

Rejoice!

April 2015



**The Magazine of the
West Norfolk Methodist Circuit**

Dear friends,

Being the Minister based in the Downham section, this last month has been dominated by the deaths of two faithful Christians - Reg Rose and Kathleen Sharman. Reg died suddenly and unexpectedly before leading worship. Three days later Kathleen Sharman (Sharmie) died peacefully aged 104. She was Downham's longest living resident.

As I write the celebration for Reg's life has happened and I shall not forget that day. About 530 people came for a warm and vibrant celebration. While 240 sat in church another 60 stood along the walls and others were standing or sitting in the social centre, hall, corridors and entrances. The celebration for Sharmie's life is expected to bring a full church and overflowing into the corridors and social centre too.

The numbers alone speak volumes about two people who touched the lives of others. Both served faithfully within church but also outside it; Reg through his working life, his life in Denver village and his musical gifts which took him near and far; Sharmie through her teaching in Nordelph and Downham.

This speaks to me of the need for Christian discipleship to express itself in engaging in the community beginning where we are. What we must not do is retreat into our Churches but meet people, offering them Christian friendship. As I said at the celebration for Reg, "An unfriendly Christian is a contradiction in terms". Yet some of the things I hear makes my blood boil - "Can you move, you are sitting in my pew", "I went to church and no one spoke"!!! Or only this week "I could not go to church as I was poorly and no one was ever in touch again."

This contrasts with the compassionate God we discover in scripture and Jesus, who valued everyone he met, to the astonishment of the Pharisees, who expected him to only mix with an elite and have nothing to do with sinners. Following Jesus means we are to be like him. His love is so great; he laid down his life for his friends.

Leslie Weatherhead once wrote a book entitled 'The Transforming Friendship'. It is such a beautiful title and says it all. It is through contact with Christians, who have experienced the transforming friendship that Jesus brings, that they too are touched by the arms of love and drawn to know God too.

This month takes us to the heart of our faith. Self would flee the cross and escape from it. But Jesus has died to self and travels the road that leads to the cross. His death is not the end. His love can now be offered to all. We are "Easter People" as David Sheppard once remarked. Let us get out from our churches and offer the transforming love of God to others and may our lives be channels that touch others. In this way we will be fruitful disciples.

Sincerely **Maurice**

Praying together in the Circuit

Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and saw the linen cloths, but he did not go in. Behind him came Simon Peter, he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth which had been around Jesus' head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed.

John 20:3-9

A baby wrapped in cloths, snug and secure, lying in a manger.
Our crucified Lord wrapped in grave cloths secured in a borrowed tomb.
Our risen Saviour, an empty tomb, just the grave cloths lying there.
He is risen, victorious over sin and death
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Just a few days earlier Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb. Lazarus came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave cloths with a cloth around his face.

Jesus asked His disciples to remove the grave cloths.

Jesus, the Resurrection and the life, calls us from death to life. Jesus, the life giver calls disciples to unwrap the grave cloths from those He calls out of darkness into His marvellous light to leave the old behind and walk in the newness of life.

So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to, the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires.

Your hearts and minds must be made completely new
and you must put on the new self,
which is created in God's likeness

and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.

Ephesians 4:22-24

The Spirit lives to set us free, walk, walk in the light.

Prayers have been requested for:-

Derek + Viv , Stephanie, Janice, Amy, Trisha, Linda, Ruth Harbach,
Andrew, Mavis, Julia, Rachel, Judy, Dulcie + Neill. Kelly, Kath,
Stephen + Victoria, William, Tom . Ken and Norma. Brian Osborne.
Marie, the family of Reg Rose,

Praying for the Circuit. Saturdays at Downham Market 11 am
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Safeguarding

Wendy Murray Circuit Safeguarding Officer and I travelled to Thetford Methodist Church to attend training for the "Creating Safer Space" leadership module. This was presented by Ann Howlett-Foster, learning and development officer for the East of England. We were there from 10am to 3.30pm and it proved very informative. If you go on to the Methodist safeguarding site , there is a good video about dos and don'ts on social media. We must be vigilant about internet grooming and all aspects of technology. Wendy and Linda will arrange a time, date and venue for the next safer space training for those on the waiting list.

