

Journey



**The continuing story of
Carrs Lane Church
July/August 2011**

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Ministers Letter

Dear friends,

I have always been ambivalent about the old adage that faith is 'caught and not taught'. Jesus' pictures of salt and light are extremely powerful ones; there is no doubting the significance of human example; we live in times where there is much talk about the importance of the 'relational' in church life...and yet, well, throughout my ministry I have believed in the importance of what might be termed 'teaching', whether in public worship, small groups or one-to-one. I guess that it is about balance: teaching comes in many shapes and forms, words need to be rooted in a recognizably human context...and we are all aware of the distress caused when the actions of human beings fail to live up to the words which they have spoken.

I mull over this as I prepare to share in two pieces of residential Christian youth work over the summer – a BB Camp in North Wales and the Synod Youth Camp in Shropshire. I continue to enjoy this dimension of my ministry; it is certainly the case that it is possible to achieve more in a week spent under canvas than it is during a whole year of weekly evening meetings, no matter how high the quality of such meetings is. Yet... well, I wonder how many more years I will continue to engage in this ministry – and I ponder why reservations surface from time to time. I don't think that it is the fact that my body is becoming, er, diffident about spending several nights on the damp ground in a bijou residence that affords only partial resistance to the elements. It has more to do with the dynamics of 'caught and taught', I think... the responsibilities of offering relevant and accessible teaching, and being able to offer an attractive lifestyle, even when potentially tired and grumpy!

I try hard to keep 'up-to-date' – relevant, accessible – in terms of the teaching which I offer to young people; equally, I continue to think carefully about the example which I set – I try to live in a way which is consistent. Sometimes I fail. If I ask the question, 'Which has the potential to do the most damage – dry, inaccessible teaching or a dour, humourless example?', then any answer effectively amounts to 'both'. At the end of the day, one cannot be separated from the other. Maybe the adage, 'caught, not taught', needs to be reshaped; it is impossible to think of one without the other. It is about balance, consistency in the Christian life, reclamation of the 'holistic' approach which was once talked about so frequently in terms of the Christian life, but which now appears to have faded from popularity.

I wish all a good summer – refreshment, opportunity and challenge in equal measure!

With much love in Christ,

Your friend and pastor,



Sunday Worship during July and August

Sunday 3rd July

10.30am Morning Worship, including the Lord's Supper led by Ernest Cruchley
All are welcome to share in 'First Sunday Lunch' at the close of this service

Sunday 10th July

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Johnson, Neil Riches and members of the Worship Group A service on the theme of 'unity' to prepare for the Church Meeting
All are welcome to share in the Church Meeting which follows this service at 12 noon
2.45pm for 3pm Kidz Aloud – A Children's Church

Sunday 17 July

10.30am Morning Worship led by Pamela Turner
4.30pm Service of Healing and Communion led by Diana Cullum-Hall

Sunday 24 July

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches. Key passage: Matthew 13.31 – 33, 44 – 52
6.00pm Radical Worship: worship and fellowship based around the meal table

Saturday 30 July

12 noon Marriage of Amina and Martin: all welcome!
All those attending the service are invited to share in refreshments at church afterwards

Sunday 31 July

10.30am Morning Worship led by Zaidie Orr
4.00pm Street Banquet – worship and food for the 'vulnerable', based on Jesus' story of The Great Feast

Sunday 7 August

10.30am Morning Service led by John Craig
Neil Riches will be involved in leading worship and discussion at the Synod Youth Camp in Shropshire

Sunday 13 August

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches - Key passage: Matthew 15.10 – 28
Please note: there will be no Kidz Aloud in August

Sunday 21 August

10.30am Morning Worship led by Brian Taylor
4.00pm for 4.30pm Service of Healing and Communion led by Neil Riches

Sunday 28 August

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches - Key passage: Matthew 16.21 – 28
6.00pm Radical Worship - *Details to follow*

Notices

Thursday 7 July Carrs Lane Discussion Group 10.15am. Focus 'The Scoundrel Christ', Philip Pullman novel.

Sunday 10 July Sea Sunday
www.seasunday.org

Wednesday 20 July BBQ Fundraising Day, Rainbow Care and Support Centre, Trinity URC, Hall Green. Live music, raffle, cake and gift stalls, and much more. 11.00am to 4.00pm.

Wednesday 17 to Monday 22 August Time Away. A leisurely holiday week at Barnes Close. Cost £200 (£160 unwaged). For more information call 01562 710231, email cfrenquiry@aol.com or see website www.cfrbarnesclose.co.uk.

Tuesday 23 August Slavery Memorial Day www.antislavery.org

1 September – 4 October Creation Time 2011 www.ctbi.org.uk

Advance Notice **URC Multicultural Event** at Carrs Lane on **Saturday 24 September**. See page 8 for more details. Requests for help to follow.

Christian Aid Week

A very big thank you to all of you who collected for Christian Aid at St Philip's Cathedral this year - Carrs Laners collected £460. Andrew Veitch

All Saints Church, Vicarage Road, Kings Heath invites you to 'Israel and Palestine in a Changing Region', a talk by Richard Burden MP, at 7:30pm on Friday 15 July.

'The entire Middle East is going through a transformation that we have never seen before – a huge upsurge in popular protest calling for rights and democracy. It is right for people to speak of the importance of pursuing the Middle East peace process at this time without soft-peddling, but it is also true that "process" is not enough. The people of both Israel and Palestine deserve an enduring peace. And – as the Arab Spring turns to summer, autumn and winter – we need actions, not just words, by the international community to help bring that about.'



Richard Burden MP chairs the all-party Palestine group in Parliament, which seeks to foster good relations and understanding between Britain and Palestine and to promote a just and durable peace in the Middle East. He speaks on this issue in Parliament as well as writing articles and commenting on developments.

Carrs Lane Lectures 2011

We hope you will join us for this year's Lecture series entitled 'Rethinking Christian Theology'. The Lectures will be held as usual on Thursday evenings in October, from 6.00 – 7.30pm, tickets £5 each.

Speakers:

Paul Knitter is a former Roman Catholic priest, now a leading theologian of religious pluralism. He is currently Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He is Professor Emeritus of Theology at Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, where he taught for 28 years. His research interests are religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue.

