
Union Church News

October/November 2009

Not long until Advent: a date for your diaries A message from Mark

Dear Friends,

A friend of mine is a great fan of Festivals - by which I mean Christian gatherings where large numbers of people come together to experience worship and teaching on a scale that you couldn't get in your local church. She started the Festival year by going to 'Spring Harvest' (not an agricultural show), where she learnt to be an apprentice (another word used in this context for disciple). She then went to the Baptist Assembly and was faced with the question, "Who do we think we are?" (I wonder if she told them she was an apprentice?)

Over the past year she has also been to 'New Wine', (alcohol is not actually encouraged), 'Leading Edge' (not an event for leaders), 'Greenbelt' (not actually held in a greenbelt area), 'Momentum' (a static event that does not move), 'Go Serve', 'Go Celebrate', 'Soul Survivor' and will shortly be attending 'Connexion'. These are just a few of the Christian festivals you can attend around the country.

Unless you have been to one of these events the names can be somewhat confusing. It is an undeniable truth that the language associated with these festivals can be baffling and that you have to be "in the know," to understand it. But the aim is to encourage and build people up, and we and our children have benefited enormously from these great events ourselves.

Of course for all these events there is a price to be paid for admission and that means that, good as they are, they will never be accessible to everyone. But there are Christian festivals that are accessible to everyone. Their names can sometimes also appear to be as incomprehensible as those of the burgeoning Christian Conference Industry. But they hail not from the mercurial world of marketing but from the theological reflection and teaching of the Church down the ages.

Some of the names will need no explanation to us: Christmas and Easter are old friends. But Advent is a season that we have not previously observed in great depth.

We can celebrate Christian festivals in very different ways. At Christmas we tend to be very contemporary with drama, puppetry and an all-singing all-dancing way of telling God's story. And this year we are going to be marking Advent in a number of ways.

One of these will be a Festival Service here at Union Church. Because of the limited availability of the Bishop of Lewes, who is preaching, we will be 'doing Advent' a week early. On Sunday 22nd November at 6.30pm we will be holding a service entitled "From Darkness to Light." We will start off in darkness to remember that Jesus, the light of the world, came into the darkness of our sin-stained creation. But during the service each person will light a candle so that the church goes from the darkness of sin to the light of Christ who has come into the world. This will mean that we get to share the message of the light of Christ coming into the world with people who may not otherwise necessarily hear it, and this furthers our mission. It will also mean that we can enjoy the beauty of a full blown Advent festival service.

We are going to be joined by singers from the Heathfield Choral Society and local churches so that we can enjoy traditional Advent music; although traditional, we will still be telling God's story in a way that is beautiful, creative and communicates freshly what God has done for us. This is a CTH event so we will be joined by people from other churches and can expect a full house - so come early to get a seat.

I hope that the darkness, the light, the preaching and the music will speak to people's hearts in a way that is different from what we normally experience. As we explore the message of Advent - that Christ the light of the world has come into the world, and that he is coming back and we need to be ready for his return - I pray that God will be at work in our lives.

I am telling you about this service early so that you can book the date in your diaries before other things get in the way. And may the light of Christ fill our hearts and minds at every moment of the year.

Every blessing,

Mark

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Book Reviews

With Christmas just around the corner, why not consider the following books as gifts for those difficult-to-buy-for people? If you wish to read them yourselves, the two reviewed by Sue are in the Church Library in the Coffee Lounge.



100 Proven Ways to Transform Your Community

Author: Steve Chalke with Anthony Watkis

Publisher: Kingsway Publications

ISBN: 978-1842911198

This is an inspiring book outlining 100 different community projects all over Britain which are run by churches, sometimes working with other local organisations. They relate to a variety of different issues such as Health, Drugs, Homelessness, Youth, Debt, Family and even Town Planning.

The authors explain the origins of each project, briefly how it works, things to consider if you want to attempt something similar in your own community, and sources of funding and advice.

Not all of the ideas would be relevant to the community in Heathfield, but to read about the variety of work that is being done by so many other people to serve the community around them in specific and relevant ways is truly uplifting.

