

Rejoice!

March 2015



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

Dear Friends,

During this week as I have been thinking about my letter for this edition of Rejoice there has been much in the news concerning a subject about which few of us know a great deal – how to prevent mitochondrial disease. Had you heard much about this before? I certainly had not. I am happy to have factual corrections of anything in this piece from those who know far more than I do. For those who do have personal experience it must be an important and emotional issue because the effects of the disease can be serious, leading to muscle weakness. In severe cases the heart beat is affected and it can lead to death. Around one in every 6,500 babies is born with this genetically transmitted disease.

The headlines have been about “three parent babies”. Scientists now believe that they can prevent the disease at the outset by intervening at the stage either of the mother’s egg or of the embryo created by the parents wanting the baby. Unhealthy mitochondria would be removed and the healthy mitochondria from a female donor would be introduced. Mitochondria are the little power packs that provide our cells with energy and they have their own DNA. As a proportion of a person’s genetic material they are tiny and apparently they do not affect a person’s significant personal characteristics. It is mind-boggling that we can potentially do this. A baby would be born without mitochondrial disease and that baby would not be at risk of passing on the disease to their own future children. On 3rd February, in a free vote, MPs voted in favour of introducing laws to allow the creation of babies from three people (a man and two women).

Of course concerns had been expressed by a number of people, including representatives of churches. Are we “playing God”? Can we be certain what the future consequences will be and what we are unleashing? Are we on a “slippery slope”? The approach which would intervene at the embryo stage would require two embryos, and one would be discarded. Is it ethical to do this – for one of the embryos to be created only to be deliberately discarded? For this reason some feel that, if this goes ahead, only the process using a human egg rather than a human embryo should be used.

Like others I wrestle with these questions and am both awe-struck and disturbed. But I don’t think I am among those who would take an absolutist position and say that we should not proceed under any circumstances. Some years ago I was a chaplain at a children’s hospital and witnessed first-hand week by week the pain caused to some children and their families by some genetically transmitted diseases. It could be deeply distressing. Is it right to outlaw something that could save people from this? If Jesus was the compassionate healer then what does this say to us?

I am uncomfortable about a process that might create an embryo deliberately to discard it. I am also strongly of the view that these skills should only ever be

used to combat distressing disease and never with the view of creating “designer babies”. But I am well aware that others might feel very differently. What I think is really important is that, as Christians, we try to engage with such questions and have open discussion and debate about really important ethical issues. The greater our scientific skills the more essential it is that decisions about right and appropriate use are reached not just by scientists but by debate among all who seek the common good of our society and with insights being contributed by people of faith.

Andrew Maguire

REG ROSE

Members and friends around the Circuit will have been very sad to hear of the sudden death of Reg Rose, just as he was about to lead worship at Feltwell on the morning of Sunday 15th February. It has been a deep shock to everybody.

Reg was held in high esteem and affection by people in the Circuit and in the wider community. He had served over many years in church and community with a rich generosity of spirit and always with commitment, warmth and good humour. He will be greatly missed.

We surround Mary and the family with our love and hold them in our prayers at this time.

There will be a service of thanksgiving for Reg's life at Downham Market Methodist Church at 3.45 pm on Friday 6th March. This will be following a private service of committal for the family in the morning. There will be opportunity to say much more about Reg at the service.

Andrew Maguire

There is a slot on Radio 4 at 05.45 called “Prayer for the Day”. The speaker the other morning spoke about the state of the world and all the terrible happenings and how we can get bogged down from thinking what on earth can we do.

He commented that Jesus said we were the light and salt of the world so just go on spreading – light and salt – it seems so simple and straight forward put like that.

Pat Benifer

Praying together in the Circuit

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Timothy 2:1-6 (J.B. Phillips)

Here then is my charge: First, supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings should be made on behalf of all men: for kings and rulers in positions of responsibility, so that our common life may be lived in peace and quiet, with a proper sense of God and of our responsibility to him for what we do with our lives. In the sight of God our saviour this is undoubtedly the right thing to pray for; for his purpose is that all men should be saved and come to realise the truth. And that is, that there is only one God, and only one intermediary between God and men, Jesus Christ the man. He gave himself as a ransom for us all—an act of redemption which happened once, but which stands for all time as a witness to what he is.

