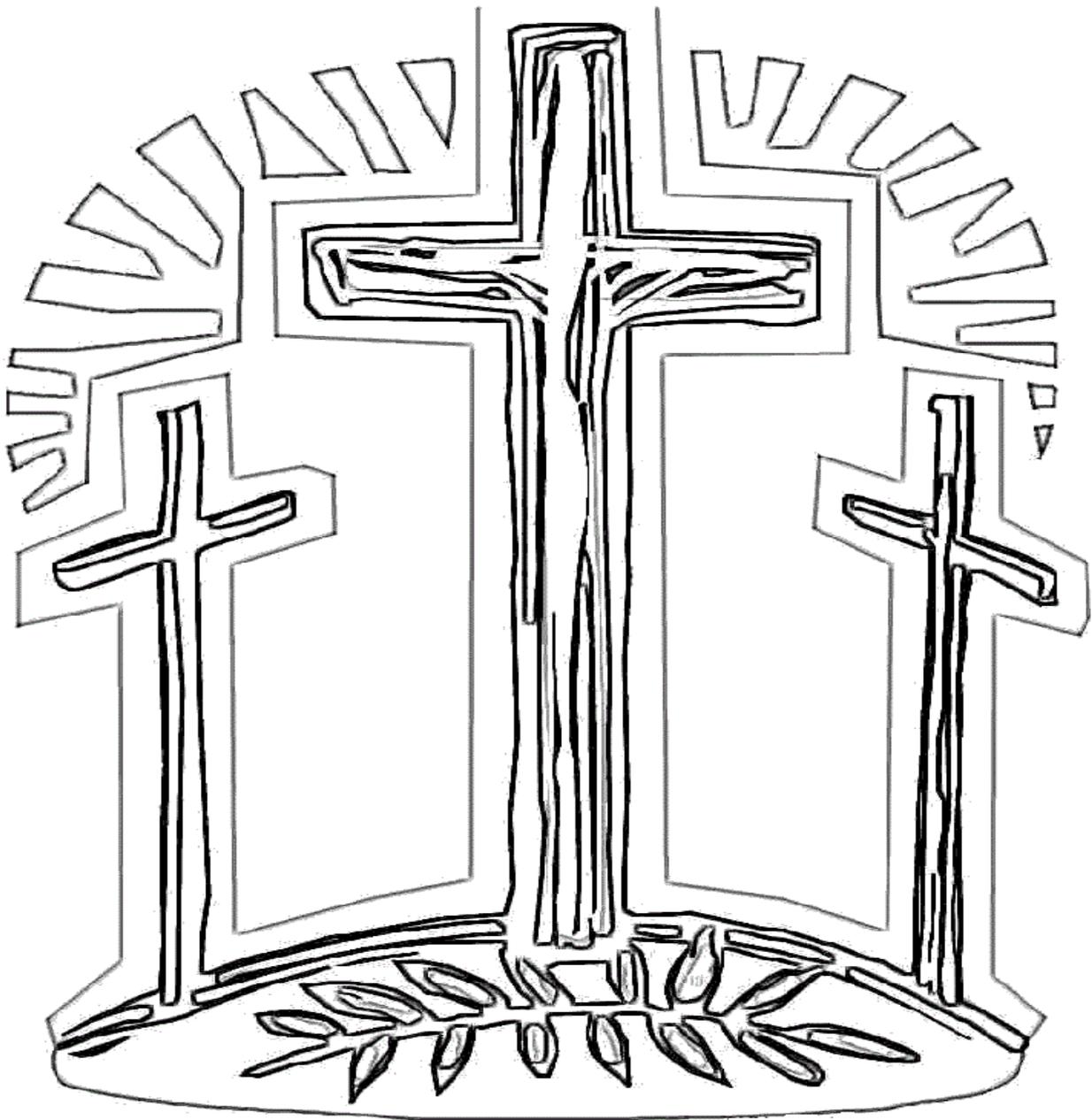


Journey



The continuing story

of

The Church at Carrs Lane

April 2014

Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

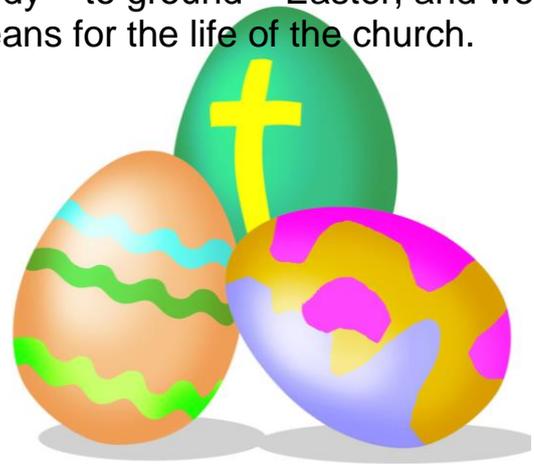
I have no childhood recollection of opening Easter Eggs at home, since as a family we were invariably on holiday for Easter...usually at Sidmouth. I do remember a variety of Easter services, however, usually at the Methodist Church; the building was invariably packed to capacity and in the time-honoured way, my sister and I were packed off to Sunday School partway through the service. I have a very clear recollection of what happened during one particular Easter in the mid-1960s, since as children we made small posies and then walked to some kind of accommodation for the elderly, where we handed over the flowers to the people who lived there.

There was nothing especially dramatic about this, and I imagine that it was a pleasant experience for everybody involved; surprisingly, however, I can still recall the words of one Sunday School teacher before we left the Methodist premises...possibly because I found them puzzling as a small boy. If I paraphrase, then I do so inadvertently; what I remember is the fact that she said to us, 'Don't forget that you are Easter'. I imagine that she was trying to remind us that the old folk would be pleased to welcome visitors who brought with them the 'gift' of young life – relatively new life – but it may well be that she was trying to say something in addition to this.

'You are Easter'. These are words – and this is an idea – which works at so many levels. I suppose that even as a child I would have understood that something of the Easter message was to be encountered within, experienced within the life of the church; I suspect, though, that these words and the challenge which they bring have actually become more difficult with the passing years. However we understand the events of Easter Day, it is an inescapable fact that the People of God are called to demonstrate something of the light and life and love and hope and vitality and promise...and much more besides that we see in Jesus. If, ultimately, the Easter message is one of mind-blowing transformation, then the Easter People are called to be a people visibly, demonstrably transformed.

This is hard. Institutional church – with all its committees and groups and responsibilities – can be a draining responsibility. Necessary agendas do sap potentially life-giving vision. Even the potentially welcome experience of Sunday worship can be subsumed beneath oh-so-urgent 'to-do' lists. Maybe we need to reclaim the experience of what it means to embody – to ground – Easter, and work out afresh what this means for us and what it means for the life of the church.

