

Journey



11 November 2011

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Friday

**The continuing story of Carrs Lane Church
November 2011**

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Ministers Letter

Dear friends,

I am writing this on a sunny Saturday afternoon in the middle of October, having cut the grass at the manse about two hours ago. I ought to add the words, 'for the last time in 2011' to the end of the last sentence, but I am not sure that I am able to do so. In theory, I have already cut the grass 'for the last time' on at least two previous occasions during the last three weeks, and on each occasion I have been proved wrong. I am not a great gardener, but I do carry a few bits of 'advice' with me when I venture into the garden. One of these runs along the lines that the last time you cut the grass is in October, and then you can enjoy a well-earned 5 month break from such activity. There are some areas of life where I welcome ready wisdom, a sense of boundaries, a tally of 'do's and don'ts', and gardening is one of them: I don't particularly enjoy it, and 'ready wisdom' should enable me to know when I can enjoy some free time. Hm. This afternoon's sunshine suggests that there may yet be another cutting in the pipeline.

There are parallels with our individual – and shared – life of Christian faith. Sometimes we seek to tidy away the infectious Spirit of God, only to discover that (thankfully) we have failed completely to do so; whilst it is often said that Christians don't know how to acknowledge – in a way that is free from guilt – when something has come to the end of its life, there are also times when we are tempted to bring things to a premature conclusion, without waiting patiently on God's timescale, which may be different to our own; sometimes we are more concerned with our own securities, agendas and carefully formulated plans, that we are reluctant to admit that we may be wrong, and that God wants to do something very different.

I suppose that I should be heartened by what goes on in the manse garden. For all that I content myself with picking the fruit, a short back and sides for the hedges and shrubs once a year and a diligent cutting of the grass during what I think should be the growing season... well, it is not for me to determine what constitutes the growing season. Late though it is, the growing season apparently continues at this point in October this year – and those with far more knowledge and enthusiasm than I have will point to the fact that they have a while to wait before they can start on harvesting leeks and sprouts and suchlike.

I am sorry if this sounds like a harvest newsletter, but I guess that I coming to the conclusion that there is no such thing as the harvest 'season', considered in isolation. Things are richer, more complex, more surprising than we expect sometimes. Not a bad for the churches to acknowledge.

With much love in Christ.

Your friend and pastor,



Sunday Worship during November

Sunday 6th November

10.30am Morning Worship including the Lord's Supper, led by Neil Riches and members of the Worship Group: a service of preparation for worship on Advent Sunday.

Worship will be followed by First Sunday Lunch (all welcome) and 'Music for a Sunday Afternoon' with Richard Silk (piano) and Peter Gosling (clarinet) at 2pm.

Sunday 13th November Remembrance Sunday

10.30am Morning Worship led by Alan Wildbur from the Methodist Circuit

Sunday 20th November

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches Key passage: Matthew 25.14 – 30

4.00pm Street Banquet – worship inspired by the parable of the Great Feast for the most vulnerable members of Birmingham society

5.00pm Informal service of healing and communion, including the laying on of hands

Sunday 27th November – 1st Sunday in Advent

11.00am Pilgrimage round the city centre, exploring the heritage of Methodist worship and witness, led by Neil Johnson and Simon Rose

1.30pm Traditional Sunday lunch in the Church Room

3.00pm Service of Celebration to mark the journey so far between Carrs Lane URC and the Methodist Central Mission, and to pray for enthusiasm, openness and a sense of God's presence in our continuing journey as The Church at Carrs Lane. Worship will include the signing of a covenant, the mutual recognition of the ministries of Neil Riches and Neil Johnson and a shared act of dedication for all those present.

All are welcome to share in any or all aspects of worship, food and fellowship on this Sunday. Formal invitations will be going out shortly in respect of the lunch and afternoon worship; if you would like invitations to send to friends, please have a word with Neil R. as soon as possible.



Notices

13 November Remembrance Sunday
www.britishlegion.org.uk

14 – 18 November National Anti-Bullying Week

15 November International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians
www.csw.org.uk

20-26 November Inter Faith Week and Prisons Week

30 November – 6 January Nativity Trail

1 December World Aids Day
www.worldaidsday.org

Carrs Lane Church Recital with Richard Silk (piano) and Peter Gosling (Clarinet) 'Music for a Sunday Afternoon'. Music by Schumann, Poulenc, Debussy, Piazzolla & Horowitz Sunday 6th November at 2pm. An hour of music spanning German romantic, French impressionist, an Argentinean Tango and finishing with a light-hearted 20th century jazzy sonatina. Donations towards expenses gratefully received

'REFORM' for 2012. The cost remains £20.00. People may subscribe individually, using the form in the current edition of 'Reform', or via me. If any new people wish to subscribe via me, please contact me by no later than Sunday 13 November as the order has to be in before the end of that month.
Simon Rowntree

Quinborne Choir – a selection ranging from Bach and Schubert to Rutter and Cy Coleman. Saturday 19 November 7.30pm at St Hilda's Church, Abbey Road, Smethwick.

Christian Aid
Wanted: Cartridges and Shrapnel. No, I haven't flipped my lid! Used ink cartridges, old mobile phones and small change (any currency) can be recycled and help to raise money for Christian Aid. Please bring/send them to Carrs Lane and I'll see that they are delivered. Ed

Will Aid – November 2011 For details contact Colin Kemp on 020 7523 2173 or email ckemp@christian-aid.org.uk. Friday 9 December Young Strings Project in Concert to raise funds for Christian Aid. 7.00pm at St Lukes Church Centre, Great Colmore Street. £7 in advance £10 on the night.

Jubilee Debt Campaign
Thursday 3 November Justice not Charity 5.15pm – 7.30pm St Francis Hall, University Chaplaincy, University of Birmingham. Event organised by the JDC Multifaith project.

Thursday 17 November Seminar: Third World and World Debt Crisis. 5.00pm - 6.30pm Room 121 Muirhead Tower, University of Birmingham. Speaker – Tim Jones Policy and Campaigns Officer.

Christmas Fayre Saturday
19 November 12.00-3.00pm at Trinity URC, Hall Green. Toys, gifts, books, refreshments and much more. We hope to see you there.

Stop the Traffik Community Roadshow
Saturday 19 November 2.00 – 5.00pm
Hawkesley Primary School, Kings Norton. To register email act@stopthetraffik.org or for more information contact Kerry at adavuproject@gmail.com

Every year the Lord Mayor comes to lay a wreath at the memorial to those killed in the pub bombings on the anniversary day. This year this will be at 9.30am on Monday 21st November in the churchyard of Birmingham Cathedral (St. Philip's), Colmore Row. The wreath-laying lasts about 10 minutes. Members of churches and of the public are most welcome to attend.

