

Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre



‘LINK’

**November - December
2017**

Aylesbury Methodist
Church & Centre
Buckingham Street
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Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre Website

www.aylesburymethodists.org.uk

(AMC Weekly Notice Sheet and LINK magazine can now be
found on the website)

Minister

Rev Helen Kirk

01296 488963

revhelenkirk@sky.com

**The Office Staff wish
you all a
Happy Christmas and a
Peaceful New Year!**



Question:

How many Methodists does it take to change a light bulb?



- How dare you change the light bulb - my grandmother donated it 50 years ago!
- Seven - that's the number CPD requires to make the meeting quorate.
- Change??!!

It is an old joke with various punchlines, but nearly all imply that change is something we struggle with in the life of the church. But that is completely understandable: the world around us seems to change at such a pace that it is immensely comforting to know that some things don't; that the music, hymns, worship and traditions we enjoy have been the same for generations.

After all we believe in an unchanging God: the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Yet don't we also worship the God of creation who continually makes all things new? Will we not celebrate the coming of Christ who offers a new relationship with God for all? And don't we rejoice at the gift of the Holy Spirit who inspires and challenges our faith continually? Our God maybe unchanging but his work in the world is not.

It can feel sometimes that we are caught in a dilemma: we long for the light of God's love to continue shining in the world, but to change the light bulb seems like a risky business!

Perhaps the key to this dilemma is in our understanding of who we are called to be. We are not called to be the upholders of a tradition but the bearers of a grace; we are not to keep the light safe for ourselves but let it burn for others.

For me, the identity of the church comes down to two words: 'Transformational community'

We are a transformational community because we are made up of individuals who are transformed by the love and the grace of God. We come to church not because we are good but because we know we need God; we rely on his love & forgiveness to enable us to be fully human and so gradually we are changed people. Grace transforms us.

But belonging to a community is transformative too. When we listen to other views; are affirmed and supported; have a sense of belonging; we become changed people. One of the great blessings of AMC is that we have members who are from many different backgrounds and from all over the world; people with different experiences of life and faith, people who hold varied political opinions and who each have a different view on 'how things should be done'.

Our media suggest that we should all be at loggerheads with each other, but instead, through valuing what each brings, we create a community that transforms - even if sometimes it's hard work!

And finally, we are a transformative community because we change the flavour of Aylesbury by our very presence. Through support of those in need; an openness to those who don't belong; through generosity, hospitality, practical care and prayerful listening, we change the landscape around us. When we truly believe the church exists, not for ourselves, but for those who do not yet belong, we cannot help but transform.

So the question remains: How many Methodists does it take to change a light bulb?

Well, perhaps if we are a people changed by God's grace, living as a loving & caring community together, and always seeking the best for those who are beyond our walls; perhaps if we truly are a transformational community, then the light bulb will never need changing, for God's light will always shine from us.

Helen

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

2017



<i>Sunday 3 Dec</i>	<i>10.30am</i>	<i>Gift & Toy Service</i>
<i>Sunday 17 Dec</i>	<i>5.00pm</i>	<i>Candlelit Carol Service</i>
<i>Sunday 24th Dec</i>	<i>4.00pm</i>	<i>Christingle Service</i>
<i>Sunday 24th Dec</i>	<i>11.30pm</i>	<i>Midnight Communion</i>
<i>Monday 25th Dec</i>	<i>10.30am</i>	<i>Christmas Day Family Service - bring a toy</i>

All are welcome!

A Surprise Journey to Kenya



In January I sat in my hospital bed not sure I'd ever make it to Kenya again. I'd made all the arrangements for a Karibuni Work Party to visit the projects in February, and I was unable to go! When the plane took off in February, with eleven instead of twelve people, I actually sat in the hospital bed and cried!

The doctors said I must set some aims to aid my recovery – get me walking and swallowing again. I didn't need to think long – my short term aim was to have a cup of tea, (I longed to be able to join the other patients with a 'cuppa') and my long term aim was to visit Kenya this year!

So started the work toward achieving these aims, which culminated in me going to Kenya in September for a month, and visiting all the projects Karibuni supports. My aim here was threefold – to see my many friends in Kenya; to thank the numerous Kenyans who had been praying for my recovery and to thank them for all their love and thoughts; and to demonstrate that I was better.

The visit didn't start too well! My hostess for the first week had suddenly gone abroad for surgery and forgotten to ask her daughter to meet me at the airport, as had been arranged! So there I was sitting all alone on a broken bench outside

the airport with three very heavy suitcases in the pitch dark! However, Joshua Katungu was my knight in shining taxi, and he took me to my host's home, where they had hurriedly got my room ready!



Coffee time with Sylvia, Johnson (Social worker who looks about 14!), and the Minister, Phineas

During that week, I visited the Conference Office where I gained my new name of 'walking miracle' – very hard to live up to – and then Kibra, Kawangware, Embakasi (where I admired the handiwork of the work party) and Limuru. I was thoroughly spoilt and was driven and accompanied by the Conference Internal Auditor,



Being greeted by everyone in the top nursery class at Kawangware

Timothy Mithieu. He was amazing – really kind and great company. He took good care of me, especially as I was mobbed on several occasions by enthusiastic children all wanting to hold my hands at one time.