With much love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sunday Worship during April

Sunday 6 April Fifth Sunday in Lent

10.30am Morning Worship led by Peter Bates

Morning worship will be followed by First Sunday Lunch – all welcome

Sunday 13 April

10.30am Morning Worship led by Peter Woodall

Morning worship will be followed by the monthly church meeting at noon – all welcome. Time will be spent discussing a number of questions raised by the Joint Public Issues Group

2.45pm for 3.00pm Kidz Aloud Children's Church. 'Jesus washes the disciples' feet'

6.00pm Circuit Praise – lively, informal worship

Wednesday 16 April

Readings and reflections for Holy Week 7.00pm, with fellowship and food from 6.30pm

Thursday 17 April Maundy Thursday

A celebration of life at Carrs Lane: exhibition from 4.30pm, food and worship at 7.00pm

Friday 18 April Good Friday

Worship for Good Friday at 7.00pm

Sunday 20 April Easter Sunday

9.00am Easter breakfast – please sign the list in good time!

10.30am Worship for Easter Sunday – including the Lord's Supper and reception into church membership – led by Neil Johnson and Neil Riches

6.00pm Taizé Prayer

Sunday 27 April

10.30am Morning worship led by Neil Riches. Key passage: John 20.19 – 31

6.00pm Radical worship – details to follow

Events at Carrs Lane

Future Sunday Lunchtime Concerts at 1.00 pm. **20 April** Vellen Ensemble (Piano Trio). **18 May** Romanesca Tre (Recorder Trio). **15 June** Cristi Bacanu (Violin)

Lent study group Thursdays evenings 7.30pm. We will be following a course entitled 'Facing the Challenge: Meals with Jesus'. Topics/passages are:

10 April: In Zacchaeus's home: Luke 19.1-10

17 April: In a home in Jerusalem: Luke 22.7-38

Central House Group on **Wednesday evening 16 April**, is open to everyone as it forms part of the worship for Holy Week. There will be a light supper from 6.30pm and then shared readings and prayers for Easter from 7.00pm until 8.00pm. Please let us know if you are coming at 6.30 for the meal and please bring a reading, prayer or meditation to share if you have one.

Notices

Wednesday 9 April Faiths For Our City

The University of Birmingham - Faith, Health & Wellbeing Seminar 10.00-4.00 at The School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, Orchard Learning & Resource Centre, Weoley Park Road, Selly Oak. *'Get Well Soon'* Archana Jain Co-founder of Disease Free World - *'Are there Lessons for us from the Developing World?'* Dr Peter & Mrs Jean Rookes - *'Tackling Domestic Violence & Abuse In Faith Communities'* Kudakwashe Nyakudya, Founder Director, Kahrmel Wellness, - *'Health Service Public Consultations'*, Christine de Sousa, Birmingham and Black Country Commissioning Support Unit - *'Providing Spiritual support in a Hospice Setting'* Saskia Barnden, Chaplain Co-ordinator St Mary's Hospice. No charge but contact Peter and Jean Rookes to book a place at pjrookes@gmail.com, phone 477 2282.

8th-12th April 'Refugee Boy' at The Rep Theatre in Birmingham. Benjamin Zephaniah's book has been adapted for the stage by Lemin Sissay and tells the story of fourteen year old Alem, a refugee boy with Ethiopian and Eritrean heritage, who arrives in London. Tickets £12-£15

Calling All Cricketers... In a spirit of ecumenism the Anglican clergy invite any full time paid worker in any church to join them. We play both friendly and competitive matches (The Church Times Cup – we made the final in 2007). Our 2014 season starts with a practice net followed by our annual lunch on **8th April**. Home matches are played at Harborne CC. Please contact our secretary Paul Hinton revpaulhinton@btinternet.com 0121 429 1384 or 07777 603188.

Saturday 12 April Christian Meditation Quiet Day 'The Sacrament of the Present Moment' 10:00am - 3:30pm Kings Heath Quaker Meeting House, B14 7PE, organised by Christian Meditation In Birmingham, part of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM). This organisation covers all denominations, for details see their website, www.wccm.org. The Quiet Day will be led by Liz Watson, who is a senior WCCM teacher, and will be of interest to any who feel the need to be more present to God, to others and to ourselves. Contact Joy Cheek Email: joycheek@hotmail.co.uk or Tel. 0121 449 0511

Friday 9th May (venue to be confirmed) Christians Against Poverty invites churches across the West Midlands to its first ever Church Partnership Day in Birmingham. A free information day for churches to find out new ways of reaching their community with the good news of Jesus through the work of CAP. We are really excited about this opportunity to meet with more churches in and around Birmingham. Start 10am with registration, finishes 3.15pm. No cost, book at <https://capuk.org/get-involved/your-church/partner-with-cap/cap-debt-help/church-partnership-days>. CAP has years of experience of this through our expert debt help service. Just recently we've added CAP Job Clubs so that churches can help people out of the hopelessness of unemployment. We have also trained over 1300 churches to run our CAP Money Course which empowers people to get in control of their finances. For more information please contact us on 01274 760 580 or email: opencentre@capuk.org

St Philip's Cathedral: help in Christian Aid Week 12 - 17 May. Every year in Christian Aid Week at St. Philip's Cathedral we take advantage of our setting in the heart of the commercial sector of the city to hold a six day street collection for Christian Aid. We regard this as one of the most important events in our year. Not only do we raise money for the poorest of our world but we also seek to raise awareness, and witness to Christian values of justice and fairness, right here in the midst of a teeming city. About 20,000 people cross our square every day. It is a wonderful opportunity. The amount of money we raise is in direct proportion to the number of collectors we can persuade to help us. At the moment the amount stands at around £3000. Please could you help us to increase it in 2014. If you could spare an hour or two on one (or more) of the six days... Monday 12 to Saturday 17 May between 8.30 am and 6.0 pm ...we'd love to hear from you. Email us at enquiries@birminghamcathedral.com with the subject Christian Aid Collection. Tell us the day(s) and times you can manage and we'll get back to you with further details. With many thanks and best wishes, Catherine Ogle. Dean

Saturday 28 June The Salvation Army West Midlands Division Retirement Celebration and Farewell from the Division of Major Samuel Edgar, Divisional Commander 7.00pm at Birmingham Christian Centre, B1 3QQ Letters or greetings can be sent to: Majors Keith & Julia Johnson, 35 Astoria Drive, Bannerbrook Park Coventry CV4 9ZY Or email: Julia.johnson@salvationarmy.org.uk

Birmingham City Mission Urban Challenge is a one-year training opportunity, a hands-on course challenging Christians to share their faith in a tough urban environment. It offers the chance to bring God's love in practical ways to different people, often in the most difficult situations. It is a year for those taking on the challenge to develop their skills, discover new ones and gain a breadth of experience in reaching out and helping those in need. No fees are required and accommodation, food and a bus pass are provided. There is a wide choice of modules, including youth work, city centre and estate evangelism, reaching the homeless, supporting the elderly and more. The next course will begin in September. For more info and an application form call 0121 766 6603 or visit www.birminghamcitymission.co.uk

**Beautiful Creation - A Celebration of Life at Carrs Lane
Thursday 17 April**

A display of the diversity of life within The Church at Carrs Lane and a celebration of difference and unity.

