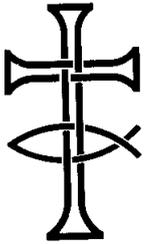
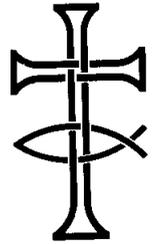


FEBRUARY & MARCH 2017



The Magazine
of the
United Reformed Church
South Somerset Group
of Churches
Martock
Middle Lambrook
Templecombe
and Yeovil



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Items for Church Matters to the Editor by the third Wednesday of the month please.		

The Manse
February/March 2017

Dear Friends,

As I'm writing this, I'm about to start my sabbatical. As some of you will know (because I may have been going on about it just a little!) it's on art, but thinking of it as a way of learning to see the world afresh, in the same way as people do who come to faith as adults. As someone who totally lacks the art gene (trust me ... totally!) I find that if art is communicating with me at all it's doing it in an alien language – something like Martian, where I have absolutely no inkling that anything is even being said – while other people have a natural sense of appreciation. It seems to me that in this secular age it may be analogous to the step we're asking people to make when we talk about faith ... and so I'll be trying to get a sense of what this feels like as I study a course on "learning to look at the visual arts" and another, learning to draw and paint. By the time you read this I should already have picked up pencils, charcoal and paintbrush – with intent, if not actually in anger!

The good news for anyone who feels I've been going on about this too much now is that this is the last you'll be hearing about it for 3 months ... but in the meantime, it's already starting to make me think more about how we see the world, and particularly about light – a theme which comes up regularly during Christmas and Epiphany – and how artists use it to emphasise what they find important in a picture. It's equally important to us as Christians, as a symbol of God's presence and a sign of hope.

One picture I've always found strangely moving is Vincent van Gogh's "The Starry Night". I read recently that he actually painted it while he was in an asylum being treated for mental illness – it was the view from the window of his room - and the stars are

surrounded by swirling patterns of light and dark, that give the picture an energy and drama that even I can sense (while his many pictures of sunflowers leave me unmoved).

Sometimes beauty can be born out of the darkest moments of our lives as we look towards the light and find hope. Epiphany talks about Jesus fulfilling God's promise to bring light to the nations, but it's light that comes through his suffering, death and resurrection to bring hope and life in its wake, particularly in times of darkness and struggle as we face challenges and uncertainty. Sometimes it comes to us through prayer and worship, but often it comes through other people, who help us to lift our hearts and minds towards God.

As the hymn by Marjorie Dobson (God the weaver, making patterns) puts it:

“When we see the pattern changing
and a new direction starts,
let us know your love unbroken
winds through life in all its parts
by the threads of love and friendship
closely woven in our hearts.”

So even as we go through this season of cold and dark nights, let's keep our eyes open for glimpses of God's light, and make sure we share them with others.

God bless,

Stella

MARTOCK UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

February Preaching

Porch

5 th	11.00am	Morning Worship	Mr Basil Wright	Mrs J Rees
12 th	11.00am	Morning Worship	Mr Trevor Goss	Mrs D Walker
19 th	11.00am	Morning Worship	Mr Phil Andrews	Mrs W Westwood
26 th	11.00am	Morning Communion	Mr Nigel Nichols	Mrs M Crossman

March Preaching

5 th	11.00am	Morning Worship	Mr Paul Cattermole	Mrs J Rees
12 th	11.00am	Morning Worship,	Rev Evelyn Rideout	Mrs D Walker
19 th	11.00am	Morning Communion	Rev John Hayton	Mrs W Westwood
26 th	11.00am	Morning Worship – Mothering Sunday	Mrs Rachel Findlay	Mrs M Crossman

February Diary

4 th	10.30am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning in the School Room.
10 th	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Time for Tea in the School Room

March Diary

10 th	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Time for Tea in the School Room
21 st	3.00pm	Church Meeting in the Yandle Hall

Advance Notice – Sunday 2nd April – 11.00am Morning Communion, Synod Moderator, Revd Ruth Whitehead.

NEWS

"Time for Tea celebrated its first anniversary in December with carols and a birthday cake. Donations received throughout the year totalled £175, which was sent to the nominated charity, The Alzheimers Society. The charity for this year is the British Heart Foundation. Everyone is welcome to join us on the second Friday in every month for fellowship with cake!!"