From Limuru I was taken to Nakuru to stay with my friend, Meg, and her family. Sunday was my first 4-hour-plus service this year – a Circuit service with

presentations from each church and their junior churches – 20 choirs in all! The service culminated in a harambee (fundraiser) to raise money to build a primary school at Wesley Empowerment Centre, Njoro – a big surprise to me, especially as I had to get up and speak to the congregation twice! They raised over Kes 300,000 – enough to build class 1 by January 2018. The aim is to build a classroom each year until it's a complete school of 8 classrooms.



With the nursery classes at Embakasi



On the new play equipment - Wesley Empowerment Centre

The following day I visited Wesley Empowerment Centre and saw the staff and children (and admired the handiwork of the other half of the work party). This day I was accompanied by the superintendent minister of the circuit and the chair of the project Board, so was very honoured!

Then on to Kaaga in Meru where I stayed for 9 days with my very dear friend, Eunice and her family. Sadly Eunice's and Justus's second son had died just 6 weeks before I arrived from cerebral malaria, leaving his wife and two small sons, and we spent a lot of time sharing together. This was doubly tragic as their eldest son had died 6 years ago from viral pneumonia leaving his wife and a small daughter. Their remaining son is a great comfort to them all.

While here I visited the Township Programme, meeting Mercy, the social worker, for the first time and quickly learning how very good she is. Later on I was given gifts by parents of the children we support – a hat (with JOY in large Kenya flag coloured letters embroidered across the front) and a beaded bag made by one of the mothers, both of which I had to model! Having met the children at the feeding programme – including Grace and Glory, twins who met the work party in February – I went with Mercy on a matatu to visit Maureen Nkatha in a church sponsored hospital in Nkubu, as all the government hospitals are closed due to

the nurses being on strike for the last 5 months. Maureen was in the last stages of AIDS and being terribly neglected – the hospital had discharged her as they could do no more for her, but she had to remain in the hospital until her fees were paid. Her grandparents, frail and old themselves, wouldn't have her back again – and even wished she would die, so she was just left untreated in bed. Her food for several days was left in bowls on and near her bed as she was too weak to feed herself; she was incontinent and left as she was. We did manage to speak to a doctor who told us that needing expert nursing care, including feeding and changing, was not a reason for being in hospital. At least, following our visit, they restarted the ARV drugs and re-admitted her! Mercy planned to take her home, rent a bigger house and care for her with some help. I strongly advised her not to as she didn't realise the implications and commitment involved.

While at Kaaga I also visited Mwithumwiru School, met the wonderful cook who provides the lunches we help to support, the special needs class – and had another gift – a half-size bath mat they had made.

Then a visit to Maua Hospital where I visited three schools for special needs children – heart breaking – we must make sure they are given a bigger share of the gifts we take out, their situations are pathetic.

Ruth, my daughter-in-law, joined me at Kaaga with George from Lindbergs, and we went straight to Marimanti and the Baobab Hotel. The next morning we were joined by George Mwabu, the Director of the project there. Here we were given a tour of the project model farm, where carers of the children have practical training in farming and growing suitable crops in that very hot, arid climate. Ruth, a horticulturalist, was in her element, although she will be growing very few of the crops they produce – sugar cane, white maize, cassava, etc.



George (social worker/manager) on right, with two helpers, on the 'model farm' at Tharaka

We visited the special needs class, leaving gifts for them, and then the School for the Deaf where we were very warmly welcomed. By special request I had to sing again the chorus John and I had shared with them last year – 'The Foolish Man built his house upon the Sand' - which they joined in with sign language. What a privilege!

Then back to Nairobi for a night before we caught (just) the new SGR train to Mombasa! How we caught the train I don't know – I was pushed into carriage 6 and, unbeknown to me, Ruth and all the luggage, including the case for the projects, was pushed into carriage 4. We finally met up again in carriage 2 where we had to negotiate sitting together with a couple of Kenyans. The journey took 4½ hours in daylight, instead of the 12-hour overnight journey, and as we went through the Nairobi National Park and Tsavo East and West Safari parks, we saw giraffes, elephants, Thompson's gazelles and camels – brilliant!



Children with special needs and their teacher, Catherine

We had a night in a hotel before visiting Hunajeza for a few hours, leaving half the lovely dresses, skirts and shorts made by the 'Sewing Box' sewing group in Princes Risborough. This project is struggling as the carers and women's group members who used to volunteer at the programme, are becoming very elderly and frail. They now have to pay the cook to feed the children, and the two teachers at the nursery they have started.

From there we went to Kilifi and visited Upendo where the school and care given continue to be excellent under the new management. The other half of the dresses, skirts and shorts from Princes Risborough were distributed. We visited some families, and after lunch left for our short holiday – two nights by the beach at Jumuia, a Kenyan churches conference and holiday centre.

