

# Journey



**The continuing story**

of

**The Church at Carrs Lane**

**October 2015**



## Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

**A**s I write, I have been with the Church at Carrs Lane for less than a month. Thank you all for making me so welcome, and for being the enthusiastic, interesting, loving, open-hearted folk that you are.

For me this summer has been a time of change – of goodbyes, leaving, letting go and then of newness, greetings, learning the new. Doctor Who sometimes refers to Time as ‘wibbly wobbly timey wimey’... and he has something there. Where there is an end, there is a new beginning waiting to happen... where there is a beginning, there are endings of what was. And just when we think everything is settled and becoming humdrum...well we never know what might happen...!

I think that the message for us all in times of change and in times of same-ness, is that God is with us in it all. In the challenges, the pains, the joys, the successes, the failures, of letting go, making new starts, or keeping going where we're at. God is with us.

I think sometimes that I am so ‘used to’ hearing this, that the words can fail to make an impact, but this is AMAZING! God – God of all time, all history and future, of all that is and is to come; God who made the world, who comes close to us in Jesus and lives amongst us... God is with us. God who understands our deepest thoughts and feelings, God who holds our heart dear, God who cares, God who weeps with us and joys with us. God is with us. Once we realise this and let it ‘soak in’, fears can go. The same-ness is transformed. Change holds no panic. We are not alone.

Whether you're new to Birmingham (in which case, Welcome!!), or a very established Brummie, whether you're a student, retired, working, currently without work; whether you're old, young, or in between; whether you're skint, rich or in between; whether you have a strong faith, have no idea what you believe, have lots of questions... wherever you're at and whoever you are, the case remains the same... God is with us. And that changes everything.

If you are already part of the Church at Carrs Lane, thank you for your welcome 😊 If you are wondering whether to come along or whether to come back, do it! Go on, there's a little gap in this Church with your name on it 😊

I look forward to getting to know you more.

Peace to you,  
Ruth

## Sunday Worship during October

### Sunday 4 October

10.30am Morning worship, including the Lord's Supper, led by Neil Johnson  
*Worship will be followed by First Sunday Lunch – all welcome*

### Sunday 11 October

10.30am Morning worship, including Harvest celebration, led by Neil Johnson and Ruth Yorke. *Followed by Church Meeting – all welcome*  
2.45pm for 3.00pm Children's Church – Kids Aloud does Holy Habits 'Prayer'

### Sunday 18 October

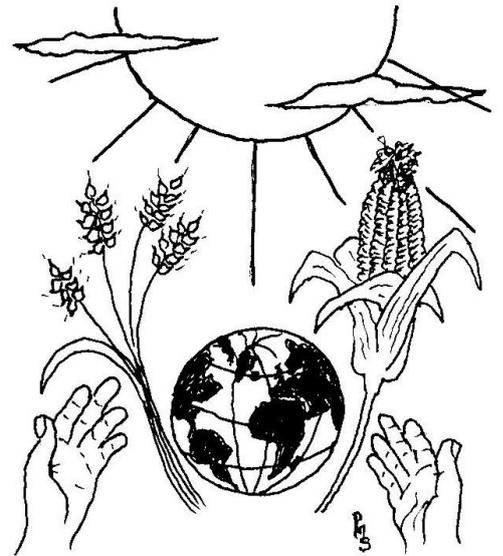
10.30am Morning worship led by Jo Powell  
4.00pm Street Banquet – hospitality and fellowship for vulnerable members of Birmingham's communities, inspired by Jesus' story of the Great Feast

### Sunday 25 October

10.30am All-age worship led by Diana Cullum-Hall

**W**e are will celebrating Harvest at Carrs Lane on Sunday 11 October. If you would like to bring a gift for the Aston and Nechells Foodbank, these are the things they would currently find most helpful:

1. toilet rolls, deodorants, soap, long life milk, fruit juice, fruit squash, tinned fruit.
2. Financial donations to help meet administration and rental costs of circa £7k per annum and also enable them to buy additional food items in lines they run short of.



Please note that the **November Journey** will be printed on Friday 23 October due to holiday commitments. Therefore, any articles for inclusion must be received in the office by Tuesday 20 October at the very latest. Thanks Carol

## Notices

**Carrs Lane Film Club** Thursdays each month - prayer at 7pm followed by a film. Forthcoming Films: 22 October - Life of Brian (15); 26 November - Waltz with Bashir (18); 17 December - Muppet Christmas Carol.

**Silent Voices Exhibition at Carrs Lane** – images showing everyday life in the village of Bil'in in the Occupied West Bank of Palestine seen through the eyes of children. Open **1,2,5,6,8,9 October**, 11am to 3pm.

**Sunday 4 October Christians and Climate Change** 7.30 – 9.00 pm at Cotteridge Quaker meeting house B30 1JB. Four speakers will explore 'Christians and climate change' speaking briefly from their own faith, church's teaching and personal perspective, followed by discussion.

**Wednesday 14 October** 6.00 at Carrs Lane Birmingham Fairtrade Association will be celebrating ten years as a Fairtrade city.

**Sunday 18 October Progression4Africa** event from 12:15 at Carrs Lane, including African food and short presentations from Eliane Kafuka who runs a small charity, Anna and Amina Stokes on the contribution towards reaching the UN Millennium goals. With retiring collection to support the work.

**Tuesday 20 October** at All Saints Church, Kings Heath and **Wednesday 21 October** at St Pauls Church, Stoke-on-Trent. Riding Lights Theatre Co – **Baked Alaska, Time to Change the Temperature** – Other dates/venues available, see [www.ridinglights.org](http://www.ridinglights.org). Box office 01904 613000.

