocket, which he would take out to check on the preacher at regular intervals during the sermon!

The third icon-my eyes fall on is the oak communion table given by the family of Dan Harrop, who was a regular participant of the Monthly Coffee Mornings and Community Singing. Dan loved it and often spoke of the joy he found there and that for him those hymns had a new and deeper meaning when he sang them here. The table is a solid aid to our worship around which we gather for the “Breaking of Bread at Communion”. Dan was a man of solid faith and Christian character. As I think of him I feel my faith was enriched through having known such a man.

The fourth icon for me is the pulpit fall, which is the tapestry work of Mrs June Sutton, representing the two doves of promise that returned to Noah after the flood. The birds are white on a blue background and carry olive leaves for their master. The rostrum area has recently been modified by taking the dais platform away and removing the original

communion rail. (The promise "As long as the earth remaineth, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, shall not cease)

The fifth icon is the organ (keyboard), an important part of our worship and we are greatly blessed that Joyce Hughes came into fill the role of organist when my wife Dorothy died. Joyce has mastered the work wonderfully and leads us well in the singing.

Mrs Mabel Gibson was the first recorded Organist and Choirmaster. She was the wife of the afore mentioned John, builder of the pulpit and woodwork. Mable must have been a remarkable person and devoted to her church. At the age of twelve she taught herself to play the organ and eventually took up this role. Better still, she saw to it that her three daughters would do the same, and in turn they did. When I became Minister at Gospel Ash, Auntie Kit was still active and took her place there each Sunday. There is a Music Edition of the 1884 Wesleyan Hymn Book, which was presented to Mabel after years of service. In addition to these three daughters, Mabel had a son Tom Gibson, who grew up to be a stalwart of the church and was the Church Steward and Treasurer for many years along with Freda his wife who became Church Secretary.

When Mabel retired from the organ, her three daughters took over. Olive followed by May and then Kit, who was organist when I became Minister in 1966. These three lovely ladies graced the organ seat for quite a period of years.

Old photographs show the original harmonium in the centre under the pulpit with the choir seats to the right. Can you imagine Gospel Ash with a choir and anthems sung on special occasions? Olive Edwards is probably the last choir member in the present congregation still with us.

Kit Parrott, another of the Day family, followed Auntie Kit, when she finished, and then dear Elsie Ashley and then by Dorothy Stubbs,

who introduced the Thursday Community Hymn singing, she has been ably followed by Joyce Hughes.

The sixth icon is the lectern from which the word of God is read Sunday by Sunday. This was presented as a thanksgiving and remembrance of the Gibson family, and is a fine piece of workmanship in its perfection, pointing to the service of the hands and hearts, of which God our Father in heaven is worthy to receive.

The seventh icon must be the cross on the table, placed there in memory of Bill and Phyllis Tranter. I like to gaze on that cross - it is empty, and says Jesus conquered when he came down from the cross. The final touch is the vase of fresh flowers which is placed alongside it each Sunday, saying "He is risen indeed" - this is new life.

Such is my preparation for a Service of Worship - these make Gospel Ash rather special for me. Over the years it has become a "footstool" of Heaven to my soul.

Postscript This is not intended to be a history, I think it is somewhere near to a correct record, but this information comes mainly from "hearsay". It runs up to around about 1935 and reflects some of the good things that belonged to its life afore. There are many more names one will call to mind. In the years since, other families have come on the scene - The Crooks, Tranters, Butlers and others.

Penn History Fair 2011

Jackie Neilson

This will take place in June at Penn URC (60th anniversary). Photos, memorabilia, documents, etc. relating to Springdale's history would be most welcome to add to my collection - I'll copy and return with thanks.

Euro-English - an announcement by the European Commission

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the European Union rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, the British Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5 year phase - a plan that will become known as "Euro-English".

In the first year, "s" will replace the soft "c". Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of "k". This should klear up konfusion, and keyboards kan have one less letter.

There will be growing public enthusiasm in the sekond year when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced with "f". This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter.

In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horibl mes of the silent "e" in the languag is disgrasful and it should go away.

By the 4th yer people wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" with "z" and "w" with "v".

During ze fifz yer, ze unesenary "o" kan be dropd from vords kontaining "ou" and after ziz fifz yer, ve vil hav a reil sensi bl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech oza. Ze drem of a united urop vil finali kum tru.

