

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**WEDNESDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 10am – 12 noon;** monthly Memory Cafe at Westbury Grange. A safe place where people living with dementia and their carers can find a warm welcome and support. Cost is £1.50 for tea/coffee, cake and a raffle. For more details phone 01908 210322.

**FRIDAY, 6<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 7.30pm at Lovat Hall:** Service to mark Women's World Day of Prayer. The service for 2015 has been written by Christian women of the Bahamas. Although written by women, all are invited to the service – men and children too. Over a period of 36 hours, 170 countries will have taken part. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland over 5,000 services will be held, focusing on the theme of: *Jesus said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you?'* Come and join us at Lovat Hall for your local Day of Prayer service.

**SATURDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH from 10am to 12.30: Big Brew for**

**Traidcraft** at the United Reformed Church

**TUESDAY, 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH at 7.30pm:** Holiday Club Planning Meeting at Lovat Hall

**FRIDAY, 3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL: CTNP GOOD FRIDAY PROCESSION**

**AND SERVICE OF WITNESS:** starting outside the Parish Church at 12 noon.

**FRIDAY, 3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL from 9am to 1pm:** Prayer stations at the Methodist Church

**SATURDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 10.30am -1pm:** distribution of Easter biscuits on the High Street.

**THURSDAY, 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 6.45pm:** Eclipse Counselling Service Fundraising Dinner and Auction at Eversholt Hall

**SATURDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> MAY, 10am to 12 noon:** Christian Aid coffee morning and cake stall at the United Reformed Church

**10<sup>th</sup> MAY to 16<sup>th</sup> MAY:** Christian Aid Week

**SATURDAY, 16<sup>th</sup> MAY from 7.30pm to 9.30pm:** Quiz evening at Brooklands

**SUNDAY, 24<sup>th</sup> MAY: CTNP PENTECOST PICNIC:** from 12.30pm on Bury Field

**10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> AUGUST: CTNP HOLIDAY CLUB:** 10am to 12.30pm at Lovat Hall

**CTNP President:** Vacancy

**Secretary:** Vacancy

**Treasurer:** Paul Tolley, PTMERCEDES@aol.com

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**CTNP website: - [www.ctnp.org.uk](http://www.ctnp.org.uk)**



## CONNECTIONS MARCH 2015

*In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.*

John Bunyan

### LETTER FROM A MINISTER

#### *Excess Baggage*

Winter is waning and we are looking forward to spring. I don't know about you but for me that means looking forward to warmer weather, shorter sleeves and holidays. However, I know if I want to go on holiday later this spring or early summer I need to do some preparatory work now like making plans and reservations.

I love holidays and the adventure of travel and seeing someplace new. However, I find the packing and unpacking a challenge. It is the challenge of having what I need without venturing into the realm of excess baggage. What is excess is clear when you fly, because there are often strict rules about excess baggage and harsh financial penalties. When you travel by means that keep you closer to the ground, what is excess is often less clear. However, I often find it can be identified by the extra space and extra bags it takes up.

If left to my own natural inclinations, I often find myself with excess baggage. This is both when I travel and more generally in my home and life. This is why my Lenten discipline to declutter, so that I can focus on what is important, is a challenge but is also good. I don't know what you might or might not have taken up as a Lenten challenge in this season the Church gives to prepare for Easter, but I have chosen things that in very practical ways help me focus more on what is most important - loving God and neighbour.

*Continued on next page*

**Articles to the Editor, Beth MacKay**

Preferably by e-mail to [beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk) 01908 612475

**Copy Deadline - 20th of each month**

*Continued from previous page*

I have chosen two Lenten challenges to both metaphorically and physically clear out the clutter and make room for adventurous living where I am not hampered by excess baggage. I have given up playing solitaire on my phone for Lent (and when I have a few spare minutes between activities, I *love* playing solitaire!). I am not convinced that God cares much either way about my solitaire playing, but I find it helpful to use my habit of *trying to fit in a quick game* as a reminder to redirect my attention to spend those few minutes talking to God in prayer. I find this a decluttering of the ways I habitually, and somewhat unthinkingly, spend my time.

On a more tangible level, my other Lenten discipline is trying to get rid of excess baggage with which I have filled my home. I have opted into the *40-bags-in-40-days Challenge* as a way to simplify and declutter my home environment. Taking on this challenge for a time has been a good reminder that sometimes we need to let go. In addition, it has also helpfully reminded me that I am grasping at straws if I live my life as if it is *things* that bring us happiness, because *people* and *experiences* are so much more important.

In the Bible, Jesus is continually reminding us to get rid of our excess baggage and put what is most important first. When Jesus was asked what the most important rules to live by were, he answered "Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence". This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: "Love others as well as you love yourself." (Matthew 22:34-40, *The Message*). In this season of Lent, my prayer for you and for myself is that we may find ways to get rid of our excess baggage so that we might focus on what is really important.

Blessings,  
*Rev. Mindy Bell*  
*Methodist Minister*

### **BIG BREW at UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> March from 10am to 12.30.** Organised through Traidcraft as part of Fairtrade Fortnight, there will be Traidcraft goods and craft items for sale, with proceeds going to Traidcraft. For every pound collected, the government will match the amount, thus doubling the contribution Traidcraft will receive. We do hope you will drop in.



BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS 1815–2015

## Good Friday

## 3rd April 2015

The Methodist Church will be open from 9.00am to 1.00pm with prayer stations for private prayer.



Then, following the town procession and open air Service of Witness, we will be serving tea & coffee and hot cross buns in the Schoolroom free of charge.

