

Journey



**The continuing story of
Carrs Lane Church
December 2010 and January 2011**



**GORDON FRANKS
AND ASSOCIATES
LIMITED**

GORDON FRANKS TRAINING

ST JAMES HOUSE
ST JAMES PLACE
Birmingham B7 4JE



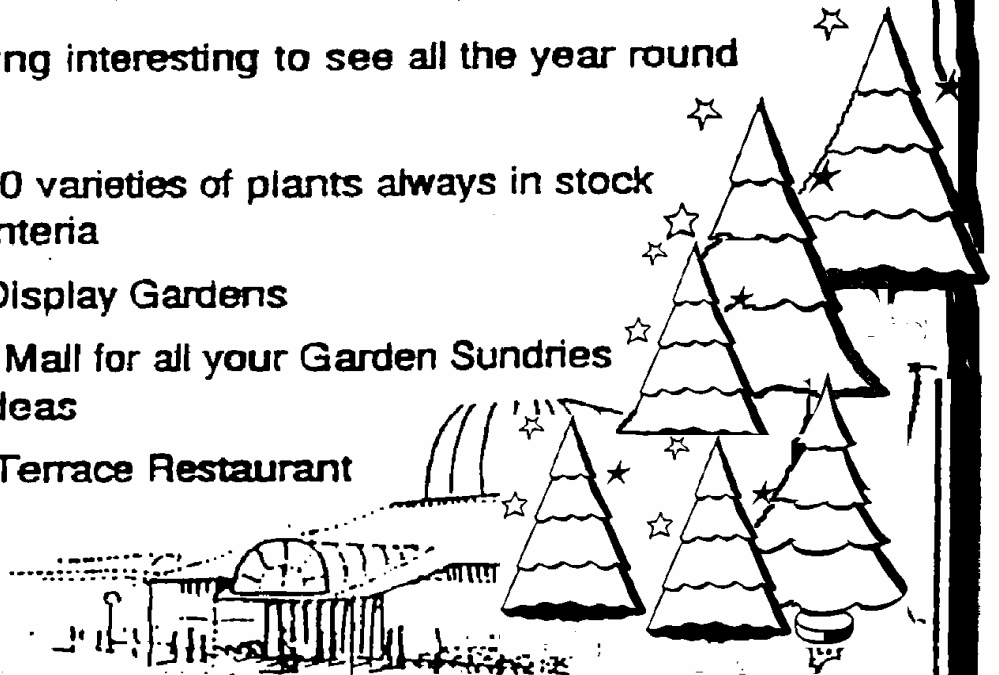
Employed or recent school leaver?
Interested in getting an NVQ 2 or 3 in Business Admin,
Customer Service, Retail or Warehouse?
Aged between 16 to 65?

We can help! For more information please contact the
recruitment department on 0121 333 3001.

Notcutts Garden Centre

for something interesting to see all the year round

- * Over 2,000 varieties of plants always in stock in our Planteria
- * Themed Display Gardens
- * Shopping Mall for all your Garden Sundries and gift ideas
- * Licensed Terrace Restaurant



Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull. Tel: 0121 744 4501

MINISTERS LETTER

Dear Friends

Recently the Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest after nearly 20 years of detention. She was described as “an outstanding example of the power of the powerless” on the day when thousands of supporters gathered at her home to welcome their leader back to public life. With a message of democracy for the military-ruled Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi used her first statement as a free woman to call for her nation to work together for change.

In a biblical passage often read during Advent from Matthew 11:2-11, we read of another leader imprisoned because of his message of liberation. From his place of detention John the Baptist hears whispers of happenings in the outside world, and his curiosity gets the better of him. The question burning inside him is whether his life’s work has been fulfilled, and so his disciples go to Jesus and ask,
“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”

Both John and Jesus drew the crowds, not simply because of their potential and the promises they made for the future, but because of the difference they made in the present. Jesus lists his credentials to John’s disciples not as a boastful CV, but because he knew that for John to hear of people being set free would tell him that his own ministry was complete.



Our work as Christians in the service of God’s Kingdom can seem relentless when our efforts to bring release and change to our communities are thwarted by the force of other values and demands. But the message here for us this Advent is that the waiting has ended, the Kingdom is in our midst because the Messiah has come amongst us.

So as we prepare to celebrate the birth of that same Jesus, let us begin to reflect on how we can live in the Kingdom Come, as we share the Gospel of freedom with the world.

May the peace and joy of Christmas be with you.

Neil
Rev. Neil Johnson

Neil Riches Induction at Trinity URC

You are invited to attend the service at Hall Green URC, Etwall Road, at 3.00pm on Sunday 16 January 2011. Our singing group will be taking part. The church is near Yardley Wood Station, and just off Robin Hood Lane.

Services in December 2010 and January 2011

Sunday 5 December

10.30am A Community of Welcome led by Revd Neil Johnson

Sunday 12 December

10.30am Gift Service led by Revd Chris Dowd

2.45pm Kidz Aloud Childrens Church Topic – 'Getting Ready'.

Sunday 19 December

10.30am Expecting with Mary Led by Revd Neil Johnson

7.00pm God surprises earth with heaven - Service of Readings and Music led by Revd Neil Johnson

Christmas Day

10.30am Be Born in Us Today led by Revds Neil Johnson and Chris Dowd

Sunday 26 December

10.30am Morning Worship led by Ann Parkin

Sunday 2 January

10.30am Communion Service led by Revd Diana Cullum-Hall

Sunday 9 January

10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Neil Riches

2.45pm Kidz Aloud Childrens Church Topic – 'Baptism'

6.00pm Radical Event Epiphany Meal – Food and worship

Sunday 16 January

10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Neil Riches

No afternoon service at Carrs Lane because of Neil's Induction at Hall Green URC at 3.00pm

Sunday 23 January

10.30am Morning Worship led by Emmanuel Ijioma

6.00pm Radical Film Night - 'If' (cert 15) A film about an uprising in an English public school

Sunday 30 January

10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Neil Riches

NOTICES

1 December World Aids Day
www.worldaidscampaign.org

2 December Carrs Lane Discussion Group. Review and Planning Meeting for 2011 at 10.15am.

2 December Warley Male Choir Christmas Celebration Concert in aid of The Leprosy Mission. 7.30pm Wylde Green URC. Cost £5 including refreshments. Contact Allister Du Plessis 0121 384 2402
allisterdup@TLMEW.org.uk

Churches Together in Sutton Coldfield.
4 December from 2.00pm Carol Singing in the Mall. (30 – 40 minutes)
11 December Prayer Breakfast 7.30am Trinity Centre. Speaker Richard Yelder talking about the work of Open Doors, serving persecuted Christians worldwide. Cost £3 prebooking from the King-Smiths 0121 355 5018.