.Linda Howling

Thanks

Mary and family would like to thank everyone who gave their time at Reg's Thanksgiving Service on Friday 6th March, from the preparation through to the tea and cakes.

Thank you doesn't seem enough - you all worked so hard. Not having to think about this made the day more bearable and gave us all the opportunity to really think about him.

Reg was a modest man and would never have thought he was worthy of such a tribute by so many.

Around the churches



Hilgay

Guild.

On Shrove Tuesday the wonderful 'Pancake Mixture' was attended by 24 adults and 21 children. About 200 pancakes, blinis and scotch pancakes were served with a variety of savoury and sweet fillings. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way on that occasion and I would like to record special thanks to Maisie (11) and Dominic (12) who worked their aprons off helping younger children to mix batter for their pancakes and also serving the older generations. They both worked tirelessly all afternoon and didn't get to eat any pancakes till after 4 o'clock when the afternoon's activities wound up.

This was a wonderful opportunity to share Faith and fellowship bringing Shell Club, Guild and village together.

By the time you read this we will have held the Shell Club Family Morning and Mothering Sunday which we trust were successful events,

On April 1st Hilgay will be holding Messy Church for parents and children. For more details contact Lesley Dent.

May 19th provisional date for a Coffee morning at the home of Lesley and Des Dent. More details next time.

Pauline Driver.

And from a participant;

Shrove Tuesday was celebrated at Hilgay Chapel with an open invitation to everyone. There were delicious pancakes with all sorts of accompaniments to choose from, as well as a welcome cup of tea or coffee and quizzes and games to do. The party began with Pauline and Elinor teaching everybody a pancake song, an explanation of Shrove Tuesday traditions and a prayer. Grateful thanks to all who helped prepare the pancakes and all those who came and made it a great success.

God bless everyone.

Gwen Dearsley

Terrington St Clement

Frauke Atkins led Network, (MWiB) with readings, prayers and hymns. Helen Maguire showed slides of Kenya and the Kivuria school. She and her family have supported the school and Helen has visited twice. There is an "Ecumenical prayer house" which helps people with problems of alcohol, drugs

and HIV. The children have lessons and dance and play football. CATS youth club had the usual games and activities. Ali Norman and Gemma organised a game of Charades, all the answers being popular songs with LOVE in them. This proved very popular, with the young people vying for the next go!

At New Beginnings with Rev. Jackie Goddard the theme was Lent. We discussed fasting, giving and praying. With coloured pens and large sheets of paper we drew our favourite locations and linked them on a journey. At Network Joella Nash spoke on the five senses and how there were examples in stories from the Bible. Two birthdays were celebrated; Daphne Brooks and Sheila Amos.

QUIZ NIGHT Friday 24th April at 7pm 4-6 in a team £2 each to enter.

Linda Howling

London Road

Every two years a special service is held at Ely Cathedral to celebrate the success of those who have had organ transplants and especially those who have donated organs.

This year the service will be held at Ely Cathedral on Sunday 10th May at 2pm. I am sure that the Cathedral will be packed as it has been the last two times I have been.

On the last occasion we had an inspirational talk from a mother who had donated organs her son's organs after he had died. She asked herself the question "Was it worth it?"

The rows of healthy individuals in front of her gave her the answer and the justification that she had made the correct decision.

Talk to any person who has had a transplant and like me they will tell you they are the luckiest people alive, this is getting more so with the waiting list for transplants getting larger.

In this country we still work on the system of "Opting in" for Organ Donation and like many people I still believe this is better than the alternative of "Opting Out".

We will be giving thanks for the skills of the surgeons, the caring of the nurses and the work of all the bio chemists, who developed immuno-suppressants, without which transplant surgery would not be successful.