Lord, we hold before you all who have leadership roles
in our nation, in every area of government and politics.

Help us not to fail in our responsibility to pray for them.

May we all approach the election with a fervent desire for
righteousness, justice and peace

Lord, we seek your wisdom and discernment.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be You Name,

Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Let justice flow like rivers and righteousness

like a never failing stream

Amos 5: 24

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, Mary Rose and family.

Praying for the Circuit. Thursdays at Downham Market 11 am

Around the churches



St Germans

When you saw the heading, did you think that it was a long time since you saw a contribution from St. Germans in Rejoice? If you thought that, you would have been quite right! However, I would like to take this opportunity to put that right.

Well, we are still here, a little fewer in number than we were, but still continuing with the things that we believe that we have been called to do. We may not meet in the chapel every Sunday, as we share some services with our friends at the Anglican Church. Indeed, we share many of our activities with them, particularly when it comes to children and youth and our monthly Monday evening 'Prayer & Praise' services. The well attended monthly luncheon club continues to take place on the second Wednesday of each month, although numbers have fallen a little over the last few years.

A few years ago we started to hold Men's Breakfasts, to enable men from various churches and chapels and, indeed, some who are not regular worshippers, to meet together. It has been a little while since the last one, but we shall meet again at 8.30am on Saturday 21st March, when we will enjoy a full English Breakfast followed by a short talk by Steve Oliver. All men from 9 to 90 and beyond are welcome, but for catering purposes please book your place on 01553 617026 by 15th March, if possible.

John Houghton.

Hilgay

Shell Group

On 14th March Hilgay Shell Group will hold a Family morning when the children will do crafts from 10-11am. Then at 11am Parents are invited for coffee, tea etc.

Mothering Sunday

Sunday 15th March will be Mothering Sunday when we shall be celebrating Mothers and others who have nurtured us. We hope the children will attend

with the crafts they have made on the Saturday. Before taking your Mum out for a special lunch bring her to our church service which begins at 10:00am. Every Mum will receive a gift.

The worship leaders will be Deacon Janet Stafford and Mrs Pauline Driver. Please come along and join us, we all have things to thank God for. If possible bring a photograph of your Mother when she was younger. There will be a game to try to match Mums to children.

If you enjoyed our Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday come and join us again. Watch this space for more events throughout the year.

Lesley Dent

Terrington St Clement

Our Easter coffee morning will be on March 28th from 10 am to 12 noon. There will be the usual stalls and a raffle. hot cross buns, tea and coffee. At Network (MWiB) Ann Cross read poems from her daughter Rosemary's book. The poems are about special times in the family, birthdays with an 0 for example. At our second meeting the guest speaker was Gill Last. Gill brought us up to date with Norfolk Knitters news. Then she recounted how she went at 16 to London from Bury St Edmunds to train as a nursery nurse. The tales were both humorous and poignant. Both ladies were thanked and received bunches of tulips.

At our New Year Party we were welcomed by Rev. Andrew Maguire and Helen. The opening game "name the celebrity" was won by Sarah Dhalla. June Loade's daughter. Frauke Adkins and Linda Howling were dressed up in silly costumes and read poems by Pam Ayres. Helen played the violin, including a piece by Edward Elgar. Margaret Smith sang "Stately as a Galleon" by Joyce Grenfell. Jenny Howling also read from Joyce Grenfell about school life and Sarah Large read a monologue about trying to slim. Wendy Murray on played the keyboard "The curse of the Were Rabbit" and Rev Andrew played "Maple Leaf Rag" by Scott Joplin on the piano. Some games followed. Then a lovely buffet was served. A big thank you to all who took part and made it a lovely afternoon of fellowship.

Linda Howling

London Road

A Hymn for today's church

We worship the hymn books, more ancient than modern;
Tattered and dusty, irrelevant too.