Review by Sue Mumford

An apology from the Editor

I am sorry if you did not receive your copy of the August/September edition of Union Church News. When I went to photocopy it at the end of July there was a problem with the photocopier, meaning that I could only produce a small number of copies. The August/September edition is, of course, available to view online (see page 6) but if you want to receive a paper copy, please let me know. My details are on the back page of the magazine.

Debi

Colours of Survival: Discovering Hope in Bangladesh

Authors: Adrian and Bridget Plass

Publisher: Zondervan Publishing

ISBN: 978-0551032514

This is the journal of Adrian and Bridget's two week visit to Bangladesh, in the year 2000, to meet the little girl whom they had been sponsoring there for five years, and to see for themselves some of the work that is being done by World Vision in this extremely poor country.

When they met Shahnaj Begum, they found her to be a bright and charming eleven-year-old, in a desperately poor but loving family, whom they visited several times in their tiny one-roomed house. They have wonderful, loving memories of those visits.

Their descriptions of the conditions in Bangladesh are truly heart-rending; but World Vision are doing some wonderful work with the communities in which they are located, and it is very interesting to read first hand descriptions of these.

Above all, Adrian and Bridget were struck by their impression of a people so destitute, yet with a spirit of hope and determination to survive - and eventually to overcome!

Review by Sue Mumford

Real Scientists, Real Faith

Author: R J Berry

Publisher: Monarch Books

ISBN: 978-1854248848

This is a compilation from eighteen scientists on the theme of science and faith. Whilst the scientists are drawn from a wide range of disciplines, they have one thing in common: faith.

They talk about their own pilgrimage and how they came to faith. As they write about science they introduce ideas that are not usually associated with science. Mike Hume writes about 'the science of limits' and 'the limits of science' using language that we don't usually associate with the laboratory. It is clear from the way the contributors write that for many of them science is a vocation and they perceive their commitment as a call.

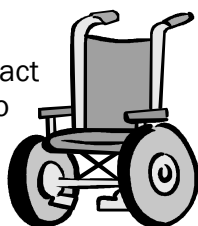
This is one of those books one can dip into without feeling that you have lost the plot. What is especially helpful is the index of Bible references, but that's just what you might expect from a scientist.

Review by John Glover

Church wheelchair

Union Church owns a lightweight folding wheelchair (of the type which requires a person to push it). Although its main purpose is to be available in the church buildings whenever church activities are taking place in case needed, it is also possible to borrow it for personal use (in return for a small donation) when it is not needed in the church.

If you would like to borrow the wheelchair at any time, please contact Sue Mumford (01580 819415) who will first check the Church Diary for availability and then make the necessary arrangements with you.



“There just aren’t enough hours in the day...”

A prayer by Fr Michel Quoist (1921 - 1997)

All people complain that they haven't enough time. They look at their lives from too human a point of view. There is always time to do what God wants us to do, but we must put ourselves completely into each moment that He offers us.

Lord, I Have Time

I went out, Lord. People were coming and going, walking and running. Everything was rushing: Cars, trucks, the street, the whole town. People were rushing not to waste time. They were rushing after time. To catch up with time. To gain time.



Good-bye, Sir, excuse me, I haven't time. I'll come back. I can't wait. I haven't time. I must end this letter - I haven't time. I'd love to help you, but I haven't time. I can't accept, having no time. I can't think, I can't read, I'm swamped, I haven't time. I'd like to pray, but I haven't time.

You understand, Lord. They simply haven't the time. The child is playing, he hasn't time right now... Later on... The schoolboy has his homework to do, he hasn't time... Later on... The student has his courses, and so much work... Later on... The young married man has his new house; he has to fix it up... He hasn't time... Later on... The grandparents have their grandchildren. They haven't time... Later on... They are ill, they have their treatments, they haven't time... Later on... They are dying, they have no... Too late!... They have no more time!

And so all people run after time, Lord. They pass through life running - hurried, jostled, overburdened, frantic, and they never get there. They haven't time. In spite of all their efforts they're still short of time, of a great deal of time. Lord, you must have made a mistake in your calculations, there is a big mistake somewhere. The hours are too short. Our lives are too short.