David Gifford

Dersingham

A Good Friday meditation will take place at 10 a.m. led by Elizabeth Batstone and followed by the usual walk through the village along with members of the congregations from St. Nicholas' Church and St. Cecilia's Church. The walk ends at St. Nicholas' Church Hall for coffee and hot cross buns.

On Easter Day we expect to welcome about thirty Scouts and their leaders from Wisbech to our morning service, which will be led by the Rev. Steve Oliver and at which we will celebrate the service of Holy Communion.

Midweek Communion will take place on Wednesday 22nd April at 10.30 a.m. and the Coffee Morning on Saturday 25th April will be in support of Diabetes UK.

Three of us recently enjoyed a day out at Wesley Methodist Church, Cambridge, where a very talented organist (and husband of a Methodist Minister in the Cambridge Circuit) helped us explore the new hymn book Singing the Faith. We haven't got Singing the Faith at Dersingham, but it was good to be introduced to some new hymns, and old hymns set to more modern tunes, and helped us to find our way around this new valuable resource.

We are looking forward to our Flower Festival and 125th Anniversary from the 21st to the 24th May. The title this year is 'Come on and Celebrate' and we hope friends from around the Circuit will join us in our celebration. The Chairman of the District, the Rev. Julian Pursehouse, will be taking the morning service and the evening service will be a Songs of Praise conducted by our own minister the Rev. Steve Oliver.

Rosemary Caink

Downham Market

Ladies' Friendship Group

Our two February meetings were well attended and very enjoyable. Our friend Andy from The Deep Sea Fishermen's Mission is always very informative about the fishermen around the country. We had a collection for the Mission and made £60.00 for which he was very grateful. Mr Hobden showed us slides about the railway in this area long ago, several of us remembered the railway going around the fens and the coast.

We have had our lunch at The Castle. 23 members and friends attended and we had a good time.

Our April meeting are on 8th April with a Quiz by Ruby and Margaret 22nd April will be a Bring and Buy Sale (Yellow theme) for our own funds. Everyone welcome.

Margaret Fox

Now we are really into Spring with lovely sunny days but such cold nights. There are signs of new growth everywhere with green buds appearing, daffodils blooming and the snowdrops nearly finished. All this new life makes our Church family's life last month even sadder with the loss of Reg Rose and Sharmie. Reg, taken so suddenly, will be missed by so many both for his

music and preaching and also for all the behind the scenes work he did for the Circuit. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mary and the family as they come to terms with his loss, which will be helped by all the love surrounding them. Apart from reaching an age that not of us will attain, Sharmie was a fine example of a good Christian lady, whose faith never seemed to falter. Life goes on and we must all carry on doing our best and being grateful to have known such stalwarts of our faith.

Maurice took a Stations of the Cross service one evening which was very much appreciated and we had a wonderful Mothering Sunday service led by Hazel with Brownies, Guides and Boys' Brigade members all taking part alongside junior Church boosted by families who attend Messy Church. The most recent Messy Church session had 36 children taking part, with 80 parents and helpers on the theme of Noah's Ark and the new start after God's covenant and rainbow sign. They made edible boats and doves and animals and shared a final feast ending with the ever popular jam tarts.

The Boys' Brigade continues its many activities and games and had a sleepover at half term, which left one leader very bleary eyed on the Sunday morning.

We are, as a Church, really blessed by all the leaders of young people we have working in the different organisations and hopefully the recent skills survey will produce more volunteers for all sections of our Church work.

Churches Together in Downham held a meeting at Church recently when it was reported that the food bank continues to be very busy, donations and helpers are still needed and you can reach Alex on 01366 384474 if you are able to help in any way. The Cat's Protection League provides the food bank with cat food but dog food would be welcomed as some people will feed their pet before themselves. There will be a Christian Aid service on 10th May at 6.30 at St. Peter's Stowbridge and it is hoped that Churches in the area will have fund raising events before then to replace the donations usually given in door to door collections. A Christian Aid quiz is being planned for 24th April at St. Edmunds Church. The Walk of Witness on Good Friday starts at St. Edmunds at 9.00 and finishes at our Church for coffee and hot cross buns before our morning service.

