

Triangle



The quarterly magazine of the
Methodist Churches of
Springdale and Wombourne

Autumn 2016

Unconditional devotion

David Hotchkiss, editor



Hello and welcome. Let me tell you about Ty. His father, Max, lived with Pauline's niece. One day they noticed that a daughter of the family was sneaking out dog food and she confessed she'd been feeding a stray. It turned out to be a German Shepherd. They took her in, called her Tash, and she and Max became . . . good friends. Ty was the chunkiest of the resulting litter, the only dog to be adopted singly, although the rest stayed within the larger family.



Ty doing his Mona Lisa pose

I was a bit dubious, but, all puppies being irresistible, was soon driving him home as he sat on Pauline's knee. We'd never had a dog before. He took only a couple of days to house train and slept soundly in the kitchen every night. He barked at night maybe twice in the following 11 years, on one occasion almost certainly deterring intruders at our house or at a neighbour's.

He was, however, a passionate barker during the hours of daylight, and as some of you will know, greeted everyone, from the minister to the postman, with such energy that there were those who stayed away rather than subjecting themselves to it.

The folk next door said once that they didn't notice the dog barking, but they did hear the bellowing that was meant to control it. Ty just wanted to be involved in everything we did and be with everyone who came. He knew the words "look after the house", and moped when we went out, but forgave us instantly on our return with muscular wags of his teacup-hostile tail. But big dogs don't live long and he was burdened with various Shepherd conditions.

In his book *Marley and Me*, John Grogan writes about doggy qualities we can appreciate, such as loyalty, courage, devotion, simplicity and joy. Dogs accept us as we are, unimpressed by human status. It was quite simple, "Give him your heart, and he will give you his". Not a perfect parallel to God's love, I know, because you don't even have to give Jesus your heart for him to love you.

But what a lesson in unconditional devotion. Sleep tight, our special boy.

The deadline for the next edition of *Triangle* is

November 20

Articles can be given to me or your stewards, sent by post to David Hotchkiss, or emailed to him

** Cover illustration used with thanks from Good News for Modern Man (Collins, 1966)*

Hope beyond nations

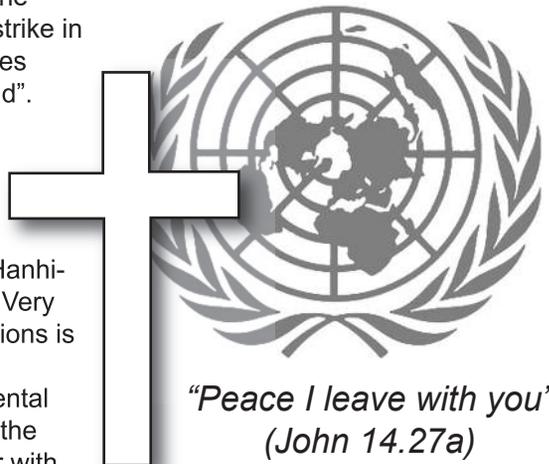
The Reverend Christopher Collins



As I write this we are about to enter into the mid-Olympics lull – soon gone will be “sensational-Sunday” and the other triumphs of our athletes and we will wait for the start of one of the most inspirational of sporting events: the Paralympic Games. We cannot help but notice that the Olympics have given us a boost, a “feel good” factor. And how much has that been needed this summer?

But while all this has been going on, life has gone on in what has become normal in other parts of the world. Our bubble was burst when we saw the picture of Omran Daqneesh, a five-year-old boy sitting in an ambulance, dazed and bloodied after being rescued from the rubble of his home following an airstrike in the on-going civil war in Syria. Voices joined together to say “this must end”.

“But what can we do?” is a question I am often asked and I wish there was a simple answer. This question has been on my mind while I read a book by Jussi Hanhimaki called “The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction”. The United Nations is perhaps the most well-known and recognisable global Non-Governmental Organisation. It was established in the aftermath of the Second World War with the aim of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war; reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights, upholding respect for international law and promoting social progress and better standards of life. The United Nations was established to create a more hopeful future.



