

THE METHODIST CHURCH BANBURY CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER February 2013

February: A month for making love!

Rev Rob Anning, Superintendent Minister, writes:

February 14 is Valentine's Day, a day of fun about a serious subject: Love. In English, we use the same word "love" for all different kinds of loving. But in the Greek, there are four different words used, to differentiate between which kind of love you mean. The Greek word for love in the context of Valentine's Day is "erōs", mainly used for love between the sexes. This word for love does not occur in the New Testament.

The second Greek word for love is "storgē" and has to do with family affection, such as parents for children and children for parents, but can also be used for the love of a nation for their leader. Again, there is no direct use of this word in the New Testament, but you can see something like it in Romans 12 v 10 when Paul writes "Love one another with mutual affection".

The most common word for love in Greek is "philia". It might be described as "to look on someone with affectionate regard" and it has a real warmth about it. In John's gospel, we find the use of this word for the way Jesus looks upon his friend Lazarus, and for the description of Jesus' love towards his "beloved" disciple in John 20 v 2.

The most common word for love in the New Testament is "agapē". It is the word Jesus uses when he gives us a command to love: love your enemy, love your neighbour, love yourself.

William Barclay describes agapē in this way: "No matter what someone does to us, no matter how we are treated, no matter how we are insulted, injured or grieved, we will never allow any bitterness against us to invade our hearts. Instead, we will demonstrate benevolence and goodwill". Although it's a tall order, that's the kind of love we should be making!

But Jesus and the Bible warn us to avoid love of some things. Quite a while ago, Pat and I had a day in London. We went to see a performance of "Spend, Spend, Spend", a musical about the life of Viv Nicholson, the lady who in 1961 won £152,000 on the pools, equivalent to £3 million today! Viv Nicholson came from Castleford in Yorkshire. She, and her mining community, knew all about poverty. The win on the pools seemed the answer to prayer but led to a life of tragedy, grief and pain. The fact that she came through it and today runs a hairdressing salon is amazing in itself.

Her life only serves to help us understand the warning in 1 Timothy 6 v 10: "The love of money is the root of all evil". Money in itself is not evil, we all need sufficient to live, but if our love of it diverts us from loving God and neighbour, then as Jesus puts it, we will be prevented from entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

LENT STUDIES 2013

There will be a series of five Lent Studies held at Marlborough Road and led by Rev Rob Anning on Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm: February 19 & 26, March 5, 12 & 19.

This year's theme is "Glimpses of God: Hope for today's world" and again we will be using the York Course material.

The same course will be running at West Court, Grimsbury, on Wednesday afternoons at 2.30pm: February 20 & 27, March 6, 13 & 20.

If at all possible please let Rob Anning (01295 262602) know if you intend to come so sufficient study booklets can be purchased.

CIRCUIT SUPPER CLUB

The Circuit Supper Club meets on 28th February at Marlborough Road Methodist Church at 7 for 7.30 pm. Our speaker is the Right Honourable Lord Boswell of Aynho whose talk is entitled "Life in both Houses of Parliament". Do come and bring any friends.

Please book your places by Monday evening, 25th February at the latest with David Hughes (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*)

LECTIONARY READINGS FEBRUARY 2013

Feb. 3rd

Jeremiah 1:4 - 10
Psalm 71:1 - 6
1 Corinthians 13:1 - 13
Luke 4:21 - 30

Feb 10th

Exodus 34:29 - 35
Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12 - 4:2
Luke 9:28 - 36

Feb 17th

Deuteronomy 26:1 - 11
Psalm 91:1- 2, 9 - 16
Romans 10:8b - 13
Luke 4:1 - 13

Feb 24th

Genesis 15; 1 - 12, 17 - 18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17 - 4:1
Luke 13:31 - 35

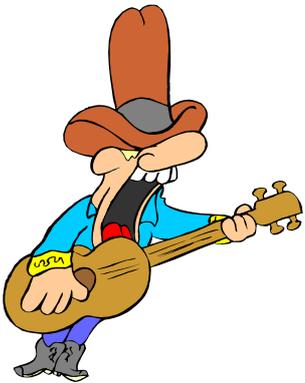
HOT OFF THE PRESS ... Former Superintendent Minister of the Banbury Methodist Circuit the Rev Mike Langstaff has put pen to paper and gone into print. His first book, **entitled Nuts and Bolts ... from certainty to faith** is now in stock at The Mustard Seed priced £6.50.