We like the "thee and Thou." No modern language now.
Do not disturb us with anything new,

The writer of your poem in last month's Rejoice would have had problems with his/her lungs as London Road removed the dust off their old Methodist Hymnbooks as Rev Catherine led us in a service to celebrate 100 year since the death of Fanny Crosby or Mrs Frances Jane van Alstyne. Her hymns were interspersed with events of the life of Fanny who became blind shortly after birth. Her inspiration is relevant to all age groups.

(In our defence the introit was from Singing the Faith)

The writer says these are irrelevant now – Is that True?

Why are “To God be the Glory” and “Blessed Assurance” still in “Singing the Faith”?

Yes the language may have changed – but many of us still prefer the beautiful poetry of the Authorised Version.

The writer of the poem falls into the trap of “It's before my time so it must be rubbish”. We do have a superb organ at London Road but nobody walks out of the door when we have modern hymns played on the piano. However for Circuit events with a full church the organ makes a tremendous support for the congregational singing.

However I must agree with the writer in the third verse. Thank goodness those who went before got rid of the hard wooden pews, first with tip up cinema seats and now with comfortable chairs.

The writer would be very welcome at London Road but would have to be prepared to meet Happy Smiling people!!!!!!!

David Gifford

Dersingham

Our monthly community lunches continue to be very popular and people appreciate the company as well as the generous platefuls of hot food. Our minister joined us in February and, having enjoyed a second helping of meat pie, found he hadn't any room for the bread-and-butter pudding which followed! The usual Carpet Bowls, Jigsaw Club, Needles & Pins Group, and Chicken Foot evenings (6th March, tickets from Rene Hayward) have started up again. The fortnightly Bible Study Group continues to meet at the Batstones' home on Thursday evenings.

The coffee mornings are well supported by the village, as well as our own congregation, and have enabled us to support various charities during the year and help our own funds. On the 28th March the proceeds will be divided equally between Methodist Homes and Action for Children. The Christmas Friendship Appeal was well supported and raised £160 for MHA and a Quiz Night is being held in February. One of our members much appreciated being

told about MHA and will shortly be moving to the branch in Derby to be nearer to his family who were very impressed when they went to look round it. The Action for Children Lent appeal sheets are being distributed. So the work, inspired by Methodists in the past, goes on and continues to meet the ever-growing need.

The group Women's World Day of Prayer will be held at Hunstanton Methodist Church on Friday 6th March at 2 p.m. and the Lent group meetings will be on Wednesday evenings at various churches in our area. Our midweek communion service will be on Wednesday 25th March at 10.30 a.m.

The Flower Festival this year will be a celebration of our church's 125th Anniversary and the title is "Come on and celebrate". It will begin on Thursday 21st May and finish on Sunday 24th May. Previous ministers are being invited back and the special preacher on Sunday morning will be the Rev. Julian Pursehouse, Chairman of the East Anglia District. Children from the local school will entertain us and open the proceedings on the Thursday and Friday mornings at 10 a.m. As usual we look forward to seeing friends from all over the circuit who come to join us and enjoy a cup of tea/coffee, lunch and delicious cakes – and, of course, admire the flower arrangements!

Rosemary Caink

Downham Market

Ladies' Friendship Group

As yet we have had no meetings.

Our March meetings are as follows :-

4th March Annual lunch at the Castle at 12.30pm

11th March Will be a beetle drive at 7.30pm

25th March Is our Easter meeting with readings and hymns also an Easter Bonnet competition at 7.30pm

Everyone welcome

Margaret Fox

We've got through one more month of Winter, one more month nearer Spring, though I dare say there will be a sting in the tail to spoil the snowdrops which are now in bloom and all the green shoots of the bulbs which are appearing. We are also one more month on in our Church year with Christmas festivities a distant memory and even our Covenant Service when we renew our vows is

over for another year. Now we come to Lent and our preparation for the main celebration of our Church year, Easter. In this connection the following courses will be run:-

Monday 23rd February at 7.30 p.m. at Wimbotsham Rectory studying the York Course

Monday 23rd Feb. At 2.30pm and 7.00 p.m. at DM Methodist Church - York Course

Tuesday 24th Feb at 2.00 p.m. at 6 Hilgay Rd, West Dereham studying 'Come and see' by David Adam, former Vicar of Lindisfarne.