National Inter Faith Week - November 20 – 26 *Don't judge a book by its cover*
Friday November 25 3.00 - 6.00 pm at Carrs Lane and Saturday November 26 2.00 – 5.00 pm Yardley Wood Library, Highfield Rd. Tel: 0121 464 2110.

Corrymeela Friends Conference
Saturday 26 November 10.30am – 11.00am The Priory Rooms, Bull Street, Birmingham. *'Reconciliation: The Economics and Theology of Hope'*
Fee £25. Details from Maureen Foxall m.w.foxall@btinternet.com or call 01527 544 875

Christmas Craft Fayre Sunday 27 November at Highbury, 4 Yew Tree Road, Moseley, B13 8QG. Free admission Doors open at 11.00am, close at 4.00pm. Be a step ahead and find some unusual personalised gifts for the ones you love. To get you into the Christmas mood, mulled wine and mince pies will be on sale as well as other light refreshments.

Ruth and José from Trinity Hall Green URC will be having a stall at this Fayre – please do go along and see them and do some Christmas shopping!

Take the Plunge to End Poverty - Birmingham Sponsored Swim – The Munrow Sports Centre, University of Birmingham. Sunday 8 January 2012. Details from christianaid.org.uk/swim but please contact Pat Davies if interested.

GEAR (Group for Evangelism and Renewal within the URC) National conference at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, 17th - 19th February 2012. Booking forms available from www.gear.org.uk. Adults £155, must be booked by 31/12/11. For details email swanwick@gear.org.uk or Tel: 020 8868 9002

Carrs Lane Lectures in Radical Christian Faith 2012
Saturday 20th October 10.30am-4pm A one-day conference: *The Church as it Could Be - For Goodness' Sake*
Revd Adrian Alker - Director for Mission Resourcing in the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds and a member of the management committee of the Progressive Christianity Network Britain

Wonderful Tour of the Holy Land June 17 - 24 2012. Cost £1385. For details contact Rev Tom Maginley, 57 St Peters Road, Handsworth, B20 3RP.



Jubilee Debt Campaign

Many people have memories of being part of the 70,000 strong ring of hands that encircled the International Convention Centre in Birmingham, at the time of the G8 summit of world leaders, one sunny day in 1998. This action was initiated by Jubilee 2000, a movement for the cancellation of the unpayable and unjust debts crippling many poor countries in the world by the year 2000. It had been the vision of two Christian friends, based on the biblical concept of Jubilee in the Hebrew Scriptures. After the Millennium, and having had remarkable success in achieving change, the Jubilee Debt Campaign was launched. It is supported by many thousands of people worldwide who realise that giving donations to charities working to relieve poverty, while worthwhile, is not enough, because it does not address the causes of that poverty.

So far over \$120 billion debts have been cancelled, liberating some of the world's poorest countries, such as Zambia, to be able to spend their incomes on healthcare, education and clean water for their people, instead of paying the interest on debts brought about by irresponsible lending. But for every \$1 given in aid to developing countries, \$5 still comes back to developed countries in debt repayments.

So in 2011, the Jubilee Debt Campaign (JDC) continues its efforts and has recently received growing support from people of all faiths in the UK, as all the main world faiths share a common commitment to fight injustice and poverty.

Currently JDC is calling for reform of the Export Credit Guarantee Department, which supports British business investing in 'risky' deals, linked to arms sales to developing countries, corruption, human rights abuses and environmental destruction.

'Our mainstream stuff is oil and gas, aerospace and defence.'

Steve Roberts-Mee, Head of Communications ECGD

The Birmingham JDC group is one of the most active in the country and is always keen to welcome new members. We hold monthly meetings to plan campaigning actions and become better informed about the issues.



Jubilee Debt Campaign Informal meeting Thursday 8 December 7.30pm 19 Berberry Close, Bourneville.

'Beyond the Presents' – seasonal faith reflections on debt and consumerism, with mince pies. Please let John Nightingale know if attending on 0121 458 6182 johnnightingale@btinternet.com.

Dear Pat

Thank you very much for the donations totalling £222, representing the gifts given in memory of your husband, Mohammed Davies. We were very sorry to hear about your loss and offer you and your family our thoughts and prayers. It was such a kind gesture for you to ask for donations for Christian Aid at this difficult time, and shows how the love that you all shared with Mohammed continues to shine through and be celebrated.

As I am sure you know, Sierra Leone's brutal civil war left the country ravaged with poverty, marginalisation and poor governance. Through the nationwide programme, 'Lets push peace'. Christian Aid partner, the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone (MCSL), helps 120 communities to address poverty, tackle conflict within communities and assists people to hold the authorities to account.

John Foday is a village animator with MCSL in his home village Kiegbai. In the village community centre John holds peace meetings: "I want to motivate my people to realise our development lies within ourselves. It's in our own hands," says John. "Pre war, people were working individually, but we couldn't stand firm on our own. We achieve our goals by working as a group. Two hands are better than one."

John received training to help him to promote peace in his community, and transform conflict into amicable agreements. He quotes examples of families settling differences, of persuading elders and youth to listen to women and understand their needs, and of lobbying the local government into completing the school which had been left half standing.

Christian aid partners also recognised that in order to build peace people need not to be hungry so John has helped MCSL to establish a village development committee and encourages people to work together. MCSL provided technical support, seeds and food enabling the group to develop swamps to cultivate rice, fields to grow groundnuts, gardens for vegetables and ponds to breed fish. Every harvest, seed is returned to MCSL to enable new groups to start up. Emergency seed stores are set aside, some is planted again, the rest is distributed fairly amongst the group. In three years, production went from an initial 30 bushes to this year's harvest of 200.

By enabling the people of Sierra Leone to learn how to live in peace and work together, communities are being rebuilt and harvests shared, creating hope for the future. Thank you for enabling us to support projects like MCSL all over the world.

With best wishes
Rachel Vincent, Regional Administrator

Amnesty International Greetings Card Campaign 2011

It is hard to believe that it is coming towards the end of 2011 and it will soon be time to send Greetings cards, containing messages of hope, to people around the world whose human rights have been abused.

Between 1 November and 31 January thousands of Amnesty members and friends show their solidarity with victims of human rights abuses in a simple but powerful way – by sending a card with a message of support.

The annual Greetings Card Campaign features around 30 cases from across the world, including prisoners of conscience, human rights defenders at risk because of their work, families whose relations have disappeared and many more who are under threat.

These cards have an enormous impact. As well as offering encouragement, providing support and raising spirits, they are a tangible sign that people care. They also help to bring about change; the impression that mail makes on police, prison staff and political authorities can help to improve the treatment of the recipients and keep them safe.

