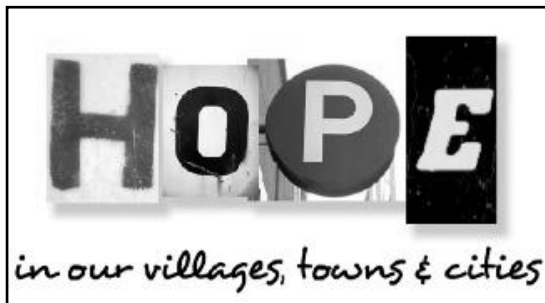

Union Church News

January/February 2008



“The whole Church for the whole nation for the whole year”

HOPE 08 has as its strapline “in our villages, towns & cities” and will be a catalyst to resource and stimulate all parts of the church in the UK during 2008, whether urban or rural, as they seek to engage with their communities through mission activities.

This catalytic role is to encourage churches to increase the breadth and scale of their collaborative work in proclaiming the Gospel and taking part in social action activities in the name of Jesus Christ. One of the founders uses the phrase “Do more, do it together and do it in word and deed.”

HOPE 08 is a national initiative designed to reach across the UK during 2008, irrespective of the size or nature of the community concerned, and will provide a framework of options for groups of churches, individual churches, groups of Christians or individuals.

Most of the programme options are centred on festivals such as Easter, Pentecost, Harvest and Christmas, utilising resources produced by a wide range of Christian organisations representing all traditions of the church. These options are intended to empower all churches to engage with their communities.

What are the local churches planning?

The Churches Together in Heathfield and District have been thinking and praying about their response to this countrywide initiative and have all agreed to support a number of events and opportunities together during 2008.

Individual Churches will also be promoting their 2008 programmes under the banner of ‘HOPE’ and in the next few weeks you will be seeing banner headings appearing across and around the district.

The first key programme is a Week of Prayer in January commencing at St Richard’s Church and concluding with a Prayer Breakfast in Union Church.

The Heathfield Street Pastors has already commenced, with one training session held in November, and this whole project will be launched on Sunday 11 May at a United Pentecost Celebration at Heathfield Community College. All the Churches will be joining together for a whole day’s celebration for all the family.

Meanwhile for the Lenten Bible Studies, Dr David Dunn-Wilson will be leading the sessions, all focusing on different aspects of HOPE.

And something which is in the pipeline and just emerging on to the drawing board is an exciting initiative for young people called ‘Soul in Heathfield’.

What is exciting and challenging is the timing of this initiative. Nearly three years ago, Rev. Jane Sherwin challenged the Churches of Heathfield to stop looking inwards, but to look ‘outwards’ and to the opportunities around us.

It was a three year vision of thought, consideration, prayer and then action, and HOPE 08 comes to us with the challenge of action – doing it together.

See page 4 for what people are saying about HOPE 08

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A message from Mark - empowering God's people to grow God's Church

Dear friends,

When I came to Union Church, I formulated a Five Year Plan. The basic aim of this plan was simple: to put some life into the church, attract some new people and ensure its future in the short term.

This would involve changing the culture of the church enough to make it attractive to young families. I shared with the Deacons and later briefly with the church members what the factors were in church growth. Uncomfortably for me, the critical factor (according to all the best research) is the Minister. Ministers who make churches grow are "Shapers", that is to say that they take hold of a church and shape it, giving it a distinctive ethos and aim. The critical factor is that everyone knows and understands which direction the church is moving in and why it is necessary. But without the support and encouragement of the congregation, even the best of Ministers will be powerless to realize their hopes and dreams. So the credit for anything good that happens belongs to you all.

When I presented the Five Year Plan to the Deacons I was careful to say that most churches don't see any growth in the first three years of a Pastorate. Eighteen months later I want to say a big thank you to you all. With your help and understanding we have made changes to the culture of our worship and it is your embracing of this change that has made it possible. To your credit, we have experienced growth across the age ranges and proved ourselves to be the exception to the general rule that it takes three years before growth occurs. Eighteen months on, most of the aims of the Five Year Plan have been accomplished: God is good and so are his people. Well done to you all!

So what is the next stage in our Church's journey?

The short term future is looking comparatively healthy, but we must not become complacent;

there is still a possibility that the whole process could stall. If we are to continue growing we will need to identify, mentor, enable and appoint new lay leaders to assist in the church's development in the coming years. This means that people will need to be ready to be vulnerable and try new things, growing in their gifts and serving, perhaps beyond their comfort zones.