I am sorry to have to report that our Sisterhood Group, for which I have been secretary since Kath Wing handed over in 2005, has finally folded. So many of our regular members are now too frail to attend and it was getting very difficult to arrange speakers for such a small number. We used to have an annual rally and the year we joined with the Lynn Circuit the Lynn Churches were also invited and we had over a hundred for the service and buffet which followed, lots of friendships made and fellowship enjoyed. We will just have to remember all the good times we had and perhaps direct our energies elsewhere.

Our Saturday coffee mornings are getting even more popular with 150 and 170 coming in the last two weeks. We are indebted to our merry band of helpers who do the catering, especially those yummy cakes, man the stalls after unpacking and displaying all the bric a brac and then packing away afterwards . We do not need any books but bric a brac is always acceptable as are offers of help with the cake making. We are well on the way to paying off the loan for the final stage of the double glazing. I am hoping to sort out my outdoor plants and get the gazebo up outside the Church soon, catching passers by for sales and also directing them into the coffee morning. I find God's presence in our surroundings, in the peace of Shouldham Warren and in my garden, and in the dead plants which are now springing to new life with the promise of such beauty for Spring and Summer. How can people think this all happens accidentally? With my house on the market and no idea where I shall be living soon, I trust in Him to look after me and help me settle where I can continue to work with the fellowship at Downham, whose love and care, as well as that of my lovely family, has got me through the last few months since Peter died. God bless you all

Joan Macey

Pott Row

We are having our popular Quiz again on Friday 22nd May 2015 to raise funds for our Chapel.

Teams of up to six people, £2 per person (inc Tea/coffee.) Kick off at 7.30pm
Hope you can be there.

To book your team ring 01553 630369. Also for your diary! Our Strawberry Tea this year is Saturday July 11th, More info later.

Women's World Day of Prayer

The service at Pott Row was held in the morning - the weather was bright with a cold wind, but the Chapel was warm and welcoming.

Joy Smith led the service, designed by Christian women from the Bahamas, on the theme taken from John's Gospel when Jesus said to the disciples, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

Several readers took part in the service based on Jesus washing the disciples' feet - His example of radical love. A symbolic bowl and towel were taken to the front and we then had time to consider how we ourselves might express this kind of love.

We had prayers of intercession for women and others who suffer violence or neglect, followed by a prayer of dedication and singing the hymn 'Let love be real.'

Together we said - "Let us go out from this place to do as You have done - to serve with radical love."

After the service we enjoyed a light lunch and fellowship together.

Shirley Hone

St Faith's

As we prepare for the great celebration of Easter the choir will be performing "The Cross of Christ" on Palm Sunday, 29th March, at 6.30pm (please note the time).

There will be a Quiet Evening offering the opportunity to come into St Faith's Church and rest awhile in the middle of Holy Week. This chance to pause and reflect will be held on March 31st between 7.30pm and 9pm.

During Holy Week, there will be 10am Communion services in St Faith's Church on March 30th, 31st and April 1st. On Maundy Thursday there will be Holy Communion services at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

Also on Maundy Thursday the Lord Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James, is inviting members of St Faith's Church to share with him. clergy and laity from across the Norwich Diocese, in the Maundy Thursday Chrism Eucharist in the Cathedral starting at 11am (please note the time).

During this special service, large numbers of robed clergy (making an impressive sight) process through the Cathedral and take part in a renewal of their Ordination vows, bless the oils for use in initiation and healing and recommit as clergy and lay people to their ministry for the coming year. Bishop Graham is to preach the sermon.

A sandwich lunch will be available after the service. It I hoped to arrange lifts from Gaywood to Norwich through car sharing. Anyone wishing to attend this service, or wish to know more about it, can speak to churchwardens Gill Hiles or me for more details. You can also contact the Church Office on 01553 774916 weekday mornings between 9am and 12 noon) for more details.