People at Carrs Lane Church have been taking part in this campaign for at least 27 years now. It was agreed at Church meeting in October that we should continue to do this. There will be an opportunity to write Greetings Cards on **Sundays 4th and 11th of December** after the morning service. Further details will be supplied later. However, if you would like more information before then please contact me or look on the Amnesty website www.amnesty.org.uk/gcc

I do hope that people will feel able to take part in the Greetings Card Campaign this year and 'Send a Message of Hope'

Christine Rowntree

November 2011



Multicultural Day at Carrs Lane

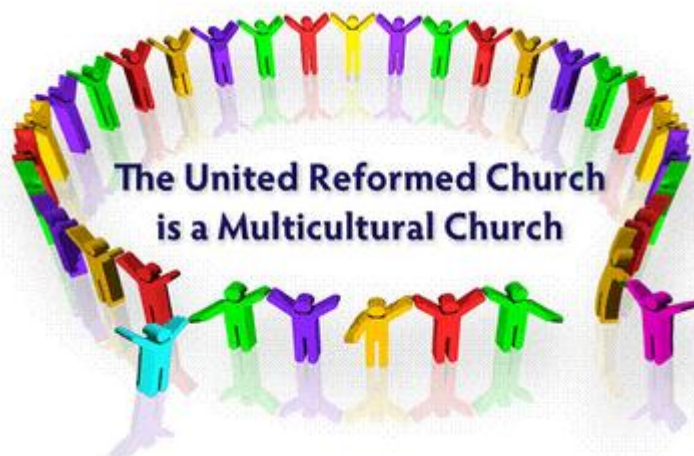
Yes, an excellent day...but I am heartily glad that it is only once every two years! 400+ people shared in the event – many of them young people – and to be involved in any way was to the gain the impression that the URC is alive, kicking and making progress in a great many ways. Thanks to the volunteers and church centre staff who worked hard to ensure that everything ran (relatively) smoothly... everybody was fed in less than 50 minutes, requests for various bits of kit (some of them quite odd) were handled quickly and efficiently, rooms went through various permutations of chairs during the course of the day and we only ran out of toilet paper once in the ladies loos (and that at the end of the afternoon). Carrs Lane Players put on a thought-provoking sketch which was extremely well-received by the capacity congregation and Tim was involved in a 'hands-on' capacity which involved music-making in a bewildering variety of styles. I suspect that many of those who come to us on the day get the impression that the day is hosted by a church with several hundred active members...

What snapshots am I going to tuck away for future reference? Hankies waved during the Ghanaian-style offering; kiddies' feet dangling (safely) through the slats at the bottom of the balcony rail; Elaine's flowers representing a kind of sun-burst in front of the cross in church; the glorious juxtaposition of so many kinds of dance and music; the sheer vigour and colour of so many entries in the art competition; the presence of so many young men under 25 years of age who are active in their churches; the sense of relief at the end of the day that everything had gone well and that the 'host' church had been found equal to the task in so many ways.

As a team of organizers, we meet for a debrief later in the autumn. A bit of me is tempted to say that the event could return to London, or go to one of the denomination's other truly city centre churches, say, in Sheffield or Cardiff...but I have a sneaky feeling that we could/will be asked to host it again.

Thanks again.

Neil



The River of Life: Launch Service of the Methodist Birmingham Circuit

I found the launch service both moving and exciting. The venue was Symphony Hall, surely one of the most important cultural icons of our city and our region. It was wonderful to hear the praise of God resounding in this hall which usually echoes to the performances of professional singers and musicians.

The formal purpose of the service was to induct the Superintendancy Team for the new Circuit: Rev Peter Bates (worship, learning and caring), Rev Helen Jobling (resources), and Rev Neil Johnson (service and evangelism); also to welcome to the new circuit the presbyters, deacons and church staff who will be part of it. They made the appropriate promises of service, as witnessed by the congregation, who asked to be enabled to reveal Christ's way through words and example and respond to Christ in all those we meet.

The theme of 'The River of Life', life-giving water, which gave the worship its title was illustrated in the Bible readings: from Ezekiel 47, in which water flows from the sanctuary, ensuring that the trees on either side of the river will produce every month fruit for food and leaves for healing; from Revelation 22, in which the water of life flows from the throne of God, and the tree of life produces its fruit every month, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations; and from John 7, in which Jesus says that, through the Holy Spirit, out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.

The theme was further explored in a reflection by Stuart Webb, based on the Revelation passage, which presented a vision of Birmingham as a city of peace, justice and plenty, and the sermon by the President of Conference, Revd Leo Osborn. This featured not a river, but different sources of water associated with part of the speaker's life journey in this city. These included a swimming pool, potentially frightening at first; a canal, once essential and valuable in the life of the city, then discounted and neglected, now restored to usefulness and appreciation as a leisure facility; a fountain, illustrating how water can be pleasurable but also uncontainable; and the welcome supply of water in one's home, in the case of the citizens of Birmingham largely due to the flooding of the Elan Valley and all that that involved.

Perhaps the most effective way to sum up the significance of this act of worship is to re-state the mission statement of the Birmingham Methodist Circuit and quote the description accompanying the meditation through dance, which, through its flowing motion and use of blue and green fabrics, illustrated so beautifully 'The River of Life':
Our 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.

Meditation through Dance: Water is the basis of life. The Holy Spirit fulfils the promise of water, and gives us the Water of Life, enabling us to live rich Spirit filled lives. The dance combines the theme of the service with a yearning to take the Spirit of God out into the wider community around us, whatever obstacles are placed in our way.

Wendy Firnin

October Synod at the Holiday Inn

It is always difficult to comment on something when you have been a member of the organizing group (I am not going to use the word 'committee', because I made it clear a long time ago that I was, er, resistant to serving on a Synod committee and this is where I found myself!). If numbers are an indication of success, that peak attendance of about 230 people is some indication of a successful day: this number of folk eating, chatting, praying and reflecting together can only be a good thing.

I enjoyed Michael Jagessar's upbeat talk after dinner on the Friday evening, drawing on 'wisdom' from around the world and setting the scene for challenges a-plenty when he becomes one of the two Moderators of General Assembly in Scarborough next year. I moved on discussion about the Radical Welcome campaign in the bar afterwards, facilitated in part by Mike Walsh, the minister at Heald Green URC who, a good many years ago, was the very first student from Northern College with whom I worked on a placement during my ministry in Manchester. Obviously, it was good to catch up with news of him and his family; Churches Together in Heald Green continue to work together on an internet café at the heart of the community, Mike's wife, Kate, continues to serve at St. Mark's URC in Wythenshawe, one of the most deprived communities in the UK...and one of Mike's brothers has recently become a full-time poet! I found that the session on Radical Welcome allayed some of my own ongoing concerns, but it is clear that confusion/questions/misapprehensions abound still in some quarters. You will see from elsewhere in the magazine that the first of the 'Preparation evenings' for the service on the first Sunday in Advent will be dedicated to an introduction to this campaign.