You who are beyond time, Lord, you smile to see us fighting it. And you know what you are doing. You make no mistakes in your distribution of time to men. You give each one time to do what you want him to do. But we must not lose time, waste time, kill time. For it is a gift that you give us, but a perishable gift; a gift that does not keep.

Lord, I have time, I have plenty of time, all the time that you give me, the years of my life, the days of my life, the days of my years, the hours of my days, they are all mine. Mine to fill, quietly, calmly, but to fill completely, up to the brim. To offer them to you, that of their insipid water you may make a rich wine such as you made once in Cana of Galilee. I am not asking you tonight, Lord, for time to do this and then that, but for your grace to do conscientiously, in the time that you give me, what you want me to do.

Summer Holiday Fun 2009: SHOWSTOPPERS!

Many of you will have heard by now what a wonderful week we had at the beginning of the school summer holidays. Over 70 children (many of them new to us) and an excellent team of 18 adults and three teenagers were led by Lisa Jones of Scripture Union in lots of singing, dancing, drama, games, yummy snacks, arts and crafts, team work, Bible teaching, stories, memory verses and prayer. On the Friday evening we held a family event where all were entertained by Josh, and it was a delight to see some of the most timid children venturing up on the stage to take part in the games. The evening finished with hot dogs, pizza, crisps and ice cream.

The week was rounded off with a Family Service on the Sunday morning at which some of the children's art work, as well as their other learning and achievements, could be enjoyed: especially the popular "Showstoppers" theme song! Some of the quotes from the children afterwards were:

- "It has been an EXCELLENT start to the summer holidays. I will definitely come again!"
- "I've really enjoyed myself. I really really like this place!"
- "It was fun and nice to meet new friends."
- "I like coming here. I like everyone and feel special."
- "I really enjoyed it. It was really fun. The games were awesome!"
- "I would say the week was brilliant"


A big thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to a really great week. And, believe it or not, they are all preparing to do it again next year!

Summer Holiday Fun 2010 will begin on Sunday 1st August 2010 - please put it in your diary.

Sue Mumford

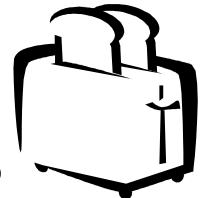


Sunday Club and Sunday Special attendance prizes

2 August	Steven	Architect	Candle, book and keyring	350 stars 
6 September	Christian	Sunday Special		30 stars
	Reuben	Sunday Special		15 stars
20 September	Samuel	Starlet		15 stars
	Ryan	Candle		30 stars
	Codie	Candle		15 stars

Sunday Club and Sunday Special

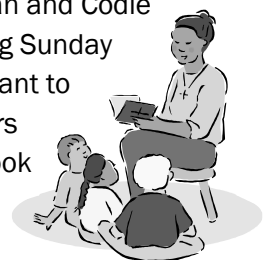
Sunday Special got off to a lively start on 6th September even though some families were still on holiday. We had five new children from this year's Holiday Club and, from the enthusiasm they showed, I think we'll have more next time. Our routine of breakfast first (lots of toast and chocolate - I even saw one boy put a spoonful of chocolate spread into his dish of Coco Pops!), sharing of news, noisy games, then a story or discussion on a Christian theme, followed by craft activities until we join the adults in church for a few words and a lively song, continues to work well



for the children, whether they are familiar with church or not. In October, Sunday Special will begin its 5th year! It isn't quite the same without Gill Barker, whom we all miss, but I am pleased that three new people have agreed to join the leaders' rota. Many thanks to them, and to others who have agreed to help set it all up on Saturday mornings occasionally.



Sunday Club began its new term the following Sunday and we were pleased to have Ryan and Codie join us. They have been attending Sunday Special for some time and now want to come more often. We hope others will gradually do the same. We look forward to a good and happy term, trying out some new ideas on Sunday mornings to see which ones work best.



Sue Mumford

YClub730

YCLUB has started in earnest again. Sue Fletcher, Katie Gulliver, Lindsey Green and myself sat down together to work out a programme for the coming year and we have lots of exciting events coming up including 10-pin bowling, laserquest and tobogganing. After the success of this year's sponsored walk we've decided to do one again, but this time to walk a little further - we will attempt to walk around Bewl Water!