Lay leaders

Why are lay leaders so important in the life of a church? There is only so much activity that one person is able to sustain. Whilst a Minister who shapes a church is an important factor in church growth, a Minister who tries to do everything himself may eventually become a limiting factor in a church's growth and development, as the necessary input for sustained growth gets beyond the ability of one person to fulfil. As a church grows, more people need to take responsibility for areas of the church's life. Appointing Rev. John Glover as the Pastoral Minister of Union Church has been an inspired move and I want to express my gratitude for all that John and Doreen are doing; they are fantastic people to work with and a great joy and blessing.

Continuity of good lay leadership is essential in a growing church. I am so grateful for the teamwork and the joint effort that has been made by the Deacons who are working so well alongside me. I am delighted that three of the retiring Deacons are willing to serve again and am grateful for the continuity that this could provide if they are re-elected by the Church Members' Meeting. But looking ahead we need to be ready for the time in the coming years when, as some people retire from the Diaconate, we hope to have people already prepared to fill the places which become vacant.

In the appointing of ordained leaders there is preparation and selection from above: potential Ministers are screened and selected for training by Local Associations before undergoing further screening and selection by Theological Colleges. Finally they are accredited by the Denomination before they can be called to serve in a pastorate by the membership of a local church.

We need to take the selection and preparation of lay leaders just as seriously because they are vitally

important people in the life of a local church. Potential Deacons should be identified, selected and mentored as they are given opportunities for service within a local congregation. That way, when Deacons' elections come round people are not taking a step of blind faith by voting for someone just because they seem to be a nice person. When potential leaders have already been identified and prepared, the church members who vote are confirming into office those who have already been tested and who have demonstrated that they are able to serve competently and cooperatively.

Instead of wondering whether new Deacons will be a blessing or a curse, people will be assured that they have grasped and understood the mission statement of the church: 'Making and Shaping Disciples to Serve the Community in Jesus' name.' They will know that they are already actively working and serving with the aim of seeing it fulfilled, in cooperation with the Ministers and lay leaders of the Church. They will be assured that they not only give assent to our agreed values, but

work to ensure they are an integral part of everything we do.

It will not be my role to try and do everything myself (though it can be tempting to get the brownie points!). As the senior Minister it is my calling to invest particular time in those people who will become significant lay leaders in the life of the church in the coming years. This will facilitate continuity, it will mean that we all know in which direction the church is moving and it will enable our continued growth.

Will you join me on our continued journey together as Pastor and People, servants and disciples of Jesus Christ, seeking his Kingdom, growing His Church? It will take prayer and sacrifice, courage and conviction, above all it will need the empowering and enabling of the Holy Spirit, but remember that with God, all things are possible.

With every blessing!

Mark

Finance report - December 2007

This time last year we indicated that it would probably be necessary to 'dip into' reserve funds to balance our General Account for 2007.

We are pleased to say that General Church Income, including increase in offerings and Gift Day will be close to General Church Expenditure for 2007. This in itself should be close to target. This is good news - thank you so much for your support.

At the recent Church Members' Meeting, we indicated that General Church Expenses for 2008 are anticipated to increase. We would ask that we all bear this in mind through our continued regular financial support.

Various projects, i.e. the kitchen refurbishment already agreed, are covered by monies already held in separate dedicated accounts.

Thank you.

The Lord bless,

Alwyn

Flower Rota



January 6th

January 13th

January 20th

January 27th

February 3rd

February 10th

February 17th

February 24th

March 2nd

Mrs A Miller

Mrs N Fletcher

Mrs F Anderson

Mrs H Stevens

Mrs M Braxton

Mrs B Pitches

Mrs N Saunders

Mrs S Fletcher

Mrs T Rutherford

News in brief

Union Book Group



Our first meeting of the new year will be on Thursday 10th January at 12 Cherry Gardens where we will be discussing 'The House at Riverton' by Kate Morton and 'Restless' by William Boyd. Please ring Julie Baxter on 868799 for more information or for a copy of the current book.

Union Church News on the internet



Don't forget, all editions of the new format Union Church News are available to read on the Activities and Events page of the church website: www.unionchurch.co.uk



What some of our leaders are saying...