On Good Friday (3rd April) people taking part in the King's Lynn Churches Together Walk of Witness will leave St Faith's at 10am. Following a large wooden Cross, the group will make its way into Lynn town centre. The group will then process (in silence) from outside Lynn Minster (St Margaret's Church) and, led by the Cross, around the town centre. Hymns and Bible passages about the Crucifixion of Jesus will be used at intervals.

Also at 2pm in St Faith's Church, people will have an opportunity to be quiet, reflect and pray during the Last Hour at the Cross.

The latest in the popular Saturday morning coffee mornings takes place in the Church Rooms on 4th April, starting at 10.30am. These sessions provide an opportunity for people to meet together for a coffee (or tea) and a slice of delicious home-made cake or scone and to enjoy a chat. There is also a raffle.

Donations of cakes or raffle prizes are always welcome and much appreciated. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee morning and admission is free.

Confirmation classes for St Faith's candidates have been running in recent weeks and the Confirmation Service will take place within the Easter Vigil in Norwich Cathedral on Easter Saturday evening starting at 8pm. Candidates from St Faith's will become members of both the Anglican and Methodist Churches. More details about the Confirmation service or transport arrangements for those wishing to attend please contact Joan Greening or me via the Church Office.

St Faith's major celebration of Christ being raised from the dead on Easter Sunday will be starting with a dawn service and Holy Communion at 6am followed by a light breakfast. There will be a service of Holy Communion at 8am. The main Easter Sunday service will be at 9.45am and there will be an Open Door service in the Church Rooms at 11.30am. There will be an Easter Praise service in the evening at 6.30pm.

Also on Easter Sunday those St Faith's Church members who have been taking part in the year-round anonymous Prayer Partners Scheme can, if they so wish, reveal their identities to the person they have been holding in their prayers and thoughts during the past 12 months. A new Prayer Partner Scheme for 2015/16 is launched for those who wish to take part..

During April there will be two meetings of Exploring Spirituality on 13th and 27th of April starting at 7.30pm. These sessions in the Chapel at Highgate, have become increasingly popular and new members are always welcome. At each session members have an opportunity to lead the evening. Tea and coffee is available. More information is available by contacting Connie Cleps via the Church Office.

On 22nd April a concert by The West Norfolk Singers is to be performed in St Faith's Church starting at 7pm. For more details and ticket arrangements please contact the Church .

Advance notice: The annual meeting of St Faith's Church Council take place in Gaywood Church Rooms on 28th April at 7.30pm. At this AGM, churchwardens and stewards are elected and people are proposed and elected for vacancies on the Council. People are invited to consider standing for posts on the Church Council. More information is available by contacting Gill Hiles, Joan Greening or me via the Church Office.

Richard Parr.

Stow Bridge

How good to see the Spring flowers again in their allotted time and taties in a chitting tray nearly ready to go in.

Looking forward is mostly a pleasing thought to have, although we recognise there are many who look forward with concern for how events will turn out. Maybe an operation; the passing of a loved one; will the arranged party or fete go well; what will the weather be for this event or that. We wonder what the outcome will be from events that happen abroad.

To get back to the nicer thoughts of the future; a wedding, a birth, a party, family gathering or a hundred and one other things.

Only a short while ago the Celebration Service took place for the life of Reg Rose. It truly was a celebration of song and words. It was very good to see so many people loved Reg. Years ago when we had Circuit events like the big Garden fete we used to meet people on a regular basis, but now it was good to see so many people from round the area that Reg served. Yes, I know we still have Circuit events but they seem to have a different buzz to them! I'm going red in the face and holding my hand up!

Of course, sadness and tears were there but from that came a great afternoon of friendship and reunion because Reg served his God, the church and community. We wish you goodness in the days ahead Mary and family.

Mr and Mrs Sperring were well known in the Circuit before they moved to Luton. Sadly John Sperring died on January 26th aged 98.