**Thursday 22 October** An Evening With... Margaret Hodge at Birmingham Progressive Synagogue, Roseland Way, B15 1HD. Vegan/vegetarian Buffet (£3) from 6:15pm, Meeting 7pm-9pm. Methodist Tax Justice Network and Jubilee Debt Campaign Birmingham welcome you to this open meeting with Margaret Hodge MP MBE, speaking on her experiences from five years spent on the frontline in the fight against tax dodging as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee. Contact Matthew Jones at [mtjncoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:mtjncoordinator@gmail.com) and let us know whether you will be attending the buffet and the meeting, or the meeting only.

**Saturday 24 October at 7pm** Songs of Hope for Africa at Banners Gate Community Church, Westwood Road, B73 6UH with Juliet Mukisa, a singer/songwriter from Uganda, Joyous Symphony a gospel choir full of African spirit, Henry Nelson, with the gospel in his voice! and Banners Gate Music Group with a heart for the gospel! Admission is free but there will be an offering to support projects in Africa.

**Saturday 30 October** 6.00pm at The Bridge Church Redditch, B97 4JX. Elaine Storkey Lecture '**Is Christianity dying in the West?**' All welcome. Retiring collection.

**Saturday 7 November** 10am-4pm at Perry Hall Methodist Church, **Making and Growing Disciples**, a Holy Habits meeting. Contact [bfrancis@birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:bfrancis@birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk) or on 0121 616 1800.

## Fortress Europe: pulling up the drawbridge

**Tuesday 20 October 19.00– 21.30 at Carrs Lane.** Central England Quaker Asylum Group and the Church at Carrs Lane invite you an evening of discussion on the current refugee situation, including the position of those asylum-seekers in the UK who do not appear in the current media coverage. Andrew Lane, Representative at the Quaker Council for European Affairs in Brussels, will bring us up-to-date with the developments at European level, as well as informing us about the dangers of plans for the use of military intervention to control the flow of refugees. In addition to looking at the situation in the UK and in the EU, we will consider how we can supply asylum-seekers both individually and corporately.

## Christmas Friendship Appeal 2015

**C**ould this be the most important Christmas card you'll send this year? We are asking church/group members to write just one extra Christmas card and share the joy of Christmas with an MHA resident or Live at Home member.



Following last year's appeal the chaplain from Hatherlow House in Southport, Heather Draper said:

*"each resident received a Christmas card from a friend/supporter, we then enjoyed opening, reading and displaying the remaining cards around our crib. The conversation around the geography and places and churches of the donors was lively and began many recollections of places visited and I would encourage senders to include this in addition to a greeting and name"*

If you would like to get involved please contact Lesley France for more details Tel 01332 296200 or email [lesley.france@mha.org.uk](mailto:lesley.france@mha.org.uk) or write to MHA Freepost, 499 Derby, DE1 9BR

## About People

**I**t is with sadness that we report the death of Betty Leadbeater on 27 September. Betty, and her husband Roy, were long standing members of Carrs Lane. Betty battled with dementia for several years. There are no funeral details as yet, but it will not be in Birmingham.

## Hello .....and Goodbye.....

**O**n 5 September a group of folk from Carrs Lane travelled by coach to Swansea to join others for the Induction of Revd Neil Riches to his new pastorate. Although it is a half time post he will be minister to three churches there.

We were warmly greeted at the first stop with a welcome cuppa to accompany our packed lunches at one of Neil's new churches dated 1889. Our next port of call was at the larger more modern church, for the service of Induction attended by many people from various places where Neil had worked – and even an old school friend.

Representatives from the three churches spoke to welcome Neil to their communities and we enjoyed joining in the singing together – who couldn't in Wales? Afterwards, over a sumptuous buffet provided by church members, we had a chance to meet the people Neil will be working with, and to chat to other friends who had come for the occasion. It was a lovely day out and we thoroughly enjoyed our visit.

The next day at Carrs Lane we met Neil's school friend Tony Bridgewater again when he played the piano for one of our regular musical performances, this time with violinist Anna Downes, organised by Tim Batty, after the First Sunday Lunch. This was again a very pleasant hour of music-making by two talented instrumentalists.

To round off a truly inspirational weekend we stayed for the service of welcome to The Church at Carrs Lane for Deacon Ruth Yorke. She will be working at the Centre as part of our ministerial team, concentrating on setting up a HelpDesk in the building, to provide support for the many vulnerable people of Birmingham. Once again we had a large congregation, made up of Ruth's friends and family, along with people she has worked with in the past and her new companions and members from The Church at Carrs Lane.

Pat Davies

.....and Thank You from....

.....Christian Aid.....

**T**hank you very much for sending a cheque for £866 for Christian Aid from The Church at Carrs Lane as part of your annual offertory. Please find enclosed a receipt for your records and do thank all those involved in choosing to allocate such funds in this way.

You may well be aware that in this our seventieth year, the focus of Christian Aid Week 2015, has been on transformative work in Ethiopia and how something as unlikely as a cow and two goats can make the difference between hopelessness and a more secure future for women in pastoralist communities. Droughts have left

thousands vulnerable. When the droughts hit hard, men have to take their livestock to find better pastureland, and many women have been left behind, struggling to feed their families.

At Christian Aid, we continually witness how giving, acting and praying brings about great transformation in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

In emergency situations and committed, long-term development, we tackle the causes and the symptoms of poverty across the globe. We choose our partners on the ground carefully, working with all kinds of local groups who see great need, and are innovative and effective in helping communities to change their situations. Please continue to hold them and those they are supporting in your prayers.

Your commitment and generosity for Christian Aid will help poor families around the world escape from grinding poverty and will help communities build a brighter tomorrow. Thank you.

Dave King Christian Aid Regional Coordinator for Birmingham

### .....also Christian Aid.....

**T**hank you for your donation of £85 towards Christian Aid's refugee Crisis Appeal. You are so consistent in your support for our work and it is very much appreciated. Please find enclosed your receipt.