4 December International Carol Service
2.00pm St Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, Bristol St. All welcome.

6 December Sacred Space Meal
7.00pm The Purple Rooms 1076 Stratford Road, Hall Green. Speaker Faiz Choudhury MBE 'Values We Share'. Price £8 Call Kathie 0121 772 4575 or Gill 0121 747 9897.

8 December Music for an Autumn Evening Quinborne Choir – From Handel to Rogers & Hammerstein. 8.00pm at St Edwards Church, Raddlebarn Road, Selly Oak. Tickets £5 Kay Chambers 0121 422 5794, or Pat Davies.

Friday 10 December Christian Aid's 'Birmingham's Big Christmas Sing'
7.00pm at St Lukes, Great Colmore Street. Tickets £7 in advance (£10 on night) from Central Library 0121 303 2323 www.birminghamboxoffice.com

11 December Masters Touch Drama Group 'Behind a Closed Door' 6.30pm at The Library Theatre, Paradise Place, Details 07783622856 www.ifcc.co.uk.

Sunday 12 December Dancing Day
6.00pm at Ladywood ARC St Johns and St Peters Church. Christmas Charity Concert in aid of St Martins Centre for Health and Healing. Mulled wine and mince pies served after the concert. Tickets £7 (£5/3 conc). www.bfcs.org.uk. Contact Phil Brayshaw 0121 414 1978
philbrayshaw@btinternet.com.

11 and 18 December Christmas Festival 11am to 5pm Quinton Methodist Church, Ridgeway Avenue. www.quintonmethodist.co.uk

13 December Birmingham University Carol Service 6.15pm in the Great Hall (Aston Webb) 0121 414 8151. All welcome, no booking or ticket required. Contact Fr Nicholas 0121 414 8151
n.lopolito@bham.ac.uk

14 December Carol Service 1.00pm in the Atrium at the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital, with the Salvation Army Band

15 December Carols for the Business Community 1.05 – 1.55pm at Birmingham Cathedral. Talk given by Revd Kate Coleman. Details from Chris Dinsdale 0121 236 9742
chris.dinsdale@chaplaincyplus.org.uk

16 December Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra: Farewell to George Caird, stepping down from his position as Principal after 17 years. 7.30pm at the Town hall. Tickets £12 (£10) 0121 780 3333. www.thsh.co.uk

17 December United Christmas Celebration 'The Light of Jesus shines in darkness'. 7.30pm New Testament Church of God, Lozells Road. Speaker Bishop Derek Webley Further details 0781 3038756 www.lozells.org.uk

17 December Ex Cathedra 'The Night Before' Rehearsal. 6.30pm St Pauls Church. Advanced booking by 10 December is essential. Call 0121 200 2283 or email birmingham@christian-aid.org.

Saturday 18 December Christmas Concert for Human Rights 11.00am Birmingham Cathedral. Guest speaker Clare Short. Tickets £5 contact Derek Bennett 0121 454 4423 db@hayfinance.co.uk.

Monday 20 December Open Christmas at Barnes Close 7.30 – 9.00pm Please let Ian know if you are going cfrenquiry@aol.com or 01562 710231

22 December Nearly a Goat Christmas Play 2.00pm St Nicolas Church, The Green, Kings Norton. Tickets £6/£3 Enquiries 0121 458 3289 jayne.crooks@blueyonder.co.uk

18-25 January 'All Things in Common'. The 2011 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity comes to us from an ecumenical group in Jerusalem. Resources are available to download or order at www.ctbi.org.uk

18 January JDC AGM 7.00pm at Birmingham Progressive Synagogue, Bishopgate and Rosalind Way, B15. Speaker Rabbi Margaret Jacobi 'Jewish perspectives on Debt and Development'. All welcome.

22 January 2011 A Musical in a Day (Apostle by Roger Jones) St Faith and St Laurence Church, Croftdown Road. Rehearsals from 12.00pm, Performance 6.00pm. Participants £5 (£2.50). Audience tickets £3/ (£2.50), call Andrea Handel 0121 472 0419 for more information.

29 January – 6 February Poverty Homelessness Action Week www.actionweek.org.uk

5 February Two Sisters and a Funeral A brand new musical by Roger Jones. A fantastic retelling of the Gospel story through the eyes of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. CDs and vocal scores available now. Come and learn it at the Birmingham Launch Day at Christ Church, Burney Lane. More details 0845 307 6279 www.cmm.org.uk.

12 February National Justice and Peace Network Open Meeting 10.30 – 4.00pm at the Chinese Methodist Church, Corporation Street.



The Spiritual and Pastoral Care Service (Chaplaincy) at Birmingham Women's Hospital is looking for volunteers (admin, patient-visiting pianist/organist etc) If you have time and can help please call Revd Dr Mojalefa Khechane 0121 472 1377ext 4208, email spcs@bwhct.nhs.uk

ABOUT PEOPLE

Margot Lewis wishes all her friends at Carrs Lane a very happy Christmas. She is going to be in rehabilitation for a while but is in good spirits and is making steady progress. She thanks everyone who has visited her or sent good wishes.

Congratulations to Pat and Michael's daughter Eleanor on being awarded a Ph.D. in Social Work by the University of Warwick, for research on the significance of sibling and peer relationships in child care, fostering, and adoption.

Christmas Greetings

Christmas Greetings to all our readers from the team producing Journey
and

Christmas Greeting to all our friends from

Gill Barfield
Tim Batty
Peggy and John Best
Cicely Coleman
Diana and Phillip Cullum-Hall
Joan Davies
Pat and Mo Davies
Wendy Firmin
Julie and Chris Grove
Sue Hill
Thelma Justham
Andrew Leo
Margot Lewis
Eunice Marston
Julia and Peter Redwood
Fran and David Stackhouse
Priscilla Steele
Martin Stokes
Greg Swadener
Anne and Malcolm Veitch
Kate Waplinton
Amina Whitley



*Donations have been sent to
Save the Children*

Five ways to a Child-friendly Christmas



* Make sure that any presents you buy are helping and not hurting children. See www.fairtrade.org.uk

** Before you tuck into your Christmas dinner, take a moment to pray for those children around the world who have little to eat or drink

*** Think creatively about your presents, and offer children you know gifts of your time -

take them to see your local Christmas lights, go ice skating, or out for a meal; make sure they feel loved and supported

**** When you're baking Christmas cookies make an extra tray and surprise a child or family in your neighbourhood

***** Go through your child's belongings with them and think about giving some things away over Christmas - either to a charity shop or perhaps a local playgroup or children's hospital.

www.viva.org

WHO COUNTS?