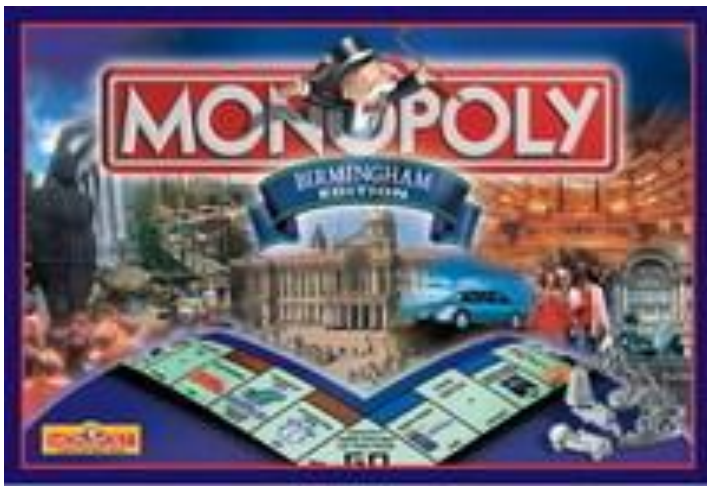
Saturday was an extremely full day... mixed, if I am honest, since consideration of the relatively dry nitty-gritty of the continuing life of institutional church rarely 'does it' for me. I enjoyed the sessions which I attended on 'making the most of being a small church' and 'living together in diversity', led by Val Morrison and Liz Caswell respectively. Liz's reflections on diversity in the earliest days of the Church provided much food for thought as I reflect on what it means to sustain a position of integrity in a small denomination which is at the same time a 'broad church'. Of the formal Synod sessions, I thought that the one before lunch – led by the Moderator – was effective and engaging; jargon was avoided as folk were brought up to speed on the many outward-looking initiatives espoused by the URC... and the clarity with which available resources were linked to ongoing initiatives can only have been helpful for those who shared in the session.

At one level, I am left to grapple with the fact that we have not come up with many formal 'mission pledges' as a part of our response to the challenges of Vision 2020. At the same time, it is clear that our clearly-articulated priorities (in terms of ecumenical journeys, work with the local community, commitment to fresh expressions of church and the like) are very much in keeping with the overall aims of Vision 2020. There may well be times when our commitments need to be refined further in terms of 'wording', not least so that our prayers can continue to be as specific as possible.

Neil

Monopoly

During one of my summer camps, we played the Birmingham version of 'Monopoly' – the first time I had done so! I have to confess that I was somewhat startled by the way in which the properties were valued in this local version of the game: the cheapest place – the equivalent of Old Kent Road at £60 – was Cannon Hill Park; the most expensive place – the equivalent of Mayfair – was Hurst Street. Hurst Street!?! For those who don't know where this is, it is the home of the Hippodrome Theatre (one of the UK's busiest theatres and in turn the home of the Birmingham Royal Ballet) and the 'back-to-backs', the only National Trust property in the centre of Birmingham. So...in a way I understand the logic of the choice, but I wouldn't have selected a street with so many car parks as the most expensive property on the board; equally, I wouldn't have confined the undoubted glories of Cannon Hill Park to the cheapest square on the board. Yet before I get



carried away... well, I guess that we all see things through our own eyes and in the light of our own experiences; the fact that the manse garden backs onto Cannon Hill Park has affected my view of this particular slice of Birmingham's many open spaces. In the same way, not everybody catches the 45 or 35 bus past the less glorious end of Hurst Street as often as I do. It is not always easy to see things in the way that other people see them.

Such an approach is an essential part of the 'discipline' of living the Christian life, however, a point which was made again and again during the consultation in which I shared in Cambridge (see my article elsewhere). Even as believers, we know that other believers may have very different views, held with sincerity and absolute conviction. It may not always be enough to say that, 'we know where they are coming from and we respect their views': there will be times when we need to make a conscious effort, literally, to put ourselves into the shoes of the other person, in order to engage properly with their passions, their priorities, their apparent 'non-negotiables'. Thankfully, we do not belong to a monochrome church; Paul's picture of the church as a body with all its spectacular diversity is a powerful and abiding one; Jesus underlined the unity of the people of faith as it already exists...not something for which we need to strive. In my prayer life at present, I find myself making a conscious effort to put myself in the place of people with whom I may disagree – sometimes profoundly – and I try to imagine the nature of the prayers that they will be praying in hope and with sincerity. We commit to tunnel vision at our peril; whilst we may not always like the word 'empathy', with all the modern connotations that it has acquired, it is a fundamental characteristic of the life of faith.

Neil

The Choir With No Name

The Choir With No Name Birmingham is launching with its first rehearsal on Thursday 6th October 6pm at Carrs Lane Church Centre.

The Choir with No Name was set up in London in 2008 and brings together people who have experienced homelessness and who feel excluded from “mainstream choirs”. It has been really successful and founder Marie is keen to build on the London Choirs success and reach out and develop choirs in cities that experience homelessness.

The newly set up Birmingham Choir has found a home at Carrs Lane Church Centre, the Church will be the weekly venue for the choir to rehearse in and then share a meal afterwards.

Birmingham choir manager Bethan says, “We are thrilled to have such a great venue and one located so centrally, we’ve already been made to feel very welcome and we haven’t actually started yet! We hope to attract lots of people who want to sing and make the choir a fantastic place to be.”

The Choirs main aims are to have fun and a release from day to day situations, providing a safe place for the members and volunteers to support each other through tough times and coming together to bond over the joys of rehearsal and good performances.

For more information about the choir contact: bethan@choirwithnoame.org or go to the website: www.choirwithnoame.org

Bethan Rand



Human Sexuality Forum

– Westminster College, Cambridge – 14 - 16 September

I had the privilege of being one of the two representatives from the West Midlands Synod at this recent consultation / series of conversations. I am not quite sure what I am able to say at this stage, since the papers presented during the Forum are being modified somewhat before they enter the 'public arena', but I can make some general comments by way of positive reflection. It was a joy to share in constructive comments and reflection with folk from a very wide variety of theological backgrounds; it was a privilege to share in something of a very robust – and therefore challenging – theological nature; it was helpful to be able to share with others in articulating clearly that sensitive matters are best handled in an open, prayerful and informal setting (rather than the set piece debates of General Assembly); it was encouraging to encounter so much love for the denomination – a desire to grow together; yet...well, it was sobering to realize again that searching issues call for a considered and prayerful response.