However, despite all of the good intentions, the progress of the United Nations has not been as golden as hoped for. Hanhimaki puts this down to the fact that the United Nations can only ever operate as each nation in the world allows it to. There is no mechanism by which countries can be forced to comply.

So perhaps that’s the problem. We have an international system built on individual nations. And when rogue states cannot be forced to comply, the only other option is war. And this doesn’t make for a peaceful world.

So what can we do? Perhaps we need to hope for something greater than a world of individual nations. A world where we put our self-interest aside. A world in which we can truly hold all nations to account in order that peace might prevail.

And we, the Church, need to remember the promises of God. In Isaiah’s vision for

the hope-less inhabitants of Jerusalem, as conflict seemed to rage around them, they are assured of God's grace and unending attention: "Truly, O people of Jerusalem, you shall weep no more. [God] will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. when [God] hears it, [God] will answer you."

And we must pray for peace, that we will put aside national interest in the cause of peace and stability for the common good. And we must live at peace with ourselves and with each other as we live out our witness to the God of peace.

And we must pray for ourselves and each other that we may know the peace of Christ. Yours in peace and fellowship,

Rev'd Chris

Wombourne vestry news

Charles Clowes, senior steward



The past few months have been a rollercoaster of uncertainty. With the far-reaching results of the EU referendum and all major political parties unravelling, the world has suddenly seemed to become a lot more uncertain and shakeable.

At church, too, we face losing Chris to Darlington Street, and the retirement of John Howard, David Lavender, Steve Singleton and Linda Bishop. In such uncertain times it is important to put our hope in the unchanging God, whatever is going on around us. As people of Christ it is important that we live in the real world and engage with the issues that affect our community.

We come to worship on a Sunday to readjust our focus on to God and our place in his world and to find strength and sustenance to live the way the Lord Jesus would have us live. Rev'd Chris especially wants us to pray for our church and our world. We hope to organise a Prayer Day in the autumn.

It has been important that the life of the Church has carried on with consistency. Louise Wright and Amanda Morris have joined the communion team. Thanks to Bob Hughes and Vanessa Price for your service as communion stewards. The Church Family Week went well, with a great skittles evening and a superb afternoon tea, followed by an evening service of songs of praise, supported by the choirs from the URC and our own church. It was a wonderful occasion. The choir also sang at Alison and Joe Baldwin's wedding in August. Their chosen reading from 1 Corinthians chapter 13 implores us all to love each other selflessly. Surely that is a way to a better world.

God Bless, Charles

Tea with the Queen

Chris Fincher reports from Buckingham Palace

Earlier this year, Chris Fincher and Ann Humpherson went to Buckingham Palace. Chris writes:

Tuesday, May 24th, 2016, is a memorable date for Ann and me, having received a privileged invitation to a Buckingham Palace garden party in recognition of our charity fund-raising, after being nominated by Meg Gough of Springdale Wives Group.

On arrival at the palace we were fortunate enough to go straight into the grounds where we sat and enjoyed the lovely sunshine and surroundings. Delicious finger-sized sandwiches and dainty little cakes were served prior to lining up into avenues to see the Queen arrive.

During the afternoon all wheelchair users and escorts were invited to assemble to greet the Royal Party on their departure. What a surprise for us when the Queen, Prince Philip, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie passed by acknowledging everyone and asking if we had enjoyed the day – wonderful, and a perfect ending to a special day. In the course of many years the Wives Group has raised funds for all sorts of charities, including Guide Dogs for the Blind and the



Guests: Chris and Ann at the Palace



Tea and fancies before royal meeting

Air Ambulance. There are too many members and friends to mention (for fear of missing out someone), who have been a great support on the committee of wives, organising concerts, selling tickets, making tea and coffee and encouraging others. Ann and I were honoured to represent them at this special event.

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At Springdale we are proud of the Wives Group and all they do to show the love of Christ in our church and community.