The loving and enthusiastic welcome I received everywhere was incredible and very humbling. No wonder I love going to Kenya.

Note: Since returning home and writing this we have heard that dear Maureen has died from meningitis, another opportunistic infection she caught due to her very low immunity caused by Aids.

Also since returning, the second Presidential election has taken place amid tension, rioting and bloodshed, especially in Kawangware and Kibra where we support two very active projects. Please pray for the people of Kenya and especially the staff, children and their carers.

Joy Murphy.

J TEAM

Welcome to the J Team pages



At Christmas, we give to others. Why? One reason is to show that we care for one another. It also reminds that God gave us the best gift of all: Jesus!

It is wonderful giving and receiving gifts. While physical gifts are good, spiritual gifts are even better. God gave us the best gift of all through Jesus, so we should share his love when we give to others.

What physical items did the wise men give to Jesus?

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh

What spiritual things did they give him?

Honour and worship

Colouring in

The wise men combined special physical gifts with spiritual gifts. Christmas presents should be about more than just material possessions. We honour God when we also give spiritual gifts.

What spiritual gifts could you give this Christmas?



Prayer

Lord, change our hearts to be more like you. Help us give to others as you have so freely given to us.
Amen."



Spot the Difference

The Birth of Jesus

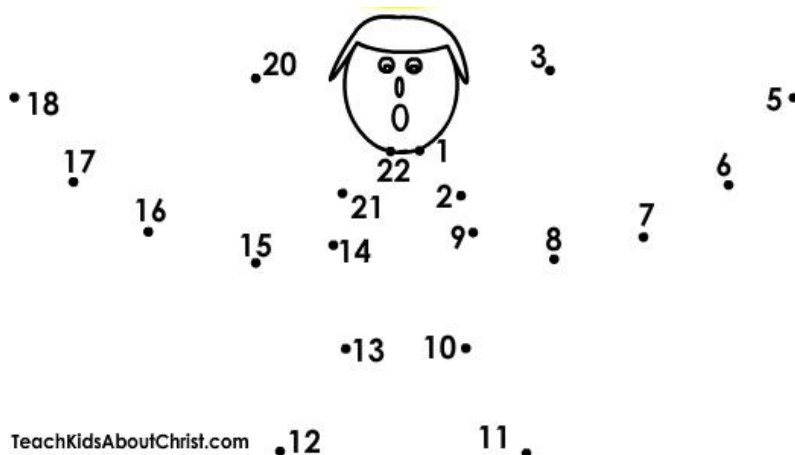


There are eleven differences between these two otherwise identical pictures. Can you find them all?



When you find something that is different put a circle round it!

Dot to Dot



Prayer

"God, remind us that it's more important to give than to receive and help us share your love with others this Christmas. Amen."

‘VACANCY’ LIST !!

Our morning service on Sunday 5th November recognised and re-affirmed the work done by our very committed and dedicated pastoral ‘In Touch’ team, just keeping in touch with members of our congregation, by a phone call, a visit or a chat at Church.

There are so many ways that we help others in simple but invaluable ways. At Aylesbury Methodist Church in particular, so many tasks are carried out and people’s needs met, often without us being aware of it. We take our minister, preachers, musicians, choirs, J Team leaders, stewards, etc for granted; and seldom think about who cleans the church or keeps the premises maintained, who sews the beautiful banners, arranges the flowers, and ‘mans’ the coffee bars and countless other jobs that are seemingly magically performed!

If we realistically can, we all need to play our part, however small our possible contribution, in Church and Community Centre life.

At the moment there are a number of areas where help is needed, since some groups are struggling, as members and helpers move away or are unable to continue for a number of reasons.

Below are just a few ‘vacancies’ where you might be able to help.

[Creche Helper on a Sunday morning](#)

Time: During those Sunday morning services which are not Family/All Age services

Frequency: On a rota basis, and hopefully (if we have enough volunteers) working with another person, one Sunday a month or less.

Experience required: None

Other requirements: Safeguarding training and DBS check will need to be undertaken.

Speak to Marilyn Storer (01296 622656) if you would like to know more.



[Communion Stewards](#)

The job, on a rota basis, is to help prepare for communion services and then wash glasses and tidy up afterwards. Talk to Ann Prendergast (01296 622718) for further information if you might be interested.



Action for Children

Would you be interested in

- Joining our small, friendly fundraising group to help with occasional market stalls, quizzes, etc.
- Taking charge of the Home Collecting Boxes - collecting the boxes in once a year, and counting and banking the money.



Jennie Torpey (01296 581414) or Pauline Noble (01296 484940) can give you more information.

Property Stewards

We currently have a number of Property Stewards covering different aspects of our building and its services from boilers, to AV, to redecoration, to cleaning and all things in between. We try to do as much as we can ourselves to keep costs down, but on a lot of occasions we need to call in professionals. However, we do have a gap between the area of fixing a screw on a wall (which we do) and putting on a new roof, or repairing the drains, where we would employ a contractor.