I don't propose to go into the nitty-gritty, the specifics of some debates here: for those interested, the minutes of the Human Sexuality Task Group can be found on the URC website and Reform has touched on current issues on a number of occasions. Suffice to say that it could now be possible for UR churches to offer religious services of commitment for those wishing to enter into civil partnerships (rather than a service of blessing after the civil partnership has taken place, which is the current situation). It will be left to each individual congregation to determine whether this is appropriate for them...but in order to allow this freedom, it is likely that General Assembly in 2012 will be asked to pass a resolution which allows for such decisions to be made. Now, you might suppose that this looks very straightforward: each individual church can make up its own mind under the Spirit's guidance, with no church be asked to act against its combined 'conscience'. However, the current denominational 'Commitment' on matters of human sexuality allows for continued prayer, reflection and growth together in diversity, so long as nothing akin to new denominational 'policy' is formulated. It can be argued that the passing of the appropriate resolution at General Assembly in 2012 is tantamount to the formulation of new policy on the part of the denomination...something for which there is no mandate.

Prayer and wisdom are needed in ongoing discussions: what may be a 'non-issue' for some is a matter of justice or sincerely held belief for others. I believe passionately that we can continue to live together in diversity, not least because this sends out a powerful, a compelling, an attractive message to the world at a time when the voices of disruption and distrust are raised.

Neil

Martin and Amina



Hello Folks, Martin and I would like to thank everyone from Carrs Lane and elsewhere for taking time out to attend our wedding; you made our special day a very memorable one.

Martin and I went to Florence on our honeymoon. We arrived at the beginning of August and the weather was just beautiful - everyday! Florence is a beautiful city. I have a special affinity with Florence because I lived there as teenager with my parents. Such a beautiful city!



Our accommodation was basic - but walking distance to the train station and to all the special places, such as the Uffizi gallery and the Ponte Vecchio Bridge, which is incredible - the bridge encompasses many various jewellery shops and little houses.

We saw the outside of the Duomo and Cathedral - stunning architecture, one wonders how they managed that without the technology of today. We also went to Pisa; we did the touristy things with the Leaning Tower. Here is a photograph to illustrate what I mean.

I will recommend Florence to anybody who likes architectures, art and culture, good. We also visited Leonardo Da Vinci museum, saw all his inventions and some of his paintings. We were unable to see the Statue of King David due to long queues.

Amina Stokes

Carrs Lane visits Ernstweiler

- Warm greetings on arrival at Zweibrücken.
- Renewal of friendships and acquaintances, meals with well-remembered family friends.
- Worship with fellow Christians where different languages were of no consequence as we prayed together 'Our Father / Vater Unser.'
- Music and drama which bound us together in enjoyment and merriment.
- Visits to beautiful countryside, wine-growing areas, lovely parks and interesting historical towns.
- Meeting new people and introducing fresh faces to our long-established Gemeinschaft/community of ordinary folk from two countries.

This was the essence of our visit and we look forward to the pleasure of being their hosts in two years' time.

Pat Davies



Our intrepid minister looking puzzled by something while overlooking Trier

What to say about the recent visit to Germany? For the first time in my life, I now have a clear understanding of what a 'second breakfast' is – exactly that! The first (as in the first 'second' breakfast) was eaten in a very scenic lay-by overlooking the Moselle; the second 'second' breakfast was eaten on the return journey from Germany to France... an unaccustomed sojourn in the First Class carriage of the train brought with it robust mid-morning refreshments. This was the tip of the iceberg, of course: hospitality throughout our stay was extraordinary...consistently generous and gracious. I have no idea as to what my personal calorie count for the trip might be; I am conscious that to four (five?) meals per day need to be added a visit to a small brewery in Speyer and a wine tasting in Trier. Hm...

I stayed with the pastor and his family again; a visit to the Memorial Church in Speyer with Benno, along with the opportunity to share with him in preparation for worship on the Sunday morning left me with the impression that German Protestants have a far clearer knowledge of their history – and its implications – than many of us who serve within the Reformed churches in the UK. Sunday morning worship was a good experience; bilingual, accessible and positive. In addition to four musical items by ourselves and the local choir, Harvest Thanksgiving served as the central theme for the service and Communion was celebrated (one of only 7 or 8 such occasions each year). Benno was at pains to stress the apparently unusual nature of a service which allowed people the choice of drinking from the common cup or using individual cups...but I explained that this would not be problem for Carrs Lane folk! Given the

nature of the service, I found myself in the attire of a German protestant pastor; fine...though confusion over ecclesiastical etymology meant that I moved further along this particular path than anticipated. Benno assured me that I would be delivering my address from the chancel...only 'chancel' turned out to mean 'pulpit', which meant that I was literally – and vertically – six feet above the heads of Carrs Lane folk who were sitting a very few feet in front of me. Robes and pulpit...please don't get any ideas!

There was a reasonable amount of time with host families, in addition to choir practice, a visit to Trier, Sunday morning worship and the final entertainment and food-laden Sunday evening. At the heart of the 'English' contribution...a not particularly polished, but undoubtedly memorable version of the 'Silent' Hallelujah Chorus. Not quite the thing for worship, perhaps, but undoubtedly worthy of another rendition in Birmingham. An invitation was given to visit Birmingham in 2013; no doubt the time will pass very quickly indeed.

It was sad that what proved to be a delightful weekend for many of us, proved to be a difficult and distressing one for Andrew and Jill. Rest assured of continued prayers.

Neil

Quirky Quotes from the Choir

a. Overheard in Ernstweiler
Who said?.....

1. "The Zug est arrive"

This is a remark which demonstrates the amazing tri-lingual competence of the Carrs Lane contingent.

2. "Just think of Dawn French"

Perhaps fortunately, our German hosts may not have made the connection between Dibley and the Lord being our shepherd.

3. "If you pastor is called 'Minister' does that mean he is a politician?"
"Ask Neil ! I don't know."

b. Overheard in the train en route homewards

1. "If a lady in soggy socks gets off the train smelling of alcohol it will be me" (after someone had spilt their bottle of Sekt from their snack pack given them by our hosts)

2. "What a waste of my Sekt!" (her son-in-law)

3. "My trouser leg is wet too"

4. Her husband – "Why don't you wring it out?!"

c. Overheard in Birmingham on our return

"My alcoholic trousers have been washed."

Relief was expressed all round.