A happy and thoughtful Easter to all.

Peter Hewitt

Pastoral Carers Day 7th March 2015

"JOY-RIDING OR PASTORAL PEDALLING" was the theme for the day when 31 Pastoral Carers from across the Circuit met at Hunstanton Methodist Church for a day of resourcing, refreshment and fellowship.

The day was ably and sensitively led by Julia Warnes who had done an immense amount of preparation for us - her bicycle, complete with basket, being the central visual aid. Throughout the day, which was based on the acrostic:

PREPARE - Praise & Prayer
EQUIP - Explore examples
DO the deed
ASSESS the Actions
LEARN the Lessons

we looked at Pastoral scenarios and shared how we would deal with them, recognising that some leave us feeling inadequate while others bring us joy in unexpected ways.

Julia concluded her sessions by leading us to biblical situations and stories of everyday people showing pastoral care at its best.

Thank you Julia for all your hard work; expert leading of the day and the care you showed each one of us.

The day concluded with an invitation to gather round the Lord's Table as Revd Stephen Oliver led us in a most moving Communion service.

Not only did Stephen minister to us, but invited us to bring those we loved and cared for to the table with us - a meaningful act of pastoral care. Thank you Stephen.

Throughout the day our need in the way of food and drink was supplied by the Hunstanton folk with their usual generous hospitality, so a big thank you to them too.

All in all, an excellent day of friendship, fellowship and some fun! We look forward to the next one on 10th October at London Road.

Sheila Forth

1st Downham Market Guides - Easter Term 2015

We started off the New Year with a number of new Guides. This takes our unit up to 24 girls and 2 young leaders plus over 25 girls on the waiting list. This term the girls earned their Traditions Badge - this involved learning the national anthem, laying a table for three courses, knowing what a colour party is, plus learning about Thinking Day.

Girls then made a 'pot bag' - which is a bag that the girls will keep their plate, cup, bowl and cutlery in when we go on camps. This involved learning to sew! They also learnt how to sew badges onto their camp blankets. Some got carried away and managed to sew the blanket to their trousers!! Too much chatting I think!

Patrols had the opportunity to plan their own evenings. We have one patrol doing the 'Chocolate Badge', another doing the 'Confectioner Badge', one completing their 'Cook's Badge' and the final patrol organising a party as part of their 'Party Planner Badge'. As you see they all involve food!!

We have been out for a penny walk (heads right, tails left) which ended up at a chip shop for a portion of hot chips. Lovely as the night was very cold.

We have been learning about WAGGGS (World association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) for World Thinking Day. This year's World Thinking Day theme was Millennium Development Goal 8 (MDG 8): "Develop a global partnership for development" is the last year of the Millennium Development Goals. We learnt about how to improve our environment.

The unit will also be completing a new resource 'Hear our Voices' all about the forthcoming general election. How Parliament works, why it is so important to vote, how women got to vote, how we can all make a difference and how to get women's voices heard in the male dominated world of politics.

Girls have also attended a district disco, a district roller skating event and a Mothering Sunday Church service.

The summer term is even busier: Here are some of the highlights.

- * Having our own Houses of Parliament question time, with voting.
- * Weekend in London staying at the Guiding World Centre, Pax Lodge, and visiting the Museum of London.
- * Learning about International Guiding and the other World Centres in Switzerland, India and Mexico.
- * District Campfire
- * Treasure hunt and picnic tea at Oxburgh Hall
- * The Lights, Camera, Action challenge badge
- * Bowling
- * Summer holiday in Derbyshire.

When it is all written down it looks amazing! Not bad for £2.00 per week.

Victoria.

Songs of Praise Service

In memory of

Les English

April 26th at 3pm

At Highgate

All are welcome

LORD JESUS, THINK ON ME

When we had this hymn in church on a recent Sunday morning I noticed that it was by Synesius of Cyrene. That immediately brought back to me a memory of the `been there, done that` kind. During the war I was stationed for a whole year in Benghazi and got to know Libya quite well. With its lovely Mediterranean coastline and sunny climate it is such a shame that the present troubled scene stops this country from being on the tourist trail.