"Hope 2008 is a really remarkable vision.....I thank God for the inspiration that has driven it and wish every blessing to all involved"

Most Rev and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams
- **Archbishop of Canterbury**

"I wholeheartedly recommend this grassroots initiative as a way of empowering local Churches to be bold in living and proclaiming the Gospel in our society"

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor
- **Archbishop of Westminster**

"Hope 2008 is a tremendous catalyst for encouraging and resourcing churches of all traditions to raise their game in community service. It has my unequivocal support"

Rev David Coffey
- **President of the World Baptist Alliance**

"I want to invite and encourage every person who knows and owns the name of Jesus Christ to become a partner of Hope 08"

Most Rev and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu
- **Archbishop of York**

"Hope 08 will enable young people to show the generosity of God's love in your locality - and make a difference. I strongly commend it"

Rev Graham Carter
- **President of the Methodist Conference**

"It will be an exhilarating and inspiring year. I am thrilled to be part of such a vibrant, credible presentation of good news"

Rev Joel Edwards
- **General Director of Evangelical Alliance**

"We are more than thrilled to be able to stand with others in this kingdom initiative"

Stuart Bell
- **Team Leader of Ground Level Network of churches**

"Hope 2008 will be an excellent opportunity for

people of all denominations of the Christian faith to unite in regenerating and transforming their local communities, making them better places to both live and work"

Sir Ian Blair
- **Metropolitan Police Commissioner**

"Hope 08 is a wonderful initiative and an opportunity for local churches throughout the country to work in their communities and make a real difference to their neighbours"

Caroline Spelman MP
- **Shadow Communities & Local Government Minister [at time of quote]**

"I welcome the contribution of Hope 2008. The Government is committed to working with faith groups to strengthen community engagement"

Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
- **Chief Secretary of HM Treasury [at time of quote]**

"Hope 08 provides an opportunity for local churches to demonstrate the relevance of the Gospel in a very practical way in their local community and can make a real impact. I am delighted to be associated with this venture"

Steve Webb MP
- **Lib Dem Health spokesman [at time of quote]**

"I honestly believe 'Hope' in 2008 is an opportunity perhaps like we have never had before"

Andy Hawthorne
- **Founder and Director of The Message Trust**

"HOPE provides an amazing opportunity for all Christians to work together"

Mike Pilavachi
- **Founder of Soul Survivor**

"This initiative has the potential to be a catalyst, not just for one year. My dream would be that it sees a movement develop."

Roy Crowne
- **National Director of Youth for Christ**

HOPE 08 needs the power of prayer...

New Year is all about new resolutions and fresh starts. Hope 08 aims to tap into that as churches and Christian groups across the country launch into this year-long programme of word and action.

Most of the denominations and a wide range of ministries and groups are rolling up their sleeves to get involved. The Bible Society is working on plans to run an open art competition, 'Images of Hope', to host a showcase event as part of the London-based Pentecost initiative and to contribute towards the media campaign that will promote this year of community-facing activities around the country.

In your prayers, please

- Ask for energy and inspiration as Rob Cotton, Bible Society's Senior Campaign Manager, seeks to lead their contribution to Hope 08 and for Assistant Campaign Manager Beth Lane.
- Ask that the thousands of churches, youth groups and others involved will have the faith, creativity and energy to develop initiatives and events that will reach many in their towns and villages.
- Pray that churches will make the most of opportunities to use or adapt resources and initiatives in their situations.

Adapted from the Bible Society's Quarterly Prayer Bulletin

... because prayer can change the world

Prayer can change the world according to one in five adults in the UK; a finding revealed in research published by Tearfund.

The survey found that in the UK 20 million adults say they pray (outside of church services), that is 42% of the population. Of these, 10 million believe that prayer 'changes the world', while 12 million believe that prayer 'changes what happens in my life' and 'what happens to other people I know'.

London is the prayer capital with 73% of people praying, but only 24% pray in Yorkshire/Humberside. Praying for family and friends was the most common theme for prayer with 68% of the prayers, (81% among regular churchgoers). The second most common theme was thanking God with 41% of the total prayers (64% among regular churchgoers).

Banning Christians from public services will damage society

The Evangelical Alliance has responded to a report by the British Humanist Association (BHA) claiming that religious organisations do not offer any distinctive benefits to the provision of public services and might even damage social cohesion due to discrimination on religious grounds.

Rev. Joel Edwards, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance, commented, "A wealth of public service bodies are hugely motivated by their Christian faith to provide an effective service. If they were stripped of the right to express this motivation there would be an enormous hole that would not assist the social cohesion the BHA are so keen to foster. To wipe out faith convictions from public services would be like an artist being interrogated with every stroke of his brush.

"It is so important that charities with a religious basis such as the Salvation Army, the Shaftesbury Society and Faithworks are able to deliver public services in a Christian way. This also applies across the faith spectrum.

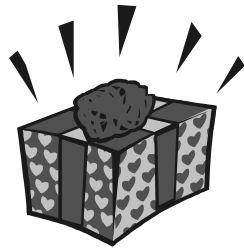
"As regards any question of discrimination, the Evangelical Alliance has made its views known in its submission to the discrimination law review."

