

Triangle

The quarterly magazine of the
Methodist Churches of Springdale,
Wombourne and Gospel Ash



Autumn 2011

Message from the Manse

Rev Robert Ely

August has given me the chance to spend a bit more time reading. The theme of so many of the magazines and periodicals I get is the mission of the church: how can we win more disciples for Jesus Christ? The statistics show that very few people have any idea about even the basics of our faith. The situation is urgent; but how are we to tackle it?

We hear phrases like “Mission Shaped Church” and “Fresh Expressions”, and perhaps we wonder what they mean. The idea is simply that everything we do should be related to the mission of the church, whether it is our weekly meeting (not so well attended as once?), or our special effort to raise money. How can these help the church to grow? We have one or two “Fresh Expressions” in each of our churches (although some will say we should really be going to where people are, rather than expecting them to come to us). At Gospel Ash we have pioneered events like the Nativity Service in the barn (which we had to cancel because of the weather: We’ll try again!) and the Harvest Festival at the Vineyards. Wombourne has its Kids’ Club, Springdale has Family Hot-Pot and now Café-Style Worship, and both the larger churches now have “Prayers and Bears”.

Yet we still need to reach out to other age groups and the many people who as yet have no idea about Christianity. On Saturday 17 September, Rev Jeff Reynolds is coming to Gospel Ash to help us discuss all these issues: details are elsewhere in this “Triangle”. Do please make sure you are there if you possibly can be! Don’t leave it to others!

Let us pray that God’s Holy Spirit will continue to give us the imagination and courage to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

With Christian greetings

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Springdale Vestry News

Bernard Davis, Senior Steward



Friday 19 August - It is 9.50am and I am waiting for the Water Board to sort out my water supply. Hopefully, someone will come to sort out the stop tap in the street! God has given me this morning to put my rough notes together and start to compose Springdale Vestry News for the next Triangle.

First of all I must thank all the stewards who have been very supportive and encouraging since I became Senior Steward.

Thank you to all who made the evening meal on Saturday 21 May such an enjoyable occasion. The food was delicious and there was plenty of it! Much time was spent in transforming our hall with colourful decorations and we all enjoyed the atmosphere created.

'The Bible' was the chosen theme for the Junior Church Anniversary and once again the Junior Church came up with something new and engaging. The service, so well designed and produced, was enacted well by all sections of the Junior Church and the theme fitted in well with the anniversary of the King James' Bible. If more people used the bible, especially the teaching of Jesus, as their moral compass we would have a much better society.

On 12 June, to celebrate Pentecost, our first Café Church service was held in our hall. We were grouped around tables and tea, coffee and cakes (including a delicious birthday cake!) were available before the service. The theme was the Holy Spirit, gifts of the Spirit, wind, breath, tongues of fire, and there were things for us to do on each table: a model plane kit, bubble blowing and a balloon to blow up and release - all to show that the Spirit of God goes wherever she will: not in our control. The service was very well planned with lively hymns led by Julian and Helen on their guitars and Robert, Mark and Val made us think whilst entertaining us. Many people I spoke to really enjoyed the service and thought that perhaps we could have a similar service once a quarter. Thank you to all involved in putting together this relevant and meaningful service and to those who

provided refreshments. We all have gifts from the Spirit but are we prepared to use them to further God's kingdom? The church is in us, not a building, and we can take God with us wherever we are if we have a background consciousness of his presence.

The Summer Fair held on 18 June was very successful. Thank you to all who organised, set out and manned stalls and put everything back into place for the Sunday services.

The charity concert in aid of Help The Heroes on 9 July was most enjoyable. Thank you to Helen, Ann and all the wonderful and gifted musicians who performed.

Unfortunately our Open Air Service on 17 July had to be cancelled owing to the previous few days being very wet. We were not downhearted as Robert led us in a very meaningful and enjoyable service indoors based on the parable of the wheat and the weeds. As Barbara Mead exclaimed, "An outdoor indoor service!" We sang 'Happy Birthday to Gwynneth and congratulated Laura on her degree.

We live in a world where as Christians we are called to live by Christ's values and standards. The recent riots, looting and murders in our cities show what happens when people ignore 'Thou shalt not steal' and 'Thou shalt not kill'. Who is to blame for the lack of morals in some sections of society? This is too deep and intricate a question to be answered here. There but for the grace of God go !!

We coped well without a front entrance during the building of the atrium. Thank you for your co-operation during this period of change. On Sunday 21 August we used the new front entrance for the first time. I was amazed at the vastness of the atrium. Robert thanked all those who had specific tasks in bringing about the planning, raising money, overseeing the construction and helping with renovation in any way. We now look forward to the Dedication Service on 16 October at 3pm. May we be inspired to use our new building to spread the good News further afield, as we plan how to make the best use of our atrium.