The exhibition will open at 4.30pm; you are welcome to walk around and stop at the reflection spaces if you wish.

There will also be a Maundy Thursday Service and meal at 7.00pm. For further information contact Stephanie: beautifulcreation2014@hotmail.com.

Sponsored Walk on Tuesday 22 April

A few days after Easter in 2013, I led a cycle ride for members of the 12th Birmingham BB Company; lest you have forgotten, let me remind just how chilly it was last year...and we didn't make it to Stratford as we had hoped! This year, I will be leading a sponsored walk on Easter Tuesday, 22 April; the company is visiting Hungary this summer, not least to spend time with young people in the Reformed Church of Hungary. Sight-seeing in Budapest will be coupled with a visit to Szeged, close to the Serbian border.

Hostels and church hall floors will be the order of the day, but the trip still doesn't come cheap – hence the need to raise some additional funds at the end of April. We aim to walk the Outer Circle bus route...all 26+ miles of it. It is a long way to walk in a day, but at least those who tire will have ready access to public transport! My sponsor form will be at the back of church on Sunday mornings... all contributions, however modest, will be greatly appreciated.

Thanks, Neil

Carrs Lane Walking Group – Thursday 24 April

Circular walk from Dorridge Station towards Hockley Heath and back. Meet at Moor St Station for 10.20 train or Dorridge at 10.45 (Dorridge is within the senior travel pass area), or approx 11.00 at Dorridge Park (at the end of Arden Road, first left after going under the railway bridge from Dorridge towards Hockley Heath. At the end of Arden Road turn sharp right down a narrow road). Walk is approx 5 miles along country footpaths to Box Trees Craft Centre, where there is a coffee shop and toilets etc. Lunch at the craft centre, and back via a different route to Dorridge (or catch the bus from Box Trees to shorten the walk to 2½ miles). Finish time for full walk - approx 2.30, and then return train to Moor St.



Calling....

Dear fellow members

As you are aware I have been exploring my calling to ministry within the United Reformed Church. I greatly appreciated your prayers and support during my candidating and I thank you for that. Sadly for a variety of reasons I will not be pursuing this path. I am now praying and reflecting on my ministry and discerning where God wishes me to serve along with my congregation at Journey MCC. I am pleased that my role there is expanding and I will now apply for the permanent role of minister as I am only an interim at present. I also look forward to continue worshipping and serving with you at Carrs Lane. I hope you will keep me in your thoughts and prayers as I will you.

Love in Christ
Stephen Bentley

Champion Phil

If you are not new to Carrs Lane you will know that Phil Parkin spends a lot of his life on a bus! He and several other men work tirelessly monitoring buses. This involves travelling on them, checking that they run to timetable, that the vehicles are fit for purpose and fit for passengers, that the drivers drive well and give their passengers a comfortable ride, and are polite and welcoming when we board the bus. And they write reports about their findings. Phil has completed over 500 report forms during the past year.



He recently attended a day conference 'Putting Passengers First' organised by Centro. The day included an awards ceremony, when awards were given for various tasks well done. I am pleased to tell you that Phil Parkin – your Trusted Travel Advisor – has been awarded the prize 'Passenger Champion of the Year 2014'. The trophy is an engraved glass star, and he also has a framed certificate. Do ask Phil about his award - he is always glad to talk buses!



End Hunger Fast

You are invited to join the End Hunger Fast by committing to fasting and praying during lent in solidarity with those who are in food poverty or live at daily risk of food poverty. In this way to witness to those in power that as Christians we encourage our national leaders to consider the very poorest first when making policy decisions. We encourage those aged between 18 and 65 to commit to at least one day of prayer and fasting during Lent and those who are older to commit to at least one day of prayer. Friday 4th April has been named as a national day of fasting for those in food poverty.

Over the last few years many of us have become very aware of poverty in our city. The number of people using food banks has increased, the number of our neighbours who are in serious financial trouble has risen. An article published by the BBC last June revealed that one in six children live in families earning a household income of £250 a week or less and are defined by the government as living in relative poverty. Walking the Breadline, a report published by Church Action on

Poverty and Oxfam last May estimated that half a million people in the UK are now dependent on Food Aid. A survey by Netmum's has estimated that one in five mothers regularly miss meals to better feed their children. This is not just a problem for those without work; the majority of the households living with these realities are in work. Research carried out by Save the Children shows around 60% of families with an annual income under £17,000 have cut back on food to save money. The relative decrease in the minimum wage in comparison to food prices, and the increase in zero-hours contracts have driven many low paid workers to the very edge. There are reports of full time workers visiting food banks in their lunch break.

This is a national crisis. As churches we have a responsibility to respond to these pressing questions of our time. Many of our churches are already involved in supporting local food banks and homeless shelters, this is important and necessary work, but as Desmond Tutu once said: "There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in"

The End Hunger Fast campaign has been launched to address these questions. We would like you, as churches, families and individuals to join us in asking for:

- A welfare system which provides a robust last line of defence against hunger in Britain
- Work which pays enough to provide working people with enough to properly provide for their families
- Food markets which function for the poorest in our society not just for corporate profit, promoting long term sustainable and healthy diets at an affordable price.

Recently we saw Church leaders from across the denominations stand up and play their part, now is the time for all of us to show that our leaders are not out of step with their congregations and to make our voices heard. Some congregations are organising a fasting and praying relay with one of their members fasting and praying on each of the days of Lent. You might like to create a space in your church dedicated to praying for those who are hungry, we are calling these "40/40 Prayer Space".

Throughout lent there is going to be a "Hunger Hut" in the grounds of St. Philip's Cathedral, open each day from 10.00am until 2.00pm. Please come along and visit the hut. If you can volunteer to help staff it then please get in touch. If you are on facebook or twitter: www.facebook.com/endlungerfastbirmingham or @EHFBirmingham Come with us to the Houses of Parliament for the concluding 'End Hunger Fast' vigil on Wed 16th April For more information on the campaign, and to let us know how you decide to be involved, contact matthew.neville@endlungerfast.co.uk <http://endlungerfast.co.uk/>

A Trek too Far?

In a word No!

Having said that I need to explain that there were times that we felt we were being pushed beyond our comfort zone.

Life it seems is not a straight line, where you progress from one stage seamlessly to another. It happens in fits and starts and sometimes you are shocked into something very distressing like the death of a loved one and other times it can be a wonderful surprise.

We were totally unprepared for a very generous offer from Anne's sister to give us a holiday they had only just got back from a few days before.

Nepal is a small country sandwiched between two of the planet's largest populations the size of England and Wales together. Its population is much like India but the main religion is Hindu with some Buddhists to the north. The north was where we were going to Himalaya (not with an s). We were going to climb up a valley and climb to over 15,500 ft (4773 m) and then come back down to climb up to some sacred Lakes and climb over a pass and down through a farming district.