Do get along to any of these sessions if at all possible to enable everyone to share their beliefs, doubts and hopefully strengthen our faith.

After years of planning and fund raising at last all our church premises are double glazed and while I could not say the Church is warm, at least it is not so cold as it has been sometimes. Today, St Valentine's day, we had a very happy friendly wedding in Church, complete with choir back in the gallery again and I did feel that the bride and bridesmaids were probably a lot more comfortable than they would have been a couple of weeks ago.

Our messy church sessions continue to be very popular, albeit down in numbers a little for half term week. Familiar faces return and there have been several messages of appreciation saying how much the children have enjoyed the session, and how friendly the church is. Another bonus is the added contribution junior church makes to services every Sunday morning before they leave for their own sessions. At times it gets really lively.

Our Saturday coffee mornings also continue in popularity being a regular venue for between 80 and 100 people, though not all at once, to enjoy a cuppa, a chat and some inexpensive shopping. We have been missing Meg and Rob Harrison, but others stepped in to staff the various sections. Now we hear that Meg has broken her wrist, so will be out of action for some time, not only playing for Sunday services but also playing for Downham Amateur Dramatic Society.

I wish you all a peaceful and tranquil Lent as we prepare ourselves for Easter when the usual Good Friday Walk of Witness will start from St. Edmunds at 9.15 am and will be followed by a service at our Church led by Rev Maurice Stafford. See you then.

Joan Macey

Pott Row

Women's World Day of Prayer

A service for Women's World Day of Prayer is to be held at Pott Row Methodist Chapel on Friday 6th March at 11am. The speaker will be Revd Judith Pollard. The service this year is written by Christian women from the Bahamas.

The theme of the service is taken from St John's Gospel, chapter 13 verses 1 - 17. Jesus said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" and it challenges us to demonstrate the same radical, unconditional love for others that Jesus showed when He washed the feet of His disciples. Everyone, (including men!) are very welcome to join us - and to share in our light lunch afterwards.

Shirley Hone

St Faith's

The arrival of Spring is often the time for a spring clean and clear out of clutter at home. So where better to take all those unwanted items you have been meaning to dispose of than on one of the stalls at the St Faith's Spring Fair on Saturday, 21st March starting at 2pm?

The Fair is one of St Faith's major fund-raising events, but of equal importance is its role as an outreach event to the wider community. People always enjoy the Spring Fair in the same way they do the bigger Summer Garden Fete and the Christmas Fair. These events bring people together for a couple of hours when they can meet friends and pick up one or two bargains on the various stalls.

This year the Spring Fair organisers are introducing a new idea by inviting charities, organisations and private individuals to rent a stall for £10 and then any proceeds they make they keep. The "rented" stalls will be set up in Phase 1 of the Church Rooms. All the usual stalls, including bric-a-brac, home-made cakes, books etc will be in Phase 2 of the Rooms.

The only condition for people renting a stall is that they do not sell goods that are being sold in Phase 2. More details about the Fair and the rented stalls can be obtained by contacting St Faith's Church Office on 01553 774916 (weekday mornings between 9am and 12 noon).

The month of March is, of course, a busy time as various activities and courses will be available in St Faith's Church Lent programme. Centred on Christ is the title of one of the Lent courses being offered. It will be run for five weeks starting on Shrove Tuesday, each session starting at 7.30pm and held in St Faith's Church.

Centred on Christ is an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with Christ using examples from Paul's letter to the Philippians as its model. It will focus on servanthood, affection, life, mindset and knowledge. Refreshments will be available and each session will end at 9pm.

Praise Him is a York Lent Course which will be held on Wednesday from 10.45am until noon and follows on from the 10am Communion service.

This course will set out to explore the hymns of praise in the Bible looking at Gratitude, Image of God, Humility, New Birth and Word made flesh. The course started on Wednesday, 25th of February.

