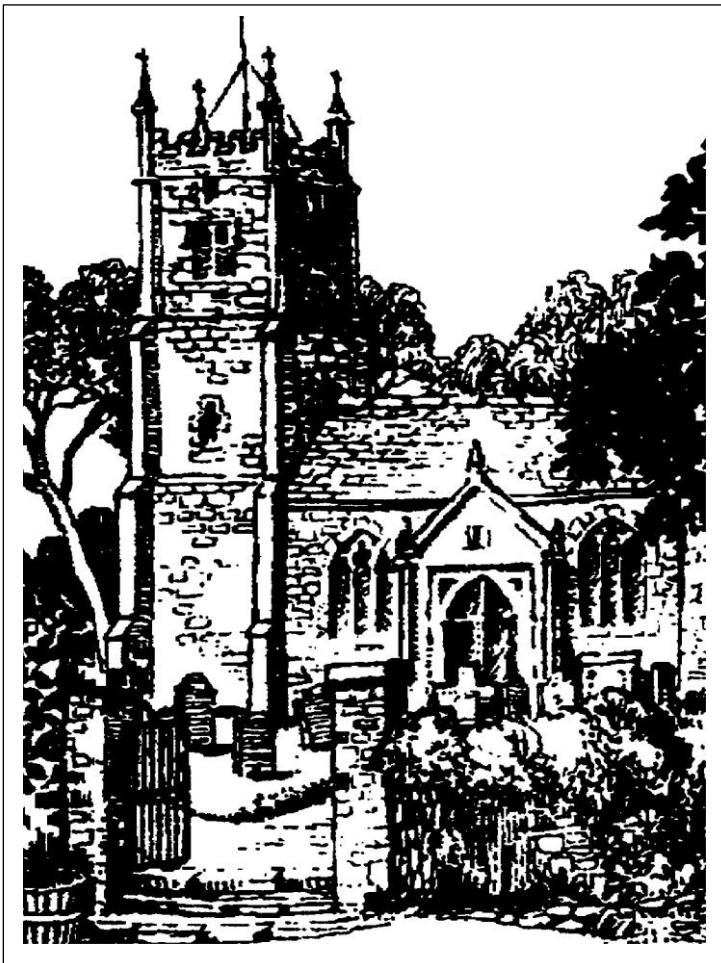


st Andrew's

Whitchurch



*REACHING
OUT
WITH
THE
LOVE
OF
CHRIST*

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Parish Magazine

February 2012

50p

Dear Friends,

As I write this, Christmas has slipped into the past and Lent is appearing on the horizon. This year the season of Lent begins on the 22nd February. How will Lent affect you? Will it be 40 days of giving something up? Or will it be 40 days of consciously giving more time to your relationship with God? The Christian Church links the 40 days of Lent with the time that Jesus spent in the desert.

A few years ago I was fortunate enough to spend some time in a Middle Eastern desert. A place known as the Empty Quarter. The heat is the first thing that hits you. It is so hot during the day with the heat blasting you as if you have opened an oven door. We never experience such intensity of heat in the UK. The desert is a place of contrasts. From craggy, hostile rocks to endless, drifting sands. It is wild, rugged and unforgiving. It is spectacular and awe inspiring. It is known as the Empty Quarter for a very good reason - life seems unsustainable there - the void is dramatically impressive. It is a place where there are no home comforts - no easy living, just the harsh reality of life stripped bare. A place with no distractions, a place to focus one's mind.

In the Old Testament the desert was where God prepared the children of Israel to be his people and to inherit his promises. In the New Testament it was where Jesus was prepared for the ministry that lay before him. Lent is a time that could be an opportunity for our own desert experience. Before you start getting too excited - that doesn't mean jeep safaris or Bedouin camps! It is where we can begin to prepare for Easter Week, when Christians recall the events that led to the Passion of Christ. This culminates at Easter when we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was sent into the desert by the Spirit where he experienced temptation and hunger. He was being prepared by God for his future work. For that, God needed Jesus to know himself. St Mark deals with Jesus' temptation in two short sentences (Chapter 1 v12 - 13). You have to turn to the Gospels of St Matthew (Chapter 4 v1 - 11) and St Luke (Chapter 4 v1 - 13) to read about how the devil tempted him and how he resisted temptation.