Roger Haight is Scholar in Residence at Union Theological Seminary. He is a member of the Society of Jesus and is a Past President of the Catholic Theological Society of America. He has taught at four Jesuit graduate schools of theology in Manila, Chicago, Toronto, and Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has also been a visiting professor in Lima, Nairobi, Paris, and Pune, India.

Programme:

October 6th: Professor Paul Knitter 'What Is Atonement?'

Even if we take the idea of atonement symbolically, just what does it really mean? We will review past answers to that question and explore how contemporary theologians, especially those in dialogue with Buddhism, are offering viewpoints that are both faithful to past Christian tradition and more relevant to our contemporary context.

October 13th: Professor Paul Knitter 'Is There Life after Death?'

Granting that there is no "hard data" for the answer to this question, granting too the multiple interpretations of biblical statements about "heaven and hell," we will explore the traditional Christian notions of life after death, including the resurrection of Jesus, in an effort to come to images or symbols of life after death that are trustworthy. Such trustworthy beliefs may go beyond our reason, but they do not contradict our reason.

October 20th: Professor Roger Haight 'Who is Jesus?'

We approach the identity of Jesus on three interrelated levels representing three of the most contested areas of Christian Theology. Who was the historical person Jesus of Nazareth? What is Jesus' status relative to other religious mediations? Who is Jesus in relation to God? Sorting through these questions will give a holistic response to the question 'Who Is Jesus?'

October 27th: Professor Roger Haight 'What is the Trinity?'

We first discuss 'Trinity' as the name of a doctrine rather than God and how this doctrine functioned in the early church. Much of this doctrine has been corrupted by the attempt to reconcile three distinct persons in the one Godhead. In the light of this

an effort is made to reconsider the doctrine as the short form of a narrative that tells the story of what the Christian community has learned about God.

Professor Haight will also be offering a one-day workshop on **Christian Spirituality for Seekers: according to Ignatius Loyola**: three sessions, entitled: *Jesus for Seekers; Finding Meaning in Jesus' Story; A Spirituality of Gratitude for Existence* on **Wednesday 26th October, 10.30-4pm**; tea/coffee will be provided but bring your own lunch. There will be no charge but donations would be appreciated.

The series will be chaired by Dr David Cheetham who is Senior Lecturer in Theology and Religion in the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham.

Julie Grove and Simon Rowntree

This is No Wild Goose Chase

In Celtic Christianity, the symbol for the Holy Spirit is the wild goose. By flying in a V-formation, as each bird flaps its wings the whole flock adds seventy per cent more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they want to go more quickly and easily because they are all travelling on the thrust generated by all.



Whenever a goose falls out of formation it quickly gets back so that it can continue to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go.

When the lead goose gets tired, it moves back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

It pays to take turns at doing the hard tasks – sharing leadership and maintaining interdependence.

The geese in formation 'honk' from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

We need to be sure that our 'honking from behind' is an encouragement to those who lead us.

When a goose gets sick, or wounded, or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow the one to help and protect it. They stay until it is able to fly again or dies.

In our fellowship as Christian people, we stand by each other in all circumstances.



Multicultural Celebration 2011

Speakers: Mrs Val Morrison and Revd Nigel Uden
Venue: Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham B4 7SX
Time: 10am - 4pm
This is an all age event

Celebrating Faith & Faithfulness in all its diversity - Come Feast and Share

The United Reformed Church has professed to being a Multicultural Church. A key implication of this declaration is that we desire to be a church committed to empowering all towards, just, inclusive, renewing and transforming mission and ministry.

The United Reformed Church Multicultural Celebration 2011 is about gathering together to feast and be inspired by each other's stories and cultures. We all have stories and we are all cultural beings, hence every congregation of the United Reformed Church is multi-cultural. Here is an invitation to discover and celebrate our diverse spirituality and ethos, to share each other's experiences, to deepen cross-cultural understanding, to network and to develop bonds of friendship. The day will include a variety of cultural presentations, workshops, meal, activities for all age groups, and worship.

This is an opportunity for all URC congregations to come to the feast to share ideas and celebrate the rich cultural diversity that exists in the church and society. For this reason we invite you to prepare an item/performance that expresses your culture and faith (preferably 5 minutes, but maximum 10 minutes) that all can enjoy. It can be drama, dance, music, song, poetry or any way you see fit.

Further information from 020 7916 8655 or email: michael.jagessar@urc.org.uk

About People

Carrs Lane Gardens

Residents and staff are very happy with how everything is working out with Yardley Great Trust in charge - repairs and maintenance are being carried out very quickly, some Carrs Lane Gardens residents have formed friendships with some Yardley Great Trust residents, so it's all looking good.

Former Carrs Lane Homes trustees have still not quite finished as we are due to meet with Accord Housing in July/August to sign off the last set of accounts.

Andrew Veitch



At Home with The MacKenzies

This photo was taken in May when we popped in to see Murdoch and Anne. The bike was bought with money we gave them when they left Birmingham.

Joan Duffield



It was a joy to see Murdoch and Anne in May, and to receive their hospitality on my way to Iona. Their beautiful garden is a delight.

Joan Davies



Pam, 88, puts on her first exhibition of art

A creative pensioner from Sutton is holding her first ever art exhibition at the age of 88. Pam Liddell from Wylde Green will be displaying her watercolour and oil landscapes and still lifes at the Highbury Theatre Centre in Sheffield Road until July 10. Pam started painting in her 40s, after bringing up her family and painted over a 40-year period, after taking up an evening class with her great friend Peggy Pinch.

The former medical secretary has painted over 100 watercolours and 100 oils and a selection will be on display at the theatre, a venue she has been attending for 60 years. It was only when Pam moved from Streetly to Wylde Green a couple of years ago that her daughter Janet Shaw discovered the extent of her mum's hobby and urged her to put them on show.

"I didn't think anyone would want to see them," Pam said. "I didn't value them that much. They are of places I went with my husband Bob, including Sutton Park, Wales, Cornwall, the Lake District and Scotland."

As well as day trips around the Midlands, one of the more unusual scenes is a painting from Japan, which followed a trip to the Far East, when Bob was director of the Motorcycle Association of Great Britain.

"When I went anywhere it was the potential for a painting was always at the back of my mind," Pam said. "You are always looking out for the details."