Sunday 1st March, is the day for the retiring collections at St Faith's for the Diocese of Norwich Appeal to help the suffering church in the Holy Land as it strives to meet the medical needs of their peoples. Alongside this Appeal will be a talk given on February 28th in the Church Rooms at 7pm by St Faith's curate, the Rev Zoe Ferguson, on her experiences on her recent Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The talk is open to everyone and refreshments will be served. If you feel you would like to become more actively involved with St Faith's groups why not consider helping out with the Wednesday weekly Forget-Me-Not luncheon Club for the Over 60s or with Messy Church (for younger church families) on the second Friday afternoon of the month. The Church Office can provide more details of these two groups.

St Faith's Church choir will be performing The Cross of Christ on Palm Sunday, 29th March, at 6.30pm (please note the time).

There is to be a Quiet Evening offering the opportunity to come into 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 1st April. On Maundy Thursday there will be Holy Communion services at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

On Good Friday the Walk of Witness, leaving St Faith's Church at 10am, will make its way into Lynn town centre where it will process from outside the Lynn Minster around the town centre. Hymns and Bible passages about the Crucifixion of our Lord will be read at intervals. At 2pm, in St Faith's Church people have a chance to be quiet, reflect and pray during The Last Hour at the Cross

On Easter Saturday, 4th March there will be a service of Lighting of the New Fire and Renewal of Baptismal vows. Contact the Church Office to check starting times for this service.

St Faith's major celebration of Christ being risen from the dead on Easter Sunday will be starting with a dawn service followed by breakfast. The main service will be at 9.45am and there will be an Easter Praise service in the evening at 6.30pm

Richard Parr.

Stow Bridge

I recently found myself in one of the best hotels in Lynn. This hotel was very busy with people, doctors, nurses flying all around the place, with a lot of people lying in beds, a large percentage of them elderly. Yes, you've guessed it – the QEH NHS hotel.

The food was good with a great choice of menu, the doctors and nurses had a smile for everyone, even those who were a little grumpy! Some people were wholly out of it and were 100% dependent on them. Of course, there were many others contributing to the running of the place; cleaners, cooks. There were tablets to give out, papers to fill in. Many of you will have experienced a stay there.

I've been thinking of "Thank you" but it's such a small way of expressing how grateful we are for the great knowledge of how our bodies should work. Some respond by raising money for certain wards or departments. Wonderful places, our hospitals, where we can be made well and praise our fellows for their skills in our healing.

How much more were the folks in Jesus' day to have their blindness, deafness, useless limbs and other ailments; to be suddenly healed, cured, made well; how grateful they must have felt. Even so, some didn't even bother to say "Thank you", and "Cheers!" does seem to be inadequate to me.

Our thanks, I feel, must be heartfelt and also given to God. Besides our health there are many blessings we should be thankful for.

On a lighter note;

Doctor, I feel like a bell!

Take these and if they don't work give me a ring.

Doctor I feel like a pack of cards!

Stop shuffling around and I'll deal, with you later.

Doctor, I think I'm a spoon!

Sit over there and don't stir.

Doctor, I think I'm a bridge!

What's come over you?

A lorry, two cars and a bus.

Doctor, I think I'm a dustbin!

Don't talk rubbish!

Doctor, I've got 59 seconds to live!

Wait a minute and I'll be right with you.

Doctor, can you give me something to my liver?
How about some onions?

Doctor, I'm getting smaller and smaller every day!
Sorry, I can't see you till Friday.
But I'll have shrunk even more by then.
Well, you'll just have to be a little patient!
Our doctors are great people, int they?
Keep well.

Peter Hewitt

MWiB Easter Offering

Envelopes for distribution in churches re Easter Offering (traditionally this would be on Palm Sunday) along with publicity for the Easter Offering Dedication Service; which will be held this year in our Circuit on 20th May at London Road and led by Rev Catherine Dixon will be available at the Circuit Meeting on 11th March.