Springdale pastoral news

Jane Rawlings, pastoral secretary

As I am writing this we are in the middle of Olympic fever, and although I am not in any way an athlete (as those of you who know me are well aware) I cannot fail to be inspired by the journeys some of the athletes have made in order to get to the Olympics. The stories behind some of them are inspirational and, as they all say, they cannot do it alone. Well, thankfully, we never have to do anything alone, as wherever we are we know that our Lord is with us, guiding, supporting and answering us, even before we are aware of what we need.

We can also offer guidance and support to each other as we all continue on our journey through life and as we all know the best time to start is at the very beginning. Well, over the next few of weeks we will be at the start of the journey for three children as they come to baptism. The first was Maddison Bacchus, who came for baptism on August 7th with her family and friends. May she know that as she starts on her journey through life she is never alone but her Lord will be with her all the way.

You will have to wait until the next Triangle issue to hear about the other two baptisms, or be there on the day to celebrate these occasions with the families concerned of course.

Other exciting news for the Springdale family was the safe arrival of Grace Cook on July 12th, a daughter for Richard and Sally, and another grandchild for Lesley and Brian. What a blessing these arrivals bring. May she grow surrounded by the love of all her family.

Some of our church family have found the last few months difficult, with many experiencing health concerns, hospital tests and visits. These are always trying times for everyone concerned and we continue to pray for everyone. We may not always be aware who needs our prayers or how to help, but we can be confident in the knowledge that our Lord always knows what is needed and will be there beside us all offering support, comfort and strength as we go through difficult times.

Congratulations to anyone who has celebrated a birthday or anniversary recently or has one coming up in the near future. I won't name names, as I am sure to miss someone.

As the summer continues, I hope everyone gets a chance to see the splendours of God's creation, whether it be at home in the garden, by the seaside or further afield. We don't even have to leave the house to realise what an amazing world we live in and how thankful we should all be for this beauty every day.

God bless, Jane

Proud memories

Uncle who escaped the Somme

Jean Gray is a popular contributor to the monthly Coffee and Sing mornings at Wombourne, and recently read to us from one of the war poets to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. It prompted her to share the story of her own uncle, Arthur Nock, who escaped almost certain death in that terrible battle.

Private Nock, 14878, enlisted in the Royal Berkshire Regiment on September 10th, 1914, having lied about his date of birth. Such was the pressure on ordinary young men to be seen to be doing their bit for king and country. He claimed to have been born in 1894, but was in fact two years younger.



Arthur Nock

More than one million men were killed or injured at the Somme between July and November, 1916. Arthur would almost certainly have found himself there, but in May of that year he was wounded in the forearm, in action, and was discharged.

Jean, who remembers him from her childhood, recalls he had difficulty breathing due to a gas attack, and that he died mid-century after a successful career. Among the memorabilia she has inherited, along with discharge papers and certificates of good character, are two silver cigarette



Jean with the gift cigarette case

Army Form B, 2079.

WARNING.— If you lose this Certificate a duplicate cannot be issued.

Certificate of discharge of No. 14878 (Rank) Private.

(Name) Arthur Nock

(Regiment) ROYAL BERKSHIRE REGT

who was enlisted at West Bromwich

on the 10th September, 1914.

He is discharged in consequence of

NO LONGER PHYSICALLY FIT FOR WAR SERVICE

PARA. 882 DWD K.R.

after serving 1 years 265 days with the Colours, and

0 years 0 days in the Army Reserve.

(Place) Reading Signature of [Signature] LIEUT. COL.

(Date) 22nd May 1916 Composting OFFICER REGT.

*Description of the above-named man on 30th May 1916 when he left the colours.

Age 21 years 309 days Marks or Scars, whether on face or other parts of body.

Height 5 ft 9 inches Gun shot wound

Complexion Tallow left forearm in action in France

Eyes Brown

Hair Brown

N.B.— Any person finding this Certificate stamped to forward it, in an uncancelled envelope, to the Secretary of War Office, London, S.W.1.

* Should agree with the description on Character Certificate, Army Form B, 2057.