In the 60s Pam focused on still lifes, moving on to oils of landscapes in the 70s and 80s and latterly watercolours. A few of the paintings hold special memories of places where Pam and her family lived. Daughter Janet said: "A lot of places are of some significance or other to mum's life. When I was a child I was aware of the current picture she was doing in the kitchen but I didn't know she had done this many."



Pam's exhibition will be available for viewing on Mondays to Fridays from 7.30pm until 9pm and on Wednesday mornings from 10am until noon, which will coincide with the Highbury Players performance of *Shadowlands* – the story of author C S Lewis's relationship with American poet Joy Gresham.

I have seen them and it is well worth a visit. Well done, Pam. Joan D

Notes from the Organ Bench

I have been trying to gauge the musical preferences of the congregation over the past couple of months, and two things stand out: there seems to be a strong liking for piano voluntaries, and for other instrumentalists. We had the privilege of hearing Clara Bergstrand play the cello for us (twice), which was a delight – and Clara found it a very positive experience, too, so thank you for supporting her. So, I shall endeavour to invite other musicians to play for us over the next few months, but bear with me on that one. Likewise, I will program more frequent piano voluntaries.

Over the next few months, I may provide feedback sheets about the musical offerings at Carrs Lane, so that I can take account of your opinions and wishes in future programming.

I thought it would be interesting for people to learn a bit more about the organ – what happens upstairs at the console, and what goes on behind the pipes that you see. I therefore propose to give a talk-demonstration-recital, probably on Sun 7th August, after the service.

With a similar intention, I have decided to invite any curious members of the congregation to observe upstairs at the console whenever I am playing organ voluntaries after the service. My only request is that you are respectful of others and move quietly upstairs if you wish to observe.

For those of you joining us on the Germany exchange visit, and wishing to sing, there will be rehearsals starting in August - probably after the service on Sundays, and on the normal choir rehearsal days (alternating Thursdays and Fridays).

Two other things to look forward to:

I am planning a series of singing workshops in September, aimed at all levels and musical persuasions. This may be of particular interest to people who might have considered joining the Choir or Singing Group, but lack confidence/musical training/etc.

Stephanie Thomas has offered to run a Dance Movement Psychotherapy workshop, which will be hugely interesting, and I hope to hold a taster session over the summer – possibly mid-late August.

Further details and dates of all the above will be announced on the notice sheet.



Finally – take advantage of all the musical events going on in the city over the summer. (And then tell me about the things that you particularly enjoyed.)

*A note left for a pianist from his wife -
Gone Chopin, (have Liszt), Bach in a Minuet.*

Tim Batty
Church Musician

Coast Along for WaterAid



Join us, and let's get walking for water!

Millions of people around the world have no choice but to walk for hours every day to collect essential water for themselves and their families. This water is often dirty and causes deadly diseases. You can help us transform lives by taking part in Coast Along for WaterAid – our national flagship walking event. All we ask is that each person in your team commits to raising £50 towards our target of £100,000 and helps us make a real difference to some of the world's poorest communities.

This year Coast Along is bigger and better than ever! With nearly 250 sections of path covering every area of the UK, from Cornwall to the Moray Firth, there's no reason not to get walking. To complete the challenge we are aiming to have at least one team of walkers on each section of path on 10 September – but we need your help to make this happen! Register your team at www.coastalongforwateraid.org, (minimum two walkers) or contact the office at Carrs Lane for more details. So why not feel at ease with the summer breeze, and get walking for water.

Best Wishes, Becca, Sarah, Anna & Sam,
WaterAid Events Team

Retreat 2011

Plenty of firsts this year... the first time that I have ever seen an adder basking in the sunshine, the first time that I have seen two barn owls sitting on the branch of an oak tree in broad daylight – and the first time that I have managed to get to bed by 9pm for three days running! Seriously, though, a good week in every respect; I sent out 25 cards during my time at St. Oswald's, reflecting the level of concerns and prayer requests shared with me before my departure.

I think that it is worth repeating the little story that I shared in Carrs Lane on the Sunday after my return. I experienced some very wet weather indeed whilst I was in Yorkshire; my reasoning in such times is that when walking in bad weather, it is best to search out features which benefit from a lot of rain...namely waterfalls! So, on one day I set out to visit Falling Foss. After several hours of relentless, heavy rain I was, er, wet... to put it mildly. In a hamlet, I came across a Methodist Chapel which proclaimed that it was open; I duly entered...and, at the back of the church, I found water, tea, coffee, sugar, milk and a kettle, along with an invitation to myself (as to all walkers) to help myself to a hot drink and whatever shelter I needed. I duly did so... and marveled that the Christian ministry of hospitality can be a wondrous one. It is not rocket science, but a little thought and a little trust and a few carefully chosen words can go a long way.



Neil

Why You Matter

A vital part of the picture



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Dear Friends

The growth of the fair trade movement in the UK is a success story for which the church can claim much of the credit. Thank you for the part your church has played in helping to make the UK the world's largest fair trade market. It's a great achievement and one for which we give thanks to God. But the job's not done, which is why we need our church supporters more than ever.

The spread of fair trade into the mainstream – which we helped pioneer – is giving hope and opportunity to millions of small-scale growers and their families. However, supermarkets deal in large volumes so they can only work with producer organisations that have already achieved Fairtrade certification and with the capacity to supply them in the quantities they need.

That offers no opportunity to those commodity producers who are not yet at the Fairtrade Mark level – but would like to be – or to the millions struggling to support themselves and their families making crafts, textiles, jewellery, ceramics, or paper and card products, for which no Fairtrade Mark yet exists.

a “shop window” for our Christian values

As a Christian response to poverty, Traidcraft directs much of its efforts towards these poor and marginalised producers, working with them to help improve their products, refine their techniques and develop their small businesses in ways which will allow them to gain their share of the global fair trade market. People selling Traidcraft products in churches around the UK are a vital part of that picture. As well as providing a significant proportion of the income that pays for the work we do with producers, they are a “shop window” for our Christian values and our response to the scriptural call to seek justice for the poor. As such, they play a powerful role in our advocacy and outreach towards the church community – and to the world beyond the church doors.