Sometimes it is helpful to seek the emptiness of the desert. Perhaps Lent is a good time to travel to your own desert. It could be a quiet place where you can retreat from the demands of the world and, just for a while, focus on God, His Word, His Kingdom, and the salvation that He has given to you and me. Lent could be that desert place where we can find who we really are, not the person we show our friends but the person that God knows. Often we are so involved in our personas that the real person lies forgotten under a facade of who we want people to see. Perhaps Lent is the time to give something of yourself rather than to give something up.

In your desert experience you may face temptation. You might want to take a short cut or to give up. Persevere if you can and seek something new from God. On the other hand, the opportunity might open up to do something for God. Lent is a time when our walk with God can be strengthened and deepened. If we give time to God, we will be better equipped to build His Kingdom on earth.

Yours in faith,

Alan

Here is a prayer (courtesy of Roots issue 57) that might focus you on your journey:

*God who calls us on the journey of Lent,
forgive us when we have been so wrapped up
with the beginnings of our journey of faith
that we have failed to let it flourish and grow.*

*God who calls us on the journey of Lent,
forgive us when we have been so caught up
with the day-to-day challenges of our own lives
that we have failed to live lives of justice and peace.*

*God who calls us on the journey of Lent
forgive us when we have been so excited
to hear the good news for ourselves
that we have failed to be good news
for the people around us.*

Forgive us and challenge us.

*Send us out to forgive others
and to be the change you want to see
in our communities and our world.*

Amen.



Back to the future

The theology of the church (ecclesiology) is a funny thing. It is meant to guide us as we shape the church of tomorrow. But only too often it is simply used to justify the shape of the church of today. A dynamic understanding of the church, intended to equip it for principled appropriate change, in response to changing cultures, and direction from the Holy Spirit, is given theoretical acknowledgement, while nothing changes. Perhaps we have given too much uncritical emphasis on the church as steward of the inheritance from the past, and too little on the church as an anticipation of the future.

Most mainline denominations say that the church is called to be 'a sign, instrument (or agent) and foretaste of the kingdom of God'. If we take that seriously there are a number of consequences. Signs show people the way and allow them to understand which paths will take them the wrong way. If the church is to be a sign, then it has to be contextual. The sign has to be erected where people, going about their everyday lives, can see it. The local church must live its life where people are, culturally and geographically, not where they used to be. But the church is more than a sign. It is the instrument God uses and the agent he chooses as his partner, to offer salvation and to demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. People need the church, not a pointer to something else, if they are going to find salvation through Christ and be recruited to serve in the kingdom of God. So it is vital that the local church engage its life with the localities it has been sent to serve. But, most significantly, the church is a foretaste, an anticipation of God's kingdom. People should be able to see among us an imperfect taste of what God has prepared for the new heaven and earth. Local churches are called to be communities which offer a taste of the future, in advance.

Our Western society lacks hope more than anything else. The best many people can hope for is more of the same, or in these difficult economic times, holding on to most of what they have. They need local communities of Christians who live in the present in the light of the future Jesus has secured, and do so locally, as they engage exactly the same difficulties and challenges as their neighbours. A

regular question for each local church should be 'How can our life and worship together here best show people the future which Jesus has won for us?'

The relationship with the past is vital. The future is only possible because of the past. The incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus have opened the future. The moment we depart from those central truths we have no hope to offer. We are indeed stewards of the inheritance of the past, and that inheritance has shaped the churches over the years. But so has the culture of many different eras. We need to distinguish between adaptations which were appropriate for a different time, and the beliefs and practices, which make the church the church in every time. The past is powerful because it has been such a blessing. But some of yesterday's blessings are the very things which stop us receiving what God intends for the sake of the world today.

It is the role of the Holy Spirit – the first fruits of the kingdom of God, the taste of the powers of the age to come – to guide the church, so that it becomes a foretaste of the future in whatever setting God has located it. We receive the gospel from the past, and the Spirit equips us to live it out as a local foretaste of the future. We go back for the sake of the future, not simply to justify the present.