MIDDLE LAMBROOK UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

February Preaching

Elder

5 th	11.00	Morning Worship	To be decided	Mr F Pocock
12 th	11.00	Morning Worship	Mr Peter Trenchard	Mr W Powers
19 th	11.00	Morning worship	Mr Barry Bryer	Mrs J Harris
26 th	11.00	Morning worship	Join with our friends at Martock URC	

March Preaching**Elder**

5 th	11.00	Morning Worship	Dr Stephen Powers	Mr F Pocock
12 th	11.00	Morning Worship Communion	Mr Nigel Nichols	Mr W Powers Mr F Pocock
19 th	11.00	Morning Worship	Mrs Joanne Morling	Mrs J Harris
26 th	11.00	Morning Worship	Mr Peter Trenchard	Mr F Pocock

TEMPLECOMBE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**February Preaching**

5 th	11.00 am	Morning Worship	
12 th	11.00 am	Morning Worship	
19 th	11.00 am	Morning Worship	
26 th	11.00 am	Morning Worship	

March Preaching

5 th	11.00 am	Morning Worship	
12 th	11.00 am	Morning Worship	
19 th	11.00 am	Morning Worship	
26 th	11.00 am	Morning Worship	

Every Week All welcome.

Thursday 11.00 am Coffee Morning *not organised by URC
7.00 pm Crafts
8.00 pm Table Tennis

Saturday 18th February – Games Night 7pm. In the schoolroom, (venue may change subject to numbers). Please contact Helen on 01963 370818 or email templecombeurc@outlook.com by Thursday 16th if you are thinking to join us.

Saturday 1st April – Quiz Night. 7pm for 7.30pm. Teams of up to 6, £5.00 per head to include Ploughman's supper. Please contact Helen on 01963-370818 or email templecombeurc@outlook.com by Thursday 30th March to book your team, please advise expected number of members.

PRINCES STREET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

February Preaching - all services at 10.30 am

5 th	10.30 am	Morning Communion	Nigel Nichols
12 th	10.30 am	Parade Service Baptists	Matt Bradley
19 th	10.30 am	Worship with the Baptists	Rev Derek Hills
26 th	10.30 am	Worship with the Baptists	Rev Brian Woodcock*

March Preaching - all services at 10.30 am

5 th	10.30 am	Morning Communion	Rev Alan Thomasson
12 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship St Marks**	To be advised
19 th	10.30 am	Communion St Marks	To be advised
26 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship St Marks	To be advised

February Diary

1 st	No Healing Service		
3 rd	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning	Murray Parish Trust
5 th	After Worship	Church Meeting	For essential business
7 th	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	TOTS – Rosemary
10 th	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning	Murray Parish Trust
14 th	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	
17 th	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning with Good News Library	Murray Parish Trust
21 st	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	TOTS
	7.30 pm	Bible Study	Hillgrove Avenue
	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting	Legion Road
24 th	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning	Murray Parish Trust
28 th	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	Pancakes

March Diary

2 nd	7.00 pm	Healing Service	Westfield Road
3 rd	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning	Murray Parish Trust
5 th	After Worship	Church Meeting	For essential business
7 th	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	TOTS
10 th	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning	Murray Parish Trust
14 th	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	No Meeting
17 th	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning with Good News Library	Murray Parish Trust
21 st	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	The Holy Land David Gent
	7.30 pm	Bible Study	Hillgrove Avenue
24 th	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning	Murray Parish Trust
28 th	2.30 pm	Friendship Club	Members
	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting	Legion Road
31 st	9.45 – 11.45 am	Coffee Morning	Murray Parish Trust

*Rev Brian Woodcock is a retired URC minister who lives in Bristol. He is a former warden of the Iona Community.

**St Marks Methodist Church is at the junction of Milford Road and Chelston Avenue. Postcode BA21 4PU.

TODAY I'M 80

Today , dear Lord, I'm 80 and there's so much I haven't done

I hope dear Lord, you'll let me until I'm 81.

But then I haven't finished all I want to do.

So please would you let me stay until I'm 82.

So many places I want to go, so very much to see,

Do you think you could manage to make it 83.

The world is changing fast, so very much in store

I'd like it very much to live to 84.

I've taken up yoga this last year, I'm glad to be alive,

So do you think dear Lord, that you could make it 85.

More planes will be up in the air, so I'd really like to stick,

And see what happens in the world when I am 86.

I know, dear Lord, it's much to ask, and it's very nice in Heaven,

But really Lord I'd like to stay until I'm 87.

I know by then I won't be fast and sometimes I'll be late

But it would be pleasant to be around when I am 88.

I will have see so many things and had a wonderful time,

So perhaps, dear Lord, I'll be more willing to leave at 89.

(given to me by a lady who is on the 5th verse!)

CHRISTIAN AID LUNCHESES 2016

I am writing to thank you and your team for your magnificent efforts for Christian Aid Lunches during 2016. Glory Hallelujah! Thanks to all your hard work we have once again raised over £3,000. The normal Friday Lunches made £3,045 and the Lenten Lunches £378.50 making a grand total of £3,423.50. Please pass on the committee's thanks and congratulations to your teams who worked so hard to achieve this magnificent result. But it is not, of course, just about raising money. It is also a wonderful witness as we are increasingly attracting folk who have nothing to do with church. There have been so many comments along the lines of, "We didn't know about this, we are pleased to support this worthwhile activity."

