

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TUESDAY 4TH MARCH, 5pm – 6.30pm: Pancake supper at URC

WEDNESDAY, 5TH MARCH, 11am – 12.30pm: ‘Ashes to Go’,
Newport Pagnell High Street

FRIDAY, 7TH MARCH, 12 noon to 1.15pm: Lent lunches start

FRIDAY, 7TH MARCH at 7.30pm: united service at the URC for Women’s World Day of Prayer. The theme for this year’s Day of Prayer is Egypt. Everyone is welcome to come to this service – not just women!

SATURDAY, 8TH MARCH: first day of ‘Big Little Give’ week.

SUNDAY, 9TH MARCH from 12 noon - 1pm: start of the new PILGRIM learning course at the United Reformed Church.

MONDAY, 10TH MARCH, 7.30 - 9pm: ‘MK Christians in a World of Faiths’, Quaker Centre, Downhead Park

TUESDAY, 11TH MARCH, 2pm -3.30pm: Lent study group starts at Methodist Church

THURSDAY, 3RD APRIL at 7.30pm: meeting at the United Reformed Church to raise awareness about the work of Christian Aid

THURSDAY, 10TH APRIL at 6.45pm: Eclipse fundraising dinner and auction at Eversholt Hall.

CTNP President: Vacancy
Secretary: Beth MacKay, beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk Tel. 612475
Treasurer: Paul Tolley, PTMERCEDES@aol.com Tel. 210048
CTNP web-site: - www.ctnp.org.uk



CONNECTIONS MARCH 2014

Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.
Psalm 25, v 4&5

‘ASHES TO GO’

Wednesday 5th March marks the start of the season of Lent and is known in many Christian traditions as ‘Ash Wednesday’. Between 11am and 12.30pm that day some of us from the Newport Pagnell churches will be out on the High Street engaging in conversation with passers by, offering to ‘ash’ them to highlight the beginning of the Lenten journey, and reminding them how God’s love is freely available to all.

God meets us not just in worship, but in the midst of life, and ‘Ashes to Go’ reminds us of that. It’s an opportunity for people to talk to someone about any concerns or worries they may have and is an invitation to pause in the midst of our busy lives for reflection, healing and prayer. Do come and join us if you’d like to be part of this. For more information email revdjmill@btinternet.com.

And of course, while on the subject of Lent...

Don’t forget to come to our popular **Lent Lunches** every Friday from **March 7th to April 11th** at the URC Hall from 12.00 to 1.15pm. Enjoy delicious home made soup, a variety of bread, rolls and cheeses for £3.50. All profits go to Christian Aid.

Articles to the Editor, Beth MacKay
Preferably by e-mail to beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk 612475
Copy Deadline - 20th of each month

LETTER FROM A MINISTER

So what are you giving up for Lent? It's often some luxury food or drink item that we do not really need but will crave when we cannot have it – we have all given up chocolate at some point! But no-one would actually give up *food* for Lent now would they? That would be silly. Yet for many families in Milton Keynes going without food because of financial difficulties is becoming much more common.

Have you ever been hungry? I don't mean that 'just-before-lunch tummy rumble' but *really* hungry with no food available and no money to buy any? We tend to think of hunger as a third world problem that we encounter through Comic Relief or Sport Aid evenings. Yet last year Milton Keynes Foodbank gave out over 10,000 bags of food to local people who could not afford food for their families. Some of them walked miles to their nearest centre where they exchange their referral voucher for food - proud people, not scroungers, sometimes in tears at having to 'accept charity'.

Without Foodbanks, many living in this 'hidden poverty' would have to resort to more drastic measures to feed themselves: loan sharks or perhaps even shoplifting.

For Christians Lent is a time of self-examination to ensure that we are truly answering the call we each have from God. It is also the time of the Foodbank's 'Big Little Give' when everyone is encouraged to donate one item of food to help fill their shelves.

So if you want to do something for Lent this year to show the love of God or simply to help those worse off than yourselves, then what better way to use the money you save on Mars bars than to help feed those in need!

You can find more details on their website www.mkfoodbank.org.uk or in adverts in local publications.

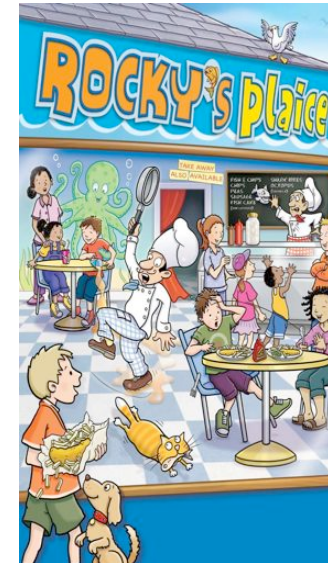
We each need only give a small donation but together these will help 10,000 of the poorest people in our city. And if you do, I guarantee your Easter chocolate will taste even better!

Geoff Morris

HOLIDAY CLUB 11th – 15th August 2014

This year we are using Scripture Union's Rocky's Plaice material (yes it is spelt like that!) We are planning and praying for 150 primary school age children and are busy recruiting the team. The Bible content centres on the life of Peter.

Join up and have great fun with the kids and the team. If you are inexperienced – don't worry, we will provide some training and support – and we're looking for help with all sorts of tasks, not just working with the children. For example, we need people to help prepare the hall, clear up afterwards, help run a crèche for younger children of volunteers, prepare mid-morning refreshments and lunch for the helpers, etc... There are lots of ways you can help so contact us at Info@npbc.org.uk. It's a wonderful venture to be involved in so don't miss out!