Malcolm Duncan, leader of Faithworks, a Christian charity that exists to empower and inspire individual Christians and every local church to develop their role at the hub of their community, comments, "The report demonstrates a deep intolerance of any place for faith in the public square and completely misunderstands faith as a motivation. They are calling for faith to be removed from public services in a round about way – that's not just wrong, it is misguided, dangerous and will doom communities to poorer services."

Thousands of charities and voluntary groups with a religious basis continue to do their work, whether publicly funded or not, and arguably make the largest contribution to the voluntary sector in the UK.

Sunday Club and Sunday Special

Many thanks to everyone who helped in any way to support our Love-in-a-Box project this year. We ended up delivering a total of 211 filled boxes - almost a record - along with a cheque which more than covered the cost of their transport. Mustard Seed Relief Mission were delighted with our contribution. And I have already had a surprise visit from a young lady, who popped into the church last Thursday, who is saving a bag of small soft toys for next year's shoe boxes and wants to come and help us fill them.

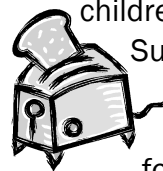


assuring us that they will be very much appreciated by those who receive them.

We enjoyed being part of the Christmas Family Celebration on December 16th, particularly the Nativity play and puppet show.



During January, while the main church kitchen is being refurbished, Sunday Club will have to operate in restricted space - but we will carry on each Sunday, with appropriate programmes for the architects in one place and the younger children, all together, in another area.



Sunday Special will have to have a holiday in January, but we look forward to making lots of toast again for you on February 3rd.

Sue Mumford



A week or so ago we sent 60 Christmas cards, written by our children, to be distributed by the Salvation Army to the lonely and the homeless in London. We have already had a very nice letter thanking us for these and



Sunday Club and Sunday Special attendance prizes

| | | | | |
|------------|--------|------------|--|-----------|
| 21 October | Steven | Architect | Matt Redman CDs: "The Father's Song" and "Where angels fear to tread" | 300 stars |
| 4 November | Alice | Bricklayer | "The Queen's Feast" - a puzzle book about Esther "Itty-Bitty Bible Activity Book: Volume 4" | 30 stars |

Sudoku Challenge

© Copyright 2004 The Word Puzzles

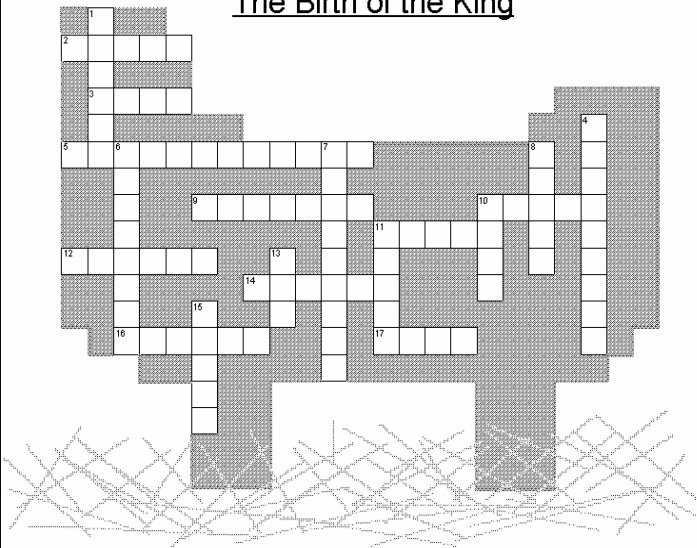
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| | 9 | | | | 2 | | | 3 |
| 2 | | | | 4 | | | 8 | |
| 4 | | | 6 | | | | 9 | |

There was a man called Jim, who lived near a river. Jim was a very religious man. One day, the river rose over the banks and flooded the town, and Jim was forced to climb onto his porch roof. While sitting there, a man in a boat comes along and tells Jim to get in the boat with him. Jim says "No, that's ok. God will take care of me." So the man in the boat drives off. The water rises, so Jim climbs onto his roof. At that time, another boat comes along and the person in that one tells Jim to get in. Jim replies, "No, that's ok. God will take care of me." The person in the boat then leaves. The water rises even more, and Jim climbs onto his chimney. Then a helicopter comes and lowers a ladder. The woman in the helicopter tells Jim to climb up the ladder and get in. Jim tells her "That's ok." The woman says "Are you sure?" Jim says, "Yeah, I'm sure God will take care of me." Finally, the water rises too high and Jim drowns. Jim gets up to Heaven and is face-to-face with God. Jim says to God "You told me you would take care of me! What happened?" God replied "Well, I sent you two boats and a helicopter. What more did you want?"