Allan Grassham

I have agreed that Princes Street will provide the Christian Aid lunch at Vicarage Street on **Friday 5th May 2017**. If you are available to help, either by helping on the day or by providing a dessert, please speak to Jan Stallard.

CAP UPDATE

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, writes...

As a society, we have a duty to support those among us who are vulnerable and in need, which we see demonstrated most clearly in the life and works of Jesus Christ. CAP embodies this value. Having seen them at work and how effective they are, I wanted to become a patron and show them my support. They are highly professional and deeply committed to the work they do to help people of infinite value find the way forward. They reach out to the poor and marginalised, work to build community and their work is infused with a deep generosity of spirit.

Items for Praise

- We are so thankful to Yeovil Community Church for allowing the Yeovil Debt Centre to have one of their **GateWay Coffee Shop Charity Days on Monday 6 March 17**. This is where donations are made for all food and drink purchased during the opening hours of 9am to 4.30pm. So may I ask you please to **put this event in your diary** and please come and meet/chat to both Mary & I **AND** of course to have either morning coffee, lunch or afternoon tea! We'd love to see you there. Thank you.
- Two of our clients went along to the start of a Discovering Christianity course at St Johns last Monday and have said they will be there tonight.
- Our Community Links Co-ordinator (CLC), William, is now back from helping his mum sell her house and since back has also set up our next CAP Money course on 20/27 Feb & 6 Mar 17 at the GateWay in Yeovil from 7pm, with the help of Helen. We have much to thank William for as he gives his voluntary time to the CLC role.
- We continue to thank the Lord for the many supporters who regularly pray for us and give so generously as needed. May the Lord bless you.

Items for Prayer

- Our magnificent team of befrienders are meeting tonight for more training. It looks like there may be 5 more coming along who may well be added to the team, which is brilliant news. Without this team, both Mary and I cannot act properly as debt coaches. Clearly the Lord is adding to our team and if you would like to find out more on how you can become a befriender, please contact us.
- We have clients in our diaries now into April, which means Mary & I need to look at creative ways of connecting with those who need to wait for

their 1st visit weeks away. Please pray they will pop into the Gone Fishing Cafe in St Johns on a Thursday morning and therefore stay connected to CAP.

- We have a Management Committee that meet 4 times a year and who basically encourage Mary & I to keep on track with the Yeovil Debt Centre. We need to add to the Committee, so if you are interested, please get in touch. Thank you.
- I will be going on holiday to the Caribbean this weekend until 12 Feb 17. Please pray Anne and I will have a good break and rest, in the sun!

Finally, please pray that God will enable clients to fully engage with the CAP service to journey out of debt, and that we will make the most of every opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ with them, through our words and actions.

Steve & Mary

OUT ALONG LEA

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people’.

And immediately they left their nets and followed him.”

-Mark 1 v17-18

One Saturday in early February, Sophie went down the lane to Mr Jones' cottage with his bi-weekly cake which, this time, her mother had cooked. This saved Mr Jones' taste buds getting an unexpected work-out due to Sophie's well-known attempts at *experimenting* with the ingredients in her cakes. She knocked on the door to the cottage, but there was no reply. She knocked again, and then walked over the lawn to peer in the front window. “Mr Jones! Hello!” she called, tapping on the glass. But the room was in darkness. She then walked up to the end of the cottage and looked down the side. “Ahha!” said Sophie to herself, “His bike's not there. He must have gone somewhere then. Unusual, but then I suppose I am a bit earlier than normal today”. Not thinking anymore about it, she left the cake, in its tin, on the front door step and wandered very slowly back up the lane. Somewhat disappointed at not finding her old friend at home, she was hoping that she might meet him if he would be coming back along before she got to the entrance of the drive to her folks' place. But, sadly, no Mr Jones appeared.

However, the next day, when Sophie and her family got into chapel just before the service was about to start, there was the bearded old fellow

sat in his usual pew. Sophie was determined to solve the mystery, but she had to wait until after the end of the service...

"Imagine that you are a fisherman," spouted Rev Hodges, beginning her all-age talk, "as opposed to wishing that you were a fisherman as the *Waterboys* did in their song. Remember them? Most of you are old enough to, apart from a few" she continued looking down from the pulpit at Sophie and Angel in particular.

"Mike Scott!" hissed their father to them, not that that made any difference to the youngsters who shook their heads and raised their eyebrows. "*The whole of the moon?* No? Oh, never mind!"