Here are a few eyewitness accounts of the vital work our ACT Alliance sister agencies are doing to help refugees in Europe.

Ahmed Shaiah has made it to Hungary. He is one of the thousands of Syrians that have made the journey along the Serbian-Hungarian border in the hope of a safe refuge. Traveling with his wife and two children, Ahmed hopes to reach Sweden.

In Hungary, our ACT sister agency is working on the Serbian-Hungarian border where it's estimated that 1,500 people are crossing each day. They met with a Palestinian woman, travelling with her three young children, as they crossed the border into Hungary. She told them she was forced to flee Aleppo, Syria after their family home was destroyed in an air-raid. Fleeing with her children, she has spent the past month sleeping on the streets and road-side ditches as the family make their way towards Germany. Once there, she hopes to be reunited with her husband who has already reached Germany.

Christian Aid is working with churches and other agencies in supporting humanitarian efforts taking place in Europe and the Middle East. In Hungary, Hungarian

InterChurch Aid is distributing blankets and other non-food items. To date, they have helped over 5000 with vital assistance as they cross the border into Hungary.

Thank you for your continued support with this work to provide vital assistance to those facing fear and uncertainty.

Mary Reay, Regional Coordinator

### .....and The Methodist Church.....

**O**n behalf of The Methodist Church I would like to thank The Church at Carrs Lane for the donation of £562.87 received on the 18 September towards The World Mission Fund Refugee Support.

Your giving is enabling us to channel support right to where it is needed, through our Methodist and United Methodist Church partners in Germany, Lampedusa, Macedonia and Serbia. So far you have helped us raise over £4000. Thank you.

Why not keep up to date? Check the Methodist website ([www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)) for prayers, reflections and press updates.

Stephen Drury, Fundraising Officer

### .....and Traidcraft

Dear Joan,

**W**e've just published this year's Development Review and we are simply overwhelmed by the level of support we've received from you this year. Donations to our Fair Necessities appeal earlier in 2015 totalled over £615,000 which will be matched pound for pound by the Government.

But Fair Necessities was just one success story - thanks to our amazing supporters, in the last year alone, we've been able to work on 37 projects in 22 countries, improving the lives of over 678,000 artisans and farmers and their families.

We are so proud of all we've achieved but none of it would have been possible without our incredible supporters. From all of us here at Traidcraft and all the people we work with across the world, a heartfelt thank you. Best wishes,

Paul Oliver  
Head of Supporter Relations Traidcraft

## Windsor, England – A Confrontation over the Meaning of Resurrection

**O**n one stop near the end of my lecture tour of Europe during this summer, I confronted a person whose question drove me back to the series I had been developing in this column about what the Bible actually says about the resurrection of Jesus. It thus helped me to re-orient myself to the discussion on the Bible's resurrection narratives and thus to re-enter my ongoing world.

This lecture was sponsored by the Maidstone Chapter of the Progressive Christianity Network of the United Kingdom. This organization was birthed and nurtured during its early years by The Reverend Hugh Dawes, one of the most creative clergypersons I have ever known. Cambridge trained, but now retired, Hugh spent his entire career as an academically-oriented parish priest, relating the world of Christian scholarship to the men and women who gathered for worship on a Sunday morning. He became aware that there were many church-goers who could not twist their brains into first century pretzels sufficiently to continue living inside the traditional patterns of Christian worship. That is what moved him to create a new structure that he called "The Progressive Christianity Network." This network took the form of people from a variety of religious backgrounds, Anglican, Catholic, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed, as well as a sprinkling of those who called themselves agnostics or atheists, meeting together from once a week to once a month to read and to discuss scholarly Christian books, the kind most of them had never read before. For many of its participants, PCN is the only thing that keeps them either rooted in or related to religion generally or to Christianity in particular. They are sometimes excited by new visions of Christianity, but generally bored by the church. Today, active PCN groups are in almost every city across the UK. A quarterly newspaper keeps them informed about and related to each other. That journal also acts as a forum in which ideas, books and knowledge about potential speakers can be shared.

My particular lecture was set for 2:30 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon at Holy Trinity Church in Windsor, a lovely town about 20 miles west of London, known for Windsor Castle on one end and the international headquarters of Legoland on the other. There were 120 or so people in attendance that day. Some had come from as far away as Birmingham by public transportation. Those not familiar with the roads and trains in England need to understand that all roads and trains lead to London. So, anyone taking a train from Birmingham to Windsor, has to go to London and then back out to Windsor, making the journey far longer than one might imagine, given the actual distance between the two cities. Still they came in great numbers. The lecture was well received. I spent most of my time outlining the way the Christian story grew between the life of Jesus and the creation of the New Testament. Miracles, for example, did not enter the Jesus story until the 8th decade in Mark. The Virgin Birth was an early ninth decade addition in Matthew and later in Luke. The idea of resurrection as a physical resuscitation was also added to the developing Christian tradition in the ninth decade. The account of Jesus' ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost were both tenth decade additions from the book of Acts. John's gospel, in the late tenth decade was the first to assert "identity" between God and Jesus. These biblical facts are generally undisputed in the citadels of Christian learning, but many people in the pews of our churches have never heard

of the evolving nature of Christianity. They rather hold a homogenized version of this faith, which assumes that the Bible dropped from heaven, fully written, divided into chapters and verses and very probably in the King James' Version.

The two-hour session at Windsor was divided about equally between lecture and questions. I follow a format in which every other question must come from a woman. It is my way of trying to redress the grievances of the past in which the voices of women were seldom heard in places of worship. I also urged those asking questions to try to avoid making speeches under the guise of asking a question. This admonition seldom works!