There is going to be a census of the population in 2011, as there is every 10 years. The census will try to list all the people who live in the country - but chances are there are many it won't include - such as the 'hidden homeless' and destitute asylum seekers. God's own Son was born in poverty in a stable, in the year of a great census. Will this census recognise the exclusion many experience, or will it reflect just the world's material values - of success, looks and celebrity?

Scripture tells us that in God's Kingdom 'the least shall be first.' Does the way we live bear witness to this truth? Are we living in true solidarity with people who are poor, homeless and excluded?



RAISE YOUR VOICE AND MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE IS COUNTED!

For more information please go to - www.actionweek.org.uk

Carrs Lane Homes Calling

On the 15th November we held our Annual Community Meeting. The meeting was attended by our present trustees and representatives from our future landlords Yardley Great Trust (from April 1st 2011). Also present were Daphne Francis and Gemma Bell from Anthony Collins Solicitors. Daphne especially has been most helpful in advising our residents through the changeover period. Although, as always, the meeting was a very happy occasion it was tinged with a little sadness as we will soon be without our present trustees. As ever our trustees have gone way beyond the call of duty in looking after our interests throughout this long period of uncertainty, and have constantly kept us informed as to what was happening.

Whatever the future holds for us we will always remember with gratitude our links with Carrs Lane Church and, of course, our wonderful trustees. Long may our friendship continue.

John and Pat Mudway



We hope our friends at Carrs Lane Homes will keep us posted in the future about events, comings and goings etc. in Acocks Green. Ed

Tons of Money

With an impeccable sense of timing, given the tough economic climate, Carrs Lane Players have chosen to perform a play entitled 'Tons of Money'. This was one of the early Aldwych farces and was written by Will Evans and Valentine, adapted by Alan Ayckbourn.

The plot is about trying to protect an unexpected inheritance from a long list of creditors. You will gain a greater understanding of the word 'devious' by watching this funny play.

The performances will be on Thursday and Friday 24 & 25 February at 7.30pm, and Saturday 26 February at 4.30pm. Tickets are priced at £7. We are also repeating last year's highly successful format of pre-play suppers on Thursday & Friday at 6.15pm priced at £5, and afternoon tea on Saturday at 3.15pm will cost £3.



All tickets can be purchased from members of Carrs Lane Players or by reserving them at the Church Centre office. We intend to support, by way of a donation from the net proceeds, the Birmingham based charity 'Home From Hospital Care'. This charity is known to a number of people at Carrs Lane.

The cast are working hard at rehearsals, and hope to receive your support in February.

Alan Emson

Amnesty International Greetings Card Campaign 2010 Send a Message of Hope

Last month in Journey, I wrote an article about this campaign, inviting people to take part and to send greetings cards to Prisoners of Conscience or their families and supporters, throughout the world, on the first two Sundays in December (5th and 12th) after the morning service.

Suitable cards (hand made by a member of the congregation), envelopes and names and addresses will all be provided. All you have to do is read about the Prisoner of Conscience, on the information sheet provided, write a suitable message (guidance given), sign the card and give a donation towards postage. Occasionally one is asked just to sign with a first name but that information is on the sheet provided. I buy the stamps and arrange posting.

The people to whom one is asked to send cards have been detained for their political or religious beliefs and have not advocated or been involved in any kind of violence. Some of the cards are sent to families of people who have been murdered or disappeared

When writing cards it is important that one does not express any political or religious views but simply remind people that they are not forgotten. If you can write the message in the recipient's own language so much the better but English is fine. Just ask me if you are unsure of anything.

I have full details about the people to whom we sent cards last year. Just ask me for the information

I do hope that people will feel able to take part and 'Send a Message of Hope' and don't forget to let me know if you receive a reply!

Following last year's campaign Mayra Sirias, one of nine Nicaraguan Human Rights defenders wrote:-

Dear Colleagues, friends, sisters – I do not have the words to thank you for your solidarity...when I feel such tenderness. understanding, solidarity and dedication from people from different parts of the world... my spirit is strengthened and our struggle is shared.

In April 2010 the group received formal notification that the investigation against them was closed.

Thank you to all who took part last year and I hope that you will participate again this year.

Christine Rowntree



New Birmingham Circuit Implementation Group

On the evening of Monday, 1st November at Maypole Methodist Church, the newly appointed Implementation Group met for the first time. The group is made up of those people who will serve in the Superintendents Team (Peter Bates, Helen Jobling and Neil Johnson) and people from across the uniting circuits (Sefena Olatunbosun, Sandra Jenkinson, Ian Hancock and Peter Benson). The secretary of the meeting was Mal Glenn, and Neil Johnson was the chairperson.

The brief of the Implementation Group is to review the paperwork produced by the two previous groups that have considered the vision and development of the new circuit, to assess whether there are any gaps in their proposals, and to think about the creation of the processes and structures for the new circuit. The group had before them the two important statements about the new Birmingham circuit.

Vision Statement – *To be a Methodist presence, centred in Birmingham, transformed by Jesus Christ, embodying God's love, justice and peace, for all.*

Mission Statement – *The resourcing of Methodist people centred in and around Birmingham for effective evangelism, faithful discipleship, compassionate service and transforming worship within the wider community.*

Reports were given at the meeting of gatherings of preachers and administrators that had taken place during the preceding weeks, along with an update on the stationing of presbyters for 2011, a Circuit Treasurers' meeting and matters relating to the future developments for the Methodist Central Mission. Conversations are taking place with representatives of a prestigious city centre venue about hosting our Launch event on 1st September. Then tasks were identified and prioritised. A number of short-term sub-groups were formed to look at finance, clusters, communication and lay staff issues. Work towards the establishment of the various themed circuit forums which focus on 'Worship, Learning and Caring', 'Service and Evangelism', and 'Resources' will begin with the coming together of small groups, these will think about strategy and practice for each of the forum areas.



It was agreed by all who were part of the meeting that good progress was being made, which was both encouraging and invigorating for the months ahead of us. We acknowledge that there is much to be done before the new uniting circuit for Birmingham takes its first breath on 1st September 2011, but we are confident that with the assistance and support of the Methodist family across our circuits our goals will be met and we will be ready for a new beginning.

The peace of God be with you,
Neil Johnson, Helen Jobling & Peter Bates.