One of its treasures is the ruined Greek colony of Cyrene which I was privileged to visit. It boasts a mythological foundation. Apollo fell in love with Cyrene, changed her into a nymph and carried her off from Mt Pelion to this lush fertile strip on the North Libyan coast. Rather more prosaically it was founded by Greek migrants in the 7th century BC, advised to come there by the oracle at Delphi to escape famine in their Aegean island home. This well watered, fertile site, with its perfect climate must have seemed like a promised land to them. It became one of the great capitals of the Greek world. Even in ruins Cyrene is still an example of Greek architecture at its best. It became the seat of the Cyrenaics, a famous school of philosophy founded in 3rd century BC by Aristippus, disciple of Socrates and was nicknamed the Athens of Africa. Later it came under Egyptian and then Roman rule. Colonies of Jews settled there; Simon of Cyrene helped to carry the Cross to Calvary; the inhabitants of parts of Libya about Cyrene were among the crowds who heard the apostles preach at Pentecost; Jews of Cyrene took part in the dispute with and the stoning of Stephen; a Cyrenaican, Lucius, was in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas started their mission there and he was traditionally the first Bishop of Cyrene. The city was a famous medical centre (the pure air and good climate no doubt helped to effect cures). Earthquakes, a Jewish revolt against the Romans and zealous Christians purifying pagan temples damaged many of the noble buildings, but there is still much to see – baths with their under-floor heating system, mosaics, the sacred fountain of Apollo and the Roman Forum. The amphitheatre is particularly beautiful.

`Lord Jesus, think on me` is derived from a group of Odes written in the early 5th century by Synesius. Born of wealthy parents, he claimed descent from the royal Spartans who originally founded Cyrene. When a student in Alexandria, he was introduced to neoplatonism. This philosophy taught

that there is one supreme God and that God cares for all creation. On a later visit to Alexandria he married a Christian wife and he became a Christian himself. Eventually he became Bishop of Ptolomais even though he held some rather unorthodox views, which he promised not to press in his public teaching.

This hymn is a little gem. It has been immortalised by being included in Benjamin Britten`s delightful children`s opera Noye`s Fludde, the story of Noah`s Ark. Obviously this is because one of its verses goes:

Lord Jesus, think of me,
That, when the flood is past,
I may the eternal brightness see,
And share thy joy at last.

The hymn may be found in Hymns and Psalms No 533. One wonders if any of the modern hymns that have replaced it in Singing the Faith will still be sung in sixteen centuries time

John Garfoot

NEW DATE
Downham Market
Wednesday April 15th at 2.30 pm
MISSION SUPPORT SERVICE
Speaker; Deacon Janet Stafford
Bring and Buy stall and Refreshments
Collection for World Church and Home
Missions

CATHERINE DIXON'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ORDINATION

We are delighted to be able to share that the District Probationers Committee agreed at its meeting on Monday 9th March that Catherine Dixon should be recommended for Reception into Full Connexion and Ordination at Conference this year. The recommendation will go to the April District Synod and to the Connexional Presbyteral Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee. Subject to final agreement by this Committee Catherine will be Received into Full Connexion at the Conference in Southport on Sunday 28th June and ordained at Chester Cathedral later the same day.

The District Probationer's Testimony Service is planned for Saturday 23rd May at 3pm at London Road. Please put the date in your diary. It would be good if we could support Catherine at this important service prior to her ordination.

It may be difficult for people to make the journey to Southport and Chester but this may be a possibility for some. Tickets (free) are required for admission. They can be booked online from Monday 30th March through the Methodist Conference website at www.methodistconference.org.uk.

We wish Catherine well for the exciting weeks ahead.