Our response to “seek justice for the poor”

We are earnestly asking you and your congregation to continue your support for our work by supporting your local Traidcraft Fair Trader or outlet – and through your excellent example, encourage other churches to do the same. If you would like to know more about our work and how your church can engage with it further, please contact our Church Relations Manager Peter Collins on 0191 4976465 or email him at peterc@traidcraft.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Chandler Chief Executive Traidcraft

Why you matter

A message from Traidcraft

Fairtrade in the UK is worth a staggering £1 billion a year – the largest Fairtrade market in the world. It's a fantastic achievement and one for which we thank God and for which churches like yours can take a great deal of the credit. But the wider availability of fair trade products in supermarkets has given some people the impression that somehow, the job is done and that we don't need to bother anymore. They're wrong – but we know that mistaken belief can make life difficult for you, so here are a few answers to some of the questions you might get asked:

Why is it better to buy from a Traidcraft stall/outlet than a supermarket?

Supermarkets are great at what they do – selling large volumes of products at very competitive prices but they can only work with Fairtrade certified food producers who can supply them in the volumes they need. So they offer no opportunity to commodity producers who aren't yet at that level – but would like to be – or to the millions struggling to support themselves and their families making crafts, textiles, jewellery, ceramics, or paper and card products for which no internationally agreed Fairtrade standard yet exists. Traidcraft can – and does! A large part of our effort is directed towards helping some of the poorest and most marginalized producers gain their share of the growing global fair trade

market. Sales from Traidcraft stalls/outlets like yours play a vital role in making that work possible.

How can supermarkets sell some Fairtrade products more cheaply than Traidcraft?

Between them, the four largest supermarkets (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrison's) have around 75% of the UK grocery market. Tesco alone has a weekly turnover of around £1 billion – as much as the whole Fairtrade market in the UK for a year! Even the smaller supermarket chains are still very large compared to Traidcraft. Their size means they can achieve economies of scale and efficiencies that smaller trading operations, like ours, just can't hope to match. They can afford to offer products at lower prices because their operating costs are, proportionately, much lower.

So you're asking your supporters in the church to pay more?

In the case of a few products - yes. If you believe what we are doing is right, if you want to see more families given the opportunity to work their way out of poverty, more communities enjoy the sort of amenities we take for granted – clean water, a school, a clinic – then choosing, consciously, to buy from your Traidcraft outlet rather than the supermarket is the way to help.

Why does Traidcraft sell its products to the supermarkets?

Because Traidcraft was set up to change the way the world trades – and getting the mainstream to adopt fair trade is part of our mission. Although the fair trade market has grown impressively in recent years, it is still only a tiny fraction of trade in the UK, let alone the world. If we can move the ‘big boys’ even a little way towards fairer trade, that will open up huge opportunities for many more producers. And supermarkets offer Traidcraft access to a whole group of customers who might otherwise never come across fair trade products.

Why is my support so important to Traidcraft?

Because Traidcraft was created as a Christian response to poverty and the support of the churches has been critical to its growth and achievements – and will always be so. Because consumption involves choice and the choices we make when we spend our money send powerful signals to government and business. Because Christian living can, sometimes, involve sacrifice – and people who are prepared to be self-sacrificial make impressive role models for others. Because you’re making a difference – to all the families who can look forward to a brighter, better future because of what you do.

On behalf of them - and us - thank you.

The 350 pupils at Thunguri Primary School, near Ndima, Kenya, can look forward to a brighter, more secure future. Tea from Ndima is used in the Traidcraft range. Those fair trade sales mean a better income for the tea growers and that is allowing them to keep their children in school to complete their education. It also means the school can run a class for 18 children with special needs, who otherwise would have no education at all.

It’s one of hundreds of stories we can tell of lives and communities transformed because of the way you have responded to God’s call to seek justice for the poor. And you play a vital role in every one of those stories because it’s your sales and those of the thousands of others like you in churches around the UK – that help pay for that work. But you do so much more.



Your commitment is a powerful witness to the church and to the world beyond the church doors, it demonstrates a practical and effective response to the Gospel command to love our neighbour, and it brings our vision of a world freed from the scandal of poverty a little bit closer. You make it happen.

Angola partners: working for real change

During Christian Aid Week, Ana Claudia Menezes, Angola Programme Officer, visited the West Midlands to share with supporters and staff how the work of partner organisations have been transforming the lives of excluded communities. In urban and rural settings, partners have been speaking out against injustice, and educating and campaigning for change at local and national level.

Angola is one of the many examples of a country where the absence of war does not necessarily reflect in peace for the majority of the population. The 27-year old civil war ended in April 2002 when the two main parties involved – the MPLA and UNITA – signed the Luena Memorandum of Understanding. Ten years later, the country still faces great challenges. Located in the Southern African region, Angola has unprecedented natural resources and is the third largest exporter of oil in the continent, after Nigeria and Libya. But the social indicators do not mirror this top position.

According to the United Nations, 54.3% of the population live below the poverty line, with less than US\$1.25 per day. Angola ranks 146 out of 177 countries on the UN Human Development Index, and house demolitions and land evictions became a daily threat – and reality – for thousands of poor people in urban and rural areas. Radio Ecclesia, for example, the only politically independent radio in Angola, is considered the “voice of the voiceless” and its expansion to other provinces is much wanted by civil society – because of political pressure, it is only allowed to broadcast in Luanda.



Another partner is SOS Habitat, a human rights organisation working on the protection of poor people’s housing rights especially in the overcrowded capital Luanda. Association Justice Peace and Democracy (AJPD), has been monitoring and defending the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS and has been playing a key role in documenting and denouncing human rights violations. AJPD and the Association for

Building Communities (ACC) are part of a group of five civil society organisations representing Angola in the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights. The

latter one is involved in a wide range of advocacy initiatives to protect pastoralists in Huila province, such as campaigning against torture, defending women's rights and protecting the land rights of nomadic animal herders.

“These partners, just to mention some, are making a huge impact in the communities they work with, in areas such as sustainable livelihoods, climate change, accountable governance, and HIV and AIDS”, said Ana Menezes, who is based in the Christian Aid office in London. “I will be visiting the partners in Angola in June and I can't wait to share with them the amazing stories of engagement I heard and witnessed during my days in the West Midlands”.

Happy Birthday Brum

It was a red-letter day for Birmingham on 3rd June 1911 when the Greater Birmingham Act received the Royal Assent, giving Brum the right to be the second city of the empire.

