

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WEDNESDAY, 3rd FEBRUARY: **Memory Cafe** from 10a.m. to 12 noon in the foyer of Westbury Grange on the first Wednesday of each month. A safe place where people who suffer from Dementia and their carers meet others and share experiences. There is a charge of £1.50 per person which includes a hot drink, cake and a raffle. For more information please contact Westbury Grange on 01908 210332.

FOR LENT GROUP DETAILS, SEE FRONT COVER

SATURDAY, 6th FEBRUARY: Charity concert at 7pm at St Mary's Church, Bletchley

FRIDAY, 12th FEBRUARY: Lent lunches at URC hall start at 12 noon

WEDNESDAY, 24th FEBRUARY, 8pm at Lovat Hall: 2nd planning meeting for Holiday Club

WEDNESDAY, 2 March 7.30-10pm: Parent Talk event at the Ridgeway Centre

FRIDAY, 4th MARCH: Women's World Day of Prayer service in the Methodist Church. Start time to be confirmed. The service this year has been prepared by the Christian women of Cuba.

TUESDAY, 22nd MARCH at 7pm: 'An Impossible God' at the Methodist Church

FRIDAY, 25th MARCH: Good Friday 'walk of witness' starts from Market Hill at approx. 11.45am followed by a united service at the Parish Church at noon. More details in next edition.

SATURDAY, 26th MARCH: distribution of Easter biscuits on High Street as happened last year on Easter Saturday morning. More information in next edition.

For up-to-date information on events and activities check our website regularly at www.ctnp.org.uk

CTNP President: Vacancy

Secretary: Beth MacKay beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk 01908 612475

Treasurer: Paul Tolley, PTMERCEDES@aol.com 01908 615729

CTNP website: - www.ctnp.org.uk



CONNECTIONS

February 2016

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

LENT GROUPS WITH A DIFFERENCE!

Our Ministers support the principle of the various CTNP congregations getting together during Lent, to study together and learn from one another. As a change from the York courses we have opted to use two films for Lent 2016. The ministers have chosen the films. Film 1 is *Chocolat* and Film 2 is *Mr Popper's Penguins*. The format will be to show *Chocolat* the first week, and then, a week later, meet together to talk about it. This will be repeated the following fortnight with *Mr Popper's Penguins*.

Each week there will be an afternoon session on Tuesdays at 2pm, held in the Westbury Grange Activities Room, Westbury Lane, and an evening session on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm (venue to be confirmed).

Tues 16 Feb 2pm or Thurs 18 Feb 7.30pm for viewing Film 1
Tues 23 Feb 2pm or Thurs 25 Feb 7.30pm for talking about Film 1
Tues 1 March 2pm or Thurs 3 March 7.30pm for viewing Film 2
Tues 8 March 2pm or Thurs 10 March 7.30pm for talking about Film 2

You only attend one session each week, but each week you have the option of whether to attend the 2pm or the 7.30pm one. No need to book. Intrigued? Do come along if you can and bring friends and neighbours with you. Help us make these sessions enjoyable and stimulating!

Articles to the Editor, Beth MacKay

Preferably by email to beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk 01908 612475

Copy Deadline - 20th of each month

LETTER FROM A MINISTER

A few years ago an American friend visited Germany with her family during the February half-term. As part of their visit they spent a day in Cologne and were very surprised (and disappointed) to find that the cathedral was closed. Unbeknown to them, they arrived on *Fat Thursday* or *Weiberfastnacht* in German, which in Cologne is an important date.

Because on that day, the final phase of the Carnival celebrations begin and women take over the city for a day. The celebrations take place in the street and usually become very exuberant and often even boisterous. That's why the cathedral is closed, to avoid any damage if people get carried away. And my friend and her family accepted that this was necessary.

The point of the Carnival celebrations is to live it up before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, because in the past this was a time of fasting.

In our time, this has changed and the idea tends to be to give up something for Lent, e.g. sweets, biscuits or alcohol - a commendable practice which is also good for our health – but this may not be for everybody. An alternative approach, and this may seem strange, is to commit to doing something extra, e.g. a short time of prayer or just of quietness. This is well worth a try and not surprisingly, I don't find it strange at all but rewarding!

Deacon Klaus Reidel
St. Bede's Catholic Church

LENT LUNCHESES

Come to the Lent Lunches every Friday from **12th February to 18th March** at the URC Hall, Newport Pagnell from 12 noon to 1.15pm. Enjoy delicious home-made soup and a variety of bread, rolls and cheeses. Cost is £4 and all profits go to Christian Aid. For more information, contact Jennifer Mazzone.

CTNP FORUM - SAVE THE DATE

Our next Forum and AGM will be held on Thursday, 23rd June at 7.45pm in the Methodist Hall. I know that may seem a long time away but please note the date in your diary now and encourage others to come along.

Please also pray that people will feel able to come forward to take on the vacant positions on the CTNP Executive. We are currently looking for a Secretary, Treasurer and Chair for CTNP as well as a Chair for the Emergency Help Scheme. CTNP has become less committee-based and the number of meetings has been halved over the last two years which means that these roles are less time consuming than they may have been in the past.

It would be great to have new people (of all ages) involved in CTNP with new ideas and enthusiasm so do think prayerfully about offering your services on the committee or as an extra pair of hands to help organise events.