Sounds easy and to many it probably is. Jetting off to far flung places is as simple as ABC, yet we had never left Europe! Therefore we had never been to any country in Asia.

We have some trekking or walking in UK and Austria and France. The Himalaya comes from the word Himal meaning snow covered peak in Nepali. We were going to be in the snow. But to correct one possible wrong assumption, we would be walking in their dry season. No rain, no new snow on the tops.

November is one of their times to trek in Nepal, because you should get clear skies and sharp mountain tops. The best time for flowers, like whole mountainsides of rhododendrons is in February when there is lot of haze about. "Isn't too cold in November?" Well no, not when you are on the mountains. It's freezing at night but warm in the day and you get 12 hours of daylight there. You have to remember you are on the same latitude as the Sahara there.

The preparations took us much of the preceding months with a shopping spree at Cotswolds outdoor shop buying clothes called 'base layers' and clothes that 'wick' moisture and other technical stuff that would have made the early mountaineers like Dr Sommerville green. Tickets had been bought in March and we were despatched to Manchester by our son Tom to catch our two legged flight via Doha in Qatar and on to Kathmandu in Nepal. This is a sprawling city bigger than Birmingham.

We were warned about pollution from exhaust fumes and it was not as bad as London was in 1950s, but could be on some days. They never get snow there but

they have a constant pall of dust hanging over the city except in the monsoon, which does its best to clean up the dust et al.

It can be very unnerving being in a place with so many small motorbikes, Suzuki cars as taxis and rickshaws all clamouring for space. The constant noise of horns follows you everywhere. Out in the bigger part of the city you have to contend with buses and brightly painted lorries from India belching out black smoke. Some people cover their faces with masks but I suspect they don't really do much to stop bad stuff getting into the lungs.

We met Nir Lama, who owns Peace Nepal our trekking company in a small upper room, on one of the main streets in Thamel and whose staff were going to escort us up in the Himalaya. A few days later we were taking a taxi up one of the scariest roads we have been on. When monsoons arrive and chuck 2500 mm of rain down it causes massive landslides, At one point several kilometres of hillside (including the road) disappeared downwards. They make temporary roads with a large digger but it means weaving in and out and over large boulders and being forced on to the edge with nothing between you and the valley thousands of metres below. Glad to get to our destination we set off early next morning with Prem our guide and Maila our porter who carried both our large bags and his own rucksack.

The walk lasted 11 days and was mostly easy walking. That is making it sound too simple. They call the path their roads, which they are. Everything has to go up and down these roads. Not in a 4 x 4 or truck but on people's backs, or on the back of yaks.

The problem for tourists like us is a lack of acclimatisation. The air at altitude has less oxygen and is under less pressure. Normal things like walking are more difficult when above 3,000 m 10,000 ft. When you do simple things like hurrying over some rocks your heart races and you have to stop. To prepare for this you need to walk at a steady and slow pace. Get into that stride and breathe slowly and deeply to maximise the oxygen and you may be all right. We had two speeds, slow and stop! You also need to eat and drink the right stuff, herbal tea, lots of soup and dal Bhatt which is the Nepali staple.

There are lodges for eating and sleeping overnight dotted all along the valley we were climbing up, and Prem knew where we needed to stop for a cuppa, later for lunch and the one for our overnight.

Gaining height slowly is the recipe for success. Some people spend an extra day en route to ensure they are adapting to the mountains. Not everyone is so careful or lucky. Mountain Sickness is the name for the condition that can turn a holiday into an emergency. We promised our guide to let him know if we started to get headaches, or getting dizzy, or being sick which are all signs of mountain sickness. He would then take us straight down the mountain to safety.

The walk through the valley was through a protected forest and we had paid for a pass that allowed us to trek through this beautiful area. The absence of trees is now

a major source of landslides. Elsewhere, quite recently chopping trees down has cleared mountainsides thus putting people's lives at risk, with flooding now an increasing problem in the populated valleys further south.

Trees gave way to alpine meadows and scrubby vegetation. Here yak grazed and their milk was made into butter and cheese in the village higher up. But now rather than only seeing glimpses of the high mountains we were amongst them, truly snow clad tops with pointy peaks looking so sharp you could cut your fingers on them. We finally climbed our peak and joined many others excitedly having their pictures taken in amongst Buddhist prayer flags. The views were amazing but not of Everest. We were too far away and other big mountains blocked our view. This was the pinnacle of our holiday and although we had many incredible views and other experiences this will be the one we will remember.

Kyangin Ri 4773m first ascended by the husband and wife team of Anne and Malcolm on November 12 2014, at 11:00 am local time. Cheers!

Our sincere thanks go to our sponsors Sue and Peter and our guide Prem and porter Maila. The pictures were fantastic thanks to Geoff Jones our photographic advisor.

Footnote: Some form of presentation will be made at Carrs Lane and at house groups in the near future.

Anne and Malcolm

Carrs Lane Fair Trade

2013 Report to Annual general Meeting

I am pleased to present my report on the work of Carrs Lane Fair Trade during 2013. This was a very busy year in many ways but it was exciting too. First and foremost, I am delighted to be able to tell you that our sales rose, particularly in the second half of the year. People ask me what has contributed to the increase and I think there are a number of reasons, some of which I am detailing here.

I would like first to pay tribute to our team of volunteers. We are most fortunate in having a good team of very dedicated people whose different skills tend to complement each other. Their reliability and their enthusiasm are much appreciated. Each year we lose a few, students mainly, but we gain some others.

We are indebted to the Church Centre Manager and staff, both caretakers and those who work in the office, who look after us well in so many ways.

Our business cards, new at the end of the previous year, may be helping to bring more custom. This year we bought two new pavement signs to replace the old ones which were badly showing signs of their age – we had had them for over ten years and of course they had been out in all weathers. This gave us an opportunity to

redesign the text and indeed we succeeded in getting permission from the Fairtrade Foundation to use the Fairtrade Mark.

We were very pleased to have a full page advert, with thanks to Traidcraft, on the back cover of the updated city centre guide to Fair and Ethical Trade in Birmingham. This is a Birmingham City Council publication produced by Fairtrade Association Birmingham of which we continue to be an active member. We had a large stall at the council's Sustainability Spring Fair held at the Botanical Gardens during Fairtrade Fortnight where we had very good sales, mostly of food. In June we were back at the Botanical Gardens for the council's Big Green Lunch where again we had good sales not only of food but also of crafts. We also take stalls about twice a year to a local church coffee morning on a regular basis. We continue to offer goods on sale or return.

For some years now we have been invited to bring a stall to a Christian Aid "Thank you" Evening at St Edburgh's Church in Yardley. This is always a worthwhile and stimulating event.

However our sales in the shop at Carrs Lane have also shown an increase despite the fact that Carrs Lane Church Centre was virtually closed for about six weeks in the summer in order that vital maintenance work could be done. Unfortunately due to some of this work not being completed we were unable to make use of our window space until just before Christmas. We offer to send information by email or telephone about new products, the arrival of the new catalogue and/or any other news which may be of interest to our customers and we have a number of people who have asked for these regular updates.