We've already had a couple of evenings in the Church Hall to get us under way. On Sunday 11th

TM

As you will have seen if you were at the morning services on 6th or 13th September, the church family presented some 'Love in a Bag' to our young adults heading off to university for the first time. They all achieved the results they needed in order to get into the courses they wanted at the places they had applied to.

Please continue to pray for them as they adapt to life away from home. (From what we've heard, they've adapted to some aspects of student life extremely well!) They are:

Lucy Baxter:	studying Medicine at Newcastle
Chris Mintram:	studying Physics at Southampton
Jon Hollyman:	studying War Studies at Birmingham
David Preston:	studying Marine Biology & Animal Behaviour at Anglia Ruskin
Kathryn Anderson:	studying Music at Southampton
Iain Mitchell:	studying Physics at Southampton

As we have very few young people now in the TM age group, we have decided not to arrange any more meetings until a few more Architects reach this age. Of course, if new families join the church and it would be beneficial to them to start it up again, we will do this.

Sue Fletcher

October we are taking the young people to the first concert of the year. The music is always excellent and the speakers are always good to listen to.

Despite the older members of YCLUB now going off to University, our numbers continue to do well. We had a few new faces appear at the start of term and we hope that the kids will continue to encourage their friends to join us.

Sean

Love-in-a-Box



Would you like to help?

Wrapping boxes

Contact Gill McMahon. All boxes must be wrapped by
Sunday 25th October

Donations of money

(for gifts and cost of transport) may be given at the morning service on
Sunday 11th October
& **Sunday 18th October**
or give them to Sue Mumford not later than
Sunday 18th October

Donations of gifts

to go in the boxes may be left in the Church or Coffee Lounge porches from
Sunday 11th October until
Sunday 25th October

Filled Boxes

(with £2.50 transport fee) may be given to Sue Mumford any time up to
Sunday 1st November

Please ask for a copy of the guidelines for contents, wrapping and age labels. Any queries, please telephone

Sue Mumford on 01580 819415

Gill McMahon on 01435 863518

Finance report - September 2009

We're now into the final quarter of the year - where does the time go? I am pleased to report that finances are broadly in line with budget at the present time. Thank you to everyone who has reviewed their regular givings - at the end of August direct offerings had increased by 10% from the previous year. The budget for 2010 is now being prepared for submission to the Church Meeting in November.

The Lord bless.

Christine

News in brief

Union Book Group

Our next meeting will be in November when we will be discussing 'The Boy With The Topknot' by Sathnam Sanghera and 'Relentless' by Simon Kernick. Telephone Julie Baxter on 868799 for more information or for current and planned book titles.



Inspire magazine

Copies of this free monthly magazine are available for you to take home and read.

Do pick up a copy either on a Sunday or during the week - it's also available at Open Door, Luncheon Club and Do Pop Inn.

Union Church News on the internet

All editions of Union Church News are available to read on the Activities and Events page of the church website: www.unionchurch.co.uk



Let Your God Love You

Be silent. Be still. Alone. Empty.

Before your God.

Say nothing. Ask nothing. Be silent. Be still.

Let your God look upon you. That is all.

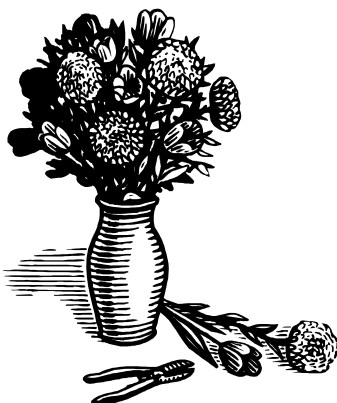
God knows. God understands. God loves you with an enormous love. God only wants to look upon you with His love.

Quiet. Still. Be. Let your God - love you.