"So then, how would you feel if someone came along and called you to leave your nets and boats, to follow them?" queried Rev Hodges, "Would you drop your tools and go? Would you say 'Hang on a minute, I need to sort a few things out and then I'll be right with you'? Or would you just tell them to go and ask someone else? Would any of us actually be bothered to ask the person what it was they wanted us to follow them *for*, before making a reply, so that the response could be a reasoned one? I reckon the majority would make a negative response, and not even want to know what it was all about anyway, due to being *too busy*, as the simple get-out clause always goes. But then, we can think of situations where we would certainly go. Suppose you lived near to a volcano and someone came to tell you it was about to blow. Or you lived on the coast, as you might well do if you're still imagining you're a fisherman, and there's a hurricane, or a tidal surge, coming - there was talk of one of those on the East coast the other day. I think you'd want to follow a call *then*, and get up and go. But of course, even then there are people who refuse to leave their homes, despite such destruction and danger being imminent.

And then what about the person who is doing the calling? You would be a lot more likely to go if the person calling was someone you already knew - a family member, or a friend or neighbour, rather than someone you didn't know. After all, from our earliest days we are told not to go running off with strangers! So then, what if the person *happened* to be Jesus? We'd like to say 'Oh, yes, of course, we'd get up, leave our nets and boats; follow him anywhere, of course we would!' But then, wait a minute: how would we know that it was Jesus? We don't really know what he looks like, do we? But, don't worry, don't worry. We *would* know him. If it *was* him, our heart and soul would be telling us. There would be no doubt. Just one look at him, and we wouldn't query his call. And so our reading in a bit is going to be from Mark's gospel where Jesus travels along the shores of

Lake Galilee, calling fishermen to be his first disciples. As we shall hear, Simon and Andrew, and James and John were ready and willing to begin their discipleship straight away. Things are different for us, aren't they? We've grown into the faith, fair enough; but we have also grown into lots of other commitments and characteristics that make us too busy, too fearful, to grasp the hem of Jesus' coat tails and follow him like those disciples did. Our faith is part of who and what we are, it is true, and yet we build it in with everything else we are. And yet I don't think we should worry. Well, OK, if it does worry you and you feel that you are called to follow Jesus more nearly, for example, by going to be a missionary in some far-flung part of the planet, then go for it! Do it! Make the difference, and God will be with you. But I don't think we should worry if our faith is calling us to do something here, where we are, in the nitty-gritty of the life we lead. But I would also say this: We may not have been called to do the same miraculous things that Simon, Andrew, James and John were called to do, but it is still important that we work our little miracles of love in our lives. We may not have left our nets, but we can still use them to catch people."

"So where were you yesterday morning?" asked Sophie of Mr Jones, after they had sung the last hymn and been blessed to go forth and serve the Lord: called, ready and willing to do his work in the world.

"Pardon?" asked the old sage, rubbing an ear.

"I *said*, where were you yesterday?" said Sophie, somewhat louder.

"I was in all day. In fact, I was going to ask you why you left your cake on the doorstep and didn't knock the door."

"I did"

"You did?"

"Yes. I thought you were out. Your bike wasn't there."

"No, that's true. It's at the bike shop having a thousand-mile service, or make that a two-hundred-mile service in my case!"

"Well then!" exclaimed Sophie.

"You should have knocked louder" replied Mr Jones.

"Pooh! I yelled a bit too, you know."

"Ah hum, right" succumbed Mr Jones humbly. "Prrhh, maybe it *is* time I thought about getting that hearing aid!"

By this time, Rev Hodges had approached them on her way back to the schoolroom, and she overheard their conversation. "It's a good thing you've already been called to follow Jesus then, Mr J." she put in wryly, "I'd hate to think that you wouldn't have *heard* your calling!" S.J.P.

Lord's Larder Christmas Thank You

A huge thank you to everyone who has donated Christmas items to Lord's Larder in 2016, and for all the amazing support we experienced through December, thank you so much. As you probably know through December, we put together Christmas Parcels for those in our local community who are on their own, individuals or families, who are experiencing the effects of poverty. This can often mean that Christmas Day will be just another day. These parcels make a difference showing that there are people out there who do care. This Christmas 2016, with your help, 307 Christmas Parcels were sent out to 425 adults and 372 children, along side responding to daily requests for emergency parcels, of which we had 246 parcel requests, helping another 520 people through December.

The Lord's Larder is still helping those who are in need of food parcels on a daily basis, and it was only with your support that The Lord's Larder was able to help 1297 local people in December.

If you find you are able to give a few items to the food bank, the Larder is currently running low on the following items,

Long-life milk,

Packets of Sugar,

Tins of Corned Beef with key or ring pull,

Tins of Spam with ring pull,

Packets of Powdered Soup,

these and any other items would be gratefully received. Many thanks for all your continued support.

Mat Callaghan

Yeovil Christian Support Trust

Operations Manager