Come and join us to

“Sing

the

Faith”



An open opportunity to enjoy worship songs together, taken from our new Methodist Hymn Book “Singing the Faith”

on Saturday 2nd February 2013

10am-12.30pm

at Marlborough Road Church

Refreshments provided

ACTION FOR CHILDREN AND THE NEW JUNIOR ISA

On November 28th Action for Children, in conjunction with Barnardo's, Sharefound and the Government, launched a new scheme to help young people leaving the care system at 18. Ever since the Government ceased payments to the Child Trust Fund in 2010, there has been no state provision for these vulnerable young people. At the launch of this Junior ISA, a Government minister pledged £200 for each individual in care to start their own ISA (totalling £16.7m). What the three charities involved in campaigning for Govt to part with scarce resources are now asking us to do, is to donate top-up amounts in order for these Junior ISAs to provide a real start in life. For example, where to find a deposit for a rented flat at the age of 18 and no parental backing?

Lee explains: *“When I left care it was really a daunting time – I was suddenly on my own and needed to work out how to live independently. I had to grow up fast. I was also really aware that I didn't have any savings, and that limited the plans I could make. Just having a bit of financial support would have made a real difference. It would have helped me stand on my own two feet, made me feel safer and less stressed.”*

When individuals or churches consider where their charitable donations might go in the New Year, giving a top-up towards a Junior ISA via Action for Children would seem to be an excellent option.

Michael King

VOLUNTEERS FOR SYNOD

Banbury Circuit is hosting the Spring Synod at Banbury Academy, Ruskin Road on Saturday 27th April 2013. In order for this day to run smoothly, we are looking for volunteers from the Circuit to join rotas to help throughout the day for the following:

CATERING – Setting up, clearing, washing up and serving tea, coffee and soup at certain times during the day, which will run from 9 am to 4 pm approximately. If you can help at all during these times, please contact Pauline and Tony Giles (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*)

CAR PARKING – Marshalls needed between 9 am and 10.30 am

ADMINISTRATION – Register those present and issue them with badges between 9 am and 10.30 am

STEWARDS – To welcome and direct visitors between 9 am and 10.30 am

Please contact Cheryl Messer (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*) if you can help with any of the last three tasks.

Thanking you in anticipation Cheryl Messer (on behalf of the Circuit Stewards)

CONNECTED WORSHIP AT WARRINGTON

Arriving before 9am on the Saturday meant that we were immediately part of the morning worship which included both praise and reflection. Thereafter the Local Preachers and Worship leaders went to one of three strands; Michael's choice was to learn more about 'Preaching' in the 21st Century, with Rev Ron Willoughby, an experienced American Methodist presently stationed in Warrington. Over two sessions in the morning, with helpful input as well as facilitating discussions, he talked about the art of personal story-telling, relevant contextual examples, and the effectiveness of indirect messages for congregations (as per the parables of Jesus). He also stressed the time needed to wrestle with lectionary readings (a minimum of ten hours for sermon preparation in his case), the difference between teaching and preaching, and the discernment to leave things out as much as what to include. These were useful reminders! Worship Leaders were encouraged to attend the 24/7 Prayer Workshop led by Carla Harding from Chichester. Her enthusiasm for prayer to be part of our whole life was infectious and she suggested ways that this could be done with congregations. She encouraged leaders to pray the positive, suggested having a prayer room or space in our buildings, with helpful symbols and texts around. There was also encouragement to pray outside the walls, in our communities; and as an example there was a focused 10 minute prayer walk around Warrington. The important point is to recognise where God is moving in our communities, and join in. Hazel... At the Warrington LP and WL Training day, *Connected Worship*, I took part in the discussion strand entitled *Frontline*. This title was chosen to remind us that all Christians should be in a *frontline* position in actively working to expand the Kingdom, to make disciples. People were asked to explain to their neighbours what their church outreach was, at which point both enthusiasm and frustration were expressed. Pain is being caused by *the tension between maintenance and mission*, and this pain is being felt everywhere among frontline Christians.

Churches were described as, "comfortable duvets where a powerful minority stifled hope".

Churches were described as, "places where the Minister is asked to do everything," and,

"not the missionary means" - I wonder if you think of your church as an asset to make disciples?