That area is small building work, for example brick work repair, and our current problem of repairing the concrete floor in one of our storerooms.

Anyone who feels they have some experience in this area and would be prepared to help with what I would call 'small building works' would be very valuable to add to our team.

Speak to Kevin Hardern (01296 481285) for more information.

Missions Committee

We are looking for 1 or 2 committee members to help raise additional funds for Methodist Missions Home & Abroad. We hold 3 committee meetings a year and fund raising events 2 - 3 times a year.

Contact John Miskin (01296 422919) if you would like to know more.

Sunbeams Baby & Toddler Group

Occasional help is needed on a Thursday morning to assist with putting out and packing away play items (9.30 - 11.30 am) or helping to serve teas and coffees (10.00 - 11.30 am). Margaret Miskin (01296 422919) will give you more information.



The 'In Touch' team

We are looking for members who would be prepared to keep in contact with a small number of church folk. This is not necessarily by visiting, but maybe a friendly chat on Sundays or an occasional phone call to see if all is well. Please talk to Pauline Noble (01296 484940) in the first instance if you would like to know more.

The Church Office

The office relies on our willing and helpful volunteer reception staff to help run the Church & Community Centre efficiently. They all choose when they work - some only come in one morning a month, some prefer fortnightly and some weekly, and a rota is produced for each quarter.



Duties include greeting visitors on arrival and giving them access to the premises, answering their enquiries or directing them to the right person; answering the telephone; checking the diary; and doing basic admin tasks to support Carla Barnes (Office Administrator) and Jennie Torpey (Church Representative).

We would welcome a few more volunteers (both ladies and gents) to ensure that we are not without a receptionist when staff are on holiday or ill.

The office hours are: 9.30am - 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

If you would like to find out a little more about the duties, do please pop into the office or phone 01296 426526 to speak to Carla, or Jennie (01296 581414).

Volunteer Church Cleaners - (See following page)

This is a selection of groups at AMC which would currently very much welcome some more members or helpers. Do please consider whether you might have a little time to spare, and either have a word with the contact listed or a chat with Rev Helen Kirk (01296 488963) email: revhelenkirk@sky.com

Jennie



We all like a clean and tidy church,
so read on...

As some of you may know, a group of volunteers keep the church and foyer clean. The rota is such that people on it can expect to be asked only twice a year, but events this year have put that into question. Four of our volunteers have needed to move on and therefore, to keep it at twice a year, we do need to replace them. To do this we need 4 more volunteers to give 2 hours on 2 occasions through the year.

So can I ask you to consider whether you can help us by joining the rota?

Basically you would need to

- be able to do light cleaning (vacuuming, dusting etc)
- be able to offer approx 2 hours every six months

Please consider this, and if you can help, do; don't just leave it to others.

Our volunteers have so far saved our Church the staggering sum of over **£45,000** since they started.

So, if you have 2-3 hours once in a while to help us all keep our church clean and fit for use, please either call me as below, or see me after church on Sunday. Remember:

If we all give a little, we all gain a lot

Kevin Hardern, Resources Co-ordinator
01296 481285





DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Sun 12 Nov	10.30am	Remembrance Sunday Service led by Mr Ken Harris
Tues 14 Nov	12.30 for 1pm	Tuesday Fellowship Lunch - hot buffet
Wed 15 Nov	2.00 - 3.30pm	Bible Study: Prayer & Persistence
Sat 18 Nov	7.30pm	SOS: Cheese & Wine tasting at the Storer's'
Sun 19 Nov	8.45am 10.30am	Service of Holy Communion led by Rev Helen Kirk Morning Worship led by Aylesbury Creativity Group
Sat 25 Nov	2.00 - 4.00pm	Good Faith Book Club
Sun 26 Nov	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Rev Helen Kirk
Tues 28 Nov	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship - Pauline Linton: talk on Bible translations
Sat 2 Dec	8am - 4pm 4.00 - 6.00pm	Action for Children Christmas Stall in Friars Square Messy Church
Sun 3 Dec	10.30am	Gift & Toy Service led by Rev Helen Kirk
Sat 9 Dec	10am - 6pm	Christmas Tree Festival
Sun 10 Dec	10.30am	Service of Holy Communion & Tree Service led by Rev Helen Kirk
Thurs 14 Dec	2.30pm	Carol Service at Church of the Holy Spirit
Sun 17 Dec	10.30am 5.00pm	Morning Worship led by Mr John Shaw Candlelit Carol Service led by Rev Helen Kirk
Sun 24 Dec	10.30am 4.00pm 11.30pm	Morning Worship led by Rev Brian Tebbutt Christingle Service led by Rev Helen Kirk Midnight Communion Service led by Rev Helen Kirk
Mon 25 Dec	10.30am	Christmas Day Service led by Rev Helen Kirk
Sun 31 Dec	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Frankie Fisher
2018		
Sat 6 Jan	7.30pm	SOS: Planning Evening at the Storer's'
Wed 10 Jan	2.00 - 3.30pm	Bible Study: Grace & Forgiveness
Sat 3 Feb	7.30pm	SOS: Winter Olympics at the Aylens'
Wed 21 Feb	2.00 - 3.30pm	Bible Study: Judgement

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He
Was born
On Christmas Day.