This year the Service is based on words from Revelation 'On either side of the river is the tree of life or the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations'

New instructions on how we handle donations because of the complexity of the rules regarding gift aid have now been received. In the past two years Church Treasurers have been responsible for claiming gift aid and then forwarding a cheque to the Circuit Mission Treasurer to pay into the bank. Now it is recommended that envelopes with a completed gift aid form should not be opened by the churches but taken to the Easter Offering Service. The Circuit Mission Treasurer will then pay these donations in with other monies, sending the envelopes to Methodist Church House who will claim the gift aid. Churches should continue to open envelopes which are not gift aided, recording these as previously and presenting them in a cheque at the Easter Offering Service. This is another change which may sound complicated but actually its simpler and goes back to the way we handled them before. The main thing is that we see this request not only for donations but prayers too for the ongoing work of Methodism Overseas, especially in projects that help families to a better future and way of living and in informing those who give about what is being done.

At this year's Dedication Service we shall hear of work in Kenya, Sri Lanka and Kenya, look forward to seeing you there.

Mary Uttin – Circuit Mission Treasurer

Marion Eleanor Margaret Green (1920- 2015)

Miss Green was a lifelong Methodist, indeed her father was the Rev Ernest D Green, Chairman of the Cardiff and Swansea District. I treasure his set of John Wesley's Letters which she gave me. I had the privilege of hearing him preach when I was stationed in South Wales during the war, little dreaming that his daughter would be a very good friend of mine for over fifty years. Her grandfather was the Rev Dr Walford Green who was President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1894. She was also related by marriage to the Rev Dr Maldwyn Lloyd Edwards who became President of Conference in 1961 and to the Rev John Arthur Broadbelt who was Principal of Cliff College from 1933 to 1948. Not surprisingly she came on to the Plan as a very acceptable local preacher in 1953.

She came to King's Lynn in the 1940s as a teacher. When I first knew her she was at a nursery school next door to our London Road Chapel which was known then as St James. She remained there for the rest of her working life, becoming headmistress. I could see then that she was so good with children. She had a quiet, calm demeanour and was strict but gentle. It was only when her back was turned as she was playing the piano at school that the children dared to misbehave. She would only have to look at them and they would keep quiet. I never knew her to raise her voice; a quiet word from her could bring to order a crowd of boisterous children at a Sunday School party.

At this time new housing estates were springing up all over the country and Methodism was faced with the challenge of reaching out to these populous areas. It was hard going as less than 1% of the newcomers could be expected to show any interest. In our Circuit we had the North Lynn estate and this was especially difficult as it was mainly London overspill, with families having no local roots. However the Borough Council allocated a site for a Free Church and the other churches left Methodism to take up the challenge. So a Sunday School was started in St Edmundsbury Primary School, where one of our local preachers, Miss Marjorie Oliver, was head mistress. Unfortunately Mr Walter Armstrong who started this new venture moved away after a year or two and an appeal was made for someone to take up the challenge. Immediately Miss Green volunteered. Incidentally it was always `Miss Green` - I have never known anyone to call her Margaret, perhaps because she had such an air of quiet dignity about her. The Sunday School was transferred to the Junior School so that older children could attend and soon there was a thriving attendance. All the children loved her and she loved them.

In the meantime we were looking towards the possibility of building a church on the estate and she was a tireless visitor, letting me know if there was anyone who showed the slightest interest. In this way a congregation of about twenty was built up from scratch which met initially in the Community Centre. When it eventually became possible to build and the great day of the opening dawned on St Andrew's Day 1963, Miss Green was the obvious choice to turn the key of the door. Her words on that occasion really sum up her own commitment and influence: "This is a happy day for us all. We must congratulate Mr Dann and Mr Collison the builder for making the building an attractive place. It is a shining light to the community around us."

From then on North Lynn was to be her life, and she was able to attend the church up to the Sunday before she died. It is no exaggeration to say that for over 50 years Miss Green held the society together by her pastoral care, wise leadership and sheer determination. Her whole life was rooted in prayer, and her hope in Christ was her anchor. More than that, everyone could see in her a truly Christian soul dedicated to serving her Lord in loving, giving, and caring for others. Both in her vocation as a teacher and in her work on the estate, her gracious influence touched many lives.