Kids' Bits

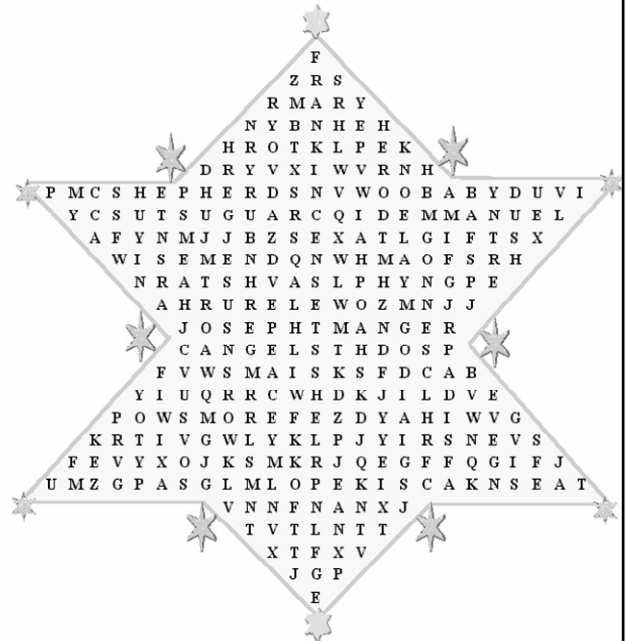
Nativity Wordsearch

The Birth of the King



- | Across | | Down | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 2. Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to pay these | 12. Mary's husband | 1. An open box to hold food for livestock; Mary laid Jesus in one | 11. And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call His name |
| 3. A precious metal; one of the gifts from the 3 kings | 14. These appeared to shepherds and told them about the birth of Christ | 4. The city of His birth | 13. He was born in a stable because there was no room here |
| 5. A fragrant gum used to make incense; one of the gifts from the wisemen | 16. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a _____, which is Christ the Lord | 6. The Roman emperor who taxed everyone | 15. We celebrate His _____ at Christmas |
| 9. The 3 kings from the east | 17. This led the wisemen to Jesus | 7. Angels told these guys about His birth while they were watching their flocks | |
| 10. A pungent tasting herb; A gift from the wisemen | | 8. The king of Judea when Jesus was born | |
| 11. Bethlehem is here | | 10. His mother | |

©A Kid's Heart at akidsheart.com

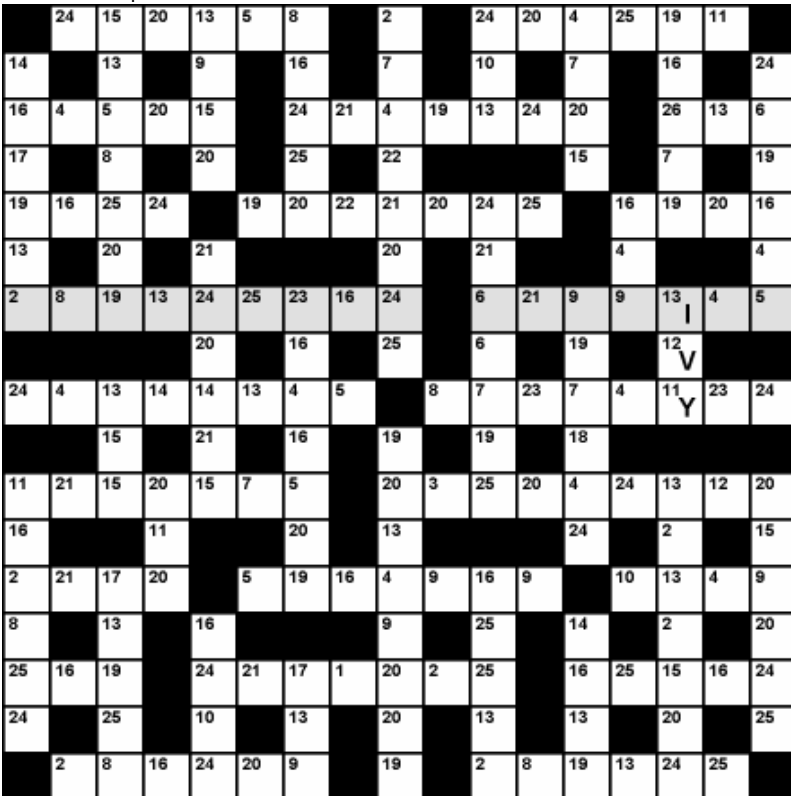


- | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| Angels | Gold | Nativity | Taxes |
| Augustus | Herod | Noel | Virgin |
| Baby | Inn | Peace | Wisemen |
| Bethlehem | Jesus | Promise | |
| Elisabeth | Joseph | Savior* | |
| Emmanuel | Manger | Shepherds | |
| Frankincense | Mary | Star | |
| Gifts | Myrrh | Swaddling | |
- * It's an American puzzle! Ed.