Pat Davies

Carrs Lane Walking Weekend

They say Things always come in threes. I've always thought this was superstitious nonsense, but maybe, just maybe . . .

Thing the First

In the afternoon of the first full day of the weekend, those of us on the B walk (ie, we don't do vertical surfaces) went to a little Church of Wales right on the coast – so much in the dunes that at one time it was practically buried in sand. It was a fascinating place and very old, with some stones dating from the 5th and 6th centuries. The kindly gentleman who opened the place for us mentioned the part of the building that had been there for a thousand years then talked about the modern extension dating from 1350. I was grateful to one of our party for drawing my attention to photographs of the presentation of a Cross of Nails in June of this year. The Community of the Cross of Nails is part of the reconciliation work of Coventry Cathedral, and as many of you know I'm a Coventry kid and I've been closely associated with the Cathedral in various, mostly musical, guises, for over 30 years, so this was of interest to me. And in fact, the last time I sang in the Cathedral earlier this month there was a blessing of a Cross of Nails which was going to some far-flung place. The story of why this part of Wales was honoured is both complex and interesting, and much too long to include here, but it has something to do with the Huchenfeld Cross that has sanctuary in the church.



Thing the Second

A short while later, I was seated on a boulder on the nearby beach contemplating the seascape (generally speaking we don't see much sea in the See of Coventry, so I try to make the most of it when I can). A lady came tramping over the sand, and as she approached we got into conversation. It turned out that she's in the choir of St Nicholas' Church, Kenilworth. Now, I don't know how good your geography is, but Kenilworth is not a million miles away from Coventry. In fact, from where I live, it's quicker to get to St Nick's than to the Cathedral. AND a couple of years ago when St Nick's were without an organist I helped out with some Evensongs, which included taking choir practice, AND - yes, you've guessed it!! Her comment was: "I thought I recognised you. You really put us through our paces." Enough said.

Thing the Third

It was during my drive homewards on the Monday that, musing on events over the weekend, I realised that there was a Third Thing. Malcolm and Anne Veitch came for the day on the Sunday, and in chatting I learnt that the previous evening they'd been at a concert in Coventry Cathedral where a friend of theirs from Exeter was singing.

An ex (like me)-St Michael's Singer who now lives in Exeter (not like me), a very great friend of some very great friends of mine, had also come up to Coventry for the evening's performance. I didn't meet up with her, of course, as I was in Wales! But I guess she knows Malcolm and Anne's friend.

There are several conclusions that *could* perhaps be drawn from all this. One: there's always **someone** who knows someone **you** know. Two: if two Things have happened, you can usually find a third to make up the number if you think hard enough. Three: women are inveterate chatterboxes. Four: no – Things always come in threes, so I'll stop there!

Sue Hill

Pictures and a brief history of the medieval church of St Tanwg can be seen at <http://www.snowdoniaguide.com/llandanwg.html>

Plas Tan y Bwlch

The house was originally built at the beginning of the 17th Century. Standing on the wooded hillside above the river Dwyryd in the Vale of Maentwrog it is now the Environmental Studies Centre of the Snowdonia National Park Authority, offering professional courses in environmental matters as well as public courses as varied as Geography and Jewellery Making, the Sky at Night and Embroidery, conducted in either Welsh or English. With stunning views the beautiful historical garden has exotic and native plants, and is managed in a wildlife friendly manner, one of the first in Wales to cover such a large area.

There are footpaths open to the public crisscrossing the estate and the Ffestiniog Railway runs through it, with its own Halt to enable travellers to ride up to Blaenau Ffestiniog or to the coast at Porthmadog.

Once a youth centre, the rooms for guests are varied, with some self-catering chalets in the grounds and accommodation in the stables as well as the main house. The conference and meeting rooms, also the library, reflect the historical grandeur of the families who lived off the wealth of the slate industry in the past.

The walking group from Carrs Lane arranged its own daily itineraries - A group, B group and T party going in different directions – climbing up the summits of Snowdonia, visiting beautiful old churches and castles, or enjoying the delights of Caernarfon and Porthmadog's waterfronts and teashops. All tastes were catered for and we enjoyed the evenings chatting, playing games and planning the next day. It was another chance to get together with new and old friends and enjoy the delight of God's wonderful world.

Pat Davies

On this day ... October

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle October 1911

Friendships in Ascending Scale (extracts from a sermon by Dr. John Clifford, entitled 'Jesus, the Soul's true Friend')

Friendship is a perennial human, and divine, concern. What, I wonder, are our thoughts about an 'ascending scale' of friendships in Jesus' life and in our own?

The friendships of Jesus rise from stage to stage. First you see him as the friend of sinners. Next as the friend of those disciples who are ready to link their destinies with His, to accept the risks of associating their names and activities with His. Next you come to His friendship with the twelve, then you have the first three within the twelve as His most intimate friends, and then the Bethany home, where Martha and Mary and Lazarus are, and crowning this friendly ascension scale, you arrive at John the disciple whom Jesus loves more tenderly and deeply than all.

So our friendships rise. We do not love everybody alike. You cannot command friendships, they are developed by affinities between spirit and spirit, by common sympathy with ideals, aims, passions, by helpfulness, by trust one in the other; by discharging the responsibilities which one puts upon the other; in these various ways friendships grow, and so the friendships of Jesus Christ grew. He chose twelve out of the number of His disciples, that they might be with Him and so deepen and tighten the bonds by fellowship. You may have friends out in Africa or Australia, you value them, and correspondence helps in the interchange of ideas to keep the friendship alive and helpful. But friendship grows more by actual association, by the interchange of emotion and ideas face to face. Friendship grows as soul pours out what it contains into souls, and Jesus therefore "chose the twelve that they might be with Him," and then He told them His secrets, spoke to them about the things that concerned their Father and His Father. The perfect trust between Jesus Christ and these twelve is one of the finest features of the Gospel story; He rebukes them, interprets their perplexities and doubts, acts as a friend to them; all this is discovered as Jesus Christ reveals Himself to them, and brings them over to Him in blessed friendliness.

Then He takes out of these twelve Peter, James, John. They go with Him to the transfiguration scene; they are with Him in the house of Jairus, and in the agony in Gethsemane's garden. Jesus has His special friends. As I have said, you cannot love everybody alike. It is not their fault altogether, it is not yours. We have our limitations. We veil ourselves from some people. For others we draw the veil aside, and they see us as far as they can. Friendship is not a matter based upon physical relationships. The soul of friendship is the soul. The Master is interrupted one day when He is talking to a gathering of people. Some of his relatives want to stop Him. They suggest a frenzy has taken possession of Him, and that He is imperilling His life, and send a message that they would like to see Him. "Your mother and Your brothers are outside, wanting to interview You." Jesus hears, and then He looks round upon the company in front of Him, and says, "Mother! Brothers! Who are they?"