Under a dynamic council leadership the boundaries of the city had been extended to cover the borough of Aston Manor, the urban district of Erdington from Warwickshire, the urban district of Handsworth from Staffordshire, and the urban districts of King's Norton and Northfield and the rural district of Yardley, all from Worcestershire. This made the city's population grow to almost 900,000 covering three times as much land as Glasgow and also leaving behind Liverpool and Manchester.



The local celebrations took place on 9th November 1911 when the act of parliament authorising the wide extension of the city's boundaries came into force. American journalist Julian Ralph had bestowed on the city the title of 'the best governed city in the world' in 1890 and our leaders improved the life of Birmingham's inhabitants with the municipalising of the private gas and water companies and establishment of the drainage board. Shortly after that the local electric supply and the tramways were added to the list. This dynamic and successful council put the city of a thousand trades firmly on the map.

Pat Davies

How much do you know about our city? Try the following quiz – Ed

Do you know Brum?

1. Where were people entering when they passed through the archway of tears?
a) The City Hospital b) the City Workhouse c) Witton cemetery
2. What was historian Carl Chinn's father's profession?
a) A policeman b) A thief c) An illegal bookmaker
3. Who was the first owner of Aston Hall?
a) Sir Thomas Holte b) William Murdoch c) Joseph Cadbury
4. Birmingham's first flats were built in Garrison Lane, Small Heath, to replace slum housing – when was this?
a) 1927 b) 1939 c) 1949
5. The last back to back houses were demolished in the 1960's – there had been a delay due to no new land being available. Where was this big new estate built to enable this to happen?
a) Rubery b) Falcon Lodge c) Chelmsley Wood
6. Which Bank was founded in Birmingham in 1836?
a) Lloyds b) National Westminster c) The Midland
7. Which Monarch made Birmingham a City?
a) King George b) Queen Victoria c) Queen Elizabeth II
8. Which brummie band started life as M&B Five?
a) The Moody Blues b) The Seekers c) Deep Purple
9. Barbara Cartland was born and lived in Kings Heath as part of the Cartland Family. Which Royal was she related to?
a) Prince Michael of Kent b) Prince Philip c) Diana Princess of Wales
10. Andy Hamilton has been playing music in Birmingham for over 30 years. What type does he play?
a) Jazz b) Swing c) Pop
11. What is Birmingham's motto?
a) The Heart b) Forward c) Keep Right On
12. The Sentinel Towers are a pair of Birmingham's highest tower blocks. Where are they?
a) Holloway Head b) Small Heath c) Castle Vale

Answers next issue.



The Green Thing

In the queue at the supermarket the cashier told the older woman that plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The woman apologised to her and explained, 'We didn't have the green thing back in my day.'



That's right, they didn't have the green thing in her day. Back then, they returned their milk bottles, Coke bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilised and refilled, using the same bottles over again. So they really were recycled, but they didn't have the green thing back in her day.

In her day they walked up stairs, because they didn't have a lift in every shop and office building. They walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower four-wheel drive every time they had to go two blocks. But she's right. They didn't have the green thing in her day.

Back then they washed the baby's nappies because they didn't have the throw-away kind. They dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up watts; wind and solar power really did dry the clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers and sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that old lady is right, they didn't have the green thing back in her day.

Back then, they had one TV, or radio, in the house not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a pizza dish, not a screen the size of the state of Montana. In the kitchen, they blended and stirred by hand because they didn't have electric machines to do everything for them. When they packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, they used wadded-up newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then they didn't fire up an engine and burn petrol just to cut the lawn. They used a mower that ran on human power. They exercised by working so they didn't

need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate by electricity. But she's right, they didn't have the green thing back then.

They drank from a fountain when they were thirsty, instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time they had a drink of water, they refilled pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and they replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But they didn't have the green thing back then.

Back then, people took the bus and kids rode their bikes to school or rode the school bus, instead of turning their mums into a 24-hour taxi service. They had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And they didn't need a computerised gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest takeaway.

But that old lady is right... they didn't have the green thing back in her day. I'm glad that was MY day too!

From 'Crosstalk', the magazine of Christ Church URC, South Manchester.

An old illustration

...but one that never loses its message

A minister visited one of his church members who hadn't been seen at church for some time. He found the man alone, sitting in front of a huge log fire. The man was slightly embarrassed, but he welcomed the minister and they both sat quietly in front of the fire. After the pleasantries, there was a long silence.



Eventually, the minister picked up the tongs and moved one of the logs to one side of the hearth, where it gradually lost its flame. After some general chat, the minister replaced the dying log on the fire and they watched it start glowing again. As the minister got up to leave, the man had a tear in his eye as he said, "Thank you, I have enjoyed your visit very much, especially the sermon."

On this day ...

Sermon extracts which, although couched in the language of their time, may help us to reflect on our own concepts of significant aspects of the Christian experience and of miracles:

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle July 1911

Extracts from the sermon by G. McLuckie: "The Basis of St. John's Appeal" (based on 1 John 2. 12 – 13)

The apostle is here leading up to his great appeal, "Love not the world." This morning we are to consider the grounds on which he bases that appeal. Those grounds are summed up in the Christian experience of his readers, viz. forgiveness, their knowledge of the Father, and their power to overcome the evil one.

First of all, then, let us take stock of our Christian experience. What does it involve?

- a) *The sense of sin*: It is when I am brought face to face with Jesus Christ that I most clearly recognise the sinfulness of my own heart.
- b) *The joy of forgiveness*: Then there comes to me the voice of Jesus in His Gospel, with its message of pardon and of hope. God loves me, sinner though I be. His love is of that mighty order which many waters cannot quench.
- c) *The experience of victory through Jesus Christ, the friend that sticketh closer than a brother*. Thanks be to God, our Christian experience is not entirely one of failure. We have fallen often enough, God knows, but we also know the experience of victory, and this is our hope.

Is it not reasonable to think that the man whose experience involves the sense of sin, the joy of forgiveness, and the realization of victory, will find in that experience the strongest basis upon which an appeal may be urged to him? By way of contrast, let us look at some other bases of appeal.