Near the end of the question period a man came to the microphone. His white hair was rather long around his shoulders. He began his "question" with a challenge and a long biblical analysis. After at least five minutes of his oratory, I interrupted him to inquire as to the nature of the question he had yet to ask. He responded with some irritation, but continued to explain for another two or three minutes. I interrupted again and said I hear and understand your preamble, but can you state your question. He then said that resurrection was all over the Old Testament, that Elijah raised the dead and that I was simply wrong to say that understanding the resurrection of Jesus as bodily resuscitation did not enter the Christian tradition until the ninth decade. His concern was finally clear, but his question was still not actually stated. I nonetheless decided to try to address his concerns first with some factual data from the Bible. Belief in life after death, in a personal and meaningful way, did not become prevalent in Judaism much before the period of the Maccabees in the second century BCE. The growth of this idea was fueled by persecution in which a number of young Jews, faithful to their religion, had chosen to be put to death rather than renounce or violate their faith. The justice of God seemed to demand that God grant to these victims the compensatory reward of life after death. Prior to this time, the only Hebrew concept of an afterlife was what they called "Sheol," a bleak, shadowy place to which all the dead went. It was not a place of reward or punishment, but only an abode of the dead.

My questioner, however, was saying that since both Elijah and Elisha were said to have raised people from the dead, then resurrection as a physical phenomenon was known long before the time that I was suggesting. Then he added Jesus raising Lazarus from his tomb as his final argument. One recognized quickly that this gentleman was not inquiring or seeking to understand, he was challenging, committed to showing me how wrong I was. That is not a problem; I have been wrong many times. Being challenged is the way the life of scholarship evolves. What was also clear was that he was not willing to entertain anything I said.

When he finished talking, however, I began my response first by assembling the biblical data. There are two stories in the Old Testament where someone is said to have been raised from death back into life. Elijah raised to life the only son of a widow. Elisha raised to life a child who had died. In the New Testament, there are five narratives giving accounts in which Jesus raised someone from the dead. Three of the five are various accounts of the same event. Jesus was said to have restored to life the daughter of a synagogue ruler, Jairus (Mark 5:21ff, Matt 9:18-26, Luke 8:40-58). The fourth occurs only in Luke where in the village of Nain, Jesus raised to

life the only son of a widow (Luke 7:11ff). The last one occurs only in John. It is the story of Jesus calling to the deceased Lazarus to walk out of his tomb (John: 11).

Biblical scholars over the last two hundred years have raised many questions about the literal accuracy of any of these narratives. In the case of the Old Testament, the accounts of Elijah and Elisha raising the dead were written long after the events were supposed to have occurred. Did the stories grow in supernatural power during these years? Were these people really dead or were they only unconscious or even asleep? Is the similarity in attributing to both Jesus and Elijah the ability to raise from the dead “the only son of a widow” just a coincidence? Does the similarity between Elisha raising a child from the dead with Jesus raising a child from the dead mean they are related? Is there any evidence that Elijah and Elisha stories have simply been wrapped around the memory of Jesus? Is there any possibility that the story of Lazarus being raised from his tomb four days after his burial, told only in John, is history? Could such a public and dramatic event, if it had actually occurred, have escaped anyone’s notice for 65-70 years before it was mentioned for the first time in the Fourth Gospel?

It is important to distinguish between these biblical stories and the resurrection of Jesus. Every raising from the dead story in the Bible, other than that of Jesus, portrayed a person being restored to his or her previous physical life, from which presumably someday they would have to die again. This is not the claim made for Jesus in the earliest parts of the New Testament.

In 54 CE, Paul, writing to the Corinthians, suggests that Jesus was raised not back into life, but into the presence of God (I Cor 15). In 58 CE, in the Epistle to the Romans, Paul says, Jesus, having been raised from the dead, “dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him.” That is not resuscitation; that is an attempt to describe an entrance into a new dimension of life or eternity. The author of Colossians, probably writing within a decade of Paul’s death, says: “If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.” When Colossians was written, the story of Jesus’ ascension was still some 20 years away from being written. The resurrection of Jesus was originally not about being restored to this life from death. It was about transcending the boundaries between life and death, about entering the eternity of the life of God. My questioner could not hear this distinction. He departed, suggesting that I should get out of the church since I did not affirm “the true faith!”

Idolatry comes in many forms. Biblical fundamentalism and creedal expressions that pretend to capture “the true faith” are only two of them. Christianity is a journey into the mystery of God. To that journey I invited my fellow travellers in Windsor, England. Many came to join the journey, but you can’t win them all!

John Shelby Spong ([www.johnshelbyspong.com](http://www.johnshelbyspong.com))

*I can vouch for the authenticity of this account...because I was there! And I now have the DVD of the talk, if anyone would like to borrow it... Julie Grove.*

## Don't Run Away

Don't run away without the bread because  
you will need it when.... you're hungry!

a reflection based on John 6: 6-67



Richard Becher

*The bread I like  
is not the source of life  
but the Bread of Life  
had a taste I did not like  
so when I ran away  
I took with me  
the bread I like  
and left my life behind!*

*So if you run away  
don't leave behind  
the Bread of Life  
because you will need it  
when you're hungry....*

*The bread I like  
was not the source of life  
for the hunger that I felt  
but I had left behind  
the Bread of Life  
so all I had  
in the wilderness with me  
was the taste of death....*



## You are the Salt of the Earth

**T**o follow Jesus is to be Salt in our World (Matthew 5:13). What can we make of this obscure metaphor?

Salt has many uses. In cooking it is best used in moderation, just a small amount of salt in a pot of food can make a difference while too much can spoil a meal. We are often called to be this gentle, almost imperceptible, transforming presence which makes a positive difference to those around us. This difference can be so gentle that it can be all too easily missed by the wider world. Simple acts of kindness, money given without great fanfare, hospitality offered, the homeless fed and sheltered, food banks stocked and staffed. As Christians we are called to a gentle gospel of quiet humble service to those most in need. Even if we can only do a little bit it is important to begin, to do something and to trust the fruits to God.