A Region in Despair

Two successive years of crippling drought and failed harvests combined with late, infrequent rains this year have left the arid Sahel region of West Africa teetering on the brink of a food crisis even more severe than the 2005 famine. On the desolate outskirts of Niger's low-rise capital Niamey, families from the north of the country are living in makeshift tents, desperately looking for food and water. Just 150 miles northeast, in the sun-baked town of Abala, camel, cow and goat carcasses litter the roadsides in ever-increasing numbers. Despite basic foodstuffs being available in local markets, spiralling global and local food prices combined with long-term endemic poverty mean they are unaffordable for many of the most vulnerable groups. A staggering 10 million people are now facing extreme hunger across Niger, Mauritania, Chad, Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso.

Ironically, instead of relieving the situation, recent heavy rains in the Sahel have caused severe flooding across west and central Africa and threaten to worsen the food crisis. Up to 200,000 have been left homeless in Niger, where more than 30,000 animals have died. Carcasses have been seen floating near water points, spreading further fears of outbreaks of waterborne diseases. About 105,000 people are affected in Burkina Faso and thousands more in Mali. Northern Chad has recorded its heaviest rainfall in 50 years. The torrential rains have aggravated the lack of food for communities,' says Cristina Ruiz, Christian Aid's regional emergency manager.

Tribal Chief Bubacar Maman is in despair after his entire animal stock has been wiped out by the current drought in Niger. His people have been reduced to picking weeds and tree leaves for themselves and their animals to eat. 'We are starving,' he says. 'We have been going this way for two years. Many villages have been abandoned and the grain stores are completely empty, nothing but dust.' Two of Bubacar's oldest friends committed suicide after all of their animals died. 'They were no longer able to feed their families and they just could not see any kind of future,' he says quietly.

Young mother Basira Gada, 17, stares blankly into the shimmering heat as she cradles her tiny three-month-old daughter, Bourja, who weighs just 2.5 kg. Basira has not been able to breastfeed baby Bourja since birth because she simply wasn't able to find enough food to nourish herself during most of the pregnancy. Today neither Basira nor Bourja have eaten for more than 24 hours, but Basira says that the gruelling 5km walk from her remote home to the open-air feeding centre and clinic at Guidan Ider village is the only chance she has to save her child. 'My husband has left for Mauritania to try to find work as a casual labourer and earn money to support us,' she whispers, her eyes fixed on the hard, dry ground beneath her feet. 'I miss him a lot. I would like him with me now because I am frightened for our baby.'

Christian Aid News Issue 49 Autumn 2010

Here in Britain much of our day-time TV is filled with programmes about food and drink, featuring high profile celebrities. What happened to the stars of the 80's and 90's who promoted Band Aid, Comic Relief, etc during the famine which devastated the same area then? Are the current celebs too embroiled in their own success? Ed

God of Many Names

God of many names, you are the universal, creative presence within all that is. In the tiniest particle we have found, right up to the limits of space we have yet to discover, we can glimpse your essence – the same creative power that lies within every cell of our bodies. You have set us in an awesome world as creatures who can worship beauty, benefit from science, medicine and mathematics, work wonders with words and ideas. Yet we have minds that are aware of our own mortality and our capacity for self destruction. We are often frightened.

Help us to know that we are creations of love: tiny specks of stardust in the scheme of things, but dear to the heart of creation which beats in time with all its children and longs to be lived out in the fullness of each life. Strengthen the realisation that in our primitive religious fervour we have visualised and captured you in our own image because that is all we know, not because that is your ultimate reality.

When we despair of our ineffectiveness and failures, help us to see they are not apart from your desire for wholeness, but a part of living fully. When we become complacent with self satisfaction, nudge us back into new journeys of self discovery.

Remind us that we do not need to call for divine assistance, but to be ever aware of spiritual presence. Help us to live and work for the Earthly Kingdom of Justice proclaimed by Jesus, 'here in the dust and joy of human life!'

Chris Avis, Free to Believe Briefing Autumn 2010
Used with permission – contributed by Julie Grove

Praying with the seasons – Winter

You can see more on winter days. Bare tree branches etch their lacework against bright skies; ground once covered with vegetation becomes stark and hard; streets empty as people scurry indoors out of the cold and impending darkness. Winter brings us back to basics.

Though we often shun darkness, 'even the darkness is as light' to God. In him, it can become a place of rest, silent growth, a safe place to go deeper. Pray into winter's dark hours rather than being too quick to turn on the light. Let the Lord who never leaves you cloak you in his constant presence; whisper to him the secret thoughts, feeling, fears or uncertainties that surface. Afterwards light a candle and reflect on your experience of praying in the dark.

Julia McGuinness (from Sunday Link leaflet)



Lift the Blockade of Gaza

Gaza's borders have been almost completely closed to the free movement of goods and people since 2007. The blockade was partially lifted in 2010, but in recent months many items were still being banned.

During the 2009 conflict in Gaza, 1,385 Palestinians were killed including 318 children. 13 Israelis were also killed. CAFOD partners provided food, water and blankets to people who had lost their homes.

Since 2007, the people of Gaza have lived under siege. A blockade of goods led to the collapse of the economy and today, 40% of people are out of work and eight out of ten rely on aid. Living isolated from the rest of the world, with the constant threat of further violence has put families under unbearable strain.

We know that international pressure works. The blockade was partially lifted in June, thanks to a global outcry. As a result many vital materials are trickling through to Gaza again. Gazans have described this as the opening of a small window of hope. But that's simply not enough. It's time to fling open the doors to freedom.

Please join us in calling for a full lifting of the blockade to bring hope to Gaza's children and help their parents rebuild their lives and regain their dignity. Please send the letter calling for a full lifting of the blockade to the Foreign Secretary.

*Rt Hon William Hague MP
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH*

Dear Foreign Secretary,



I welcome the UK government's expressions of deep concern over the blockade of Gaza, now in its fourth year, and the progress made in partially lifting the blockade in June 2010.

The people of Gaza are still being denied the materials they need to reconstruct and rebuild their homes and their economy. Children are growing up in an atmosphere of poverty and violence, excluded from the rest of the world. This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

The UK government can show international leadership in calling for a full lifting of the blockade, allowing the free movement of people, humanitarian aid and commercial goods. As a CAFOD supporter, I urge you now to make this happen.

Yours sincerely

CAFOD Mailing (www.cafod.org.uk)

Producer Stories from Traidcraft



Malita Makima is a tea grower and member of Sukambizi Association in Malawi – one of Traidcraft's newest tea suppliers. She lives in Kalozwa village and her 3,000 tea plants grow on the lower slopes of Mount Mulanje, an hour's walk from her home. As well as looking after her own tea, she encourages other farmers by training them in good agricultural practices. Malita hopes Traidcraft will sell more of its teas because the Fairtrade premium helps provide community benefits for villages like Kalozwa. "We would like to see the money spent on a school block, electricity and water for drinking," she said.

