

Northstead Methodist Church

Newsletter March 2015

Message from the Minister

I have spent quite a bit of time recently doing some clearing out in my office. It's amazing how much "stuff" I have accumulated over my almost 13 years in ministry. Although I have sorted and tidied the office on a fairly regular basis, there seem to be so many cupboards and corners, drawers and document files in which things I really do not need have hidden themselves away. I have tidied round a mountain of unnecessary "stuff" without realising it, but with the prospect of packing up to move, it seemed like a good time to get rid. I have sorted and shredded, visited the tip and the charity shops, and gradually little by little I have rediscovered the floor, the desk top and the backs of the cupboards. My filing cabinet is tidied and labelled, my bookshelves only contain things that will move with me, and there is a huge sense of satisfaction with the result.

In our lives we seem to accumulate so much "stuff". Attached to things there are memories and experiences. We keep things because we might need them, and because they remind us of people and places and experiences. And I know that if my office was a challenge after 13 years, then among those who read this will be those for whom this kind of sorting and discarding is a mountain of huge proportions, perhaps even too much to climb. Others of you may be nodding wisely, having decluttered and down-sized yourselves. I've only tackled the office so far - all the other rooms, cupboards and corners are yet to come!

I was reminded of various passages in the gospels which relate to the "stuff" in our lives. There was the calling of the disciples which involved them leaving their lives, and the matter of their everyday normality behind, as they followed their new master. Some left their nets, though they returned to dabble a bit in fishing from time to time. Matthew left his tax collector's booth. Nathaniel left his comfortable chair under his fig tree. And they stepped onwards into a new life, which it appears (though it's never stated in so many words) was a life of living out of 1st century suitcases. Then there was Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler, who wanted to know what it took to become a follower of Jesus. He was told "Sell all you have, and give your money to the poor, then come and follow me." The young man went away with his head bowed in sadness. Letting go of the "stuff" of his life was just too hard.

And Jesus told the story of the man who built bigger and bigger barns to store the things he valued, only to find that his life was over. Jesus told his listeners this is what happens when you store up riches for yourself but are not rich towards God. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus also says, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth."

There seems to be quite a bit in the Gospels about travelling light, but somehow we never do. In this part of the world it is normal to acquire, and to accumulate. This is the world we live in - the culture of our nation, to store up, to keep, and we have the space to do so. Churches are as guilty as individuals. And with the best will in the world, I won't be moving on without the "stuff" I haven't thrown away. For example, I'd be surprised if there are less than 500 books still on my shelves, all of which I feel I will need. Am I making you feel less guilty now?

I'm not writing this as a guilt trip for anyone. It's just something I'm very aware of at present. It helps to know that some of my books will go to other parts of the world where they will be used and valued. It helps to know that odd items that have no current value to me will end up being bought by someone who can really use them, and will give money to a good cause in the process. It helps to know that my mountains of excess paper will be recycled and reused in some form or another.

And it is also reassuring that however I travel: light or laden down with "stuff"; that my Saviour is very patient, very accepting of just who I am, and will walk beside me, even helping to carry the load, until I lay it all down at his feet.

'Look at the birds in the air,' the Lord said.
'They fly unhampered by care,' the Lord said.
'You will move easier if you're travelling light,
for you're a wandering, vagabond race,
you're the People of God.'

@ Estelle White

Clare.

Events on the Way!

On Sunday, March 1st, celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight with us at a **Fairtrade Prayer Breakfast** from 9 to 10 a.m. Taste Fairtrade products and local eggs, share fellowship, and hear about the Fairtrade movement. **All-Age Worship** follows at 10.30 a.m.

Our annual **Gift Day** takes place on Saturday, March 14th. Coffee will be served from 10.30 a.m. and a **Spud 'n' Pud** lunch from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be Cake and Fairtrade stalls. Weather permitting our gardening team will be working in the garden during the morning. Volunteers welcome! – and watch the weekly notice sheet for a regular gardening time.