But salt is not always a subtle substance. There is the expression “To rub salt in the wound”. Salt can be used as a way of cleaning wounds, in the immediate moment this cleaning causes pain but this pain is for a greater healing. As Christians we have a vocation to be this salt in the wounds of humanity. There are times when we are called to make painful challenges in the pursuit of healing. We are called to challenge our society’s addictions to over-consumption, to sectarianism, to excluding the foreigner and to the accumulation of wealth. We are called to challenge unfair trade, tax evasion, the trade in arms, destructive fossil fuel extraction and cuts in services for the most vulnerable. We are called to challenge the demonization of the poor, the immigrant and the Muslim. When we become this salt in the wounds of humanity those we challenge will inevitably feel pain, and in their fear will undoubtedly send some of this pain back in our direction. Such is our privilege as part of the body of Christ, to share in the sufferings of Christ (Colossians 1:24).

We are salt of the earth. We must not lose our saltiness.

Matthew Neville

## No Faith in War

On Tuesday 8 September, I, along with many others, gathered at the gates of the ExCeL centre in London where preparations were going ahead for one of the world's biggest arms fairs. Part of a sustained week of creative action to impede the setup of the event, Tuesday was entitled "No Faith in War" and was an invitation to people of faith to stand against the evils of the arms trade. Gathering from about 9am, we maintained a presence of both prayer and protest at the gates all day, with people coming and going throughout.



Peacefully, prayerfully, many of those present stepped out into the roads, preventing access to the entrances to the centre where preparations for next week's exhibition are underway. Multiple blockades throughout the day, including one point where entrances at both ends of the centre were closed. Informal prayers and songs sat in front of a growing tailback of lorries and a funeral procession for the unnumbered victims of the arms trade were among the powerful moments which took place in the approach roads to the ExCeL gates.

This was not a passive vigil of witness but a creative, active response to one of the great evils of our time; but the atmosphere throughout remained one of respectful peace as well as of passion deeply rooted in gospel values. I remained conscious through the day of the stark contrast between this and the preparations behind closed doors for an event which will contribute to the continuing escalation of instability and conflict; the human cost of which is increasingly evident.

DSEi takes place once every two years and brings thousands of arms manufacturers and dealers together with representatives of global governments and military, including those from some of the world's most repressive regimes. Even if actual money doesn't change hands, we are facilitating relationships between some very dodgy characters. As the refugee crisis in Europe draws our attention to increasing global conflict and human misery, there is an almost sickening irony in knowing many of these conflicts are fuelled by a trade which is being encouraged here in our capital.

For me, the theme of the beatitudes reverberated through the day. We heard them several times with different groups independently choosing its inclusion in their liturgies. The power of Jesus' words, spoken as they were to an audience living under a military occupation, resonated through acts of repentance and resistance, in the face of a system which continues to perpetuate violence and oppression.

But equally, the sense of joy and community which pervaded the day, even in the seemingly impenetrable face of death and destruction allowed me, us, to experience the truth of His blessing, that the peacemakers and those who hunger and thirst for justice will know happiness.

I came away uplifted and inspired. This, for me, is where and how the church should be. And I am grateful to all who were church with and for me that day.

Stephanie Neville



## **Commitment for Life** *(from Moving Stories 185)*

### **Cremisan Valley.**

This is a quickly changing situation. At the time of writing this the EU diplomats had just visited the Cremisan Valley, where an ancient olive grove is being uprooted to make way for the construction of a section of the separation barrier which will cut off 58 families, from Beit Jala, from their agricultural lands and their livelihoods. They were briefed on the situation by lawyers from Saint-Yves centre for human rights, the local priest and resident land owners. The EU has endorsed the advisory opinion of the local Court of Justice stating that the construction of the separation barrier on occupied territory is illegal.

On the same day, Israeli bulldozers, protected by the Israeli Defence Forces, uprooted over 100 olive trees in the West Bethlehem area of Bir Owneh / Wad Ahmad. These old and well established trees belonged to families from the Christian village of Beit Jala. Some of the trees were uprooted whole, likely to be sold for huge prices in illegal settlement garden centres.

Each day prayers are said at a service, watched by the Israeli Defence Soldiers and often drowned out by the bulldozers clearing the land. In recent weeks 7 families from the area have left to find a new life in Europe. A new report by The Society of St. Yves - Catholic Center for Human Rights is a comprehensive summary and analysis of the Cremisan Valley case. The report aims to shed light on the grave violation of building the annexation wall in Cremisan and its destructive effect on the Palestinian Christian families living in the area.

### **Gaza**

August saw the 1st anniversary of the temporary ceasefire in Gaza. The crisis, however, never stopped. Massive destruction, including to physical infrastructure and private housing, human lives and social fabric, continues to traumatise Palestinians, who struggle to get by with unemployment rate of over 40% and food insecurity at over 70%. 100,000 people remain displaced. This occurs against the backdrop of 8 years of blockade, the virtual absence of large-scale reconstruction, political stalemate and the absence of a formal ceasefire. Of the 19,000 homes destroyed none have been fully rebuilt. Around 100,000 people are still homeless, hospitals and schools lie in ruins, and whole neighbourhoods have no access to running water. Without fundamental changes in the Gaza Strip, including a full lifting of the blockade, the situation risks further deterioration and another round of senseless violence. To read more and take action. #OpenGaza [gaza.ochaopt.org](http://gaza.ochaopt.org)

### **Susiya**

Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states, "*Any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons ... is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.*" The reason given by the Israeli authorities for the destruction of Susiya is the lack of building permits which are almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain.

Much has been done to highlight the plight of Susiya in recent weeks, in the international press and media.

Haneen Zoabi, the first Palestinian-Israeli woman elected to the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), came and spoke with the people.