Graham

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Places I have been (2)

One of my favourite places to be is in Suspense. It really gets the Adrenalin going and pumps up the old heart. At my age, I need all the stimulus I can get.

And sometimes I think I am in Vincible but life inevitably shows me I am not! I have been in Deep Trouble many times; the older I get the easier it is to get there!

Events of interest to the whole Tavy Mission Community

Moorland Outreach.

Wednesday 1st February : Mary Tavy Methodist Chapel Schoolroom 2:00 p.m.

Reverend Michael Brierley from St. Eustachius' Church, Tavistock.

Brentor Garden Club

Thursday 16th February : Brentor Village Hall : 7:30 p.m..

Members' meeting when we will welcome Ruth Binney to give a talk entitled "Gardeners' Wise Words". Visitors are welcome @ £2 on the door.

Brentor.

Tuesday 21st February : Brentor Village Hall : 6:00 p.m.

Pancake and Board Games Evening

Some inspiring church signs!



February Diary

(all in church unless otherwise marked)

Thursday 2nd/9th

16th/23rd

2.00 pm

St Andrew's Art Group in the Stable.

Thursday 2nd

7.30 pm

TaviPraise (Venue TBC)

Saturday 4th/18th

10.00 am

Prayer in the Square (Abbey Chapel).

Monday 6th/13th

20th/27th

10.00 am

Mother's and Toddlers, Whitchurch Community Hall

7.30pm

St Andrew's W.I. in Whitchurch Community Hall. Talk: 32 years with your Local Paper - Speaker Lyn Roberts, Tavistock Times

Friday 10th/24th

3.45 pm

Sparklers &

6.45 pm

Spark at Whitchurch Primary School.

Sunday 12th

morning

11.45 am

Soup Lunch following the 10.00 am service.

Thursday 16th

7.30 pm

TaviPrayer at Abbey Chapel.

Monday 20th

10.00 am

Mother's and Toddlers in the Whitchurch Community Hall.

Friday 24th

7.15 pm

The Filling Station at Horrabridge Village Hall

Every week in the week

- **Daily Prayer Together** in church at 7.45am Mon - Fri
- **Mothers and Toddlers Group:** in the Village Hall - Monday 10-11.30
- **Holy Communion: Thursday** 9.30am followed by Coffee
- **Art Group: Thursday** 2.00pm-4.00pm in the Stable contact
Maureen Bridge 01822 612987
- **Bell Ringers: Friday** 7.00pm in church led by Jane Doidge tel
852267

Home Groups *(please check location and that your group is meeting)*

- **Monday:** 7.30pm led by Rev. Miranda Donne and Felicity Derry-Thomas at Whitchurch House, Whitchurch.
Tel: Felicity) 614146. mirandadonne@btinternet.com.
- **Tues:** 7.30pm (Ladies Group) led by Tracey Solman at 18 Tiddy Close on the first three Tuesdays of each month. Tel: 611073
- **Tues:** 7.30pm (Men's Group) led by Jay Allerton at 71 Cox Tor Road.
Tel: 614533
- **Tues:** 7.30pm led by Paul Martin at The Vicarage. Tel:615650
- **Thursday:** 7.30pm. 147 Plymouth Road, Bishopsmead led by Andrew Steven. Tel: 612303
- **Friday:** 9.45am led by Eunice Weemys at 28 Church Lea tel: 615418



Mothers' Union

If anyone would like to know more about the Mother's Union and in particular Diocesan membership please contact
June Perkin (Tel: 615188)

St Andrew's WI

The President welcomed visitors and members to the first meeting of 2012. The Treasurer was kept busier than usual, collecting annual subscriptions and members signed up for the annual dinner to be held at Tavistock Golf Club in February. For more energetic members, Scottish dancing will start again later in the month. Each member had a chance to vote for one of the WI resolutions, which were read out by the President. This year's shortlist of topics proposed by WI members includes six resolutions. Once these have been narrowed down by members, the most popular will be put to the vote at the May 2012 NFWI AGM. If passed, the resolutions will form the basis of campaigning and awareness-raising in the years ahead. The speaker was Jane Savage from WDBC Recycling. Her talk was entitled From Waste to Resource.