(7 92 12) W.5363—582 120,000 10/14 H.W.V. Form B, 2079/2.

Arthur's discharge certificate

cases, one proudly inscribed by the company for which he worked.

“He was injured yet survived,” says Jean, “but what a waste of all those men’s lives – and all of them so young...”

Springdale vestry news

Sam Cartwright, senior steward



What a fantastic last few months! My first stint as Senior Steward at Springdale has reminded me how blessed I am to be part of the “Church Family”. At the time of writing, the Olympic Games in Rio are in full swing and, apart from tiredness due to late nights glued to the TV watching sports on which I am suddenly an expert, it has brought with it a deep sense of togetherness which I have found quite infectious. There is competition, naturally, but watching the co-operation and support among athletes has been heart-warming and just as emotional as observing them winning medals.

Indeed, participation, togetherness and inclusion are themes which resonate with me when I reflect on recent events at Springdale. Our Summer Fair was a success, as too was our Community Family Fun Day, which saw new faces and families join us for a day of sharing experiences, fun, discussion, fellowship and worship. I cannot thank everyone who was involved in the day enough for ensuring it went as well as it did. We have seen some of those new faces return to Springdale to worship, which is excellent.



Bowls at the Community Family Fun Day



Knitting and knattering for Springdale ladies

Watching Lesley and Brian setting out the numerous toys for Tots Stay & Play on a Monday morning for me encapsulates that buzz of hospitality and inclusion which I mentioned earlier. It is encouraging to know that Springdale has a role in the life of so many parents, guardians and children whether or not they are worshippers.

Such a busy period has seen much activity, including fresh thought at the

Methodist Conference and new life with baptisms (recently Maddison Bacchus and in the next few weeks Henry Harrison and Richard Salt). It has also been a time of reflection, as our much-loved Alma Ryan passed away. A great source of strength for some has been the prayer chain we have and the Pop-In Centre, which takes place on Saturday mornings and has provided a welcoming atmosphere for those fancying a cuppa and a natter.

Undoubtedly, the responsibility of being Senior Steward has allowed me to make new connections and gain a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the Wolverhampton Circuit and the Methodist Church itself. It has been a pleasure and fascinating to meet so many other Christians, sharing different experiences, making anecdotal exchanges. And I haven't even been to my first circuit meeting yet – what excitement awaits me!

Joking aside, I am so grateful to everyone who has given me advice and encouragement as I try my best to fulfil this new role with the odd hiccup along the way! As my parents have always told me: all you can do is try your best. So I leave you with a topical quote from composer John Williams, with the prayer that the best of the Olympics, like Godly love, inspires you, me and the world to improve ourselves.

“The Olympics are a wonderful metaphor for world co-operation, the kind of international competition that’s wholesome and healthy, an interplay between countries that represents the best in all of us.”

Just Fayre is just waiting!

We will be very pleased to see members from Springdale and Wombourne, their friends and family, at the Just Fayre event detailed below. Thank you for supporting the fair trade movement, and can I remind you that the coffee bar at Wolverhampton Fairraid is now open. Do take the opportunity to look at the wide range of craft goods that are in store.

Brenda Shuttleworth



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THIS MARK
fairtrade.org.uk



Wolverhampton Circuit Just Fayre

Saturday, 15th October

11am – 3pm

**St Andrews Methodist/URC
Bilston Street, Sedgley, DY3 1JA**

**With Traidcraft, Created Gifts, Fairgrounds,
Revolver World, Jamco, KOMERA – Rwanda,
Zaytoun**

**Cookery demo and fashion show
lunches, Christmas cards & gifts,
children’s corner**

Wombourne pastoral news

Pauline Hotchkiss, pastoral secretary



I am sitting in the office overlooking my garden. The sun is shining and everywhere looks refreshed after the rain. We have two days' holiday coming, when we can take it easy, rest and refresh ourselves ready for another new year for our Church and we look forward to all that it will bring.

We begin our visits to The Maltings again on the third Thursday of each month and Himley Mill Care Home each second Tuesday.