"Church is very important for me. I believe that the life that I have comes from God which is why I find it necessary to worship him."

www.traidcraft.co.uk





Recently the Financial Times carried an article on tax with a strong focus on our Trace the Tax campaign, a sure sign the campaign is gaining real momentum. The piece also covered protests from other groups targeting Vodafone stores across the country. These protesters have blocked stores and accused Vodafone of dodging taxes in the UK.

Although Christian Aid is not accusing Vodafone of tax dodging in developing countries (or anywhere), we are including them in our Trace the Tax campaign because we believe that they can play a role in helping to end tax dodging, which we estimate costs developing countries \$160 billion every year – more than the entire global aid budget.

The pressure is building on Vodafone and the other FTSE Four companies to support transparency in tax – and it's all down to the efforts of Christian Aid supporters like you. Call on the FTSE Four to support our campaign. Please help spread the word and tell your friends.

Alasdair Roxburgh, Trace the Tax Campaigns Officer, Christian Aid

News from Barnes Close - Silver Anniversary 2011.

Next year is the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Community for Reconciliation. The network community was begun in 1984 and took over Barnes Close in 1988, but 1986 was the key year as it was the formal beginning of the community and the year when the CfR Affirmation and Pledge to Action was launched.

More details about the Silver Anniversary celebrations will be available early 2011, including the special appeal, but we ask you to make note of two key dates now –
Saturday 2 April Silver Anniversary Celebration Service at Carrs Lane
Saturday 25 June Silver Anniversary Garden Party at Barnes Close



We look forward to welcoming you to our celebrations.

Winter Reflection days at Barnes Close – An opportunity to open the Bible, to be still and let God speak to you. January 20, February 24 and March 31, Thursdays 10.00am to 4.00pm Cost £13 per person per day.

Commitment for Life

Report by Lizzie King, past secretary of FURY (Fellowship of United Reformed Youth) [from *Moving Stories 131*]

In the summer of 2008 I was privileged to be asked to be part of a team travelling to the Holy Land to take part in and lead two youth and children's work programs; Kids for Hope and Youth for Hope. We were based in Jerusalem with Kids for Hope and had the opportunity to take them to some of the most important sites in the Holy Land whilst teaching them about the Bible and living life as Christians. Youth for Hope was based in Bethlehem, and it was fascinating working with young people of a similar age to myself teaching them about leadership skills as well as finding out what life was like as a young Christian living in such an unpredictable environment.

These experiences had a huge impact on my life and I learnt so much in such a short space of time. I didn't want to leave and was definitely dragging my feet at Tel Aviv airport on the way home. So in January 2010 when the FURY trip to the Holy Land was announced I knew I had to go back. There were 10 of us in the group that met excitably at Manchester Airport on 2nd September. For some this was a brand new experience and others, like myself, had visited Israel/Palestine once before and Leo Roberts, our well seasoned guide, has been out there more times than I have fingers to count on!

Our first few days were spent in Jerusalem, visiting the Mount of Olives and with it the Church of the Pater Noster, Dominus Flevit, the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations. The Garden has within it one of the oldest trees imaginable, dating back over 2000 years. It sent shivers down my spine to think that Jesus could have stood in exactly the same spot as me looking at the very same tree. In the garden you can also see the rock on which Jesus wept. This site, like many across Jerusalem and the Holy Land, has to be described with the word allegedly, but despite this it suddenly makes reading the Gospels a whole lot more real to see where these events took place.

We were also able to visit the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, and witness the crowds of worshippers at the Western Wall. Perhaps one of my favourite places in Jerusalem is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (I say perhaps because I think at one time or another I've called every place in Jerusalem my favourite!). You enter the Church through a tall doorway in a deceptively small courtyard in comparison to the size of the Church. Inside you can explore annexes and chapels, climb up to see Golgotha and queue to visit the tomb of Jesus. We were privileged to visit at dawn when the Church is quiet, and you are able to walk around peacefully without the bustling tour groups.

From here we travelled north to Haifa, Nazareth and our hotel in Tiberius on Lake Galilee. The Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth had me in awe, even though I was seeing it for the second time. The building itself is an incredible blend of ancient stone and modern architecture, with phenomenal stained glass windows. This marks the place where Mary was told she would carry God's son and that moment is

replicated all around the inside of the Church and on the external walls with murals donated from countries around the world.

Lake Galilee and the surrounding areas are where the Gospel stories really came alive for me. Here you can visit the place where Jesus fed the 5000, and the small but very significant church on the hillside celebrating the beatitudes, you can paddle in Lake Galilee by Peter's Primacy and eat fresh fish in restaurants on the shoreline.

You can stand looking out over the lake and imagine that the landscape is completely unchanged since Jesus walked those shores. Fishermen can still be seen working in traditional boats and it was pointed out to us the cove where Jesus may have stood and talked to the crowds – a natural auditorium.

Travelling south again from here, towards the border with Jordan the temperature rapidly increases. Our destination was Jericho, which appears like an oasis after hours of driving through barren desert. The description oasis summed up our hotel pretty well too and I think everyone mourned the fact that we were only stopping there for one night. It was our first chance for a swim in the sweltering heat and we spent most of the afternoon in the pool. The terrace at the back of the hotel looks out across land that stretches away towards Jordan, and in huge contrast, the front of the hotel looks directly onto a huge mountain range. The tallest of these mountains is the Mount of Temptation, and in the heat of the day it's difficult to imagine how Jesus resisted temptation for 40 days and 40 nights. Spending 40 minutes in that temperature is difficult enough without water.

Masada, our next stop, took us away from the Jesus path, and back to the history of the Jewish people living c. 30BCE. Herod the Great fortified Masada, 400m up on a huge plateau in the mountains and here the Roman Army laid siege upon Jewish extremists who eventually committed suicide rather than surrendering to slavery. It was a fascinating piece of history to learn about, and despite the scorching temperatures the views from the mountain top were phenomenal.

That afternoon we ventured into the Dead Sea and tried out our very first mud baths. Definitely an experience worth having, but quite possibly the weirdest sensation ever – floating on top of a very warm sea! From the Dead Sea Spa at Ein Gedi we travelled on to Bethlehem. Jerusalem may have some incredible architecture and fascinating history regarding Jesus' later ministry, but every time I enter Bethlehem I feel an incredible sense of being at home. It's a mixture of the biblical importance of the place, the people we know there, and the atmosphere. There is no Jewish presence in Bethlehem, the population is predominantly Christian and Muslim and right at the heart of the town is Manger Square, and this was where our hotel was. We were a stone's throw from the Church of the Nativity, which marks the spot where Jesus was born. This is one of the most historically accurate places in the Holy Land and people flock through its tiny entranceway to see the beautiful stained glass windows and to queue to touch the stone which marks the spot of Jesus' birth. Despite its barren interior it's a very moving place to be. Jesus' birth changed the course of the history of the world, and to be standing in the spot where it all happened is almost unreal.