Our leader, Jonathan Green, had been asked to draw together reports from churches and individuals who were part of current Frontline projects reaching into community. There were examples of chaplaincy rather than more open-handed, mission-shaped-mission projects. There were posters on display about some of the projects, for example, Street Pastors and Drop-In Cafés with chaplaincy desks for practical advice with poverty or related problems. Jonathan also described a quieter type of outreach he described as, "the *submersive life* of God's Mission," and, "being a transformative presence," in the place where you live, over decades. There is an invisible, immeasurable work of God going on, in our communities. However the name, Christian, means we are called to be *on the front line*, and make new disciples. The truth is many people have a heart for mission through revised worship, new service to community or spiritual exploration and churches are unwilling to let this happen. Do you want to make new disciples, or would you say to your minister, as one church has said, "You're paid to look after us!" In the afternoon, Rev Dr Roger Walton talked to the three strands together about the different stages in a journey to faith, the importance of reflection (using the example of Mary's pondering in her heart), and the contextual issues to be borne in mind re both witness and worship; before Rev Jackie Bellfield put some of this into practice by introducing us all to New Song Cafe. With the blessing and support of Warrington Methodist Church, once a month on a Sunday afternoon/early evening there is cafe-style worship. Jackie and some excellent musicians introduce contemporary praise and worship songs in an informal atmosphere, with a break for tea and cake. The message will be very short, there may be a meditation or poem, and the prayers arise from the needs of those around the tables. My understanding is that the whole New Song Cafe time lasts about an hour, that it now attracts not just Methodists but other denominations as well as 'outsiders', and is growing in number; to the extent that it has outgrown the church and needs a different venue. So much food for thought. Michael, Isabel & Hazel

MHA

I have heard old age, particularly for those of us who live to be the oldest of the old, described as being a strange land. In the words of the psalmist, "*how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land*"?

We cannot give people a song to sing but by nurturing body, mind and spirit, we have lots of ways to help the older people we serve find their own song. Everyone has spiritual needs - a need for meaning and purpose in life. We ensure opportunities are available to achieve spiritual well-being through resources that are provided through:

- A chaplain in every MHA residential community
- A team of music therapists for people living with dementia
- Trained reflexologists
- Over 4,000 dedicated volunteers

Each chaplain is different, but each is there to offer friendship and support, and time to stop and share. They work alongside other staff to support and encourage by offering opportunities for worship and fellowship, and also by joining in activities. The chaplain is there for anyone and everyone - residents, staff, families and visitors - anyone who wants to talk, be listened to, pray or worship.

One of our chaplains recently ran a meditation group, an alternative for those residents who found they couldn't engage with a service of worship. The chaplain told me she was surprised when a resident who was a well-known atheist said he was going to come. At the end of a short period of time, with a candle burning, she asked how people had found it. The gentlemen said "I met God". She asked what had God said and he said "Welcome". That gentlemen died the following week, very peacefully and the chaplain told me she felt that session had given him the freedom to meet God. It is a privilege to serve and be alongside older people.

Many of our residents can feel that they have outlived their usefulness and often ask poignant questions as to the purpose of frail old age. Others come to discover some new sense of meaning and build new friendships and relationships in their later years. **'Because they are worth it'** was last years MHS theme. Thank you to all the ministers, local preachers and worship leaders who used our worship resources and held services, raising awareness and funds.

We celebrate Methodist Homes Sunday 2013 on 9th June

It is through the generosity of our supporters that we can offer additional support and alternative therapies free of charge and we now serve over 16,000 older people around the country, more than ever before.

Our thanks go to every member and group within the Methodist Church for the continuing support through prayer, volunteering and generous donations. In 2013 we hope you will help us celebrate our 70th Anniversary and the friendships that make MHA special, whatever age we are.

*Sometimes I picture myself like a candle.
I used to be a candle about eight feet tall - burning bright.
Now, every day I lose a little bit of me.
Someday the candle will be very small.
But the flame will be just as bright.*

EVANGELISM OPPORTUNITIES

At the last Circuit Meeting I gave a few examples of things that I had seen around the country on Vice-President's visits. I was asked to put some of these in writing. First, in Lancashire, I was introduced to 'Methodist Action North West' (MANW), a charity that started out providing a soup kitchen in a Preston city centre church, and has developed into an important organisation which works with churches of all sizes, rural and urban, to maximise the land and buildings that local Methodist churches have available. They have full-time staff, including an architect, and will effectively take a lease on the buildings (not the sanctuary or any rooms the church knows it will be using each week) for a number of years; therefore will take over building repairs, etc. In return, MANW will utilise the buildings on a business-like basis, charge economic rents (including car park space, where appropriate) and liaise especially with local councils and social services to provide space for on-going social projects. For example, in Preston I visited the basement of a church that had been turned into a self-contained hostel for homeless men, paid for by local council grants, and providing a real service for the community. It had revolutionised the church's image of itself, and the café upstairs was now open for coffee, soup, light lunches etc six days a week.