Und efter ze fifz yer, ve vil al be speking German like zey vunted in ze forst plas.

Tuesday in Easter Week

T.E. Brown - "Praesto"

Expecting Him, my door was open wide;
Then I looked round
If any lack of service might be found,
And saw Him at my side;
How entered, by what secret stair,
I know not, knowing only He was there.



Sit for 5 minutes with your morning coffee or afternoon tea, and have a browse in your Bible to find the occupations mentioned.

- 1 Mark 6 v3
- 2 Jeremiah 18 v3
- 3 Psalm 118 v22
- 4 Luke 2 v8
- 5 Hosea 7 v4
- 6 Proverbs 31 v24
- 7 2 Chronicles 20 v36
- 8 Acts 18 v3
- 9 Matthew 8 v9



(Answers can be found on page 27)

Penn Poets at Springdale

Lesley Cook

Do you enjoy reading poetry? Or maybe it is many years since you did so and would like to revisit some old memories. Maybe you even write your own poetry? If so, why not come along to Penn Poets, which meets every fortnight on Wednesdays at 10.15 for 10.30am in the old crèche room in Springdale Community Centre. It is open to all ages and both sexes! Please ring Lesley Cook for details of next meeting, on 330614.

This year we are not doing “Themes” but instead we are going through the alphabet of poets. Now this posed a difficulty for Sheila Barnfather, who likes to write a poem for every meeting. But she found a way round this with this witty poem.

The Bard of Norway

Sheila Barnfather

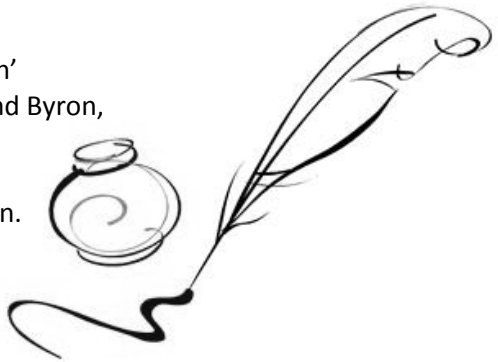
There once was a bard from Norway
Who struggled to know what to say.
He studied the craft,
What he wrote was just daft;
An eminent poet - no way.

This poet the ball kept his eye on'
He read Shelley, Shakespeare and Byron,
Voice, line and formation,
Caesura, alliteration,
Gave him nothing at all to rely on.

Metre, enjambment and line
Structures, rhythm and rhyme.
How to read Motion,
He hadn't a notion,
The meaning he couldn't define.

He read Betjeman, Browning and Keats,
Wordsworth, Whitman and Yeats.
With oh so much print,
He developed a squint,
Now his prologue and epilogue meets

Iambic, trochaic and dactyl,
Enough a large volume to fill.
But try as he might
It wouldn't come right
Would a blank free verse fit the bill?



When iambic pentameter he tried
The stresses of five were denied.
He filled the waste bin
With bottles of gin,
Then over his stanzas he cried.

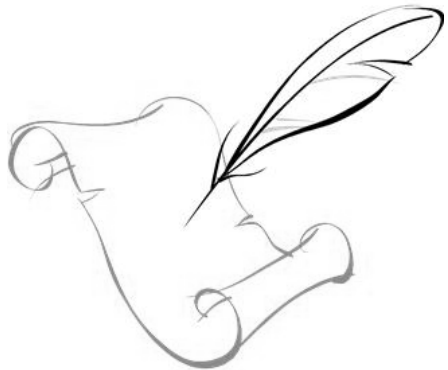
His consciousness stream had run dry,
Oh for the 'muse' he would sigh.
He so longed to write
But words all took flight.
There was now nothing left but to die

But there's hope for the bard from Norway,
For he was invited one day
To join poets in Penn,
Only two other men,
So the girls get a sonnet each day.

His poetic prowess in doubt,
A right cunning plan came about.
He put out a feeler
To a member named Sheila
For a couplet - he'd have to fork out.

He thought he would give this a
bash
So he dashed back with the cash,
But Sheila got huffy -
She thinks she's Duffy
And she wouldn't do anything rash.

He managed an ode to dear Val,
A lady, a kind, special pal
But Dennis there is!
So he changed it to Liz,
Green or Dooley the poet won't tell.