# All are welcome

NEWPORT PAGNELL METHODIST CHURCH  
HIGH STREET MK16 8AQ

### **QUIZ EVENING at BROOKLANDS**

**Saturday 16th May from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.** Cost will be £2 per person but there will be an opportunity to donate to the Christian Aid "Food for Change" project. CTNP has made a commitment to raise £5000 over the next two years for this project to help poor families trying to eke out a living on the edge of the Sahara Desert. If we reach our target, the EU will match fund it by 5:1.

**Eclipse Counselling Service  
invites you to attend their  
FUNDRAISING  
DINNER & AUCTION  
(with magician)**

Eversholt Hall, Church End, Eversholt MK17 9DU  
**THURSDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**  
6.45pm for 7.15pm



Price: £39.50 per person  
Smart Attire

For ticket or further information please ring Eclipse on 01908 211288  
or email [info@eclipse-addiction.org.uk](mailto:info@eclipse-addiction.org.uk)  
Charity No 1111366

### **HELPERS NEEDED FOR 'EASTER CRACKED'**

For many years, members of the Baptist Church, together with people from other churches, have welcomed Year 6 children from all the schools in the town to Lovat Hall just before Easter. It's an opportunity to tell the children about the real meaning of Easter in an appealing and interactive way. (A similar event takes place at Christmas.) As well as hearing the Easter story, the children will be making palm crosses and they will learn about Communion and what it means to Christians.

This year Easter Cracked will take place on **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March** and **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**. There will be two sessions on both Mondays starting at 9.30am and 1pm. We would welcome anyone from any of the churches who would be interested in helping with this important venture – either helping with the children's activities or with refreshments.

For more information, please contact [info@npbc.org.uk](mailto:info@npbc.org.uk). Or if you would prefer just to watch from the sidelines to see what Easter Cracked is all about, you are welcome to just turn up on the day.



Come on all you Landlubbers, join our pirate infested holiday club. What could be more fun! We are using Scripture Union based material. Last year over 130 children attended our week and we plan for up to 150 this time round. We are going to give them a great time learning about faith as well as creating opportunity for great fellowship across the churches.

Whatever your skills there's a role for you. How can you play your part and how can we help you in this? Roles include: teaching-team leaders; apprentice helpers; drama; music; cooking; crèche. If you are new to children's work we will give you a supportive role and put you through a DBS check.

Can you make the next planning meeting at Lovat Hall on **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm**? You would be very welcome. You can also register your desire to help by email through to [jack.walker@talk21.com](mailto:jack.walker@talk21.com) or come by the office at Lovat Hall.

### **Holiday Club 2015**

10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> August, 10am-12.30 at Lovat Hall  
For primary school aged children who attend reception through to year six.  
Registration for children is after Easter via  
Cambourne Travel Agency

## LOKO'S DAILY BATTLE TO STOP HER CHILDREN STARVING

Loko walks alone for eight hours a day, in shoes so thin that thorns repeatedly pierce through to her feet, to gather and sell firewood so she can feed her children. Loko is frightened of being attacked by hyenas with no one to hear her screams. So she prays as she walks. Her faith pushes her on. It's a job she dreads, but she has no choice; she must continue, week after week. If she doesn't, her children will starve.

**"I pray to God as I walk asking him to change my life and lead us out of this."**

As it is, Loko can only afford to give them one small meal a day. Loko refuses to give up hope. She dreams of owning a cow one day; its milk would help her children to grow strong, and she could also sell some so she could save enough money to set up a small business buying and selling tea and coffee.

### HELP GIVE LOKO HOPE

With your help, we can provide cows to vulnerable women in Ethiopia - just £150 is enough to buy a female cow and a promising future for someone like Loko.

If you are willing to help people like Loko by joining the team of collectors in Newport Pagnell during Christian Aid week (**10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> May**), please contact Pat Parker on **01908 610837** or talk to the Christian Aid representative in your church.

There will also be a coffee morning and cake stall at the United Reformed Church on **Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> May from 10am to 12 noon** in aid of Christian Aid and a collection on the High Street on the same day. Your support for these would be greatly appreciated.

## GOOD FRIDAY PROCESSION AND SERVICE OF WITNESS



The traditional Good Friday procession will start outside the Parish Church at **12 noon on 3<sup>rd</sup> April** finishing at Market Hill with music and singing and some readings and reflections chosen by members of each of the churches, after which everyone is invited to the Methodist Church schoolroom for tea/coffee and hot cross buns (free of charge).

### EASTER SATURDAY BISCUIT CHALLENGE!

We are looking for volunteers from all the churches to bake some heart-shaped biscuits that we can put in small bags along with an Easter message for handing out to people on the High Street on the morning of **Easter Saturday (4<sup>th</sup> April)** when the town is likely to be busy with shoppers.



Shortbread, ginger biscuits... it doesn't matter. Just use your own favourite biscuit recipe and cut into heart shapes (no bigger than a digestive). It's the thought and the message inside that are important. We want to tell the people of the town that after the solemnity of the Good Friday events, Jesus rose from the dead and **LOVE WON!**

Just bring your baked biscuits to us between 10 and 10.30am on the Saturday morning and we will bag them up and insert the message cards. We will be located on the High Street near the Methodist Church. We also need volunteers to help with distribution so if you can spare just half an hour to an hour between 10.30am and 1pm, we would be glad of your help!

*Hazel Reynolds, Jill Walker, Klaus Reidel, Beth MacKay  
CTNP Mission Group*