Who are my mother and my brothers but the pupils who are here, and all who hear the word of the Lord and do it.” The relationship is spiritual. So Christ finds in Peter, James and John, a relationship more intimate and precious than He does in the four brothers who belong to the same family with Him.

From the Carrs Lane Journal – October 1961

These accounts of attending worship while away on holiday probably bring back memories for many of us, and certainly illustrate how the contrast with one’s usual experience can make a lasting impression.

Holiday Worship (1) (by Pam and Bob Liddell)

The little Welsh chapel was a far cry from Carrs Lane in the heart of the Midlands. It stood on the hillside, the centre of a row of cottages that largely comprised the village. Small and square, with whitewashed walls and two arched windows, it faced the open sea, and as we stood by the door before the service began, we watched the waves breaking on the beach below. “Ebenezer 1867,” read the tablet above the door. “This site, together with the burial ground, was given to the Independent Body for ever, the giver having in view the glory of God and the salvation of souls.”

We filed in to the strains of the harmonium played by a lady member and took our places in a pew, thus almost doubling the congregation. The walls inside were of varnished pine, relieved only by a small picture of The Light of the World above the pulpit and a portrait of a past minister above the piano in one corner. Everywhere were vases gay with flowers from cottage gardens.

“We are fortunate to have David to lead our worship this morning,” we were told proudly. “He has just celebrated his twenty-first birthday, is a student at Aberystwyth University, and, like his father, who led our worship last Sunday, is a keen local preacher.” The Secretary, in the course of the notices, was warm in his welcome to the visitors. We listened engrossed to a most able discourse on the Temptations and joined heartily in the choirless but melodious worship in music. When the service was ended the entire congregation gathered round us with hearty handshakes and a warm friendliness and enthusiasm which were almost overwhelming, and which gave rise to some gnawing consciences when we thought of our diffidence back home when strangers joined us for worship.

We learned from the Secretary, who was also the village schoolmaster, that the little chapel had valiantly borne witness without a minister for over twenty years. All the members – at present there were nine – pulled their weight, taking turns to conduct the service or preach the sermon, twice every Sunday. The children too had an important part to play in the life of the Church, contributing readings and taking the offertory in a dignified manner. When electricity came to the village a few years ago, the money was immediately forthcoming for its installation in the church; and the carpets and furnishings, the gleam and polish, the loyalty, love and fellowship were evidence of the devotion of this small Christian community.

Here in the tranquillity of a village by the sea, where men and women are so dependent upon one another and upon the forces of nature, we felt the very presence of Christ, and our holiday was the richer for such an experience.

Holiday Worship (2) (by Sheila Burgess-Smith)

Whilst on holiday, I had the opportunity of worshipping with two congregations far removed from our own at Carrs Lane. The first was in a tiny village in Devonshire; although the Church itself was tiny, the whole life of the village revolved round it. It was very beautiful with its stained glass windows and the polish was the brightest I have ever seen. The service, although Anglican, was very simple, and the singing was led by keen members of the congregation rather than the choir which boasted only two small choirboys, but there was an atmosphere of devout worship. It was clear to see the pride of those who truly felt they belonged; it was all tradition.

The second place of worship I was invited to attend was Christchurch Priory; a most inspiring building into which the inhabitants of the town thronged, together with many holiday makers who wished to experience a Sunday Service in such a fine place. This time there were quite 20 choirboys and the singing was of a high standard, its quality enhanced by the height and acoustics of such a magnificent building. Pomp and ceremony always appear to be magnified in Cathedrals and larger churches, and there is a majestic atmosphere about a large congregation such as this, in spite of the drawbacks of seating arrangements which do not allow all the worshippers to see the parson.

It is good to go away and partake in the worship of others, but so very good to return to Carrs Lane.

Contributed by Wendy Firrnis

On this day ... November

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle November 1911

These observations on the reading of scripture during worship strongly evoke the period in which they were written, but the underlying premise is surely still valid for us today.

Lay Scripture Readers: a Suggestion (by J. R. B.)

The pulpit supply at Carrs Lane Church for the past six months must have caused the Deacons a great deal of difficulty and worry. I imagine it will be no small relief to them when a worthy successor to Dr. Jowett has been found and appointed. Variety is said to be charming, and we have certainly had variety enough already, but I am a little doubtful as to the charm. It may be, however, that our experience, if we take it

as discipline, may do us good. One result is undoubted – it has made us acutely conscious of our painful deprivation.

During the interregnum one phase of the services has impressed me very strongly, viz., the ineffective and perfunctory manner of reading the Scripture lessons that has characterised so many of the preachers. I cannot understand how it is that so few ministers fail to appreciate the beauty and power of an elocutionary style of reading the lessons and delivering the sermon.

By common consent of believers and unbelievers, the Holy Scriptures, regarded as mere literature, are held to be without a rival in the whole realm of literature for pathos and passion, for imagery and charm. They afford great scope for cultured skill and artistic rendering, and when read by a trained elocutionist they never fail to arrest and fix the attention of a congregation. Some great actors and orators have from time to time been requisitioned by the Anglican Church to read the lessons in church, to the great delight and profit of the congregation. Our Nonconformist ministers do not, perhaps, shine very brilliantly in respect of the reading of Scripture. It would seem to be an art that is not valued by collegiate professors, and seldom acquired by the callow student at college. It is a great pity that it is so, for I fancy that the public look upon the effective reading of carefully-selected passages from the Bible by a reader who realises the spirit and purport of the text, as second only, if not co-equal, with an eloquent sermon.

I would suggest that a small corps of devout and pious men, with a passion for Christian service, should be invited to go into training by the best elocutionist available, and when fully qualified should be asked to read the lessons, alternately, at each Sunday service, and so relieve the minister and edify the congregation. This trained corps of readers might also be requested to read to infirm members of the Church and congregation at their own homes. If this were done, I am confident it would prove to be a most blessed ministry both to the visited and the Scripture readers themselves.

From the Carrs Lane Journal – November 1961

Frances Jerman, whose daughter Margaret had been to stay with a French family, was asked to write an account of the return visits of two French schoolgirls. She gave it the title 'Entertaining Angels?' I feel sure I am not the only one for whom it brings back memories of learning a foreign language and discovering another culture fifty years or so ago – and that some of the observations are relevant to any time.

We can now say we have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Our knowledge of French would now undoubtedly enable us to qualify as second-year students at least, and we have become more adept in the art of miming. The depth of conversation was rather limited and discussion almost non-existent, but if we remembered to speak slowly – not forgetting that words have endings! – our guests understood us reasonably well, particularly if we could occasionally “pop” in a word or two in French. This mixed language caused much amusement.