Churches Together around Barrowcliff meet for a **shared service** based on the Stations of the Cross, at St Joseph's church on Sunday, March 22nd at 4 p.m.

The Brownies are holding a **Table Top Sale** and **Coffee Morning** on Saturday 28th March from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. To book a table, please contact Brown Owl Liz, tel. 370420, small tables cost £5 each, large tables £7.50. Proceeds will be for church funds.

Coffee at Scalby

Our friends at Scalby will be holding their monthly Coffee Morning on Saturday, March 7th at 10 a.m. There will be stalls selling cakes, books and Fairtrade items, and all are welcome.

Worship at Eagle View

We will be leading a monthly "Service" of old hymns, well known Bible Stories and prayer at Eagle View care home.

Messy Church

Messy Church takes place at 3.15 p.m. on Thursday, March 26th. Everyone is welcome for a time of fun, food and fellowship.

Praise Midweek

Praise Midweek this month is on Wednesday, March 18th at 8 p.m. Refreshments will be served from 7.45 p.m. followed by a time of informal praise and worship.

Services for Holy Week and Easter

Tuesday, March 31st at 11 a.m. – worship at Scalby chapel.

Thursday, April 2nd at 6.30 p.m. – Maundy Thursday service at Northstead.

Friday, April 3rd at 9.30 a.m. – Good Friday worship at Wreyfield Drive, followed by a short family walk, picnic lunch and a longer walk after lunch for those willing and able!

Sunday, April 5th at **9.30 a.m.** – Easter Communion at Northstead.

10.45 a.m. – All Age Easter celebration at Wreyfield Drive.

All these services are for members of all of Clare's three churches, so you could take the opportunity to worship in a different church, or to welcome those from other churches who come to Northstead.

Diary Dates for this month

Sun. Feb. 22nd, 10.30 a.m.	Morning worship, Rev. P. Cross.
Thurs. Feb. 26th, 3.15 p.m.	Messy Church.
Sun. March 1st, 9 – 10 a.m.	Fairtrade Prayer Breakfast.
10.30 a.m.	All-age worship, Rev. C. Stainsby.
Wed. March 4th, 10.45 a.m.	Service at Eagle View care home.
Sat. March 7th, 10 a.m.	Coffee Morning, Scalby Church.
Sun. March 8th, 10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion, Rev. B. Russell.
Sat. March 14th	Gift Day
10.30 a.m.	Coffee.
11.30 a.m.	Spud 'n' Pud lunch.
Sun. March 15th, 10.30 a.m.	Morning worship, Miss J. Dark.
Sun. March 22nd, 10.30 a.m.	Morning worship, Wreyfield Drive Church.
4 p.m.	Churches Together around Barrowcliff service, St. Joseph's Church.
Sat. March 28th, 10 a.m.	Table Top Sale and Coffee Morning.
Sun. March 29th, 10.30 a.m.	Morning worship for Palm Sunday, arranged by our members.
Tues. March 31st, 11 a.m.	Service at Scalby Church.
Wed. April 1st, 10.45 a.m.	Service at Eagle View care home.
Thurs. April 2nd, 6.30 p.m.	Maundy Thursday service.
Fri. April 3rd, 9.30 a.m.	Good Friday service, Wreyfield Drive Church, followed by walk and picnic lunch.
Sun. April 5th, 9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion, Rev. C. Stainsby.
10.45 a.m.	All-age worship, Wreyfield Drive Church.
Sun. April 19th	Church AGM after the morning service.

Wednesday Fellowship

The Fellowship is open to both ladies and gentlemen, and meets at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons for a short time of worship, a speaker or other entertainment, a cup of tea and a chat. The programme for March is yet to be arranged at time of writing.

Ladies' Circle

Our Ladies' Circle meets every other week on Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m.

The speaker on March 3rd will be Diane Robinson. On March 17th, they have their AGM, followed by games, and complete the season by going out for a meal on the 31st.