Registration for children wishing to attend the Holiday Club will take place in advance **from March** via Cambourne Travel, 52 High Street, Newport Pagnell.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Pancake Supper

On Tuesday 4th March there will be a joint URC/ Methodist Pancake supper from 5pm-6.30pm at the United Reformed Church. There will be all-age activities related to Pancake Day and Lent as well as games, singing, fun and food.

For more information email revdjmill@btinternet.com.

A course for the Christian journey

Wherever you are on the road...

Beginning on Sunday 9th March from 12 noon to 1pm at the United Reformed Church we will run our new PILGRIM learning course for five weeks. All are welcome as we explore issues of faith in a thoughtful, accessible and interactive way.

For more information email revdjmill@btinternet.com.

Soul Food @ 6

This is an alternative worship opportunity which will be held at 6pm at the United Reformed Church on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We aim for it to become a time of reflection and thinking, challenge and comfort, peace and conversation. We would love to welcome you to this non-threatening, relevant and accessible, alternative worship opportunity.

MILTON KEYNES THEOLOGY FORUM

MK Christians in a world of faiths

An open discussion for thinking Christians on **Monday 10 March, 7.30 - 9.00 pm** at the Quaker Centre, Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, MK15 9BH. Introductions by Cass Howes (Chaplain, University of Bedfordshire), Steve Bell (UK Director, Interserve) & Paul Smith (Team Rector, Stantonbury LEP)

How should we relate to those of other faiths? How should we live as Christians in a multi-faith community? How do they see Christians; how do we see them? Why are we often reluctant to engage with Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and other faiths? How do we reconcile the traditional Christian teaching about salvation in Christ alone with the emphasis on the equality of faiths in society? Is the presence of those of other faiths in MK a threat or an opportunity? How can we build friendships across cultures? What can local churches do? Is help available? How can we share our faith with confidence?

CTNP NEEDS YOU!

We urgently need to fill the following vacancies. Please talk to your minister or contact Klaus Reidel, Beth MacKay or any other member of the Executive if you think you might be able to help with any of these roles.

President/Chair (vacant now)

- Chairs the two meetings of Forum each year (January and June) and the four Executive meetings (February, May, September and November) and approves minutes prior to circulation by the Secretary
- Represents CTNP at occasional external meetings as required (although in practice this can be delegated to other members of the Executive)
- Deals with any issues that might arise in between meetings
- Term of office is two years.

Secretary (vacant from June 2014)

- In consultation with the Chair and other members of the Executive, prepares and circulates agenda and accompanying papers for the two meetings of the Forum each year (January and June) and for four Executive meetings per year (February, May, September and November) and prepares and circulates minutes for each of these meetings.
- Drafts any ad hoc CTNP correspondence as required throughout the year (in practice this is generally minimal)
- Acts as one of the initial contacts for CTNP (from the website and newsletters), circulating/forwarding information as appropriate
- Term of office is five years.

Communications Officer (vacant now)

- Convenes and chairs meetings of the Communications Group (three/four times a year) to consider any communication and publicity issues
- Prepares ad hoc publicity leaflets as required (e.g. for carnival and other events)
- In consultation with the Media Officer and other members of the Communications Group, helps to ensure that CTNP communications have a mission focus where possible
- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that the CTNP website structure and content is fit for purpose.

ECLIPSE COUNSELLING SERVICE

Invites you to attend their Fundraising Dinner and Auction at Eversholt Hall, Church End, Eversholt MK17 9DU on **Thursday, 10 April** at 6.45pm for 7.15pm.
Price: £39.50 per person (Smart attire)

For tickets or further information, please ring Eclipse on 01908 211288 or email info@eclipse-addiction.org.uk
Charity No 1111366

CTNP LENT COURSE 2014

The forms are now in and lots of you have signed up for the Tuesday afternoon sessions at the Methodist Church - which is great! The Tuesday afternoon course will start on **11 March starting at 2pm** and finishing at 3.30pm. The course is called 'Build on the Rock' and there will be five sessions.

Unfortunately, we have been unable to set up any evening groups this year as there were not enough requests for other times to make a viable group.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The service this year will be held in the URC on Friday, 7th March at 7.30pm. and the speaker will be the Revd Coralie Mansfield. The service has been prepared by the women of Egypt and is called 'Streams in the Desert'. The Day of Prayer starts at dawn in the Pacific and moves in a wave around the world ending in the USA at nightfall. This is always a moving and uplifting service with people from every church in the town taking part. Everyone is welcome to attend, men, women and children. Please come and be part of this moving service!

MK FOODBANK 'BIG LITTLE GIVE' 2014

Many of our congregations already make regular contributions to the Foodbank for which we are extremely grateful - in fact there would not be a Foodbank without you! Many others make a donation at Harvest festival time which fills the shelves at the warehouse for a while but then there is no other 'major' boost to stocks for another year. The 'Big Little Give' (BLG) was introduced to bridge that gap by asking people to donate one item to the Foodbank in March.

This year BLG week starts on the weekend of the **8th March**. If you can donate an item of non-perishable food that week, it would be greatly appreciated. Perhaps you could even organise a collection at your place of work or your local school?

There is no need to stick with that week if it is not convenient - collections go on for a while afterwards and I am happy to arrange to pick up any donations. I am also happy to come along and talk to your group about the Foodbank if that would help. For any further information please contact me (Geoff Morris) on 617050.

VOLUNTEERS TO 'MAN' THE PHONES

The Foodbank is likely to have lots of phonecalls around the time of 'Big Little Give' and we are looking for some volunteers to help 'man' the phones during the period 8-16 March with some mop-up sessions between 17-23 March.

Could you spare two hours (or more) to help us during these two weeks? If so please contact, John Marshall on 01908 322800 or email him at foodbank.john@mkcc.org.uk