As I mentioned before it is also the people we know in Bethlehem that make it a special place for me. Jack Giaciaman owns a shop and factory which produces beautiful olive wood products. We've visited him on a number of occasions and his hospitality is unmatched. He's always willing to talk to us about his work and the impact of 'The Wall' – his own olive trees have been cut off from him so he now has to buy in his olive wood from other farmers. His is a family run business and so we are introduced to everybody and given tours of the factory. We always thank him by spending a fortune in his shop!

Jack is not the only friend we have out in the Holy Land, and whilst in Jerusalem and Bethlehem we were visited by some of the young people that we worked with on the Youth for Hope projects. Their English is fantastic and that means that we can learn so much about each other, and become really good friends in the process. Our last evening in Bethlehem we all spent together and no one really wanted to go home at the end of the night. The young people living in all areas of Israel/Palestine have an incredible zest for life and for their faith. They experience problems on a daily basis with things as simple as getting to college on time, but to them this is just a part of their normal life.

Once again I was dragging my feet at Tel Aviv airport on the way home, and this time with even more memories and an even bigger passion for this country and the people we met. This account is a much paraphrased version of my week. There are so many more stories to tell, but even so, there are also so many more things left to discover and I will, without a doubt, be back there again sometime soon.

This heart warming account of a visit to the Holy Land reminds us of the positive aspects of this season of looking forward in hope and celebrating the One who came to bring new possibilities for peace, friendship and understanding to all people. The significance of the gift of myrrh and of the warning message of Simeon are not forgotten in the events linked with some of the historic sites visited, but we can rejoice in this positive and enthusiastic vision of some of the places associated with the Christmas, and Christian, story.

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

A Moment of Truth: Kairos Palestine

It is almost a year since a document was launched in Bethlehem which has now reached thousands of people worldwide and has been translated into a number of languages. It has become known as "The Kairos Palestine" document, the Greek word "kairos" signifying a moment of urgent opportunity. Fifteen months in the making, its original title is "A Moment of Truth: a cry of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering". Its authors are a small group of Christian leaders and it has the support of leaders of all the major churches in Jerusalem.

Arguably the most important word to emerge from the oldest Christian community in the world for many years - it is a Macedonian cry for help, and is addressed to US. It calls for a response.

www.kairospalestine.ps

On this day ...

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle

These passages from the Editorial Section of the Journal set out in the language of their time very positive views of the then equivalents of "Journey" and "Reform", and of worship and preaching at Carrs Lane.

December 1910: *Volume IX*

With the issue of this number we complete our eighth annual volume. For some time past we have been making preparations for the contents of Volume IX, and we are hoping to make it worthy of the best traditions of this Journal, and of the Church to which it belongs. A special series of articles, dealing in turn with each separate branch of the work of the Church will begin in our January number. Dr. Brownsdon has kindly promised a continuation of his contributions, "Church Music Composers"; The interests of our Sunday School teachers will find a prominent place; and when space permits, topical articles on Church matters, together with the usual Church news, will be included.

May we take this opportunity of making an earnest appeal to all our subscribers of last year to renew their annual subscriptions, and in addition to do all they can to help to increase the circulation of the Journal by obtaining further new subscribers. It is with an entire absence of pride that we confess to a circulation of five hundred only. Surely in a Church like ours we ought to reach a circulation of a thousand copies a month with ease. Will all our readers please do their best to help us to attain this figure at the beginning of the New Year?

Without presuming to give advice in private affairs, may we express the hope that every member of the Church will signalise 1911 by buying every Thursday "The British Congregationalist." The admirable efforts this periodical is making, and making successfully, in the best interests of every department of the work of our Churches, would surely justify a claim for recognition by it to be regarded as the authorised organ of International Congregationalism. The paper now offers better fare than ever to its readers, and is at the present time, more than ever in its career, representative of all that is most worthy and vital in the life of the Churches of our order. The Editor has laboriously journeyed a stiff uphill road, and has accomplished great things. The rank and file of Congregationalism ought to support him, for we now have in our interest, thanks to his work, a strong and virile weekly.

January 1911: *"The British Weekly"*

In a recent issue of *The British Weekly*, under the heading "A Sunday in Birmingham," Sir W. Robertson Nicol writes very appreciatively of the Morning Service at Carrs Lane, which he attended on the occasion of his visit to Birmingham to address Soho Hill Brotherhood. The following quotation from his article will be read with interest:

"I spent last Sunday in Birmingham. In the morning I went to Carrs Lane Chapel and heard Dr. Jowett preach. It is a good many years since I last worshipped there. Dr. Dale was present, and took part in the communion service, but he was not able to

preach, and his place was taken by the Rev. W. Cuthbertson, who died the other day in Dawlish. I distinctly remember how ill Dr. Dale looked, and with what masterful simplicity and unction he discoursed on the Lord's Supper as containing in itself, when rightly interpreted, the whole Christian faith.

"There have been many changes since then, and the Carrs Lane Chapel has been much beautified and brightened. It was always a Chapel much to my mind, eminently suited to Nonconformist worship, and now it is hard to see what could be done to improve it. I sat on Sunday where I sat that other Sunday of the long ago, in a seat as near the front of the gallery as I could find. I wanted to be in the place over the clock, where W. F. Callaway said he learned his theology, and I very nearly managed it.

"There was a little rain as we assembled, but the morning was on the whole agreeable, and a noble congregation gathered. It is impossible for me to do anything like justice to the service that followed. This was the first time I had heard Dr. Jowett preach from his own pulpit, and I shall never forget the occasion. Everything led up to the sermon. A more reverent and careful order of worship could not be devised, and I observed with great interest that Dr. Jowett followed Dr Dale in beginning with an Easter hymn."

From the Carrs Lane Journal – December 1960

Extract from the Vestry Letter

The other day my wife and I began to do our Christmas shopping and the first thing we bought was a space suit for our son. I am not sure if the suit is for someone going out into space or for a man coming here from Mars, but it has caused me to reflect on the way in which in legend and fairy story and science fiction we are haunted by the idea that we may be visited from another world. One of the most powerful plays of recent years, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, hinges on the hope of two tramps that someone will be coming from somewhere who will take hold of their lives and give meaning to them. The same kind of deep longing for something to happen that will transform human life and destroy men's fears and frustrations drove on the Jews, in the Old Testament, to expect a new intervention of God in power and glory, and to-day it drives others, many communists for instance, to expect a revolution that will renew the world.