In Clitheroe I was taken to Together on Fridays (TOFS) which meets at the Methodist church from 4-7pm every Friday fortnight. It's open for all ages, the youngsters come in after school, but all ages, parents, grandparents, mature church members attend. The first hour is spent on activities, games, chatting, etc; then there is a sit-down meal (meat and potato pie when I was there!) which is bought in, desserts donated by various people; and after the meal a communal time of sharing together in a game or activity. It had a real family 'flavour', and has attracted, through the young people mainly, a lot of new people into the church family.

Closer to home, and I'm writing this just before Christmas, I attended a village nativity in Aston-le-Walls. Carol singing around the village, with Bible readings, followed by a short pageant in a courtyard with two out-houses telling the story of Mary, Joseph and Jesus. And from the people I talked to, most did not attend church regularly, so this was a significant event in the calendar. I also found myself, on a cold evening, totally caught up in the story again!

None of these examples may be applicable directly to where your church is at present, but perhaps a few evangelism seeds may have been sown.

Michael King

CIRCUIT QUIET DAY

The next Quiet Day will be held on Saturday, 11th May from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. Further details regarding venue, cost and the theme for the day will be available later. In the meantime, you may wish to make a note in you new diary to 'keep the day free'!

Dorothy Hewitson

CHACOMBE

We enjoyed a very well supported Candlelit service on 23rd December. The Brownies entertained us with two heart warming performances and a solo guitarist brought to life the Silent Night Story. The retiring offering plus the Christmas Day offering amounted to £70.00 and was shared between NCH Action for Children and World Vision, two of the charities which we support.

BIBLE STUDY – At present we are holding this group in the local pub on Tuesday afternoons starting at 2.15. The group is led by Hazel and if you are interested and would like to come along you can contact her on 01295 660294.

COFFEE & CHAT – We are now holding these sessions on a Thursday morning instead of Friday from 10.30 am – 12 noon in the schoolroom. Do come along for a chat, a cuppa and a piece of delicious, homemade cake. The Chapel was delighted to receive a cheque for £400 from the committee. This will help to pay for the repair of our leaking roof and some draught proofing work.

CROPREDY

Bible Study every Wednesday pm Speak to Hazel Stag for details

27th February at 7 pm Praise Evening Leader Rev Dorothy Hewitson. Readings, favourite hymns, a chat with cup of tea or coffee and more than just biscuits.

HORNTON

Happy New Year to all our readers. We are particularly looking forward to 2013 as we hope to get our building project underway, possibly starting around Easter time. We still need to continue with our fund raising and we start off on 16th February with a soup lunch and bring and buy stall, this will start at 12 o'clock until 2 pm. Do come and join us if you can. Also we shall be celebrating Ash Wednesday 13th February with a service in the Chapel at 7 pm. We still have Friday morning coffee, cake and a chat every Friday from 10.30 – 12.00. Thursday after school club and 'Jiffy' service at 3 pm first Sunday in month.

HINTON METHODIST CHURCH (Woodford Halse)

Saturday 2nd February 2013 from 10.00am to 12.00pm – Woodford Churches Together Tea & Coffee Morning at Hinton Methodist Church. There are cakes and biscuits also plus a stall to purchase items for the chosen charity. If you do not have a car the 200 bus from Banbury Bus Station stops outside the church. Look forward to seeing you there.

MARLBOROUGH ROAD THURSDAY CLUB 7.30 pm

7th February – Meal out (venue to be decided)

Enquiries: – Shirley Davies, *(contact steward or see paper copy for contact details)*

**NEITHROP CHAPEL FELLOWSHIP
MEETINGS START AT 7.30 pm**

6th February – Val Trinder – Have Hymn Book will Travel

20th February – Childhood Memories

CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other)

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday afternoons each month except July and August at Marlborough Road at 2.30 pm and welcome Men and Women of any age to share a varied programme. The money we raise goes to the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission.

13th February – Members' afternoon – Childhood Memories

27th February – Andrea Harding Smith

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS A WEEK EARLIER THAN NORMAL AS I WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE THE FOLLOWING WEEK AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER LATE.

**DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH EDITION
THURSDAY 7TH FEBRUARY
CONTRIBUTIONS TO
MARY TANNER**

(contact steward or see paper copy for contact details)