There have been protests and visits by such groups as:-

Operazione Colomba – an Italian nonviolent peace organisation

Combatants for Peace – a joint Israeli-Palestinian peace group

Amnesty International – a human rights organisation

Susiya has been given a slight temporary reprieve from demolition. However, this has made the settlers angry and the village worries about reprisals.

Please also remember the Christian schools in Israel as they battle with funding issues.

*From the Commitment for Life Website*

## Writing on the Wall: Facts and Comments about Separation

The Separation Wall (also called the Separation Barrier) consists of concrete walls, fences, ditches, razor wire, groomed sand paths, an electronic monitoring system, patrol roads, and a buffer zone.

Around 38,000 Palestinians with work permits must attempt to cross checkpoints daily to access their own farmland and work, as well as around 14,000 who risk imprisonment by crossing the wall illegally. Even for those who have permits, getting through checkpoints can prove difficult.

After the Wall around Rachel's Tomb was built I felt terrible. Nobody was walking here, only the cats and dogs. The wall creates a feeling ... the feeling that it surrounds you, that you are not permitted to move. Every time, every day you see the Wall. When I look outside through the window I see the sunrise or the sunset, the wall is in front of me. When I go to the wall something closes in on my heart ... as if the wall is on my heart.

*(Melvina Awwad, Bethlehem)*

I belonged to the Anglican Church in Jerusalem and was a volunteer there ... now I cannot go to Jerusalem; the Wall separates me from my church, from my life. All my life was in Jerusalem! I was there daily. I worked in a school as a volunteer and all my friends live there. They took our land and with that they took our lives, but our roots are here. The Palestinians will stay.

*(Antoinette Kinesvich, Bethlehem)*

Viewed from the Israeli side, the Separation Barrier saves lives, a sacred task. No wall is one-sided, though, and every wall under the sun casts a shadow. For this to be a wholly holy wall, we must also see the barrier from the Palestinian side. The route of the Barrier restricts Palestinians' access to schools and health care, to places of worship and family homes, to fields, to livelihood. It demeans dignity and oppresses lives.

*(Rabbi Michael Schwartz, Jerusalem)*

*Contributed by Wendy Firmin*

## On This Day ...

From the Chronicle of the London Missionary Society October 1915

*This reflection on different forms of ministry might not be expressed in this way today but the basic idea is still valid in our time.*

### The Saint with Working Hands

§ In the midst of a heathen land, far away, a saint lived, working for God with hand and eye, serving Him with mind and heart. Others were there also, who ministered in holy things to the people, took in their hands the Holy Cup, brake the Blessed Bread, and gave to those who hungered and thirsted for the Bread and Water of life. These men had spent years of quiet thought and study in holy things, and in ordination had felt the gracious hands of the Blessed Lord on their heads, had received from His hands the white garment of holiness in which alone they might stand before His Table. The saint, in humility, thought himself unworthy for this high office, so he trained himself to serve the Lord in other ways. He worked with hand and eye, and consecrated these in the great service. In the far-away land the other saints built churches, but he built a workshop, because in his heart he looked back to a workshop on Nazareth where a Carpenter worked; as he worked he kept the vision of Perfection ever before his eyes. The bench was the Holy Table for him, and those who came to learn of him found the Lord in the blessed sacrament of daily toil.

§ There came to serve the King in the far-away land a young beginner in the things of His Kingdom, who had no great gift of hand or mind; all he had to give was love that could find expression only in service. He came, timid, fearful, ashamed of his empty hands and his poor thought. Into their midst he came with hands that trembled, feet that faltered, but with eyes that sought for the Christ in every soul he met. That the Christ vision was faint even in the Holy Place before the altar perplexed him; were his eyes dim and blurred with the dust of the way? Had he already lost that purity of heart which alone enabled him to see his Lord?

§ The questions burned into his heart, and into the midst of his distress the saint came. His voice, strong and clear, his words those of one who had all the precious things of life safely hidden in the heart, calmed the troubled spirit of the younger brother. And in the saint's workshop the vision came. To many who went there it was poor and lowly, a workshop, nothing more, nothing less; many of the other saints passed it by unnoticed. But when the young beginner stood within it, the rough, uneven walls widened, and for him were glistening marble, the low thatch became a lofty arch, the planks of wood strong pillars, wonderfully carved, the whole place a Holy Temple vast and beautiful; the carpenter's bench was transformed into the high altar where the mystic bread was broken; through the glorious windows the light of heaven came.

§ The young beginner bent low in adoration before the altar, the priest who ministered there was he who served the King with hand and eye and wore continually the "white flower of a blameless life." The young beginner looked at him. In the eyes that saw so keenly, measured so accurately, he saw the searching glance of the Lord Himself; in the strong, tense hands he saw the faint impress of a nail: surely in this man was the Christ revealed. This saint of the working hands for whom Christ was in the daily toil had had the greatest ordination of all, for his was 'The mighty ordination of the

Pierced Hands.' With step sure and unfaltering, the young beginner entered with a song the ranks of those who serve, for he had seen Christ in the place of the vision.