You may have noticed that in the spring catalogue groceries were right at the front to demonstrate that buying from Traidcraft is not the same as buying from supermarkets. It is better because fair trade is not just part of Traidcraft's business; it is all of their business and they are 100% committed to it.

One of the Traidcraft Roadshows previewing the Autumn Catalogue for 2013 was held in Wylde Green United Reformed Church. As it is local to us, almost all of our volunteers were able to go and see the crafts in the new catalogue and hear presentations from the Traidcraft staff. I believe that everyone thought it was well worth going to and especially one or two of the newer people were very impressed.

In the front of this catalogue there is a letter from Mags Vaughan who had just taken over from Paul Chandler to become Traidcraft's Chief Executive, the first woman to lead Traidcraft and Traidcraft Exchange.

2013 saw two new freeze dried coffees from Guatemala from the same producer, Cipac, who also supply Traidcraft with delicious squeezey honey. The Cipac coffee diversification project is helping to transform the lives of farmers who grow the coffee beans in the hills of Guatemala.

Several food products are no longer offered by Traidcraft either because the sales are not high enough to warrant keeping it in the catalogue (even though we sold a lot of them) or due to technical problems. So the date and walnut loaf followed by the

ginger loaf disappeared and also the little packets of raisins and apricots and the fruit snacks. Needless to say, new products are taking their place, such as Medjoul dates, cous cous and almonds from Zaytoun in Palestine, Divine Milk Chocolate Caramel bars, Plantain Chips, three varieties of Quinola, and new coffees: Rwandan Red Bourbon Ground Coffee and Ethiopian Sidama Ground Coffee.

The Facial Tissues we had been promised for June eventually came along with many exciting crafts. The beautiful Olive Wood Nativity set was just one of these, hand carved by skilled artisans using traditional woodworking techniques in Bethlehem. I could go on about the delicious foods and the unique hand crafted gifts and practical items for one's family and friends.

We found time to campaign against supermarket bullying. They have been shown to abuse their huge buyer power by passing on 'excessive risks and unexpected costs' down their supply chains. Millions of workers, farmers and producers are left with little choice but to work long hours for low pay in unsafe conditions to meet the demands placed on them by supermarkets.

We now have a box for recycling unwanted jewellery, watches, old and new foreign and UK coins and notes. These items and more can be turned into a donation for Traidcraft Exchange and it also benefits the environment.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the Traidcraft Sermon in October. Carrs Lane Church had been chosen to host this important event and over one hundred people came to hear Dr. Paula Gooder, Theologian in Residence for the Bible Society and Canon Theologian at Birmingham Cathedral. Her Sermon centred on Jesus' summary of the Jewish Law: that we are to love God and love our neighbour. She reminded us that the search for justice, especially justice for the poor, did not only find expression in the second half of that summary but in the first also. We are to love God with all our heart, and soul and mind *and strength*. Equally she reminded us, love for our neighbour must involve our whole being also. Without love, our good deeds can so easily become self-seeking and trite. In every aspect of our Christian faith we must never seek to separate the spiritual from the practical – they are one.

Traidcraft was one way in which we could try to follow Jesus' command to love God and neighbour. The simple purchase, and the work that enabled that purchase, gave not just a living to the provider but also a sense of worth which is beyond measure.

We were truly inspired and came away with renewed vigour to further the work of fair trade.

Joan Davies

Midnight oil

I breathed something of a sigh of relief when I sat down at my desk today – 27th February – since it is effectively the first day for a while when ‘midnight oil’ will not have been involved.

OK, so last Saturday it was social – the party after the annual Carrs Lane play, with what amounted to an early departure to catch one of the last ‘Outer Circles’ of the evening; folk needed to relax after a great deal of hard work – and it is all too easy to neglect the social side of church life, particularly in a gathered church. On Sunday, it was the late return from an event in Alum Rock on the No. 14 bus: I have written about the event elsewhere...but I felt encouraged that there were two buses an hour, even till midnight on a Sunday – and folk were pretty talkative at the bus stop. What was I doing in Alum Rock that late on a Sunday evening? A good conversation followed.

On Monday evening, I had an evening meeting in Wellington in Shropshire: reflection on last year’s Synod Youth Camp, with some planning for 2014. The train back to Birmingham was enlivened by the presence of two members of the Synod’s Youth Executive – one from Birmingham and one from Rugby. Again, an animated and interesting conversation, which ensured that the journey passed quickly.

On Tuesday evening, I was actually home by 10.30pm...but since this was following a very full (and constructive!) meeting of the elders at Carrs Lane, I wrote up my notes when I got home. Wednesday evening was slightly different, since much of it was spent on travel: a meeting of the Human Sexuality Task Group lasted from noon until about 6.30pm at Church House in London...too early to catch a cheap train back to Birmingham, so I grabbed a meal at my favourite Indian restaurant in King’s Cross, before catching a train back to Birmingham mid-evening.

On all but one of these evenings, the last stretch of time ‘out’ was spent on a bus (and then walking!), but I don’t mind this...time to reflect, pray, read. Nor do I mind the lateness of the evenings or the variety of venues: we are called to engage with folk where they are...and it is good to be reminded that our own church buildings may be the most unsuitable place for doing this. Having said this, I know that I will be in bed by 10.30pm this evening!

Neil



**Churches and Industry Group Birmingham:
Chaplaincy and Church Growth
Chaplaincy Fortnight 15-29 June 2014**

Go into the wide world that God has created.
Hear God's invitation to be with him and collaborate in re-creative acts.
Know that his blessing will flow towards you and to others.
For the good of the whole world.
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

*(from 'Chaplaincy Everywhere' Course, Methodist Church:
www.opensourcechaplaincy.org.uk/course)*

CIGB's Workplace Chaplains have stories to tell of the way in which situations, themselves and other people have been transformed. "Today, in one shop, I met with a young man whom I'd not seen for months - He seemed so pleased to see me, as I was to see him. Perhaps retail chaplaincy should be bottled and sold as a tonic?" (One of CIGB's Retail Chaplains).

Chaplains are amazed at the levels of openness they encounter. The Biblical story that is often used within chaplaincy is Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42). Jesus meets the over-looked outsider, and their conversation about having a drink grows into this statement: "they urged him to stay with them... and many more became believers".

Chaplaincy in all its forms is going to be celebrated in a fortnight of meetings, prayer and discussion during Chaplaincy Fortnight this summer (June 15-29). Chaplains will make themselves available to come to churches to tell of what they have seen and heard, as well as to ask for prayer for chaplaincy. Chaplains – whether in prison, education, military or wherever - have to learn the culture of their context, and they can share these insights with church communities.