Bjorn Aamph-Aada

There is a green hill far away - Cecil Frances Alexander(1818-95)

Jackie Neilson

Cecil Frances Alexander was born in Redcross, County Wicklow, Ireland, and was probably the greatest writer of children's hymns. Her father (a Norfolk gentleman) settled in Ireland after naval service with Lord Nelson, working for Earl and Lady Wicklow. In tribute to Lady Wicklow, who agreed to be godmother to his second daughter, Major John Humphries named his daughter Cecil Frances (she became known as Fanny).

She wrote poetry from childhood and her parents gave her an excellent education. Her first book, published in 1846, was "Verses for the Holy Season". She traveled well and met many literary figures including Sir Walter Scott, John Keble and Lord Tennyson. She moved with her family to Strabane, N. Ireland, her father working as an agent for Duke of Abercorn. The family were active in the work of the Church of Ireland and Fanny taught at the local Sunday School. She composed verses to explain various concepts so that the children could understand.

"There is a green hill" was written to illustrate the lines of the Apostles Creed - "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried" This hymn has fired the imagination of young and old ever since. In 1848 she published "Hymns for Little Children". With the sale of her books she ran a home for deaf and dumb children in Strabane, and also assisted other charities. She met a local clergyman William Alexander, and they married in 1850, she being 6 years older than him. Fanny supported William with his parish work; he eventually became Primate of All Ireland. She wrote less owing to family commitments, her charity work and help to people from all denominations. When she died thousands lined the streets of Derry. She was laid to rest on a simple grave on a green hill outside the walls of the city.

Gounod set the hymn to music (not the tune we use today, incidentally). He said it was the most beautiful hymn written in the English language. The original version "without a city wall" was altered by Mrs Alexander to "outside a city wall" after a small child asked her why a green hill would have a city wall". She wrote "Once in royal David's city" and "All things bright and beautiful" too. Her husband summed up the importance of her work by saying "the preacher's influence is of a few years, the hymnist for all time".

The Circuit Choir will be performing Mary Magdalene on Friday 1 April (Bilston) and Saturday, 2 April (St John's) and this hymn is included by Roger Jones, to a new moving, melodic tune.

A Father's Love.

Jackie Neilson

Reading a magazine last November a story of Josie Russell caught my eye. What an inspiration! After tragically losing her mother and sister 14 years ago, (killed by Michael Stone), he left Josie for dead and miraculously she survived serious injuries to rebuild her life with her loving, caring father.

He took her from Kent back to "their roots" in north Wales. Slowly rebuilding their lives together - she attended college, has found a partner who knows her for who she is (not for what happened in the past). Josie has truly found peace - buying her own place to live (at 23, thanks to a trust fund and compensation). How the Lord works in mysterious ways. It's the house next door to where her dad lives, but Josie's house is their old family home that came up for sale. She says it has so many happy memories for her, she feels close to her mom and younger sister here. So, this young lady has a blossoming art (textiles) career funded by a part-time job, a new life to enjoy with her father, boyfriend and peers. Shaun, her father must have found it difficult to carry on, but they have shared the ups and downs together. Truly a story that touches the heart. We can overcome great challenges.

Clown Service 2011

Amy Mahju



On the first Sunday in February each year an unusual gathering takes place at Holy Trinity Church, Dalston, London. Each year, a special service is held to commemorate the life of Joseph Grimaldi, perhaps the most prominent English Clown of the late 18th and early 19th century and the first 'white faced clown'. His name 'Joey' is now a familiar term for a clown. As a great innovator, Grimaldi is often credited for introducing what we now know as modern clowning, including physical comedy, visual tricks, buffoonery and his ability to poke fun at the audience. He is also credited for the invention of the Pantomine Dame and audience participation which we now recognise as staples of British Pantomine.

This year was the 65th annual service, and the 41st year in which the clowns were able to attend in full costume and makeup, otherwise known as 'motely and slap'. Our very own Mark Harrington, from Springdale, was asked to preach this year.

Arriving early so as to find the venue, we easily located the church thanks to a number of balloon sculptures and clowns in full dress outside. During a delicious lunch provided by the kind ladies of the church, we were surrounded by clowns of all types; male, female, happy faced, sad faced, in costume, out of costume, old and very young, disabled and able bodied. Over-hearing the odd conversation here and there and speaking to some of the clowns, it was encouraging to realise that the topic Mark had felt led by God to preach on would be poignant and we prayed, helpful to those who heard it.