Edwina Gately



Flower Rota



October 4th	Mrs R Dimsdale
October 11th	Mrs N Fletcher
October 18th	Mrs N Saunders
October 25th	Mrs F Newman
November 1st	Mrs E Banks
November 8th	Mrs M Wells
November 15th	Mrs E Jeal
November 22nd	Mrs H Warner
November 29th	Mrs F Anderson
December 6th	Mrs C Sheppard

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and



I will give you rest."



Matthew 11:28

Union Church regular events

Monday	10.00am - 2.00pm	Open Door - tea and coffee in the Coffee Lounge
	12.00noon - 1.30pm	Open Door - lunches in the Church Hall
Tuesday	12.00noon (fortnightly - check diary on page 8)	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club
	6.00pm (term time only)	Beavers in the Church Hall
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 (alternate fortnights)	YClub730 - for Year 6 and above
	7.30pm (alternate fortnights)	TM - Youth Fellowship for Sixth Form and above

Local church has key role to meet community needs

From The Congregationalist, September 2009

Local churches are the answer to community needs, according to a report published by Tearfund today [19 July 2009].

In the Thick of It, a position paper making the case for Tearfund's view that local churches are key players in international development, describes the role that local churches are taking around the world in meeting local community needs.

Pulling together a substantial body of evidence confirming the value of faith-based organisations in addressing development needs, Tearfund speaks from over 40 years' experience of working through local churches in the poorest parts of the world.

"We passionately believe that local churches have something extremely valuable to offer around the world," says Matthew Frost, Chief Executive of Tearfund. "In fact, we would argue that there are some parts of the world where development simply would not happen without the local church."

In the Thick of It calls for Governments and international donors to recognise the role of faith in development and to develop strategies to engage with faith groups because:

- The local church is not an external organisation coming in to help poor people - it *is* the poor, and its members share in the suffering
- The local church doesn't leave after a few years - it remains in place and is committed to long-term sustainable solutions
- The local church has unparalleled resource in the form of motivated and committed local volunteers
- The local church has invaluable local knowledge and understanding, and represents the people who are in need as well as those who are offering help, so is ideally placed to facilitate local discussions and community engagement
- The local church often has a level of credibility and authority within the community that others cannot replicate
- The local church can offer support beyond the practical, meeting emotional and spiritual needs.

Church diary

October	Friday 3	2.30pm	Women's Fellowship	
	Sunday 4	9.00am 10.30am 6.30pm	Sunday Special "Songs of Praise" Special - Rev. Mark Welch Window on the World	
	Tuesday 6	12 noon 7.30pm	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club Deacons' Meeting	
	Sunday 11	10.30am 4.00pm	Rev. Mark Welch (Holy communion) Sunday 4 U - Rev. John Glover	
	Sunday 18	10.30am 6.30pm	Rev. Mark Welch CTH United Service at Warbleton Parish Church	
	Tuesday 20	12 noon	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club	
	Sunday 25	10.30am 6.30pm	Rev. Mark Welch Holy communion	
	November	Sunday 1	9.00am 10.30am	
Tuesday 3		12 noon 7.30pm	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club Deacons' Meeting	
Friday 6		2.30pm	Women's Fellowship	
Remembrance Sunday		Sunday 8	10.30am 6.30pm	Rev. Mark Welch (Holy communion) "The life you've always wanted" - Rev. Mark Welch
		Monday 9	7.30pm	Ministers Fraternal invitational CTH Consultation
Bible Sunday		Sunday 15	10.30am 6.30pm	Rev. Mark Welch Holy communion
		Tuesday 17	12 noon	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club
		Sunday 22	10.30am 6.30pm	Rev. Mark Welch CTH United Service at Union Church Speaker: The Bishop of Lewes
		Tuesday 24	7.30pm	Church Members' Meeting
Advent Sunday		Sunday 29	10.30am	Rev. Michael Heaney, General Secretary of the Congregational Federation (Please note: no evening service today)
December	Tuesday 1	12 noon 7.30pm	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club Deacons' Meeting	
	Friday 4	2.30pm 7.30pm	Women's Fellowship Rotary Carol Service	

Union Church, Heathfield

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December/January issue due out **Sunday 6th December 2009**; copy to Editor by **Sunday 22nd November 2009**.

Items included subject to suitability and space.