©akidsheart.com

Christmas Themed Codeword Puzzle

A codeword puzzle with a few words connected to the festive season thrown in.



| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |

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www.biblequizzes.org.uk

In the cafeteria of a Catholic school, the children were lined up for lunch. At the head of the line was a large pile of apples. One of the nuns had written a note and had placed it in front of the apples. The note read: "Take only one - God is watching."



Further down the cafeteria line was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies.

One of the boys had written a note of his own. The note he placed in front of the cookies read: "Take all you want - God is watching the apples."



Hope you enjoyed this month's bumper edition of kids' bits. Have a great Christmas!



Christianity Explosion in Nepal



Taken from CWR magazine – source Virtueonline.

In the 1950's there were no Christians in Nepal. By the 1960's there were a handful, but in the next two decades there was explosive growth. Today there are probably around 800,000. This growth occurred exactly as narrated in the book of Acts or the Gospels. 'As the New Testament makes clear in repeated statements, He is King of kings and Lord of lords and His aching love was clearly revealed on the Cross' wrote Dr Robert Sanders in a report following a recent visit to the Himalayan land. Dr Sanders made the trip as a member of a small team led by Norman Beale, who spent 13 years as a missionary there.

Finding forgiveness

When many Hindus and Buddhists in Nepal see others suffering 'they feel it is their duty to leave them to their suffering. To interfere would rob them of their opportunity to atone for *karma*. Regardless of what is taught in the West about these religions, this is how it works on the ground,' observed Dr Sanders. 'For these reasons, when they hear that Jesus forgives all sin in one stroke, that something called *karma* has no power over them; that they can have a relationship with Christ and an all-loving Father; that they and this relationship will last forever, they are thunderstruck. They want God, a loving eternal gracious God. For these reasons, and many more, there is an explosion of the gospel in Nepal'.

Praying for healing

Pastor Pembedup T was the first in his village to become a Christian. His conversion came in 1984 after failure of all attempts to heal his

very sick wife by the shaman and Buddhist lama through spells, rituals, trances and his sacrificing of goats to human dead spirits. Pembedup carried his wife to a nearby village and asked a Christian to pray for her. She was instantly healed. Conversion brought much persecution for Pembedup, but a breakthrough came when the shaman and lama fell ill and asked for prayer. They were healed and decided to follow Jesus. Today all 106 families in Pembedup's village are Christians.

Pastor Bam T became a Christian in 1986, at a time when there was no freedom for Christians in a land known as the world's only Hindu kingdom. He started a fellowship, and was persecuted by angry villagers. But after a family asked him to pray for a lady possessed by demons and she was set free, 11 households received Christ. The healing of a child brought more people to the Saviour and the fellowship grew to some 400 believers. He started a fellowship in another place, followed by a third which has grown from 11 to 250 in two years. Death threats from Maoist insurgents did not deter him and another pastor from starting the second church. This other pastor fasted for 40 days, praying for the end of the Maoist insurgency. The insurgency ended last year.

A gospel of hope

'The gospel did not primarily come to Nepal carried by missionaries and accepted as part of a "superior" culture.' It came, Dr Sanders concludes, 'as in the beginning, by the risen Jesus doing what He always does: healing the sick, casting out demons, forgiving sinners, reconciling families and giving hope of eternal life.'

Heathfield Street Pastors - an update from Ruth Waller, Coordinator



This exciting new project involves all Churches in the town. 'Street Pastors' is a nationally recognised initiative 'engaging with people on the streets in night-time venues to care, listen, dialogue and offer practical help'.

The first training day - 'Role and Responsibilities' - was led by Street Pastors from London. Currently, every Friday night over 1000 Street Pastors are on the streets in cities and major towns across the UK. We heard amazing stories of God at work today in the lives of young people.

The training continues for Street Pastors over the next few months. A Prayer Team will also be needed to support the work. If you are interested in being involved contact your Church Leader. Further updates to follow!

Thank you on behalf of Penge Mission

A big "Thank You" to all who were kind enough to place items in the 'Penge' box and also to those who showed their loving care with £30 in cash gifts.