God's Beloved Son. Mary
Was His Mother, and Joseph
His earthly father. They came

to Bethlehem, for a census, and tried
To get a room, but couldn't. A stable was
then offered and Mary gave birth to her Son.

Oxen, asses and God bore witness, to
this miracle. Shepherds were told and they came.
They brought a gift of a newly born lambkin for Him.

Wise men came from Eastern lands, to acknowledge Him as a king.
They brought many gifts with them. Gold to crown Him, and fragrances of
Frankincense and Myrrh for his future death. A Bright star led them to the stable

and the Holy infant. They bowed before Him and presented their gifts to God's True Son.

The Angels sang on High. All was good with the world. And God was very pleased. Amen.

His Name is Jesus
This is God's Gift
For us. Not only
At Christmastime
But for every day.

Sandy and S.A.N.D.S.

Following the September meeting of the Good Faith Book Club, when David Hanslam's book, 'Luta Continua', was discussed, I came across a note I had received, when I worked in Norfolk. It was from a brave young lady, who, like David, exerted her influence to bring about changes for the benefit of many people. Here are my memories of her.

The senior midwives in the Maternity Unit, where I was working as a midwife teacher, were inclined to dismiss Sandy's letter. Who did this woman think she was? They were the professionals. Who was she to tell them what they should do? This was over thirty years ago.

It was not long since Sandy had lost her baby, around the time of his birth. The general attitude then, was that it was very sad, but these things happen. Parents were told to go away and forget about it. They were still young. Have another baby.

But I liked the tone of Sandy's letter. She wanted to know how we would feel about her idea, which was to set up a branch of the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity (S.A.N.D.S.) in our area. I decided to invite her to meet the student midwives on one of their study days.

She was very nervous when she arrived. She had never spoken to a group of people before. She had no need to worry though, for she soon won their hearts with the sincerity of her message. She told us she would never forget the baby she had known so intimately during her pregnancy. He would always be a part of her life. She had needed time to acknowledge his existence and say goodbye to him properly before she could mourn him and move on. Another baby would never replace him for he had been special and would always be special to her. Mourning would have been easier if she could have had things to remind her of him – his photograph, a heel print, maybe a Baptismal Certificate – if she could have talked about him to people who understood, visit the place where he was buried. The students were impressed by the way this young woman spoke. These were things they needed to know.

I got her to come to give a talk at a meeting of the local branch of the Royal College of Midwives. Sandy's baby had had a very short life but he was making a big impression. Things began to change in our maternity service.

Months passed. It was time to ask Sandy to talk to the next set of students. I wrote and told her how valuable her words had been to us. She sent a message to say that my letter had cheered her up enormously, because when it arrived, she had been recovering from an operation and feeling very low. It had provided exactly the encouragement she needed to continue with her project.

I thank God for Sandy. She used her tragic experience to take positive action to help more people than she will ever know about.
Angela M. Smith



Aylesbury Bible Study 2017-18

Wednesday 2.00 - 3.30pm
(No evening sessions)



November	15 th	Prayer & Persistence
January	10 th	Grace & Forgiveness
February	21 st	Judgement
March	14 th	Faithfulness
April	18 th	Who's included?
May	23 rd	All the bits we've missed!

If you are looking for some challenging discussion,
some help to understand the nitty gritty of the Bible,
or you just want the opportunity to ask all the questions
you've never dared to ask, please come along.

**You don't have to commit to all the sessions;
just come to what you can.
All are welcome**



Our next event is our
Christmas Gift Stall

with
Tombola and Children's Lucky Dip
in Friars Square
on Saturday 2nd December.



If you have any donations of unwanted gifts/tombola prizes or items suitable for the Lucky Dip, please give them to:

Jennie Torpey (581414), Pauline Noble (484940)
or Sandie Steeden (331278)

**Our annual Gift & Toy Service will be held on
Sunday 3rd December.**

We ask that you bring along new gifts and toys for any ages from babies to teenagers. The gifts will go to local Action for Children centres.

(Please don't wrap them, as gifts need to be matched with the children.)



If you prefer to make a money donation, it will be used to buy presents for the children and young people.

Rolls of giftwrap would also be very welcome!