John Garfoot

10,000 BC

A fascinating programme... twenty Brits are confined to a Bulgarian forest where they must survive for two months by Stone Age rules, swapping warm modern clothes and labour-saving devices for animal skins and basic tools. We see them handing over their smart phones and tablets and going off to start a fire by rubbing sticks together and work out where their next meal is coming from.. I wonder how they will cope; I wonder how we would cope.

Not 10 millennia but now almost a century ago it was a very different world into which I came. I was born at home, brought into this world by kind-hearted but untrained Polly Burton, who delivered all the babies and also laid out the dead in the village and earned her living by taking in washing. No electricity of course. Think of all the things we depend on nowadays for which we just have to turn on a switch. We did have gas, just one light downstairs, made from coal at a local gasworks. It was literally "Here comes a candle to light you to bed." No water laid on, we collected rain water from the roof into a cistern. No sanitation, we threw the washing up water over the cabbages. This also meant a walk down the yard in all weathers. No bathroom. We still have a zinc bath hanging up in the

shed in which I had many a wash in front of the kitchen fire; no radio, let alone televisions and computers. I was six before I first heard the `wireless` as we used to call it. When I got a bit older it was marvellous to play whip-top, bowl a hoop or roller skate on the A17 with hardly any motor cars to worry about. My father being a baker, we did have a horse and cart. I had quite an experience once when I was with him and the horse bolted and toppled the cart over. But we were so happy. I had a wonderful childhood in a loving Christian home and one of the loveliest memories I have is picking violets in a lane and taking them home to my Mam.

When I began writing this article the idea was to ask how we would get on without all the material things and mod cons in life we take for granted or think we must have, but it has reminded me, and I hope it will remind you, of the things in life that are really important and the wise words of one who had far less than any of us and lived the simplest life imaginable: "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" You can read the story he told about this in St Luke chapter 12.

John Garfoot

Vision, Skills and The Gift of Years. January 18th and 25th

Last year Downham Market Church placed a vision statement:

"Downham Market Methodist Church exists to experience and share the life changing love of God for all" at the top of our weekly service sheets and on the slides projected before each act of worship.

To fulfil this vision we needed to know what resources, gifts and talents the members and attendees of the church have to offer. To this end Rev Maurice Stafford led a service on the 18th January when all the congregation was encouraged during the morning service to complete a skills survey – this was drawn up by the Vision Team so that people could just tick or circle numbers depicted on a church drawing under various topics including creativity, administration, hospitality and people skills.

The team was delighted that to date they have received 66 replies and are working on compiling various lists and disseminating these to be used as appropriate to enable us to encourage everyone to participate in the church as it is now and as we look to progress and grow.

The next Sunday 25th January was to be a CFS service and after discussion Sheila Forth agreed to lead a service on "the gift of years" - this was an opportunity to encourage anyone who was not at the previous service to complete the survey and it also picked up on some comments of "at my age I

have nothing to offer” that had been heard. This is a common thought if we are no longer fit and active but the one thing we all have to offer is a story to tell – our faith story and through that story older people can be channels of grace and truth for those about them-they bring the gift of years, years of wisdom and experience.

Along with appropriate bible readings we were treated to testimonies from Joyce Dent, Margaret Standing and Brian Bannister, who all talked about their lives and their journeys through good and tough times with their faith in and around them. These words were interesting, thought provoking and I believe inspiring to those who heard them. One message that came through was that even if you feel restricted by your age and level of activity, you can provide a listening ear and caring heart.

The Vision Team hope that the whole congregation found this an interesting and thought provoking exercise – and as well as identifying skills we all have, made everyone realise that we are all valued and have things to contribute to the life and growth of the church.

It will take us sometime to work our way through the lists we have and to prioritize some immediate needs .We are very grateful for the time and thought that people put into this exercise and would encourage everyone who sees a need in the church to get involved in filling it; everyone’s contribution is valued and needed.

Thank you

Maureen Hibling on behalf of the Vision Team

King’s Lynn Churches Together

Churches Together tries to arrange a variety of speakers to look at a number of issues affecting Christians of all denominations.