Any fears we had about our guests being homesick, or appalled by English cooking were soon dispelled. Card games, such as Rummy, and jigsaw puzzles proved excellent ice-breakers for tongue-tied schoolgirls and provided happy entertainment when we were not sight-seeing or visiting friends, and both girls seemed to enjoy English meals, which they said consisted of many more sweet foods than the French. They particularly enjoyed our ice-cream, chips, lamb, and surprisingly, tea. They were both very impressed by the lovely gardens and lawns surrounding many English houses, and enjoyed helping in the Crèche.

Our first guest was, Marie-Joelle, was petite, dark, smart in appearance and very vivacious, and although only 15 years old, quite mature in outlook. We all thought her a “typical” French girl, until we met Maryvonne, our second guest. Tall, fair and shy, she was a complete contrast: proof to us of the danger of generalising.

Marie-Joelle, who spoke English quite well, and attended school with Margaret during part of her stay, expressed surprise at the strict school discipline and at the wearing of school uniform. She thought our girls seemed less mature than French girls (another rash generalisation?). She confessed to being envious of those English girls whose mothers remained at home, and able to devote so much time to them. Many French mothers, including her own, longed for this opportunity: she herself frequently felt lonely and frustrated in not being able to have talks with her mother who was always too occupied. She was obliged to make so many decisions without guidance. We pointed out that this was fast becoming the lot of many English children too.

So to anyone considering a foreigner into the family for a short time, we would say, “Don’t hesitate,” for we found it no more difficult than entertaining an English girl. Margaret now finds the study of the French language much more personal and interesting, and letters received from the French girls since their return confirm their assurances that their English has improved.

Contributed by Wendy Firrnin

Memories

As a child, Sunday was the day my father played golf. On week days he travelled by tramcar to his office in the city centre. Each morning his travelling companion was a near neighbour, and over time the two families became good friends. Our friends worshipped at Carrs Lane Church and invited us to accompany them one Sunday. From then on our life changed, and Sunday became the day when my parents, my sister and I were drawn into the life of Carrs Lane Church, and golf was in the past.

At that time the minister was Leyton Richards. In the course of time my father was elected a deacon (now elder) and in time became Church Secretary. One of his duties was to announce from the pulpit, before the start of the service, the notices for the week. After the first hymn the children in the congregation withdrew to the

Lecture Hall where a junior service was led by two dedicated sisters for about 20 children, while toddlers and babies were looked after in the crèche.

Another memory of Carrs Lane's past is the war years when the city was a target for enemy planes. A team of church members manned the fire-watching team each night on the alert.

The church was well served by the caretaker – Mr Witherall, who lived in a small house in New Meeting Street. Next door to him was a sweet shop. All these buildings were demolished when the present church was re-built.

Pam Liddell

At a price...

I am not quite sure what is going on. My laptop appears to be quite sluggish at the moment, and when I found myself starting to type 'Churches Together in Hall Green' into the Google search box recently, the most common associated word combinations appeared underneath the box as soon as I had typed in the single word 'churches'. Surprise, surprise the first suggestion was, 'Churches for sale'. Churches for sale? Hardly an obvious thought in times of recession, when we hear all too often about consistently depressed property prices. Maybe seemingly redundant churches are regarded as bargains... Does their appearance in the market place herald rebirth as places of worship, a very different new start by means of conversion to residential accommodation or something very different? I imagine that we register sadness that the life of one faith community has come to an end...but it may be that we also acknowledge that some of the most effective church 'plants' of recent years need never contemplate such a notice, since their members are adamant that theirs will always be a 'tent-making' ministry, with no desire to acquire permanent physical premises. Interesting.

Neil



PS I returned to Google and tried the same thing... Same result, only this time, I noted the suggestions which followed: church's shoes (!?) and Churches Conservation Trust came up. I haven't actually followed through the church's shoes suggestion.



Every month Linda from Trinity Hall Green submits a recipe for their newsletter. I thought Carrs Laners would enjoy this seasonal offering. Carol

This is the time of year when I get down to baking my Christmas cake, so maybe you would like to share this recipe.

Christmas Fruit Cake

1 cup water	2 cups dried fruit
1 cup brown sugar	1 cup sugar
1 tsp salt	225g (8oz) nuts
4 large eggs	1 tsp baking soda
Juice of 1 lemon	1 bottle of whisky

Method:

1. Sample whisky to check it's quality
2. Take a large bowl. Re-check the whisky to ensure it is of the highest quality
3. Pour one level cup and drink
4. Turn on the electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add one teaspoon of sugar and beat again.
5. Make sure the whisky is still okay and cry another tup.
6. Turn off the mixerer. Break two eggs and add to the bowl and chuck in the dried fruit. Mix on the turner, and if the fried druit gets stuck in the beaterers, pry it loose with a drewscriver.
7. Sample some whisky to check for tonisisticity.
8. Next sift two cups of salt, or something. Who cares? Check the wksisky.
9. Now sift the lemon juice and strain your nuts. Add one table. Spoon. Of sugar or something. Whatever you can find. Then grease the oven and turn the cake tin to 350 degrees.
10. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Throw the bowl out of the window, check the whisky again and go to bed.

O.O.C. If you are not partial to whisky, it can be substituted with vodka, rum, brandy, etc., as long as it gives the essired defect. Be happy!!

A Prayer

A prayer for all those affected by the unrest in the middle of August, based on prayers and thoughts left by people coming into the Centre at the time

We pray for all those whose livelihoods were destroyed or damaged.

We pray for all those who work to protect and help the public in difficult times.

We pray for those who lost loved ones,
and for all who suffered and maybe are still feeling grief, pain, fear or anger.

The broken glass has been mended,
but only God can heal the broken hearts and shattered lives.

Gracious God, we ask for your peace, hope, love and wisdom
for those who suffer, for those who make important and far-reaching decisions,
for those who seek to show your love and care to those around them.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

Wendy Firmin



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.

Hot and cold drinks can be supplied in the meeting rooms as often as required. Buffet meals can be pre-ordered. These range from a simple sandwich menu to a full buffet

Full details and prices are available on our website, www.carrslane.co.uk, or you may call the conference team on 0121 643 6151 if you have any questions or email booking@carrslane.co.uk.



Carrs Lane
FAIR TRADE SHOP

Open here in the city at
Carrs Lane Church Centre
Tuesday to Friday 10.30am - 2.30pm
(and Saturdays in November and December)
and after morning worship on first and third Sundays
Visit us for your Fair Trade needs
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0121 643 6151 fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk
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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 5.00pm
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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