Circuit Charity Fundraising

The project our Circuit was supporting in Kenya is now complete, so our support moves to a Christian Aid project in Burkina Faso, helping agricultural development and improving nutrition, and match funded by the EU, £5 for every £1 raised.

Food for Change – improving food security in Burkina Faso. As each year passes, families in Burkina Faso continue to suffer from the devastating effects of drought. Many struggle to grow food and earn an income, and experience hunger every day. However, in November, Christian Aid partner ODE began work to help thousands of people lift themselves out of poverty and transform their lives.

Arid land to fruitful harvests – in 2012, thousands of people were without enough to eat due to drought. Without a secure source of food and income, families in Burkina Faso are extremely vulnerable to changing weather patterns. Madeleine faces many difficulties with two children to support, but she remains optimistic and enthusiastic about ODE's new project. She is keen to see how the project might support her to become financially independent. She says, 'I would be able to continue paying for my daughter to attend college and my son to attend school.' The project hopes to help men and women like Madeleine to reach their full potential.

About ODE – ODE is the development wing of the evangelical Churches of Burkina Faso. Established in 1960 to provide relief during the recurrent droughts that overwhelmed many communities, it has now moved on to projects promoting long-lasting change. Work has included helping communities to improve their farming methods, find new ways to earn an income and protect precious livestock during drought. ODE works with communities to build their own knowledge so they can make change happen for themselves. The people are trained on how to get the best from the resources they have. With advice and knowledge on how to make improvements at a community level, they can achieve change to benefit everyone.

Christian Aid has worked with ODE since 1974. Their staff are local men and women who know the experiences, uncertainties and challenges facing families in Burkina Faso, and they have helped thousands of people to improve their lives. The project we are supporting will help communities in 45 villages in northern Burkina Faso, supporting the poorest and most vulnerable families who continue to struggle following the devastating drought of 2012. The project's ambitions are rooted in local needs, making them not only achievable but sustainable.

ODE seeks to:-

- give 4,267 households improved seeds and fertilisers,
- give 1,500 families 10 hens and one rooster, meaning they have another means of income during future droughts,
- recover large areas of degraded land to be used by families to grow vegetables and other food plants,
- provide training in production, develop farming collectives and encourage accountability with farmers so that the work benefits everyone equally
- train women in new ways to process and store crops.

By increasing the quality and quantity of harvests, families like Madeleine's will be able to secure their future. Not only will Madeleine be able to produce enough to eat, she can then sell on the remainder to pay for schooling, healthcare and a variety of foods, improving nutrition for her whole family.

Points for prayer

- Pray for the staff of ODE in this new project.
- Pray for the villages and communities of men and women like Madeleine, that they can plan for a secure future.
- Pray for our circuit and others in the UK who are fundraising for this project.

A Prayer for Lent

Lenten God,

you knew the hardship of waiting in the desert.

Be with all those who are away from their homeland as they seek to make a new life and wait for news from home.

Lenten God,

you knew the temptation to turn stones into bread.

Be with all those who know the gnawing pain of hunger as they struggle to survive in a world that does not share.

Lenten God,

you knew the temptation to throw yourself off the pinnacle.

Be with all those who know illness and despair as they struggle to go on living as life passes them by.

Lenten God,

you knew the temptation to seize power for yourself.

Be with all those who hold and exercise power:
may they seek to make decisions that will bring justice and peace.

Amen.

Sponsored Snooker Marathon

Trevor's son and grandson, Michael and Joshua, and Harry once again represented Northstead in this year's Christian Aid Snooker Marathon. They raised a grand total of £258.00. The UK government has agreed to match pound for pound all the money raised up to a total of £5 million. Trevor and Harry would like to thank those who were sponsors, it is much appreciated.

The charity is working to support a new maternal health scheme in Kenya and Malawi. In that part of the world 40 women die every day in childbirth or from pregnancy-related difficulties. The project will help provide training for health workers, more education and awareness, and will also focus on introducing ambulance services into remote communities. It aims to provide more hope and support for women who are unprepared for childbirth and unsure how to look after their child. This is an excellent effort from Northstead.