Advent, the first season in the Christian calendar, means "the coming." For four weeks before Christmas it reminds us that the deep longing which men feel has been answered already: that God's intervention in power and glory has taken place, although it was a power and glory of so strange a kind as to shine in a manger and a cross: and that if we want a visitor who will transform our lives he waits to be invited in.

*I was intrigued by the linking of the three examples of longing for positive change cited here, and appreciated the summary of the significance of Advent. I was left with thoughts of a discussion on Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World*, and of the prayer from the anthology *Cloth for the Cradle* which invites Jesus to come into the forgotten places of our world, bringing hope and caution, rest and restlessness.*

From the Carrs Lane Journal – January 1961

That they all may be one (from an article by J. Wright)

On the fourteenth day of November 1945, on the occasion of Hallowing of the West Crypt of the Cathedral as a Chapel of Unity, the members of the Joint Council of the Coventry Cathedral Chapel of Unity and Christian Service Centre made and signed the following Declaration:

“We who, belonging to different Christian communions, now set apart this place as a Chapel of Unity for the worship of God ... We are true, each of us, to the traditions we have inherited, but we have learned to see more clearly the fullness of the one Christ as we have seen him mirrored in others...”

Nearly fifteen years later, members of many churches in Coventry gathered to take part in a Service of Worship on the occasion of the setting of the Stone of Witness on the steps of the Chapel of Unity.

For those who were present, this was a memorable occasion for they were full of hope and joy and yet deeply conscious of the division in the Church. Members of the Roman Catholic Church were not present.

As we approach the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, let us think on and pray about thoughts expressed in the sermon on this great day:

“Make the purposes of this day your urgent prayer: and be obedient to your praying. We have spent too long asking God for Unity while doing little or nothing ourselves about the frontiers of our division.”



The recent seventieth anniversary of the Coventry blitz occasioned media coverage of the spirit of hope and reconciliation literally built into the new cathedral. This account links that spirit with a timely reminder of the value of being willing actually to do something about the divisions between Christians, timely for us because of the special links we are currently developing with our Methodist friends.

Contributed by Wendy Firrnin

The Lozells Bookshop



The Lozells Bookshop was due to open its doors to the public on the day after the Lozells riots of 1985. On that sunny September morning it stood amongst the burning rubble of nearby buildings, a Christian presence in the midst of high tension, fear and destruction. From that day on the bookshop has maintained its position on the Lozells Road, seeking to serve the multi-cultural community and provide a place of friendship and acceptance to all comers.

In 2003 the bookshop ministry was extended with the launch of the Lozells Project,

an ecumenical community-based charity run by representatives from local Christian churches of various denominations acting as Trustees. Together with local churches and other partners, the project seeks to share the love of Christ in this multi-faith neighbourhood.

As with all charitable organisations operating in a very difficult economic climate, it is necessary for the bookshop to be self-supporting and it is therefore essential to increase the customer base and find new sales outlets.

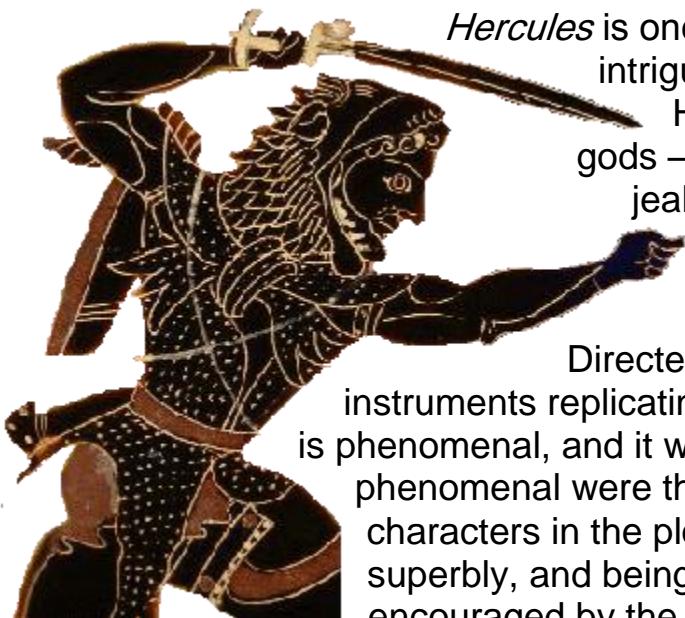
To this end it has joined forces with Internet giants Amazon and Eden, thereby offering customers the opportunity to purchase items via the Lozells website while at the same time earning commission for the bookshop.

By simply logging onto www.lozells.org.uk, clicking onto the appropriate icon and placing an order direct with the chosen supplier, web users can now provide the bookshop with much needed financial support without it costing a penny more. Why not log on now and get started on the Christmas shopping!

For all your Christian books, Bibles, children's books, cards and gifts- 92 Lozells Rd, Birmingham B19 2TB Tel. 0121 554 6471 Email: lozellsproject@tiscali.co.uk

Hercules - Friday 26th November 2010

It was a great pity that a relatively small audience of only 50-something braved the cold to watch an exquisite performance of Handel's *Hercules* by ensemble 1685 here at Carrs Lane URC.



Hercules is one of Handel's lesser-known works, with an intriguing plot set in classical mythology – Hercules is the son of Jupiter, the king of the gods – and exploring the themes of love, rejection, jealousy, ageing and a few others. Handel's music is incredibly sensitive to the plot, with two of his best slow arias featured in Act I.

Directed by Richard Jeffcoat, ensemble 1685 used instruments replicating those available to Handel. Their expertise is phenomenal, and it was a joy to hear them play. Equally phenomenal were the chorus and the soloists playing the main characters in the plot. The singers and instrumentalists blended superbly, and being new here, I was pleasantly surprised and encouraged by the warmth of the acoustics of the church room.

After the concert, I complimented Mr Jeffcoat on the performance, and we are both keen to work together on organising something for the future here at Carrs Lane – an exciting prospect! I, for one, would be delighted to host ensemble 1685 here again. I'll bring any developments to your attention.

Tim Batty

Retirement? a week in the life of a volunteer – ten years on

Remembrance Sunday – final morning service at the old Queen Elizabeth Hospital. As Chaplaincy Volunteer, helped to return patients to their wards afterwards.

Monday – delivered food parcel from Home from Hospital Care to old Q E building, took husband to annual GP check up, and provided another Food Parcel for patient going home from Moseley Hall Hospital early the next morning.