Andrew Maguire

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

STEP OUT FOR CHILDREN 2015

Saturday, June 20th 2015

10 a.m. start

Starting and finishing at

Upwell Methodist Church

This year's sponsored walk will take the form of a 3½ mile ramble around Upwell and Outwell starting from Upwell Methodist Church. It's a pleasant walk taken at the pace of the slowest and gives you a chance to make new friends, renew acquaintances and get fit. It's a walk along quiet roads, footpaths and orchards. More details nearer the time. For more information please, contact me on: 01366 385772. Thanks in anticipation.

John Miles

An Inspired bit of Nonsense!!!

I do read "Rejoice" regularly – I avoided saying religiously(!) and this offering is inspired by Peter Hewitt's piece in last month's. Peter ended on a light note so I will start in a similar vein – well his last bit was about doctors!

That made me think of dentists.

Peter ended "Our doctors are great people" and I agree-

I also think we should be kind to our dentists- remember they have fillings, too!

This got me thinking about the part humour has played in my life and I recalled the time some 40 years ago, when I was studying in Norwich and used to walk into the city, via the Roman Catholic Cathedral.

At that time, there was a Citroen garage opposite the Cathedral, so, if I recall correctly, the members of the congregation put up a sign in their grounds asking: "When did you last come in for a service?"

For those of you with long memories you might remember Edwin Gooch, staunch Methodist and farm workers representative. I was in digs with a lovely lady called Mollie Gooch, a devout Catholic, who had been married to Peter Gooch, who had sadly died not many years after they married.

Mrs Gooch brought us our breakfast one morning before announcing that she was off to help clean the Cathedral before the visit of Cardinal Hume. Bearing in mind she was no more than five feet tall I asked her, "Are you cleaning the inside or the outside?"

"Why the inside, of course, Martin!" she replied.

Some- perhaps all- of the following may be apocryphal – they are none the worse for that.

A man was passing the village church when he saw a notice outside saying "St Andrew Ch—ch. What's missing? UR" (You are!) There was another notice on the grass stating "Please keep off the grass. Trespassers will be...forgiven!" And "Beware, soft vergers!"

I was travelling through the East End of London with a school friend of mine, who had recently taken over as vicar in the area. As I was driving along he said, "Look over there. It's the Big Dipper". In vain I tried to locate the fairground attraction without diverting all my attention from driving along a

busy main road. On confessing I couldn't see the Big Dipper, Michael informed me he meant the Baptist Minister!

Then, of course, there were the two members of the congregation, one a little hard of hearing, were discussing the most recent sermon. "What did he talk about?" she asked. "Sin," her friend replied. "But what did he say?" retorted the first. "He said he was against it!" responded the second.

Was there really another member of the congregation who went up to the minister and said, "Thank you so much for your sermon, Minister, we didn't really know what sin was till you arrived here!"

I suppose there are plenty more many of you could share. It has been one of my ambitions to become a wit and the good news is my family (and many of those I teach) I reckon I'm already 50% of the way there!

Martin Chilvers



Any items for the **MAY** edition should be with the editor by **APRIL 12th**, earlier if possible. **If you don't get an acknowledgment of emails PLEASE enquire if I have received them as some articles have found their way into my spam bin which I don't check very often!**

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West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary April 2015 onwards

Saturday 11th April Fellowship Breakfast at Downham at 8.30 am

Wednesday 15th April Mission Support Service at Downham Market 2.30pm

Saturday 25th April Synod at Lowestoft

Saturday 9th May Fellowship Breakfast at Marham at 8.30 am

Wednesday 20th May Easter Offering Dedication Service at London Road at 2.30 pm

21st May – 24th May Flower Festival to celebrate 125th Anniversary at Dersingham

Saturday 23rd May at 3pm - Probationer's Testimony Service for Catherine Dixon at London Road

Saturday 20th June Step out for Action for Children

Saturday 11th July Strawberry Tea at Pott Row

Saturday 18th July at 3pm – Circuit “Celebration of Ministry” service – preacher Revd Julian Pursehouse, Chair of the District. More details to follow. Please put the date in your diary!