On 28 November, with the Ford Focus estate packed to bursting, Roy and I drove up to meet Kathy Bance at Penge Congregational Church. The sun shone and the traffic was fine. A parking space was miraculously found and we unloaded the car and then adjourned to a quiet corner, where Kathy produced a very enjoyable lunch and we had a great time exchanging news.

Before we had arrived, Kathy had been out shopping for food for the Hot Christmas Meal to be prepared and taken round on 8th December. It sounded delicious - the team is very inventive and resourceful. On enquiry, she explained that they are now helping significant numbers of foreign migrant workers who are not able to find work or lodgings, and it was touching to see our 'longer-term' homeless introducing them to the shared benefits of turning up when the vans arrive.

Please do pray for the Penge Mission and all the other churches in the group who do the hard physical work and spend time with the homeless serving and listening.

Dauida

Book Review - John Glover

IRAQ: Searching for Hope
(new edition)

Author: Canon Andrew White

Publisher: Continuum

ISBN: 0-8264-9716-0



'Iraq: Searching for Hope' was the winner of the general book of the year award category in the UK Christian Book Awards last year.

Andrew White practised as an anaesthetist before being called into Christian Ministry twenty years ago. He never dreamed then that he would end up as Vicar of Baghdad! This book gives you a rare insight behind the scenes of that troubled city, and into the efforts of Christians to find ways of reconciliation between the warring factions. It tells of the risks all people of goodwill face in Iraq.

Andrew White quotes Lord Coggan: "Don't take care, take risks!" This is a book about men and women who take enormous risks in their search for peace.

PROM PRAISE

With Noel Tredinnick,
The All Souls Orchestra and guests.

Congress Theatre, Eastbourne

**Saturday 9 February 2008
at 7.30 pm**

Guests include Stuart Townend

Hosted by Wallace Benn, Bishop of Lewes

Tickets available from
Congress Theatre Box Office:
01323 412000
www.eastbournetheatres.co.uk

Priced at £15, £12, £10, £8
(Ticket price includes
souvenir programme)

Thinking about a new year's resolution?

How about joining a house group



If you're anything like me, you feel you ought to go to a house group but for one reason or another have never got around to actually going. And the longer you leave it, the harder it seems to be to join an already established group. Perhaps the start of a new year is a good time to think about committing some extra time to this; here's a quick rundown of the six house groups that Union Church offers.

Halley Road House Group

- Fairacres, Halley Road, Broad Oak
- First and Third Monday evenings, 8.00 - 9.30pm
- Keith or Liz Miller on 01435 862518

This group meets at the home of Keith and Liz Miller and is all about fun, friendship and discipleship. You will need to be worshipping regularly at Union Church and interested in following Jesus Christ and working out what that means. You need to have a servant spirit, be prepared to muck in and do whatever is needed to help, and have a good sense of humour.

The evening starts with a chat and a drink before a time of worship and prayer, followed by bible study - bible reading notes are provided to help prepare for the passages being studied. There are also occasional social evenings.

Acorn House Group

- Mayfield
- Second Tuesday evening, 7.30pm
- Dennis Sheppard on 01435 872282

This group meets at the home of Chris and Dennis Sheppard. The evening starts with bible study followed by a short prayer time. Refreshments are served at the end of the evening. Occasionally meetings are on Thursday evenings if there is a Churches Together in Heathfield event on the Tuesday evening.

Tilsmore House Group

- Mary Burfield Court, Thorny Close, Heathfield
- First and Third Monday evenings, 7.30pm (check weekly bulletin for exact dates and times)
- Derek Miller on 01435 812983

This is not a group to sit and listen to. Rather, it is an interactive group where all are expected to

participate - the raising of challenging issues is encouraged. Discussion ranges widely, stimulated by a selected passage of Scripture and questions relating to it.

Longview House Group

- Various locations - check the weekly bulletin for details
- Third, Fourth and Fifth Tuesday afternoons, 2.30pm
- Joyce Knight on 01435 863627

This group meets to feast on God's word and enjoy questioning and discussing its relevance in our daily lives.

Recent studies have been the Epistle to the Ephesians and the vision of the Apostle John recorded in the Book of Revelation.

Town House Group

- Various locations - check the weekly bulletin for details
- Second Tuesday, 2.30pm
- Norah Fletcher on 01435 864654

This is a small group meeting in homes in the town, hence its name. This group tends to follow Scripture Union study books which include questions to stimulate discussion. After the bible study is a time of prayer, followed by refreshments.

L.U.S.H.