Tuesday – visiting at elderly person's ward in new Q E Hospital, led prayers in Quiet Room at end of morning. Shopping for 90 year old lady unable to get out (HFHC)

Wednesday – selling Traidcraft at Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop. After tea popped in to see son and grandchildren in Harborne, on way to Quinborne Centre - Choir Rehearsal for concerts in November and December.

Thursday – attended Birmingham Advisory Council of People's annual conference, theme 'Dignity in Later Life' – very beneficial for my voluntary work, and myself as a carer – and older person!

Friday – feet up for a bit while I was at the hairdresser, then went to meeting in Carers Centre – quarterly forum for Carers Agencies in Birmingham. Worked in HFHC office in the afternoon paying our volunteers their travel costs. Wrote a piece for the Journey after supper.



Saturday – phoned my daughter, discovered she was unwell and rushing to prepare for her next trip abroad for her job, whilst still trying to get the house sorted after they had moved two weeks previously, and her husband needed to go and see his father who is very ill. Dashed over to help with the grandchildren. On the way home I

hit the Birmingham and Chelsea fans' traffic leaving the Blues match – queued for over an hour because of the switching on of the Christmas lights in the city centre too that evening! When I got home I was content to sit and watch TV – and put my feet up at last. Early start next morning for Singing Group.



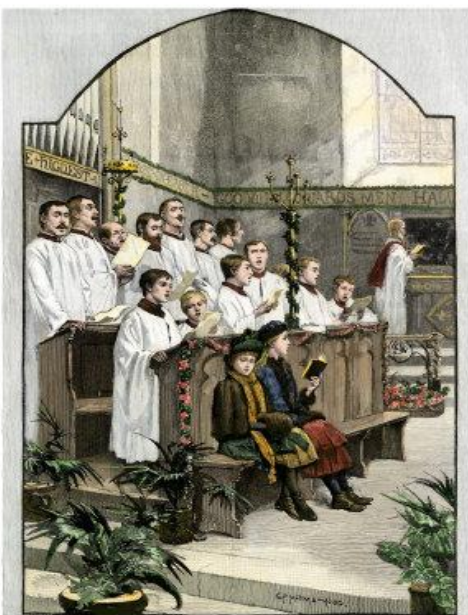
Pat Davies - Busy but Happy Volunteer

Find the Christmas Hymn

Solve the clues below, and the initial letters spell out the first line of a well-known carol (5 words)



- ___ Just add a prefix and you can get down to the burning question (5)
- ___ This is no Occident! (6)
- ___ Was Matthew part of this media empire? (6)
- ___ What name combines English humanity and Hebrew divinity? (8)
- ___ We think in terms of verse and music, but Dickens' was in prose (6)
- ___ The coming season, thanks to the Roman legacy! (6)
- ___ The bitter aroma of gathering gloom? (5)
- ___ Probably not the direction from which we would approach Jerusalem (4)
- ___ In the Bible he features in the Easter not the Christmas story (6)
- ___ Traditional in the Christmas stable, but could end up in cubes! (4)
- ___ They never try to explain what happens in an evening of enchantment (4,3)
- ___ No good can come from it! (8)
- ___ They appear in a dream or in fields, or even in the first verse of the carol (6)
- ___ Re-arrange the glitter for a quiet night (6)
- ___ Would the prophet have expected to find one in this building? (10)
- ___ A killer adds nothing to this watcher in the night (4)
- ___ Malachi and the herald angels told of this star rising and bringing healing (13)
- ___ The process of making flesh in the flower? (11)
- ___ Was it really a secure place in Bethlehem? (6)
- ___ What setting links Jesus' babyhood and boyhood? (6)
- ___ What gave rise to the whole story of the Christmas stable? (6)
- ___ To whom did Luke specifically refer as "the son of God"? (4)
- ___ Cursed and brought low, but also raised up? (7)



Scripture references (in the order of the clues, but there is not a verse in every case!)

Matthew 1. 23; Matthew 2.11; Matthew 2.1;
John 1.46; Isaiah 9.6; Matthew 2.16; Luke 2.8;
Malachi 4.2; Luke 2. 27; Luke 2.46; Luke 2.7;
Luke 3.38; Genesis 3.14; John 3.14

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

A Journey Through Christmas

It's Christmas, Hooray!
We always know,
Even if no snow.
How? Because you
Can't see your feet.

You decide to wrap up,
Then pick up the bags,
Or even your kids,
Alternatively catch a bus -
Save all the mad rush.

My favourite place
Seems to vanish
In an endless stream
Of humans moving,
All in neat rows.

You sit in a cafe
After plunging in,
Ask for a cafe latte.
Different creeds, races
Pass the window.
They look in and stare -
As if we are there for show!!

Elaine Oakley

(Elaine joined us for the Advent discussions in November. Ed)

Thought for the month and New Year

Mother Teresa's Philosophy of Life

Life is an opportunity -	benefit from it
Life is a beauty -	admire it
Life is a dream -	realise it
Life is a challenge -	meet it
Life is a duty -	complete it
Life is a game -	play it
Life is a promise -	fulfil it
Life is a sorrow -	overcome it
Life is a song -	sing it
Life is a struggle -	accept it
Life is a tragedy -	confront it
Life is an adventure -	dare it
Life is luck -	make it
Life is life -	fight for it!



Please send your contribution for next month's Journey to the Editor,
Mrs. Pat Davies, Carrs Lane URC, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX
or email office@carrslane.co.uk by 19 January 2011.

It may not be possible to include articles received after this date.

Wesley Owen

BOOKS MUSIC

7 Carrs Lane Birmingham B4 7TG
Tel: 0121 643 9235 Fax: 0121 633 4311
email: birmingham@wesley-owen.com

- 📖 **New Bargain Department** 100s of titles at fantastic prices!
- 📖 **Monthly Bookshop Promotions** within our large showroom
- 📖 **Regular Music attractions** within our fantastic Multimedia Department
- 📖 **Gift and Cards** and a wide range of Resources for the Church

Ask for a copy of our *Wesley Owen Guide* for what's new, and on Special Offer this month!

Other local branches at Coventry, Derby, Nottingham and Walsall.
www.wesleyowen.com

Advancing the Christian Faith through Retailing



Carrs Lane
FAIR TRADE SHOP

Open here in the city at
Carrs Lane Church Centre
Tuesday to Friday 10.30am - 2.30pm
and after morning worship on first and third Sundays
Visit us for your Fair Trade needs
- *Traidcraft foods, gifts and much else* -
0121 643 6151 fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk
www.carrslane.co.uk



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade



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

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

Contact details for Carrs Lane Church

Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX

Telephone 0121 643 6151

Fax 0121 631 2118

www.carrslane.co.uk