GOOD NEWS

Last month I reported that Cynthia Hatton had a new great grand-daughter. My apologies to Cynthia and her family, as in fact the baby is a boy and he is a great grandson. I am still waiting for news of Betty Crossfield's new arrival.

You will see the wedding pictures of Lee Cresswell and his bride Kayleigh, who were married in May, and also Joseph Baldwin (Joe) and his bride Alison, whose wedding was in August. Joe's son David's wedding to Sarah took place at church on March 5. We pray that their lives together will truly be blessed by God.



Alison and Joe leaving Common Road

Two of our former Junior Church members have graduated from university. Sophie Tudor gained a BA (Hons) in Family, Childhood and Education Studies; Robyn Walker gained a BSc (Hons) in Health Studies. Congratulations to both of you. Your grandparents must be very proud of you.



Kayleigh and Lee sign the register

PRAYERS

Our prayer-circle continues to pray for all those who are on our prayer cards and in the Church Prayer Book. God knows all our needs and we know that He will sustain us as we pray daily for those who need our prayer.

For those who have lost loved ones; the families of Pamela Rogers; Rita (Joy Brandrick's sister) and Doreen

Jenks' son-in-law. For those who are suffering or sick in any way. Jesus I pray that Your Holy Spirit will watch over them and that those who are in need of our love and prayers for healing will be blessed.

If I have failed to mention anyone with a need or with good news then I apologise. Jesus knows our every need and will watch over us.

This will be my last time of writing as Pastoral Secretary. I am due to retire before the next edition of Triangle comes out. I want to say a huge thank-you to all those who have kept me supplied with news and photographs, especially former JC and GNFK members. God bless you all.

Gere, the invisible man

Brenda Shuttleworth on a film with a gritty theme



Tall, dark and handsome in his role as a trainee aviator with the US Navy, Richard Gere oozed confidence then on screen as he does off it now. So I paid my money to the Big Issue seller with more than usual enthusiasm as I saw Gere's picture on the cover. As ever, once home that mag got overlaid and forgotten.

However, a little while later I spotted that the latest film that Richard Gere had both produced and starred in, *Time Out Of Mind*, was showing at the Lighthouse and we duly went to see it. Not an easy film to watch, as we trace the journey of a 50-something down-and-out, George, through the streets of New York. George's life fell apart when his wife died, leaving him with a young teenage daughter. Unable to cope, he left her in the care of her grandparents and his own situation deteriorated rapidly until, unemployed, alcoholic and homeless, we meet him as a broken man.



**Richard Gere in
*Time Out Of Mind***

The lack of dialogue and strange camera angles help us feel the isolation felt by the destitute. At one stage George rattles an empty paper cup in a busy New York square. Commuters walk briskly past, eyes averted, and we sense his invisibility.

I dug out the discarded Big Issue to see what Gere had to say about the film. It certainly was not an easy film to make: "I'm nobody, I don't exist," was one comment he made. Working in the Fair Trade shop means that I bump into those supported by the Good Shepherd Ministry more often than I used to. That film was a good reminder that a smile and hello cost nothing but do just a little to make nobodies feel they are somebody.

It's not a blockbuster but if you have the chance to see it, do make time to do so.

Life after delivery

A parable by Dr Wayne Dyer, with thanks to John Hodgson

We believe in life after death, but there are many who cannot accept the concept. The following is an analogy of that belief, which is, hopefully, a fascinating insight into the mystery of existence. It is a parable from Your Sacred Self, by Dr Wayne Dyer.

IN A mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?" The other replied: "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what is to come later."

"Nonsense!" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?"

The second said: "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat with our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."



The first replied: "That is absurd. Walking is impossible.

And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be excluded."

The second insisted: "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different to what it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord any more." The first replied: "Nonsense. And if there is life, then why has no one ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere."

"Well I don't know," said the second. "But certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us." The first replied: "Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?"

The second said: "She is all around us. We are surrounded by Her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist." Said the first: "Well I don't see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn't exist." To which the second replied: "Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above . . ."