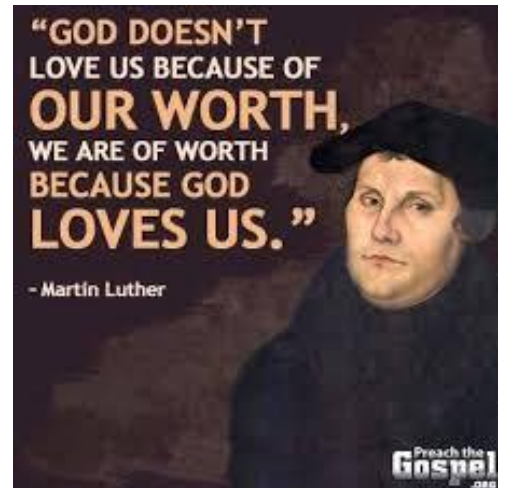
Remember, we collect old and foreign currency (notes and coin), so if you have any lurking in drawers or cupboards, please give them to Jennie, Pauline or Sandie asap. Someone from Action for Children will be collecting the latest batch very soon.

The next Caribbean Evening, Saturday 24th March 2018, will be in aid of Action for Children, so do mark the date in your diary!

500 years since the start of the Reformation 1517

It was exactly 500 years ago on 31st October when the Priest Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses onto the castle church door in Wittenberg. Germany.

He objected strongly to some of the teachings and practices of the church, especially that freedom from God's punishment for sin, could be purchased with money. Martin Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life, are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God's grace, through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin.



Martin Luther intended to reform the church, not to divide it, but the Pope excommunicated him and the Emperor condemned him as an outlaw.

However, he was protected by the Elector, who had him hidden at Wartburg Castle. Luther used the time in hiding to translate the Bible into the German vernacular, which had a tremendous impact on both the church and German culture, and influenced the writing of an English translation, the Tyndale Bible.

The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster said:

“We are formed by our history. Events of the late 15th century and early 16th century, including the beginning of the Reformation in 1517, enabled the transformation of life in Europe and eventually beyond our own continent.

But there was also violence and destruction and loss. As today we seek to draw our ever more networked and yet divided world into unity, we need to be reminded of the achievements of our forebears and the steps that brought us here, and resolve together to transform our world afresh through peace-building and reconciliation.”

An ecumenical and international service to mark the anniversary of the 95 theses and the start of the reformation was held on 31st October at Westminster Abbey, where the Address was given by the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Annelies

AN ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT



Why not make a difference this Christmas - to some of the poorest people in the world! Give an 'alternative' Christmas gift. Instead of buying your family and friends gifts they may not need, like or want, you can buy something in their name that will help people who are living in poverty. With every gift, you receive a personalised Christmas Gift Card describing the gift chosen, to send to your friends or family.

There are many organisations that provide this service - here are some of the charities and a few examples of gifts:



Methodist
relief and
development

Extraordinary gifts: Christmas Gifts to help the World's poorest people.

£21 to provide 3 families in Ethiopia with half the materials needed to build a beehive. The family contributes also, and, with training, the honey provides a sustainable year-round source of income.

£31 could help to buy a toilet for a poor household in Nepal - helping them to stay healthy and safe. Poor sanitation is one of the world's biggest killers. 1 in 3 people across the world don't have somewhere safe to go to the toilet.

<http://allwecan.org.uk/shop/>

Some catalogues on the Vestibule table or from Ruth Watkins.



Fun and thoughtful gifts that bring double delight. Not only will your loved ones be thrilled to receive these gifts, but they will bring real hope to children in desperate need.

£9 - The simple gift of a mosquito net will help parents sleep peacefully, knowing their children are protected from this fatal disease.

£14 Children who have lived through a disaster are often left traumatised and afraid. The gift of toys for a children's centre are essential in helping them to explore their feelings as they play. This gift will help a child to express their feelings in a safe and fun environment.

£18 - The gift of a chicken brings a whole host of perks for a family in need. Even their manure can be used to fertilise the vegetable garden.

<https://www.musthavegifts.org/>

PRESENT AID
GIFTS THAT KEEP GIVING

Present Aid is a charity gift website that supports the work of Christian Aid.

Whether you buy a goat or life-saving equipment, your gift could transform the lives of people living in poverty around the world.

£13 - help a community in Ethiopia start their own fishing business, with a gift of boats, nets and training how to prepare the fish for sale.

£9 - Many families in Bangladesh can't afford to send their children to school even though their children desperately want to go. For £9, you could give one of them the textbooks, stationery and school essentials they need to study.

www.presentaid.org



OXFAM

'Oxfam Unwrapped' gifts are changing lives around the world. From a 'Goat' gift in Malawi to a 'Safe water' gift in Cambodia.

£10 - a pile of poo! Tried, tested and 100% natural... this isn't just any pile of poo, it's the ideal mix of manure, organic fertiliser and training in eco-friendly farming techniques to help a family grow a lot more crops.

£29 - Solar lamps enable people to work in the evenings and help children to study too. And they light neighbourhoods, so that everyone feels safer at night.

www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/oxfam-unwrapped

**Good
Gifts
Catalogue**

The original charity gifts catalogue, widely copied but never bettered. Unique ethical gifts to give and receive, at home and abroad, that are always wanted.

£8 - Puppet shows for mine awareness. Clown and puppet shows alert children in former war zones to the danger of mines. Save limbs and lives.