- i) *The commercial basis*: Undoubtedly it is true of large numbers of men that the most successful appeal that can be made to them is that of their financial interest.
- ii) *The social basis*: One of the temptations to which we are constantly liable is that of taking up work from motives which are decidedly mixed. The love of place and power is to many men a wonderfully seductive bait, and we have to be careful lest it creep into our Church work and spoil the value of our Christian service.
- iii) *The basis of so-called dignity*. By this I mean a tendency to steer clear of certain forms of service because we regard them as not quite genteel enough for us, and hardly compatible with our dignity.

Just a closing word. What spiritual understanding approves the will must adopt, translating the inner thought into the outer act. May you and I be among those of whom it can be truly said – "The strongest appeal you can make to these folks is the appeal that is based upon what they have experienced of the love and grace and power of their Saviour, Jesus Christ!"

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle August 1911

Extracts from the sermon by Rev. Dr. R.F. Horton: "Miracles: Ancient and Modern"

Miracles are, I know, a great difficulty to many people in the present day – not only to unbelievers who do not wish to believe, but also to many who would like to be Christians, but, imbued with scientific habits of thought, they think that miracles are unnecessarily incredible, and that a religion, which, like Christianity, is so closely implicated with them is necessarily discredited.

Now the definition or the conception of a miracle which is usually current is that it is a violation of natural law. And there would be no objection to this mode of statement if it were always clearly recognized that there is, in addition to natural law, supernatural law. But by the people who usually employ this definition, a quiet assumption is made that natural law covers all possible experience. But this quiet assumption is merely a confusion of thought; it has no foundation in fact. Natural law is simply a phrase which we use to describe the regular or normal operations of nature, the observed uniformities of the visible material universe. It is not maintained by any men of thought or knowledge that natural law covers more than a very small surface of this great universe of existence. There is much that lies entirely outside of the observation of natural law.

The definition that a miracle is a violation of natural law is inadequate. A miracle in the religious sense is *the direct exercise of the Power of God out of the line of ordinary occurrences for the purpose of attesting Truth, or for the purpose of accomplishing the redemption of man.*

All that we can see and know are but parts of a mighty whole, fragments of a work which no living being has ever been able to interpret or in any satisfactory sense to understand. All that we do know and shall soon see in the present goes to show that God has reserved to Himself complete freedom in the presence of the laws of nature which He has made. Though nature is His creation, and is in the main uniform, He has never relinquished the right of shaping it according to His will.

From the Carrs Lane Journal – July 1961

Some thoughts by Dorothy Rumsby on collecting for charities, which may strike a chord with some readers

The Editor re-collects

During Christian Aid Week I made a Mid-Year Resolution. In future I shall always have ready the little envelopes that optimistic champions of deserving causes leave at the house and eventually collect. For in the recent Freedom from Hunger Campaign my husband and I offered our services and know how collectors are kept waiting.

The pile of envelopes looked formidable, but delivering them is easy. You slip quietly from house to house, being careful not to disturb the occupants. Collecting is a different matter. To do it alone is a test of courage and endurance; with a companion it can be an amusing experience – if not repeated too often.

My husband and I took opposite sides of the road for our “stretch” – how *juste* that word is – and we could hail one another from time to time, which was good for keeping up the morale. I tried various techniques and finally decided the cheerful assertive was best. “An envelope was left here the other day ... could I have it, please?” – though occasionally I was taken too literally and got it back empty. I don’t know what my husband said but he got asked in! About a fifth of the houses were empty, unless, as I suspect, the occupants were lurking behind the curtains, smothering their laughter as I tripped on the loose paving in the drive.

The rest fell into categories. There were the models I intend to emulate. Their envelopes were filled and just waiting to be handed over ... not many of these. There were those – usually men – who sorted through four or five other envelopes on the hall table and put something in mine without much delay. The majority, though, jumped like surprised rabbits. Having found the envelope they disappeared into the back quarters and there was either silence or great scurryings and hunting for change – in any case a long wait. Some were a dead loss: “Sorry, I’m only baby sitting,” or “Sorry, I only dig here.” Then there were the strong-minded characters who just said, “No, sorry,” and shut the door before I could think what else to say. Only one asked to see my card, and looked surprised when I said my husband had it, but I could show her another with rules for collectors. “Oh, well,” she said. “I’ll give you half a crown. It won’t be any great loss anyway.” She was probably our best contributor!

From the Carrs Lane Journal – August 1961

The 400th anniversary of 1611 could not be allowed to pass without acknowledging another significant date in the history of the Bible in English

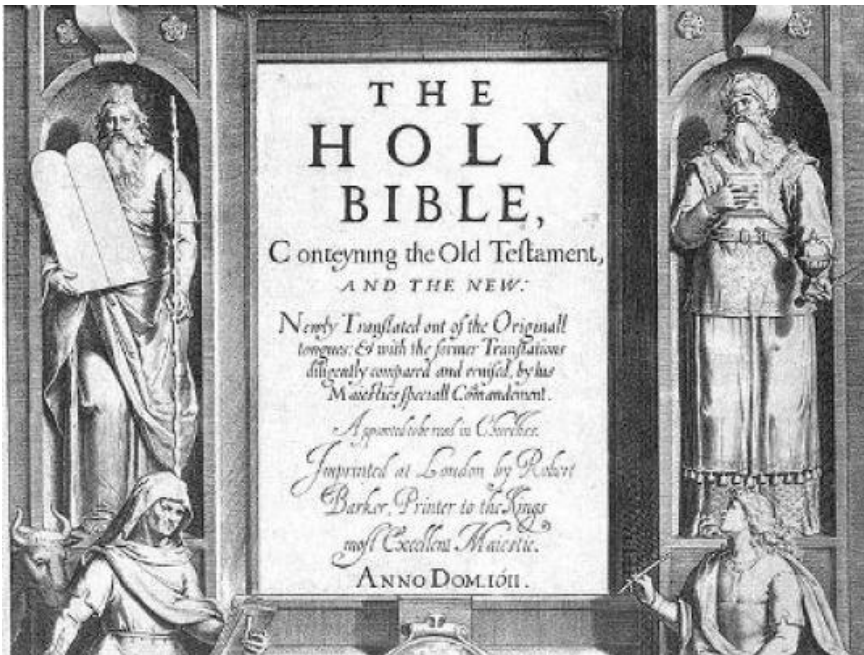
Englising the Bible

1961 is notable as the 350th anniversary of the appearance of the Authorised Version of the Bible and for the publication of the New Testament of the *New English Bible*. This year seems likely to be marked too by the appearance of a number of books on the translation of the Bible. One of them is *The English Bible: a History of Translations*. It is the work of Prof. F.F. Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Manchester.