## **From the Carrs Lane Journal October 1915**

**Editorial** *(by Sidney M. Berry)*

The signs are now clear and evident that the nation must brace itself to endure another winter of war. Most of us had believed up to the last that some sudden turn of events might bring the end in sight. No doubt it was unreasonable enough, but hope and reason do not always join hands in agreement. Now, however, in spite of the more favourable movement which is in its initial stages at the time of writing, there seems to be little chance that the end will be even in sight by the end of the winter, and most of us are prepared to consider even larger possibilities than that in the strain of endurance thus imposed upon our people it is spiritual qualities which count on the side of effectiveness. There have been implications of late, among a certain section, of restlessness and impatience, and as a result we have seen a spirit of party and even of faction raising its head once again. That there may have been reason for a certain amount of impatience I am prepared to admit. A nation which is kept in the dark will almost inevitably show signs of nervousness after a time. When people do not know the truth about things, the time will come when they imagine the worst and interpret the silence of leaders in a pessimistic sense. But every true patriot must deplore the revival of the party spirit in our midst at this present time. We are, of course, bound to differ as to the wisdom of different measures, but it is not to such differences that I refer when I speak of the revival of the party spirit. I mean the manner in which such controversies are conducted, and the growing tendency to find a scapegoat on whom all the blame for slow progress can be conveniently laid. When the Coalition Government was formed, most of us hailed its appearance with welcome, but there was one danger in the new departure. When one party in the State was in power, the other party could always be called in as an alternative in the event of loss of confidence. A Coalition Government meant, and still means, that there is no alternative. For that reason every attempt to discredit the Government today is an unpatriotic act, and ought not to be tolerated. Criticism there must be, but faction must be ruled out. The nation needs to be recalled to the spirit of trust in its leaders, and a quiet but resolute confidence in the issue of the struggle. The nation which is to win must prove itself possessed of a strength which can be patient. Impatience at the present time is a mark of weakness. For there can be no speedy end of a trial on such a gigantic scale as is before us today. It was in some such circumstances that the prophet Isaiah uttered his famous message: "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." And there is no word which is more appropriate to the present hour. The nation which endures to the end will be victorious, and all the spiritual forces in the nation ought to be exerting their influence in fostering that strength of spirit which can be patient amidst slow progress and enduring through good and evil tidings.

## **From the Carrs Lane Journal October 1965**

*I remember the 1960s; I was there! This piece evokes memories of my own situation.*

## Summer Holiday 1965 (*Elizabeth Bowden*)

§ Junior Seventy Club's second holiday at Newquay was denied the overwhelming success of the first, mainly by the weather. Fresh winds and frequent showers provided a sharp contrast to last year's continual sunshine, and caused activities to be different and more varied.

§ Newquay's wonderful beaches tend to lose a little of their sparkle when viewed beneath grey and cloudy skies; nevertheless, we bathed nearly every day in the tremendous breakers which make surfing a common sport. Since sunbathing was rarely possible, we played energetic beach games such as football, rounders and chain tag.

§ We went for several walks, and it was during one of these that we had a rather exciting experience. From the cliff we saw a man in a narrow inlet of the sea, buffeted by strong winds and pouring rain, being hauled by two men up the almost sheer rock by a lifeline. We rushed to their aid and helped to pull him to safety; he told us that he had tried to rescue a black Labrador stranded on a rock surrounded by the incoming tide. Lifeguards had been called, and we watched admiringly as they manoeuvred the unharmed dog to safety. The following day we were overjoyed to find ourselves mentioned when the incident was reported in the paper!

§ Many hours were spent in "the hut", playing darts and tiddly-winks, and "sardines" and "panic post" helped to pass away the evenings. Wednesday and Thursday evenings were occupied with entertainments arranged by two groups, perhaps the most notable feature being the imitation of Peter Cooke and Dudley Moore by John Nicol-Harper and Terence Davies. Unfortunately they seemed to grow strangely attached to their assumed voices, and have remained "Pete and Dud" ever since!

§ The catering at Newquay this year was very successful. Mr. Hubbard provided excellent menus, and two people were responsible for the cooking every day. Several of the party fought gallant battles with large helpings of Butterscotch "Instant Whip", one or two being forced to surrender, but apart from this the food went down very well!

§ Numerous ingenious tricks were played in the dormitories, ranging from hiding night attire to winding Mr. Hubbard's sleeping bag round the rafters – unfortunately he managed to retrieve it in about 5 minutes; annoying since we had spent half-an-hour putting it there!

§ On our last day the weather surprised us all, and we basked in hot sunshine on Porth beach, becoming red and sore! The "end-of-Newquay" party was held in the hut, and not on the beach as last year, and consisted of games and dancing.

§ Though it lacked the novelty and superb weather of last year, the holiday was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and helped to increase the family feeling which is the essential characteristic of Junior 70 Club.

§ Mr. Hubbard looked after us excellently, and we are sincerely grateful for his help in making the Club holiday so enjoyable.

*contributed by Wendy Firmin*

## My Red Rambler Bag

**M**y owner Francesca has put me on one side; she has another red rambler bag. I know because I saw her transfer my contents into it. I used to carry her wallet, comb, mobile phone (since 2001) keys, travelling toothbrush, lip salve, insect repellent, bus pass (since 2006) and loads more stuff she thought she might need on her rambles in the countryside. Sometimes, I used to go on ordinary days out, a trip to Bournemouth, Scarborough, Llandudno, Blackpool - lots of places Francesca liked to visit.

I've been all through the country with her, the Peak District, South Downs Way – twice. I've visited the Tyne Valley – Corbridge, Hexham and the Esk Valley where she stayed in an old fisherman's cottage in Whitby. I have been on a few more long distance footpaths – the Cotswolds Way, half of the Pembrokeshire Coast, the Ridgeway and most of the Dales Way. I've been to Skipton, Malham Cove; I was with her when she climbed up the three Yorkshire peaks – Pen-y-Gent, Whernside and Ingleborough. Fairly recently I was on a steam train on the Welsh Highland railway, Francesca and her husband had some fun there I can tell you.

Many times I've helped her husband carrying maps and guides in my back pocket, I liked being helpful, although when I was pushed inside a rucksack so that Francesca could balance on rough footpaths I missed all the beautiful scenery.

Of course I was nowhere near posh enough to go to Buckingham Palace or the theatre trip when she went to see *The Mousetrap*. The new one is posh, I noticed her new one is lined, I had to have small carrier bags inside me for the contents, I never let her things get wet!