A great many photographers and member of the press attend this service, as well as local families and those from further afield (both home and abroad) who have heard of this unique occasion and wish to experience

it for themselves. There was even a group of Red Hatters, (ladies from London who meet up at important events). This event could easily have turned into a bit of a circus, so prior to the service beginning, Revd. Rose reminded all that this service was an act of worship and should be treated as such by all those present.

Whilst some aspects of a 'traditional' service were apparent, this was also an all age service, combined with unique features (the organist was also a clown) with a sombre memorial ending. The service started with a joyous and colourful procession, led by Revd. Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the incumbent of the United Benefice, (who is also Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons (Vicar for parliament), Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen and Priest Vicar of Westminster Abbey). She was followed by Honorary Curate Clown, Revd. Roly Bain and a large collection of clowns, dressed to the nines. This was not to the usual 'Bring on the clowns', but rather to 'Lord of the Dance', reminding us all of the foolishness of God in the gospel story.

After an introduction to the act of worship, Roly Bain in his motley priest's garments, led us all in an act of confession. This was followed by the Bible Reading from the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1-14, wonderfully read by The Rt Hon John Bercow, Speaker of the House of Commons, who had brought his family with him. A clown sketch followed with juggling and a tray crashing on a viking's head! And then the clowns led the song 'Light from the Lighthouse'. Anna Brigg's hymn, 'Now we sing to praise love's blessing...' with the third verse of 'Love's the clown that mocks at winning...' reminded of God's gift of love and laughter, before Mark got up to preach.

It was daunting to look out at a packed church, full of clowns, press and families most of whom didn't normally go to church. It was only after the service that we were told that the church hall, with video link, was full, too, and that there were people out in the street still trying to get in and being turned away!

Mark based his talk on the Sermon on the Mount, using a few of his illustrations (magical tricks with a message). Firstly with a Bible full of pictures that coloured itself, then with ropes to show how God loves each one of us and wants us to receive his joy, no matter what our lives are like, or even the colour of our hair (be it red, green or blue!). To really bring the message across he then used a newspaper to recount the sermon on the mount, and as he retold it he explained how Jesus was the joy that God promised to us, as the newspaper was ripped to make a cross and then restored revealing that in the same way that Jesus God's joy was restored, we too can have that joy restored with God if we trust in him. Mark also shared a verse from Proverbs 14:13 'Even in laughter the heart may ache, and joy ends in grief.' That once a clown is at home with no slap on, that the joy filled character often hides a sadness inside. The congregation then sang, 'Be Still for the Presence of the Lord', which brought tears to some of the augustes, tramps and whitefaces present.

The poignancy of that verse from Proverbs was then brought home, as the whole congregation stood in silence, whilst the names of clowns who had died that year were read out. Children then processed lit candles, one for each clown's name, and followed a wreath carried by one of the younger clown to be laid at the Grimaldi memorial at the back of the church. Norman Wisdom was amongst those remembered that day. We were then led through an act of remembrance for those clowns. All the clowns then stood to pray the Clown's prayer:

"Dear Lord, I thank you for calling me to share with others your most precious gift of laughter. May I never forget that it is your gift, and my privilege. As your children are rebuked in their self-importance and cheered in their sadness, help me to remember that your foolishness is wiser than our wisdom. Amen"

After more spoken prayers including the Lord's Prayer, the Service concluded with the song 'Colours of Day.' The clergy and clowns then led

a procession out of the church and into the hall, where they entertained the families with a stage show, again to a packed out audience.

We didn't get to see the show, due to the numbers of visitors present and the press photographers. Instead we spent time looking around the memorial and museum exhibits, including the painted eggs, used to copyright clown faces. It was during this time that several people came up to us to tell us how much the message had moved them. One tourist guide had brought some friends who now wanted to return to church. Several clowns expressed their thanks and members of the press. too.

Mark will never forget this experience, even though his hands were shaking with nerves, as we witnessed that God's foolishness really is wiser than our wisdom. Who knows what seeds were sown and where they might grow? God does!

Holy Trinity, Dalston, houses a small display of clown memorabilia, which can be viewed from 12noon on the first Friday of each month, while the main exhibition of The Clowns International Gallery and Museum is now housed at Wookey Hole, Wells, Somerset.

For more information about clowning, the exhibition and annual church service, please visit: www.clowns-international.com. You can see photos of this year's service on the www.guardian.co.uk website, just search for Grimaldi. You may even see us sat behind the Bercows.