Many non-churchgoers are exploring transcendence and the 'otherness' of life. They use our chaplaincy encounters to explore what this means. Sometimes they have a need for healing and understanding of how things have happened to them. Chaplains never know what they are going to discover when they start on a conversation. On occasion they are rebuffed and told their presence is not welcome: usually the Chaplain goes away in prayer! It is not a comfortable ministry, but it is an amazing ministry.

CIGB Annual General Meeting: 5:30 – 8:00pm, Tuesday 6 May Banking Hall, Wragge & Co., 55 Colmore Row, B3 2AS. Refreshments will be served from 5:30pm followed by the AGM Business meeting at 6:15pm, at 7:00pm our guest speakers will address the theme "Faith and Enterprise". Guest speakers: Richard Beard, CEO of the 'Jericho Foundation'; Neil Roberts of 'Three Trees', Chelmsley Wood; & Rt. Revd David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham.

Learning curves...

At short notice, I attended a major event organised by Birmingham's Pakistani Muslim community in Alum Rock on the evening of Sunday 23rd February. When I left on the No. 14 bus back to town, armed with 'to-go' foil containers containing some truly delicious food and a weighty tome containing a 'Fatwa' on terrorism and suicide bombing written by one of the world's most eminent moderate Muslim scholars, I pondered the lessons and opportunities of the evening...

A great deal had gone on – not all of which I had understood, since many of the (15+!) speakers addressed the 500-odd people present in Urdu rather than English. As ever on these occasions, I was struck by the great beauty and power of the recitations from the Quran – and I was moved by the eloquence and integrity and conviction of the younger speakers who spoke in English (one of them barely into his teens): this was a celebration of the unity of humankind, the importance of dialogue and education and the centrality and significance of 'peace'.

I spoke on behalf of the Christian community in Birmingham, and a Jewish colleague spoke on behalf of the Jews in Birmingham; folk listened attentively and we were warmly received. All kinds of 'agendas' were present during the evening – one of them distinctly UK party-political, one of them to do with Kashmir, which I didn't follow fully, since most contributions were not in English – but I felt that it was significant that whilst religious leaders and politicians and academics were all well-received, of the visitors, it was the police who received the warmest welcome. I sat next to a Sergeant from the anti-terrorist unit; she spoke – effectively without notes – clearly and positively, and her colleague from 'the patch' was evidently known and respected and appreciated.

There was much to encourage and reassure about the evening...and, as always, I came away concerned that inter-faith dialogue slips way down our own agenda again and again.

Asian TV networks were present...one of them global and viewed by up to 150,000,000 people daily. I am always conscious of the responsibility of going 'on the record' with a live interview in these circumstances, and I was grateful that my



colleague in the police had her 'turn' before the mike was passed to me. As people of faith, there are times when our 'Yes' needs to be 'Yes', however; we acknowledge the power of words, the need to speak clearly...and the reality that there will be times when others listen to us intently. Yes, preparation is important, but it is also important to have thought through our views on some of the pressing issues of our age.

Neil

Near Neighbours to continue

A £3 million grant from Government will enable the Near Neighbours programme to expand to new areas within the UK and to support existing community projects over the next two years, it was announced last week. Near Neighbours is a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishop's Council, and is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. It aims to bring people of different faiths together to change their communities and build trusting relationships.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said: "This renewed funding is recognition of the hard work and prayer put in over the last three years by hundreds of people from local faith communities supported by the national church and inter faith groups. That work has touched thousands of lives and strengthened the fabric of our society. We have heard some great stories from Near Neighbours over the last three years and we look forward to many more."

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles who announced the new funding said: "It's been terrific to see Near Neighbours go from strength to strength over the past three years, helping grass roots groups to improve the lives of those around them through practical action. These fantastic projects have been met with huge amounts of enthusiasm, creating a sense of lasting community spirit, and helping to transform neighbourhoods in the process. "This extra money is a real investment in our shared future that will enable Near Neighbours to reach many more communities so they can become even better places to live".

The new funding will mean that there will be some small grants in the Birmingham area and the programme will develop in parts of the Black Country. Near Neighbours Development Worker, Jessica Foster, will remain in a capacity-building role based at the Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre.

Find out more: www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours or contact by email: Jess@nearneighbours.com



Standing in the Gaps

Birmingham Churches Together, through its Ecumenical Development Group, has been discussing ways of developing connection, communication and collaboration between Churches and Christians who are called to stand in the gap alongside those facing hardship in our city or our region. We recognise that

- relating together and seeking to develop appropriate partnerships is becoming increasingly complex.
- the era of endless pots of money to throw at solutions has ended.
- the complexity of networking can sap our goodwill and willingness to work together.
- instead of developing partnerships we retreat into our silos.
- the current climate is an opportunity to go back to basics.

As we sought to address these challenges, we agreed to develop a new website/portal that will provide information about Christian activities across the city region and an opportunity to communicate across our various networks. It will build on the webpage launched by Thrive Together Birmingham. Many churches and organisations are working hard to help people who are facing the challenges that come with poverty. They rely on volunteers to be able to give the help that is much needed. Thrive Together Birmingham has launched a volunteer recruitment website as part of its work supporting churches to tackle poverty together. Go to the website page for information: www.cuf.org.uk/thrive-together-birmingham/how-you-can-get-involved.

Thrive Together is part of a national Together network supported through the Church Urban Fund and the Church of England Birmingham and works with Birmingham Churches Together across Birmingham, Solihull and Smethwick. The aim is to grow and support the movement of individuals, churches and projects who, motivated by their faith, are committed to serving and supporting the poor and marginalised in their local communities, towns. The volunteer recruitment tool is part of this work.

BEN March-June 2014



On This Day ...

From the Carrs Lane Journal April 1914

I felt this rather charming piece really brought alive these children of 100 years ago, with so much in common with young children of any period. It is particularly poignant to remember that within a few months of this account being written the world in which they would grow up would begin to change for ever.

The Digbeth Institute, opened in January 1908, was an ambitious offshoot of Carrs Lane. Developed from a mission in Moseley Street, it became a community centre for a wide variety of social and educational activities, providing numerous outlets for practical activity on the part of Carrs Lane members.

The Little Ones at Digbeth

A visitor walking into the two smaller schoolrooms on any Monday evening – between 7.30 and 8.30 – will find there many little ones, left by the mothers who have come for the Sisterhood meeting. And if that visitor should be greeted with somewhat loud and not very melodious sounds, it only means that a little one has just missed mother. Usually the piteous little cry is stilled as soon as it begins, and baby smiles in the arms of the fresh nurse; and later on will drop to sleep; for it's a late hour for these wee mites to be out of their beds. It is only the few who cry, and that is usually on their first appearance in our midst; most of them hold out little arms of welcome to those nurses who, at least for that one hour of the week, have the joy and privilege of holding a little one in their arms.

Toys of all sorts, and in all conditions, have been provided by many thoughtful friends for those who can just toddle about: dolls and teddies, beautifully made scrapbooks, bricks and carts, baskets, bags, donkeys and cows, and those best of all toys - Tops!