There are fewer vehicles collecting waste since South Hams and WDBC joined together in October 2010. Recycling, refuse, food and garden waste are all collected at the kerbside. The recycling centre is at Hayedown on the outskirts of Tavistock. 30% less waste is now going to landfill and the new service has saved £1.7m. Jane explained that residents support is essential to ensure that changes will be effective. More recycling helps to keep council tax down. Members are planning to visit the recycling centre later in the year. Our next meeting is on 6 February, when the speaker will be Lyn Roberts from the Tavistock Times.

Further information about St. Andrew's WI Whitchurch from the President, Mrs. Gail Reed on 616393.

Kay Harrison

Whitchurch School

With Christmas and New Year celebrations distant (and happy!) memories, we are back to our usual classroom routines - which doesn't mean that our days are dull! On the 1st of February, the All Out Theatre Company is spending the morning with Year 5 to talk about this year's performance. Julian collects together the children's ideas, then takes those ideas away and writes



Love the Irish!

Gallagher opened the morning newspaper and was dumbfounded to read in the obituary column that he had died. He quickly phoned his best friend, Finney.

'Did you see the paper?' asked Gallagher. 'They say I died!!!'
'Yes, I saw it!' replied Finney. 'Where are ye callin' from?'

An Irish priest is driving down to New York and gets stopped for speeding in Connecticut. The state trooper smells alcohol on the priest's breath and then sees an empty wine bottle on the floor of the car.

He says, 'Sir, have you been drinking?'
'Just water,' says the priest.
The trooper says, 'Then why do I smell wine?'

The priest looks at the bottle and says, 'Good Lord! He's done it again!'

Questions you just can't answer

Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard when he lives in the jungle without a razor?

Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are flat?

Why do banks charge a fee on 'insufficient funds' when they know there is not enough?

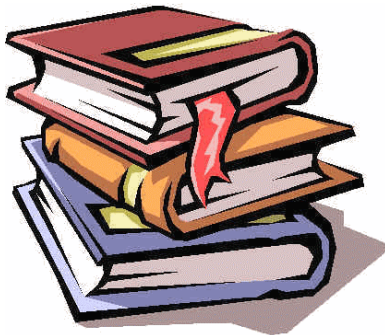
Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?

The journey for a RiT continues!

By Ann de Looy

Well, so much has happened over the past four months since I last wrote to share with you my journey to becoming a licensed Reader. I think I now have a pattern for the course beginning although every so often God lobs in a new ball and I have to become uncomfortable again – you know how it is!



On my journey are my fellow RiTs. There are seven of us two women and five men. We are variously postmen, retired head teachers, podiatrists and retired coming from across Devon but I would say mainly in the east. I attend the modules in theology (the formal academic part of the course) at Marjon while the other six attend the same modules in Exeter. At Marjon there are six of us on the module (one second year RiT and the rest Marjon students) and we meet on Tuesday evenings. Last term we studied the Old Testament and this term we are exploring the New. I must admit the theology is a great favourite with me and I have had to clear extra space on my bookshelves for more books but this time they are very big causing me also to alter the height of the shelves! My enthusiasm for the Old Testament knows no bounds at the moment and I have also taken this to my Home Group where we looked in depth at Moses and Solomon for example. One of my first exegeses (a critical explanation or interpretation of scripture) was on Micah (thank you Sean for the loan of yet more books). Learning about the prophets was definitely another highlight – why don't we do more study on the Old Testament? Fortunately I passed that essay challenge and am now waiting for the next one to be marked. It is indeed way out of my comfort zone to be writing essays in new subjects with new vocabularies and new expectations. Wow who would have thought that!