Okay, so I've got a few holes but you would think Francesca would like a 'holy' bag wouldn't you? I remember carrying her small wallet containing printed texts – 'Promises from God'. She would read these on the journey back home. I wonder where she has put those. I am so jealous of the new bag, where will he travel to? I have travelled miles and miles, I love the Malvern Hills as much as she does, I will miss going out with her. I think she said I now belong to her husband, so maybe I will go out again.

Francesca Clayton

Please send your contribution for next month's Journey to the Editor,  
Mrs. Pat Davies, The Church @ Carrs Lane, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX  
or by email to [office@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:office@carrslane.co.uk).

A time for reflection during 'Harvest festival' celebrations

## Autumn Word Search

A F G T P W Y V H K S A U W L  
 M P A I H E B A N H A P W O S  
 N L L L L H L R E B M E V O N  
 T E E P L L A U T U M N V L I  
 K S A A O G H O S T Z L A E K  
 C M E W V L H S A U Q S D A P  
 Y E E V F E K A O R R Q R F M  
 J E X S R O S G H K Z M U H U  
 N J K H R A X W N E D R O J P  
 N T X A R S H R W Y N F G I Q  
 H R N O I U E U L Q G T C R M  
 E G O P E T C Y P J L O D A T  
 E V W C N J J J J R G W W K R  
 X A P A A L T D J Y U N W V U  
 F B L N Q S M R K H L Y K G B



- |           |          |         |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| ACORN     | HARVEST  | OAK     |
| AUTUMN    | LANTERN  | ORANGE  |
| FALL      | LEAF     | PILE    |
| GHOST     | LEAVES   | PUMPKIN |
| GOURD     | MAPLE    | SQUASH  |
| HALLOWEEN | NOVEMBER | TURKEY  |



## Harvest Picture to colour.....



## and some animal jokes.....

- What did the duck say when he bought lipstick? *Put it on my bill.*
- What did the egg say to the other egg? *Let's get cracking!*
- Why do cows have bells? *Because their horns don't work.*
- What do you call a pig with 3 eyes? *A piiiig*
- What would you see at a chicken show? *Hentertainment*
- What do you get if you cross rabbits and termites? *Bugs bunnies*
- Why do ducks watch the news? *To get the feather forecast.*
- What says 'quick, quick'? *A duck with hiccups.*
- What do pigs put on sore toes? *Oinkment!*
- Where do cows go on Friday night? *To the moo-vies.*
- Why did the farmer buy a brown cow? *Because he wanted chocolate milk.*
- Where does a hog look when he can't spell very well? *The pigtionary.*
- Why did the chicken cross the playground? *To get to the other slide.*
- What kind of beans can't grow in a garden? *Jelly Beans*

Dear God,

Each season brings something new for us to see and enjoy,

With sunny days and rainy days, our crops grow larger,

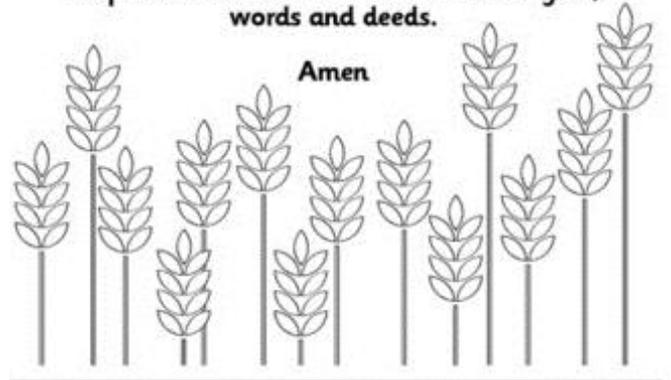
Fruit and vegetables ripen, ready for us to harvest.

Thank you for all of the food we have to eat,

Let us remember people who may not have enough.

Help us to be kind to others in our thoughts, words and deeds.

Amen



## Room Hire at Carrs Lane

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## The Church at Carrs Lane Regular Activities

### SUNDAYS

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Morning Worship</b>    | Every Sunday at 10.30am<br>with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month |
| <b>Children's Church</b>  | Second Sunday at 2.30pm   |
| <b>Radical Worship</b>    | Fourth Sunday at 6.00pm   |
| <b>First Sunday Lunch</b> | First Sunday each month at 12.30pm  |
| <b>Church Meeting</b>     | Second Sunday at 12 noon  |
| <b>Singing Group</b>      | Third Sunday 9.45 – 10.15am   |

### WEEK DAYS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Carrs Lane Lived Community meet for Prayers -</b><br>Monday to Friday 7.30am and 7.00pm, all are welcome to join them |   |
| <b>Lunchtime Healing Service</b>   | Every Wednesday 1.15pm  |
| <b>Prayer Group</b>  | First Wednesday at 7.00 pm  |
| <b>Thinking Allowed</b>  | First Thursday at 10.15 am  |
| <b>Harborne House Group</b>  | Fourth Tuesdays 2.00pm (various locations)  |
| <b>Central House Group at Carrs Lane</b>   | Third Wednesdays at 6.30pm  |
| <b>Coffee Drop-in</b>  | Fridays from 10.30am-12.00pm  |
| <b>Carrs Lane Choir Practice</b>   | Fridays at 7.00pm   |
| <b>Carrs Lane Players (drama group)</b>  | Fridays at 7.45 pm  |
| <b>Charity Knitting Circle</b>   | First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm  |
| <b>Carrs Lane Walking Group</b>  | usually meets monthly, see notice board   |
| <b>Fair Trade Shop</b>   | First and Third Sunday after morning worship<br>and Tuesday - Saturday 10.30 am - 2.30 pm |
| <b>Counselling Centre</b>  | Monday - Friday 11.00 am - 1.30 pm<br>and Monday to Wednesday evenings 7.00 - 9.00 pm     |

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