- Alternately The Manse, Tilsmore Road, Heathfield and 29 Springwood Road, Heathfield - check weekly bulletin
- First and Third Tuesday, 10.00 - 11.30am
- Sarah Welch on 01435 868160

Ladies United bible Study in Heathfield is a group formed from all of the Christian churches in the Heathfield area. It was started as a group to cater for mums who may have had trouble getting to evening house groups, and has a crèche for young children to enable mums to concentrate on the bible study.

So why not find out more - or just go along and see how it goes!

Union Church regular events

| | | |
|------------------|--|---|
| Monday | 10.00am - 12.00noon | Open Door - tea and coffee in the Coffee Lounge |
| | 12.00noon - 2.00pm | Open Door - lunches in the Church Hall |
| Tuesday | 12.00noon (fortnightly - check diary on page 12) | Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club |
| | 6.00pm (term time only) | Beavers in the Church Hall |
| | 7.00pm | Service at Mary Burfield Court |
| Wednesday | 1.30pm - 3.00pm (term time only) | Parent & Toddler Group in the Church Hall |
| | 4.30pm (term time only) | Rainbows in the Church Hall |
| | 5.45pm (term time only) | Brownies in the Church Hall |
| | 7.00pm (term time only) | Guides in the Church Hall |
| Thursday | 10.00am - 4.00pm | Do Pop Inn - teas, coffees and light lunches in the Coffee Lounge |
| | 6.30pm (term time only) | Cubs in the Church Hall |
| Friday | 2.30pm (first Friday of each month) | Women's Fellowship |
| | 7.30pm (term time only) | Scouts in the Church Hall |
| Saturday | 8.30am | Prayer Meeting in the Coffee Lounge |
| Sunday | 7.30pm (fortnightly - check dates with leaders) | YClub730 - for Year 6 and above |

Final thoughts this Christmas...

£20 billion - the amount the UK spends on Christmas.

£1.6 billion goes on food and drink.

Parents will spend an average of **£262** on each of their children.

£33 will be spent per person on last-minute panic buys.

£1.2 billion will be wasted on unwanted Christmas presents.

£7 billion - the amount Britain's shoppers are expected to spend on online gift purchases this Christmas.

£28 million - the amount spent on Christmas cakes each year.

4 billion - the number of Brussels sprouts bought in the week before Christmas; **£30 million** is spent each Christmas on sprouts.

4.2 million - the number of credit-card users still paying off their bills from last Christmas.

Christmas Day 2005 found 270 people filling out their tax return online.

220 per cent - the increase in church attendance in the UK at Christmas.

“And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:7

- the simple truth of Christmas.

Church diary

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| December | Sunday 23 | 10.30am 4.00pm | Christmas Communion - Rev. Mark Welch Christingle and Carols - Rev. Mark Welch |
| | Christmas Day Tuesday 25 | 10.30am | Family Service |
| | Sunday 30 | 10.30am | Rev. John Glover |
| January | Friday 4 | 2.30pm | Women's Fellowship |
| | Sunday 6 | | NOTE: No Sunday Special because of kitchen refit |
| | | 10.30am 6.30pm | Rev. John Glover Window on the World |
| | Thursday 10 | 7.30pm | Deacons' Meeting |
| | Sunday 13 | 10.30am 6.30pm | Rev. Mark Welch (communion) Integrated Bible Study |
| | Tuesday 15 | 7.30pm | Prayer Meeting |
| | Sunday 20 | 10.30am 6.30pm | Rev. Mark Welch CTH Week of Prayer - St Richard's Church |
| | Saturday 26 | 8.00am | CTH Prayer Breakfast |
| | Sunday 27 | 10.30am 6.30pm | Rev. Mark Welch Holy Communion |
| | February | Friday 1 | 2.30pm |
| Sunday 3 | | 9.00am 10.30am 6.30pm | Sunday Special Rev. Mark Welch Window on the World |
| Tuesday 5 | | 7.30pm | Deacons' Meeting |
| Sunday 10 | | 10.30am 6.30pm | Rev. Mark Welch (communion) CTH - Lenten Bible Study |
| Sunday 17 | | 10.30am 6.30pm | Rev. Mark Welch CTH - Lenten Bible Study |
| Tuesday 19 | | 12 noon 7.30pm | Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club Prayer Meeting |
| Sunday 24 | | 10.30am 6.30pm | Rev. John Glover CTH - Lenten Bible Study |
| Tuesday 26 | | 7.30pm | Annual General Meeting followed by Church Members' Meeting |
| March | Sunday 2 | 9.00am 10.30am 6.30pm | Sunday Special Rev. Mark Welch CTH - Lenten Bible Study |



Union Church, Heathfield

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Items included subject to suitability and space.