But the other, and highly significant, part of the preparation is the Reader Development Module (RDM). This is the 'practical' preparation or preparation for Reader ministry, homiletics (preaching), pastoral and spiritual development or 'formation'. Now here again there are enormous challenges. Every month we meet with the other RiTs (years 2 & 3) and spend time on the RDM. Our teachers lead us gently through the topics and we are then encouraged through our personal journal tutors to reflect on the application of our learning in everyday life. But this will involve you too as I

have to be evaluated by you when I begin a more public ministry for example by delivering a message one Sunday or taking part of a service. I think you can imagine how nervous I was when I had to do even a short homily to my other six classmates or prepare and take part in worship services which all the RiTs do every time we meet. To do this to all of you will be completely nerve rackingmuch prayer required.

So what are the highlights? The very supportive bond developing between my group of first year RiTs, studying and being tolerated by my home group when I get passionate about the Old Testament, the teachers on the programme who have so much wisdom, being part of the worshipping community at St Andrews who every so often ask me 'how is it going?' and, you may find this hard to understand, the value of silence. We have had two residential weekends and at the start of the second day we spend half an hour in corporate silence. The last weekend we entered this silence with these words from 1 Samuel 3:9 '*Speak Lord for thy servant hears*'. But you know, half an hour was not long enough.



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Thursdays and Fridays
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Email volunteering@westdevoncvcs.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you

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Whitchurch Methodists Sunday Afternoon Worship at 3.15 pm

5th February	-	Rev Pam Stranks (Sacrament)
12th February	-	Mr Mark Pellow
19th February	-	Mrs Joan Gosling
26th February	-	Rev Jeff Moles

Fellowship Meeting - Tuesdays (except first Tuesday in the month) at 2.30pm. Please check with Mrs Rita Clemishaw if attending on an irregular basis (Tel: 618683)

Something Simple – Light lunch and conversation
First Wednesday in the month – 12 noon for 12.30pm

Disabled facilities – fund raising
The coffee morning at the church on Saturday January 14th raised £150. Many thanks to all who supported us on that occasion

Tuesday February 21st – Pancake Party
Our Pancake Party will be held at 19 Whitchurch Road, the home of Mrs Rita Clemishaw, from 2pm to 4pm and everyone is warmly invited.

Look, Listen, then What?

The local newspaper, the Herald, has a regular column of short quotations made recently by people of note. One, which caught my eye, was made by Professor Stephen Hawking in a 70th birthday message. *“Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist”*. Professor Hawking advocates a supposed conflict between science and faith and, in his latest book, argues for a complete theory of everything, which saw no reason to believe in a divine being. This can be no surprise to Christians, for Jesus Himself said *“They may look and look yet not see; they may listen and listen, yet not understand. For if they did, they would turn to*

God and He would forgive them". (Mark 4:12).

George Washington Carver was an African-American scientist, who developed scores of products from the peanut. He was also a humble servant of God, who took every opportunity to speak to others about the Saviour he loved. He was often asked to address student audiences at colleges and universities. He spoke about the natural world and the loving God who created the earth and all people. As his goal for these meetings he said that he wanted the students to find Jesus and make Him a daily, hourly and moment-by-moment part of their lives. *"I want them to see the Great Creator in the smallest and apparently the most insignificant things around them",*

Dr Carver was following the words of Paul to his young colleague and assistant, Timothy. *"The Lord's servant must not quarrel. He must be kind to all, a good and patient teacher, who is gentle as he corrects his opponents, for it may be that God will give them the opportunity to repent and come to know the truth". (2 Timothy 2:24-25).*

It is one thing to know the truth; it's another to obey it. Psalm 15 asks *"Lord, who may enter Your Temple? Who may worship on Zion, Your holy hill?"*. The Psalm is not about any holiness of our own that we think will qualify us to gain entrance to His presence. It is rather about the beauty of holiness that God, by His grace, forms in us as we live in fellowship with Him. The closer we get to God, the more like Him we will become.

I want to conclude with a story our preacher told us on Sunday. The last time I "borrowed" a preacher's story, it resulted in a lovely letter from one of our readers with a poem, from which the story may have been taken. This story is of a salt doll, who was exploring the world. She finally came to the sea shore and waded in through the waves, deeper and deeper. Bit by bit she dissolved, becoming a part of the sea itself. *"Now, at last", she said, "I know what I am"*

With every blessing

June Woodland