SHOULD THE CHURCHES BE PART OF THE CARNIVAL?

Well, we have done on a number of occasions in the past, but for the last two years we have been conspicuous by our absence. It has been suggested that we should enter a CTNP float again this year and/or have some kind of presence on the field. Carnival weekend this year is **25th and 26th June** and the theme is 'Sporting Moments'.

What do people think? In order to enter, we would need a 'task team' to plan, come up with ideas, design and prepare the artwork for the float/gazebo and coordinate the whole thing. Does this appeal to you or do you know people you think might enjoy doing this as a little project? Please do consider it and if there are any creative/artistic/practical people in your church, give them a gentle nudge in our direction. All ages welcome!

If you are interested, please contact beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk before the end of February so that we can decide at the CTNP Executive meeting on 1st March whether we can go ahead with this or not.

CHARITY CONCERT

Heart and Music are doing a charity concert for MK Moneylifeline on Saturday 6th February at 7pm at St Mary's church, Bletchley. Tickets are £7 in advance or £8 on the door.

Contact 0300 123 5198, 07786 913233 or office@mkmoneylifeline.org.uk for tickets

Newport Pagnell Methodist Church

Keep the date!

Following the recent very successful visit by Mark Topping with his presentation "An evening with John Wesley" he will be returning on

Tuesday 22nd March at 7pm

with

"An impossible God"

A dramatic presentation of the Easter Story as seen through the eyes of those involved.

All welcome.



Care for the family are organising an evening for parents.

Ridgeway Centre, MK12 5TH

Wednesday, 2 March 7.30-10pm

Doors open 6.45pm

Tickets £6.

Group discount £5.

Partner rate £4.

On the door £7.

Book via careforthefamily.org.uk

Spread the word to any parents you think may be interested.

HOLIDAY CLUB 2016

This year's CTNP Children's Holiday Club is to be held week commencing **15th August**. The club will run for **four** days this year – Monday to Thursday - ending with the traditional Thursday evening 'show and tell' event for parents etc. A team of volunteers will still be needed on the Friday to help with the clearing up.

The chosen theme this year is *Guardians of Ancora* using Scripture Union resources and based on a faith-based app game. *Once, the Hall of Memory in the city of Ancora was filled with wonderful story treasures, each a reminder of one of the great stories of the Saga (the Bible). Now, many of those objects have been lost.* Each day of the club, the task of the Guardians (the children at the club) will be to find a lost story treasure, return it to the Hall of Memory and explore the story that it represents. As the Hall fills up, the Guardians will discover how each story fits together to reveal more about who Jesus is and how they might develop their own relationship with him.

Sounds interesting, doesn't it! Well, you can be part of it too! As usual, we will be looking for lots of volunteers. Whatever your skills there's a role for you. If this is all new to you don't worry, we will support you. We are all in this together. As well as group leaders and assistants, we will need people to help prepare refreshments, take part in drama, help with crafts, music, tidying up etc.etc. If you are new to children's work, we will give you a supportive role and put you through a DBS check.

The holiday club will be greatly enhanced if we are able to transform Lovat Hall into an atmospheric Hall of Memory! So if you enjoy being creative and doing art and crafts (or know others who do), we would love you to come and help us with this. The next planning meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, 24th February, 8pm** at Lovat Hall. If you have ideas and would like to help in any way, it would be great if you could come along to this meeting.

To help with our planning, we ask all volunteers to please sign up as early as possible to enable us to finalise teams. Forms should soon be available in all the churches and on the CTNP website for you to fill in to register your willingness to help, or you can send an email to jack.walker@talk21.com or call in at the office at Lovat Hall.

UPDATE ON FUNDRAISING

As you know, CTNP has committed to raising £5,000 by March 2017 for Christian Aid's 'Food for Change' project in Burkina Faso to help poor families trying to eke out a living on the edge of the Sahara Desert.

Here is an update on where we are with this following our activities leading up to, and including, the New Year's day walk of witness around the Churches.

We have now reached a grand total of £3,205 (including Gift Aid). In addition to this, the Anglican churches agreed at their PCC meeting on 18th January to give a donation of £500 to the project. This puts us well on track to reach our target of a minimum of £5,000 by March 2017. We have raised just over £1,000 since the second year began for us in November with the Songs of Praise service (£1,500 if we include the Anglican donation). If we continue to receive donations from the after-service coffee / teas provided at St Peter and St Paul's and the Methodist Church, this will add a further £500 approx. to the fund. This, together with any donations received at the "final" Songs of Praise annual service, could well take us over £4,500. **SO - WE STILL HAVE A BIT TO GO - but significant progress has been made.**

A number of ideas for fundraising events have been suggested but at a recent meeting of the Mission Group it was agreed that due to people's many commitments, a better approach would be to do some fundraising for this project at social events that are already in the pipeline e.g. church quizzes, games evenings etc. rather than trying to organise additional events.

So if you or someone in your church is organising an event, do please consider whether some of the money raised could go to this project. If we reach our target, the EU will match fund it by 5:1 which means that our £5,000 becomes a staggering **£30,000!**

WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY AND APPROACHING THE HOME STRAIGHT - YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT WILL SEE US THROUGH!