The book is a comprehensive study of the many translations into English of the Bible or parts of the Bible, from the earliest attempts of Caedmon, Bede, King Alfred and others right down to the present time. The story Professor Bruce has to tell is complicated, but his skill in unfolding it and the excellent presentation of his material make the book a pleasure to read.

After giving some selections from the early prose and verse translations Prof. Bruce devotes a chapter to the work of John Wycliffe and the Lollards. To them belongs the honour of producing, under threat of imprisonment and death, the first complete Bible in English. If such a book as Prof. Bruce's can have a hero, that hero, without doubt, is William Tyndale. In the field of Biblical study and translation until the appearance of the Authorised Version and even beyond, the influence of this fine scholar and truly great man is predominant. His plan was to translate the whole of the New Testament from the Greek text recently published by Erasmus and then to translate from the original Hebrew as much of the Old Testament as should prove possible.

The supreme gift that he was able to make to the people of the English-speaking world has been, I think, something that was his by natural endowment, the elevation, the vigour, the sheer beauty of his English speech. Prof. Bruce says that Tyndale's version of the New Testament is "basic to the successive versions which have appeared between his day and ours, more particularly the Authorised Version and the Revised Version."



A period of intense activity in translating the Bible filled the seventy-five years between the death of Tyndale and the publication of the Authorised Version. After 1611 all other translations were superseded by the Authorised Version which, though never legally or formally "authorised", soon established itself by the authority of its own intrinsic worth as the version for use both in Church and at home by the people of the English-speaking world.

But for all its great merits, the Authorised Version could not hold this unique position for ever. There has been in the last decades of the nineteenth and all through the present century another period of great activity in translation culminating in the publication of the *New English Bible*. Prof. Bruce devotes his closing chapters to these recently published versions. His book will have its appeal, I think, to the general reader who is at all interested in questions as to the means by which certain ancient manuscripts in Hebrew and Greek appear in 1961 as the *New English Bible*.

Contributed by Wendy Firrnin

Commitment for Life

(Extracts from Moving Stories 138)

The Two Idans, *by Anne Parker (Commitment for Life Advocate and I/OPT Activist)*
The “Combatants for Peace” movement was started jointly by Palestinians and Israelis, who have taken an active part in the cycle of violence; Israelis as soldiers in the Israeli army (IDF) and Palestinians as part of the violent struggle for Palestinian freedom. After brandishing weapons for so many years, and having seen one another only through weapon sights, they have decided to put down their guns, and to fight for peace. www.cfpeace.org.

Idan Meir’s story: “I blindly went into the army because my grandfather was a member of Palmach (the elite fighting force of the Haganah) in ’47 and my father was a soldier in ’67. ’73, and ’82. I remember my mother being anxious when I was 6 and then 12 years later I also was a soldier. I was raised by the beach and didn’t want to go into the army, but felt I couldn’t escape and was in a commando unit for 4 years. This felt really good - doing stuff you see in a movie, and I never thought about the person on the other side. However, I realized that it doesn’t bring security for if you kill ‘a hero’ he becomes a ‘super-hero’. In 1997 12 soldiers were killed in Lebanon and one was my friend. I was there when his mother was told and I realized – no game – no superman, only people really hurt and families destroyed. It was 10 years before I knew about Combatants for Peace and now I won’t serve in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and cannot serve in the army. The most important work is to connect people.”

Idan Barir’s story: “I joined the artillery in 1998 and then the second intifada broke out. I was doing policing work in Jenin, the West Bank and in Hebron. Violence becomes a faceless thing and it seemed like the price you had to pay to live here. As a reservist I was called to serve in Qalquilya (West Bank) on a road-block between 2 villages – 14-hour shifts for 3 weeks. We were told: “This is the most important place in this area – this is where people can infiltrate.” After 3 weeks this most important place was taken down! It demonstrated the uselessness. I went to prison rather than serve again as a reservist.”

You can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time and here are the stories of two people who I met in May in Tel Aviv who are no longer prepared to be fooled.

Situation update: The most significant political event in recent months has been the reconciliation agreement signed between Hamas and Fatah in Egypt, signalling what is hoped to be an end to 4 years of disunity between the two factions. This agreement, brokered in May 2011, came with a promise that full elections would be held in the West Bank and Gaza in 2012. Fatah and Hamas are currently negotiating the formation of an interim unity government and to put in place mechanisms for immediate reconciliation between the groups.

March 2011 saw an escalation of military activity in the Gaza strip. Increased rocket fire into southern Israel (including one incident where a school bus was hit, causing

the death of a young boy) raised tensions, and Israel responded in force to the attack, killing 14 civilians in Gaza in one weekend.

In April an Italian activist was kidnapped and murdered by a Salafist group in Gaza. The Salafist's, extreme Islamist militants, have conducted several attacks against Gazan targets – including Hamas who they consider too moderate – and have threatened further kidnappings. The crackdown on the group by Hamas police, following the murder, resulted in the death of two of the kidnappers.

Several people were killed and many wounded by Israeli forces during the Palestinian *Nakba* protests on the borders between Israel and Syria and Lebanon and at checkpoints into the West Bank and Gaza. *Nakba* Day commemorates hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were forced to leave their homes and fled to surrounding countries during the 1948 war.

Christian Aid's programme in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory supports 21 partners. This is an update from B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories:

Over the last three years B'Tselem have been running an innovative video project with young people, encouraging non-violent resistance to the occupation. The project involves distributing hand-held video cameras to volunteers so they can record human rights abuses they experience in their local areas. The project coordinators provide the cameras, training, editing software and support for volunteers that join the scheme. One of the most significant results from this project has been the use of the video evidence in court, resulting in several successes by B'Tselem in bringing those accused of criminal activity to justice. The video distribution project has a wide following on Youtube and B'Tselem's website, and has also been picked up by the international press and media in Israel.