One wee man goes round the crèche each Monday, calling "Coal! Coal!" He carries a little wooden bucket in which he has placed a few wooden bricks. Little Billy takes his passenger in a "puff-puff" to London, but either the steering gear goes wrong, or there is an obstruction on the line and, alas, a collision with a chair leg or someone's toe upsets cows, teddies and bricks. Leslie, who is just beginning to talk, listens with wrapt attention to the singing of the humming-top, and can tell us when it grows "sleepy." Frankie, most gentlemanly of little boys, builds high towers which have to be blown and blown until at last they fall down. Maurice and Bobbie have found the reins; they are having a great time playing "horses." A noisy imp gets a horn and blows most lustily, while little Marie nurses her baby-doll and tries to get the fretful creature to sleep, but, judging by the amount of time and care bestowed by the little mother, it takes much longer to quiet doll-babies than it does the real, live babies. Frail little Jack sits upon a bed, keenly interested in all that is going on; too weak to play an active part in the games, he makes the whole room happier and better for the sweet, merry smile on his patient little face.

It is a very happy family that is to be found "behind the scenes" in Digbeth Institute, and any friends of Carrs Lane who can give up that hour a week to work with us will receive a warm welcome from Mrs. Owen, the head of the crèche, as well as from her assistants, and the little ones.

From the Carrs Lane Journal April 1964

“Broadcasting to Everyman”

This piece under this title, by Adrian Carey of the B.B.C Religious Broadcasting Department, carries a Copyright statement, and therefore I am not quoting from it directly. It describes three new developments in religious broadcasting: the late Sunday evening repeat of the programme *Meeting Point*, the Sunday morning worship on BBC TV, and the experiment in the Light Programme’s *Five to Ten*, in particular the Bible stories presented by David Kossoff. Each of these developments illustrates an aspect of the work of the Religious Broadcasting Department.

Meeting Point was designed to highlight the relevance of the Gospel to the issues of contemporary life, not least to people who were not at all or only loosely connected with a church. Indeed at this time the regulations limited what could be broadcast at the recognised Sunday evening ‘church’ hour. These later repeats were therefore of benefit to churchgoers in making possible links with those who might listen to the radio rather than go to church.

The second aspect is taking part in worship, and the article states that those who are, for whatever reason, unable to attend church were now better served by the BBC’s Sunday morning programmes, not least because they introduced people to different traditions of worship.

The article suggests that there is a definite separation between those within the church and those outside it, and that the majority of people in both categories seem content for that separation to continue. Both groups are shocked by the modern or unexpected occurring in the context of religion. Those outside the church often relish the comfort of familiar hymns and visits to church on special occasions, whilst recognising the impossibility of living up to the standards of the Sermon on the Mount (a sentiment which, it is pointed out, is also to be found among churchgoers). David Kossoff’s Bible stories, with their human interest and unspoilt by hymns or prayers, came as a shock to some listeners on both sides of the divide. However, if God’s Word was to reach everyone, the article concludes, it must be heard not just within the safety of church walls but against the vibrant and sometimes disturbing background of today’s world, in which many people have little time for the church.

Now, in the twenty-first century, the whole world of media, including religious broadcasting, has changed beyond recognition from the 60’s. Continuous religious broadcasting is a specialist field, available to those who want it. In the ‘mainstream’ media there is little emphasis on traditional worship, except on the special occasions which probably still have a wide appeal, especially for those who found some form of comfort and reassurance in them in their youth. The point made at the end of Mr. Carey’s article remains valid. Most of ‘Everyman’ remains outside church walls, often with a strong sense of spiritual need that does not grow less, but we have possibilities for communication and interaction such as never existed before.

Wendy Firmin

Commitment for Life

This month's thoughts are based on some of the content of our special Commitment for Life service on 9 March.

I thought it was worth looking again at the scenarios, all based in reality, that we considered in small groups round the tables, and the searching questions which sought to help us think about our reactions to the events described.

Case Study – true story

I am an Israeli Arab woman returning from the holiday resort of Eliat with my party of students. I am a lecturer and have no affiliation to any political activist movement; therefore I do not consider myself as a terrorist. At both Ben Gurion and Eilat airports I was picked out for extra checks.

At Eliat I was felt all over in front of my students and forced to take off all my clothes except my pants.

- a) What was the aim of the Israeli Airport Control?
- b) How do you think the lecturer felt?
- c) What do you think were the feelings of her students?
- d) What would have been your reaction as a fellow passenger?

Case Study – based on fact

My family have lived for many many years in Palestine; for centuries we have grown olive trees and almond trees and kept a few goats. Much of our land has been taken over by “illegal” settlers and many of our olive trees destroyed. This is our livelihood. The settlers come into our village at night and create mayhem. It is no use telling the authorities as they turn a blind eye. Education and job opportunities are limited for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. My son Jaber is 23 years old and has told us that he is going to work in a restaurant in the settlement because it is work. He says he is less concerned about politics and more worried about making a living.

- a) Imagine the conversation and feelings between father and son
- b) How do you envisage the future relationship between the settlers and Palestinian youth like Jaber?

Scenario (based on fact)

I manage a home for Palestinian girls, aged 5 – 16 years, near Bethany. We rely on charitable trusts to house and feed the girls; we also educate the younger children. Many volunteers come from abroad to experience working in the home with the staff, and many pilgrimage groups visit us.

Last summer we were without water for four days. It had been turned off by the Israeli Authorities for no reason – we had paid our water bill. Can you imagine looking after teenage girls and having no running water!!! – no sanitation?

Half a mile along the road is a “settlement” where one of our visitors observed one man washing his car and another using a hosepipe on his garden.

- a) How would you feel as the manager on being informed of the above facts?
- b) How do you think she managed in the home for the four days?
- c) What are your feelings on reading this scenario?

This poem reminds us that many of those adversely affected by these and similar scenarios are children and young people, who will ultimately carry forward any positive developments. The poem does not mention Jews, although it talks of “when all three would worship in peace.” It should not be forgotten that Jews too have had cause to fear. The prayer to “prevail” echoes many petitions in the Jewish Psalms, and we can only pray that what will prevail will be a scenario of peace, justice and human worth, reflecting the kingdom of the one God worshipped by Jews, Muslims and Christians.

A child’s poem by Jamie Hamideh

I am Palestine
Home to many
Muslims and Christians
Around the world
I live I have survived
Every day I endure

I am Palestine
I am not about power
But I am about freedom
Such when all three
Would worship in peace
What a wonderful thing

I am historic Palestine
I have a right to live
I have not expelled
But have been expelled
Tormented and oppressed
Tortured and tyrannized

I am glorious Palestine
I am brave
I have withstood crimes
Promises and lies
But I will always have faith
May God help me prevail

And as a reminder of what our reaction should be, the Ash Wednesday Prayer, Christian Aid website.

Lord Jesus,
When I would shut my eyes – because I am afraid to see,
when I would hold on tightly – because I am afraid to share,
when I would close my doors – because I am afraid to get involved,
may I find courage in the company of your people,
learning with them to open my eyes, my hands, my home and my heart.
Amen.