£28 - A year's schooling. The value of education is incalculable because it offers the main road out of poverty. In Africa, it costs only £28 to educate a child for a year, offering limitless possibilities and a better future. Surely, the bargain of a lifetime.

<https://www.goodgifts.org/>



Karibuni Charity Gifts and cards

Each Charity Gift represents a tangible, life-changing item that is used in our Kenyan projects. Ranging in price from £4 to £250, choose from a range of gifts. Whichever you buy, you will receive a card to send to the recipient.

www.karibuni.org.uk

You will find some Karibuni catalogues in the church vestibule.



Whatever the gift, however big or small, you can relax in the knowledge that we'll give it our all, because whether it's for a friend, a husband or wife, your gift helps to give everyone a better life.

£15 - A toolkit to maintain ten village water points

£37 - A hand pump to provide clean drinking water

shop.wateraid.org/



Kiva is an international non-profit organisation, founded in 2005 and based in San Francisco, with a mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty. 'We celebrate and support people looking to create a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.'

By lending as little as \$25 (automatically converted to £ on the website) on Kiva, anyone can help a borrower start or grow a business, go to school, access clean energy or realize their potential. For some, it's a matter of survival, for others it's the fuel for a life-long ambition.

100% of every dollar or pound you lend on Kiva goes to funding loans. Kiva covers costs primarily through optional donations, as well as through support from grants and sponsors.

www.kiva.org

Will you be writing Christmas cards this year to people that you see each Sunday at Church?

As an alternative, why not write just one card to everyone and perhaps give a donation to one of the Church charities instead?

In December, when the post box appears, there will also be a board in the Church entrance where you can pin your cards.

Please then give your donation to:

Karibuni Children (Joy Murphy)

Missions (John Miskin)

Christian Aid (Jennie Torpey or Maureen Tucker)

Action for Children (Pauline Noble or Jennie Torpey).



Do support the Charity Christmas Card Shop in the Church.

Monday - Saturday

10.00am - 4.00pm

1st Nov - 16th Dec 2017.



CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES

CHRISTMAS POST BOX REMINDER!

This will be put up at the beginning of December.

Please remember that the Church post box is only for Christmas cards being given to **regular members of the congregation**.

They are not delivered to people, so if they are not collected, they are thrown away after Christmas.

If you're not sure that your friends and colleagues come to Church often, then please send your cards by ordinary post instead.

Please make sure you write surnames on your cards!





WRITE FOR RIGHTS GREETINGS CARD and LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN 2017

This winter, we can again give a boost to people who are under fire for defending human rights. It only takes a few minutes to write a card or letter. But for a peaceful protester arrested and tortured, an activist fighting against forced evictions, or refugees left in limbo rather than offered a place of safety, it can provide the strength to carry on. A message of solidarity tells people that, however difficult the circumstances, they're not alone.

YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER

'Letters from Amnesty supporters... were really powerful and helped me to stay strong. They protected us because the authorities knew thousands of people were watching.' Pro-democracy activist Fred Bauma, who was released from prison in the Democratic Republic of Congo in August 2016. Over 170,000 Amnesty supporters globally took action for him during Write for Rights 2015.

Letters and cards from us, and millions of others around the world, can help to put pressure on kings, presidents, governments and other authorities to correct injustices, free prisoners of conscience, and stop human rights abuses. Our messages show them that the world is watching. Over 152,000 people across the UK took part in Write for Rights 2016 – and made a real difference.

'It really is heart-warming to have so many people support my family, and it brought me to tears to see all the letters Amnesty had collected. It makes me feel stronger when I know there are so many people who trust in me, my father and my family. The attention the campaign has received is significant as the more people who know about my father's case, the safer my father and family will be.' Jewher Tohti, daughter of Ilham Tohti, imprisoned in China and serving a life sentence for criticising their treatment of the Uighurs, one of 55 ethnic minorities in China.

Uzbek journalist Muhammad Bekzhanov was freed in February after 17 years behind bars. Hundreds of thousands of people worldwide wrote messages calling for his freedom.

'I am grateful that I am not alone. I have the support of so many people from all around the world, from many different countries. Keep on supporting, helping... thank you for everything.' Máxima Acuña (Peru).

Criminal charges against Máxima Acuña, a subsistence farmer standing up against a mining giant in Peru, were dropped in May 2017. More than 150,000 people worldwide sent her solidarity messages.

In February 2016, Albert Woodfox was freed after 43 years in solitary confinement in the US. More than 200,000 people around the world called for his release. *'I'd like to thank our friends at Amnesty International for their remarkable support these last years, culminating in the Write for Rights campaign. ... These messages from beyond the prison walls became an enormous source of strength for me as I continued my fight for freedom.'*

Whistle-blower Chelsea Manning was freed in May 2017 after outgoing US president Barack Obama cut short her 35-year sentence. Over 250,000 people wrote asking him to free her.