During the communication officer's visit to IOPT three of these video volunteers were interviewed and photographed. Two volunteers, a brother and sister living in the West Bank town of Ni'lin, record demonstrations at the separation barrier which happen every Friday, and the response to these demonstrations by the Israeli military. In 2009 they recorded the shooting of an unarmed cuffed Palestinian who had been arrested by the Israeli military. The evidence from this video is now being used by B'Tselem to file the case in the Israeli Supreme Court. Another volunteer lives in Tuba, in the South Hebron Hills and has been subjected to frequent attacks on him and his flock of sheep by nearby settlers. His video recording of a settler stealing one of his sheep was shown to the police and resulted in the return of the sheep to him, and an official cautioning of the settler by the police.

The empowerment of young people in this non-violent way is having an effect not only on their lives, but on the lives of the communities they live in. B'Tselem's network of video volunteers extends across the West Bank and now numbers in the hundreds.

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

Too close for comfort?

As many of you will know, I have only been on the accredited list of URC ministers since the beginning of 1998; before that, I served as a Baptist minister for a good many years, both in a conventional pastorate and in schools chaplaincy. One consequence of this personal history, is that I did not train with URC ministers; there was no opportunity to get to know or be known by the ‘movers-and-shakers’ of the denomination, no chance to spend time with colleagues who are now in positions of influence and strategic leadership. I have no problems at all with this, insofar as I have always been a little uncomfortable with establishment – institution – and would be faintly horrified if anybody identified me as an ‘establishment figure’.

The years go by, however, and I do seem to be engaged with denominational issues rather more than I could ever have anticipated. Two landmark opportunities are coming my way in the near future. 7th – 9th July sees my involvement in the ‘Faithfulness and Fruitfulness’ Conference here in Birmingham. This has been organized by EMLOMA (the Ethnic Minority Lay and Ordained Ministers Association of the URC) and the denominational Mission Team in response to the challenges and opportunities raised by the Vision4Life focus on evangelism and that of Vision2020 on the renewal of our mission vocation. In case you think that this sounds a bit of a mouthful – and sounds rather unlike me in many respects – then be reassured! This is intended as a time for story-telling, the sharing of good practice and opportunities across the length and breadth of the denomination (and its full theological spectrum) and the Friday afternoon provides an occasion for the Carrs Lane story to be told, current practice and issues shared. Keynote speakers are Roberta Rominger and David Sangbok Kim from South Korea.

A very different opportunity presents itself in September, in that I will be sharing in the Forum on Human Sexuality at Westminster College, Cambridge. I will be going as one of two representatives from the West Midlands Synod, and the forum will spend time in preparation for General Assembly in 2012; how can the denomination move forward on all manner of ongoing and often sensitive issues? Interestingly, three sorts of representatives have been sought for this gathering: those who, on grounds of conscience, feel that a relatively conservative approach needs to be developed and sustained across the whole denomination; those who, on grounds of conscience and the need for transparency of justice, believe exactly the opposite – and those who believe that enough discussion has taken place, and that we need to move on from these matters, recognizing and respecting the fact that we constitute a ‘broad church’ and that a considerable amount of discretion is rightly left to the local church. I consider myself to be a member of the third group!

So – plenty afoot: I will keep you apprised of the outcomes.

Neil

Yow tekkin the Mik?



Aynuk builds himself a new pen for his chickens. He asks Ayli to come and have a look at it. 'Well yome med a bostin job on it ar kid,' says Ayli, Aynuk says, 'Ar it ay bad except that the roof leaks.' Ayli notices that Aynuk has put a wire netting roof on the pen, 'No wonder it leaks,' says Ayli, 'yo ay put no slope on it!'



What did the **Brummie** chef say to the egg?. 'Be afried, be very afried'



Aynock always thought their Aylie was in need of a little ferther education, so decided he would tek im to the big city, Berninggum.

Aynock took him round the city explainin what building was what and the local history attached to them. Eventually they arrived at Victoria Square and by this time Aylie's brain wus in a right spin.

Suddenly Aylie turned and saw the large building and said to Aynock 'Is thet a palace our kid?'

'Naa,' seys Aynock, 'that's the Council House'.

'Bostin,' ses Aylie, 'I've got me name down fer one of them!'



Quaker Advice

The first advice in Chapter 1 (Advices and Queries) of Quaker Faith and Practice is:

Take heed, dear friends,
to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts.
Trust them as the leadings of God whose light
shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

Contributed by Helen Hickman-Morris

Children in a Sunday School were each given a passage from the Bible to learn by heart and recite at a special service. One boy had to learn Psalm 23, but he found it difficult to remember all the words. He brought the house down when he stood up and said “The Lord is my Shepherd.....” After an embarrassing pause, he then said, “and that’s all I need to know!”

Millennium Development Goals



Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Please send your contribution for next month’s Journey to the Editor,
Mrs. Pat Davies, Carrs Lane URC, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX
or by email to office@carrslane.co.uk.

Room Hire at Carrs Lane

Carrs Lane Church Centre is in Birmingham city centre and within a few minutes walk of New Street and Moor Street train stations and the National Express coach station. Public car parking and bus stops are also nearby.

The conference rooms on offer at Carrs Lane are of several sizes and situated on three floors. We can support most types of events. Rooms can accommodate from 6 up to 350 delegates. You will find that our prices are very competitive. Our staff will be pleased to discuss ideas for your event with you and advise on the suitability of our facilities.

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Carrs Lane Regular Activities

SUNDAYS

Morning Worship

Every Sunday at 10.30am
with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month

Afternoon Worship and Healing Service

Third Sunday at 4.30pm

Children's Church

Second Sunday at 2.30pm

Radical Worship

Fourth Sunday at 6.00pm

First Sunday Lunch

First Sunday each month at 12.30pm

Church Meeting

Second Sunday at 12 noon

Singing Group

Third Sunday 9.45 – 10.15am

WEEK DAYS

Lunchtime Healing Service

Every Wednesday 1.15pm

Prayer Group

First Wednesday at 7.00 pm

Discussion Group

First Thursday at 10.15 am

Carrs Lane Players (drama group)

Fridays at 7.45 pm

Charity Knitting Circle

First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop

First and Third Sunday after morning worship
and Tuesday - Friday 10.30 am - 2.30 pm

Counselling Centre

Monday - Friday 11.00 am - 1.30 pm
and Monday to Wednesday evenings 7.00 - 9.00 pm

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