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

Help the chick to find the Easter bonnet



Easter Sudoku

Every row, column and mini-grid must contain the letters B A S K E T

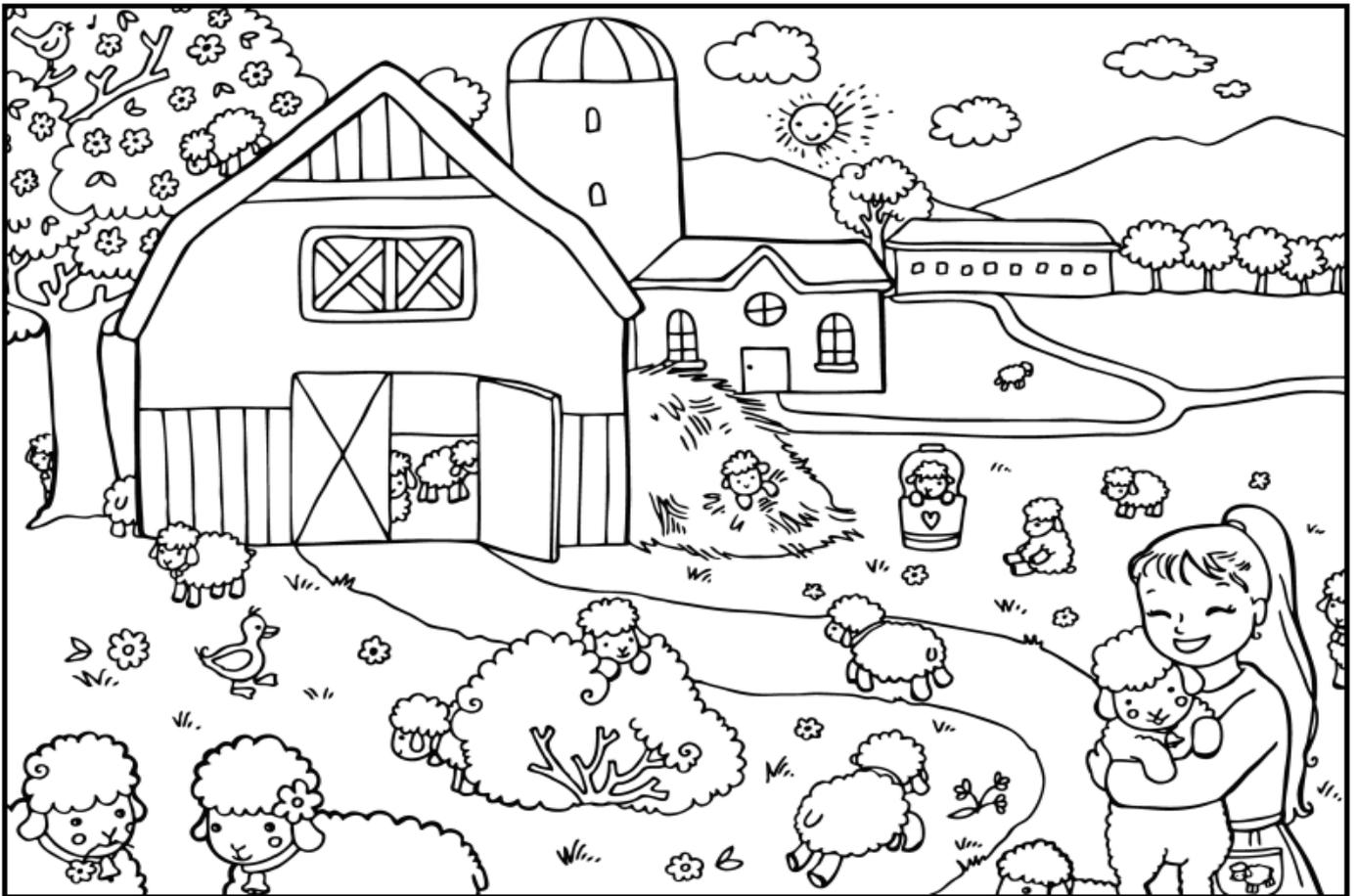
. Don't guess - use logic

		A	T		
	K			S	
B					K
A					B
	T			A	
		S	K		

Once there were two chocolate bunnies and one had their ear bit off. One said, "Happy Easter." "Huh?" said the other.



Count the lambs and colour the picture



What kind of stories do bunnies like best? *Cotton-tales!* Why do eggs go to the beach? *To search for seashells.* Where do eggs go on vacation? *Easter Island!* What's the Easter Bunny's favourite sport? *Basket-ball!* Where do bunnies hang out? *The hare salon!* What do eggs listen to on the radio? *Yolk music!* Which side of a chicken has the most feathers? *The outside!*

Avoiding Miss Steaks.....

Some of you may have noticed a few typos in Journey now and then. To improve this we are now using a new set of rules for editing...

- Verbs has to agree with their subjects
- Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
- And don't start a sentence with a conjunction
- It is wrong to ever split an infinitive
- Avoid clichés like the plague (they're old hat)
- Also, always avoid annoying alliteration
- Be more or less specific
- Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary
- Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies
- No sentence fragments
- Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used
- Foreign words and phrases are not apropos
- Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous
- One should NEVER generalise
- Comparisons are as bad as clichés
- Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc
- One-word sentences? Eliminate
- Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake
- The passive voice is to be ignored
- Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas
- Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice
- Use word correctly, irregardless of how others use them
- Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth shaking ideas
- Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
- If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times. Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly
- Puns are for children, not groan readers
- Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms
- Even IF a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed
- Who needs rhetorical questions?
- Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement

and the last one

Proofread carefully to see if you any words out

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 Saturday 10.30am - 2.30pm
and after morning worship on first and third Sundays
Visit us for your Fair Trade needs
- *Traidcraft foods, gifts and much else* -
0121 643 6151 fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk
www.carrslane.co.uk



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Carrs Lane Regular Activities

SUNDAYS

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

Carrs Lane Lived Community meet for Prayers -

Monday to Friday 7.30am and 7.00pm, all are welcome to join them

Lunchtime Healing Service	Every Wednesday 1.15pm
Prayer Group	First Wednesday at 7.00 pm
Thinking Allowed	First Thursday at 10.15 am
Harborne House Group	Fourth Tuesdays 2.00pm (various locations)
Central House Group at Carrs Lane	Third Wednesdays at 6.30pm
Carrs Lane Choir Practice	Fridays at 7.00pm
Carrs Lane Players (drama group)	Fridays at 7.45 pm
Charity Knitting Circle	First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
Fair Trade Shop	First and Third Sunday after morning worship and Tuesday - Saturday 10.30 am - 2.30 pm
Counselling Centre	Monday - Friday 11.00 am - 1.30 pm and Monday to Wednesday evenings 7.00 - 9.00 pm

Contact details for The Church at Carrs Lane
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