The material for the Write for Rights campaign will shortly be displayed in the vestibule. It is simple to take part. Please help yourself to a copy of the case(s) you have decided to write to and follow the guidelines given with each case.

Please ask me if you have any questions or are new to this.

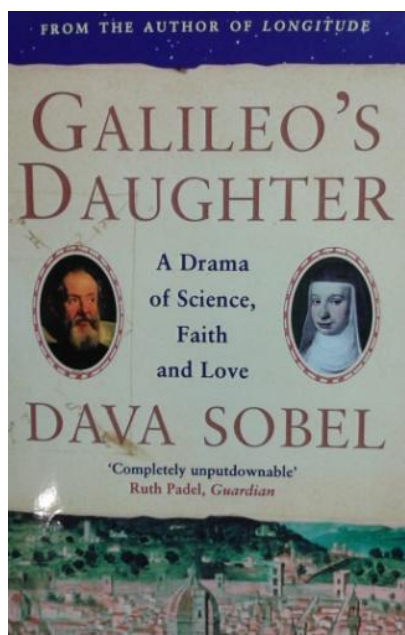
If you like, you can cut off the side with the greetings from last year's Christmas cards and use the side with the picture of the robin or winter scene etc. for your greetings to the prisoner of conscience of your choice.

Thank you for taking part.

Annelies Varsey



Galileo's Daughter by Dava Sobel



Several members had a common experience of a difficult early read becoming an enjoyable one. Using excerpts of the numerous letters Galileo's daughter wrote to him from her nunnery, supported by other meticulous research, this book gave a real insight into the life and times of this remarkable man, who lived from 1564 to 1642.

The book chronicles the international recognition for his scientific achievements and contributions in such areas as the telescope, microscope, geometry, experimental physics, astronomy, sun spots, Venus cycles and measuring longitude at sea. However, when he developed scientific evidence supporting Copernicus's derided earlier suggestions that the earth went round the sun and not vice versa, he met with conflict, censure, an inquisition and house arrest by the Catholic Church. The church felt that he was now trespassing on their area of expertise and teaching.

The group felt that the conflict highlighted human rather than spiritual concerns. The Galileo investigation came at a bad time for Pope Urban VIII. A bright intellectual with an interest in astronomy and an early admirer of Galileo's work, his human fallibility was evident after 10 years in office. He had all the birds killed in his garden as they woke him up; he was accused of a lack of zeal on costly papal-led wars in Europe and could ill afford another challenge to his authority. So 'The Beliefs Police' or beliefs of the church at the time triumphed over scientific evidence and curtailed Galileo's work in this area. It was commented that a similar conflict was to face Charles Darwin in more recent times.

As well as the well documented science versus papal belief dispute, members were fascinated by the social history the book revealed. For instance Galileo considered his two illegitimate daughters

‘unmarriageable’ and placed them in a convent. This was a common practice and seemed to be accepted without demur by the daughters. Whilst being ‘brides of Christ’ was largely a life of poverty and deprivation, at the time of the deadly and widespread bubonic plague that swept Italy and much of Europe, being in effect ‘quarantined’ in a convent was a very safe place to be.

Virginia, the daughter herself, who took the name Sister Maria Celeste, was said to match Galileo’s brilliance, industry and sensibility. In her father’s words, she was a ‘woman of exquisite mind’. She had the intelligence to read and understand Galileo’s work, research and mathematics, transcribed some of his work for him and became the apothecary at the convent, helping visiting doctors, nursing sick nuns and dispensing potions for various ailments.

Despite the seeming opposition of science and faith, Galileo remained a good Catholic throughout his life. Both he and his daughter were greatly comforted and helped by their prayers, faith and Christian beliefs of the time.

Peter Green



The next LINK magazine will be the January - February 2018 issue.

Please send in all contributions by Friday 5th January 2018.

To make sure I receive them, please send them to both addresses below:

Jennie Torpey: jennietorpey@ntlworld.com

AMC Office: office@aylesburymethodists.org.uk

or I can type them up for you if you let me have them in time.



You alone

Dear Father, You alone
Listen to me.
Others barely hear me.

Dear Father, You alone
Really see me.
Others hardly notice me.

Dear Father, You alone
Speak to me.
Others only talk about me.

Dear Father, You alone
Love my existence.
Others hate my being.

Dear Father, You alone
Care for me.
Others cannot be bothered.

Dear Father, You alone
Hold my spirit.
Others try and break it.

Dear Father, You alone
Raise me up.
Others try to tear me down.



Dear Father, You alone
Made me in entirety.
Others can try and destroy
All that is good.
But they will never succeed
Because.....

You are Awesome.
You are invincible.
You are wonderful.
You are the creator of all.
And I am yours.
Thank You.





Christmas Tree Festival

Aylesbury Methodist Church
Buckingham Street



**Saturday 9th December
10am to 5pm**



**Free Admission
Refreshments and Craft Stalls**



**Tree Service
Sunday 10th December
at 10.30am**



**All proceeds towards the new
Church Welcome Area**