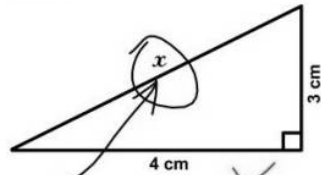
Penn Lent Course

This year the Lent house groups in Penn will again be following the York Course. The theme is "Rich Inheritance", and it discusses Jesus' legacy in this "Year of the Bible". Do look out for information at Springdale, and join one of the groups if you can.

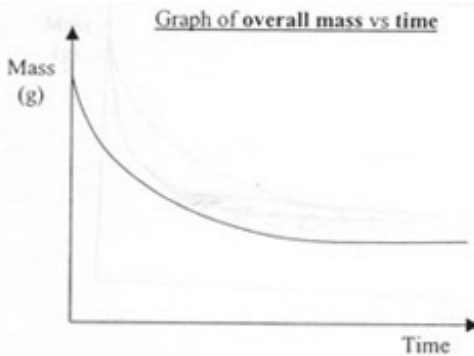
Silly Maths Answers

How I wish I'd been brave enough to answer my maths questions like this instead of leaving a blank or putting any old rubbish down! Classic!

3. Find x .



Here it is $\times 0$



1. Explain the shape of the graph.

Its curvy, with a higher bit at the end and a rather aesthetically pleasing slope downwards towards a pretty flat straight bit. The actual graph itself consists of 2 straight lines meeting at the lower left hand corner of the graph and moving away at a 90° angle. Each line has an arrow head on the end.

“It’s curvy, with a higher bit at the end and a rather aesthetically pleasing slope downwards towards a pretty flat straight bit. The actual graph itself consists of 2 straight lines meeting at the lower left hand corner of the graph and moving away at a 90° angle. Each line has an arrow head on the end.”

PETER

1.21

4) Expand

~~23 + 2c - 2~~

$$(a+b)^n$$

Very funny, Peter.

$$= (a + b)^n$$

2 ?

$$= (a + b)^n$$

$$= (a + b)^n$$

~~X~~

etc

Saints Revisited - Answers

- 1 St. Martin
- 2 St. Catherine
- 3 St. Crispin
- 4 St. Veronica (tradition says she handed it to Christ on his way to Calvary)
- 5 Glasgow
- 6 29 June
- 7 25 October
- 8 St Luke
- 9 St Mary Magdalene
- 10 Winchester

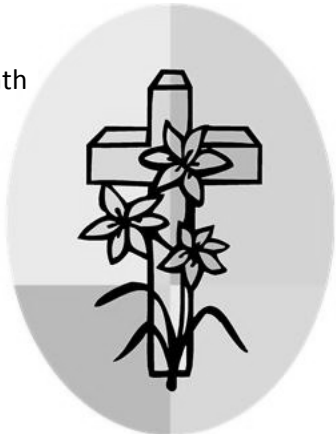
Occupations - Answers

- 1 Carpenter
- 2 Potter
- 3 Builders
- 4 Shepherds
- 5 Baker
- 6 Merchant
- 7 Shipbuilder
- 8 Tentmaker
- 9 Soldier

Hope Gave Life

Richard Vautrey, Vice President of the Methodist Conference 2009-10

In a pauper's stable - hope was born
In the minds of poor shepherds - hope burnt bright
In the eyes of an old woman - hope was seen
In the ears of the deaf - hope was heard
In the skin of the diseased - hope was felt
In the bodies of the lame - hope gave strength
In the hearts of his disciples - hope gave warmth
In the traitorous kiss - hope was not lost
In the tears by the cross - hope gave comfort
In the empty tomb - hope gave life
To us all.
Amen.



Deadline for the next edition of Triangle is

Sunday 22 May, 2011

**Please would all stewards, pastoral secretaries, etc., etc.
make a note in their diaries so as not to miss this deadline.**

Thank you.

Remember! No photocopies! Please check copyright and gain permission where necessary! Email if you can - it makes things so much easier!

Please hand in your articles directly, or via your stewards, to **Helen Cooper** (119 Wynn Road, Penn, Wolverhampton, WV4 4AW). Alternatively, follow the link on the Springdale website in the "contacts" section (www.springdalechurch.org.uk) or just email to triangle@springdalechurch.org.uk