On 11th February the Rev Riaz Murbarak, vicar of West Winch and surrounding parishes gave an enlightening talk on life as a Christian and especially a Christian Vicar in Pakistan. Dealing with Muslim fanatics, which includes death threats etc in everyday life, is something we find difficult to comprehend. Riaz highlighted the problems caused for converts to Christianity from the Muslim faith. If they stayed in the same area they face death from their relatives, so all converts are moved to an area miles away from their home city.

Riaz also highlighted the work he was concentrating on in his last position in Pakistan which was organising Inter Faith Conferences with the Muslim Imams. The aim of the Conferences was to foster a spirit of understanding between Muslim and Christian. The pictures of the crowds attending these conferences were very heartening.

As everywhere in the world Riaz stressed there are good Muslims but there is always a faction of extremism to cope with, especially when you are close to the Afghan border and are working in the area where the Taliban leader was residing.

In response to a question Riaz stressed one aspect of his belief that has been enhanced is the realisation that God is the God of all and we belittle him if we only look on him as the God of Christians or of Muslims.

HE IS LORD OF ALL.

It is not easy to get out of your warm armchair to go to an event like this on a cold winters evening – but I am sure that everyone who attended, which included a good response from London Road, found inspiration in Riaz's journey of faith.

David Gifford

FOR SALE

Neumeyer piano

Cross strung to give it the tone of a Babygrand.

If anyone is interested please contact me on
01366 347930 or joanmacey@btinternet.com.



Any items for the **APRIL** edition should be with the editor by **MARCH 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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Methodist Chapel

Terrington St. Clement

**EASTER COFFEE
MORNING**

SATURDAY 28TH MARCH

10AM - 12 NOON

Coffee, cakes, raffle,

Games, bric-a-brac

Plants and gifts

All are very welcome

Downham Market
Wednesday March 18th at 2.30 pm
MISSION SUPPORT SERVICE
Speaker; Deacon Janet Stafford
Bring and Buy stall and Refreshments
Collection for World Church and Home Missions

Re hymn for today's church – in no way reflecting the views of the collator – but very apt in many ways, although it could well have been intended 'tongue in cheek'.

We should reflect on the ideas mentioned and see just how we, as people of our church, can be regarded as negative or positive in our church and community outlook.

It was certainly a talking point.

GIG Report on Hilgay Shell Club

Hilgay Shell Club held its annual party in January. On Shrove Tuesday, members and their families were invited to come along to the pancake party hosted by Guild members, with the opportunity to make and eat a pancake as well as tackling a Shrove Tuesday puzzle and taking part in various games. More fun activities are planned for March.

Our Mothering Sunday Weekend Events at Hilgay Methodist Church

On Saturday, 14th March, parents and grandparents are invited to join Shell Club for Coffee/ Tea and pastries at 11 a.m. Shell Club for the children will start at 10 o'clock as usual.

On Mothering Sunday (15th March 2015)

We are holding an informal family service starting at 10a.m.

Tea/ Coffee will be served after the service. All welcome.

Lesley Dent

CMEG presents ...
SNOW WHITE
and the SEVEN DWARFS



a pantomime

Thursday 5th March **7.30 p.m.**
Friday 6th March **7.30 p.m.**
Saturday 7th March (Matinee) **3.00 p.m.**
Clenchwarton Methodist Hall

ADULTS £4 / CHILDREN (16 or under) £3

Bookings (01553) 772855

● *Free Refreshments* ● *Raffle* ● *Raising money for local charities*

West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary

March 2015 onwards

Friday 6th March Women's World Day of Prayer at Downham Market at 2pm

Saturday 7th March Coffee Morning plus 10.30 at Gaywood Church Rooms

Saturday 7th March Pastoral Carers Day at Huntanton 9.30 – 4pm

Saturday 14th March Fellowship Breakfast at St. Germans at 8.30 am

Wednesday 18th March Mission Support Service at Downham 2.30 pm

Saturday 28th March Easter Coffee Morning at Terrington 10 - noon

Saturday 11th April Fellowship Breakfast at Downham at 8.30 am

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 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!

Editor's note.

I apologise for any glaring errors but I have had the pleasure of the company of my grand daughters this week. Enough said??