Yours in Christ.

Wombourne Vestry News

Charles Clowes, Senior Steward



A change of seasons is upon us as autumn draws near. I am writing this in August (hopefully you will be reading this in September) as I prepare to visit relatives halfway round the world in Australia. There it is winter, which in Brisbane is significantly warmer than ours.

Over the summer worship and various church groups have continued as usual. We have also had a BBQ with the cubs and scouts, skittles and a Bangladeshi evening during church family week and a concert by Claire Martin and friends.

Thinking back to the harsh winter of last year I notice the 'Ceanothus' which we thought was dead has started to produce green shoots. Other plants have responded to the cold winter and dry spring - roses in our garden at home have, for instance, produced an abundance of beautiful flowers and the vine, apples and pears are producing loads of fruit.

It occurs to me that our Churches and our lives have seasons. There are times when everything seems dead, dry and dusty. Times when we have to prune away the old or diseased branches. Times of new growth and hope - we need patience and persistence, for God remains the same yesterday, today and always.

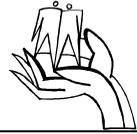
On 17 September we are having an away day at Gospel Ash when Jeff Reynolds will help us to explore our mission in Wombourne so we can reach out and share the Love of God in this village. Please support this.

This was advertised in huge letters and numbers on a church notice board in Wells-on-Sea, Norfolk:

1 cross
+ 3 nails
= 4 given

Springdale Pastoral News

Jane Rawlings, Pastoral Secretary



Well what a busy time since my last message. We have had some baptisms which are always a joy and unfortunately we have also had some very sad news with the loss of two of our members. We have had some people showing off their talents and some people returning to us and some off to pastures new. What an eventful time we have had.

Let's start with the baptisms - we have had the joy of two since my last message. We welcomed the family and friends of Declan Lee Kingston Fereday on 26 June and Alexander May Binder on 7 August - may God bless them as they grow in grace and the knowledge and love of God and of his son Jesus Christ our Lord.

During this time we have also had to bear the loss of two of our members, Sheila Thompson and Helen Keith. Sheila had been ill for a long time, but her loss was still greatly felt by everyone in the church. Helen's passing was a great shock to many and came after a short illness following a fall. We continue to think of both Sheila and Helen and, of course, their families as they try to build a new life without their loved ones around them. May God keep Sheila and Helen close and offer strength and support to all who mourn them.

Over the recent months a number of our members have been ill and requiring hospital treatment. We think especially of Bob Tong who is currently awaiting a heart operation - our prayers are with Bob and Ruth during this worrying time. Norman Priest has been very ill in hospital but is now at home, but requires further treatment before he will be back to full strength. Francis Cox has also been in hospital but has now been transferred to Warstones Resource centre for assessment. We continue to send our best wishes and prayers to everyone who is feeling unwell or anxious at this time and hope that the knowledge that God is with us all through these difficult times will help and give strength in our hour of need.

On a happier note a number of people have been demonstrating their many talents and have received the deserved recognition. Phillippa

Cooper won the Dorothy Eckford Perpetual Cup at the Annual Sweet Pea Show in Wem, Shropshire. Phillippa has been showing Sweet Pea's for a number of years and they always look show stopping and smell divine. Eleanor Cooper, who has for many years demonstrated her many musical talents, was given the honour of Wolverhampton's Young Musician of the Year, a well deserved honour I am sure you will all agree. Continuing on the theme of success I would like to express our congratulations to Laura Priest upon gaining her Degree this summer and to Eleanor Cooper on her excellent A Level results - we wish you all the best, Eleanor, with your continued studies at Surrey University and look forward to hearing about your adventures when we hope you will return to be amongst us from time to time. One of our young folk who has been away from us for a while has been Sam Jones who has been studying in Italy for a year - we are pleased to have her back amongst us, even if it is for a short time before she goes again to continue her studies.

Well what a time we have been having! I will end my message by wishing all well whatever may lie ahead. May you all go in the knowledge that God is walking with each and everyone of us and we are never alone and can rely on his ever lasting love.

Wombourne Pastoral News

Pauline Hotchkiss, Pastoral Secretary



September already, how the last three months have flown by! The summer was a time of mixed weather, and also mixed blessings for my friends at Wombourne.

In the Summer I wrote about Edith Bailey suffering with shingles. Unfortunately she was just recovering when she fell and broke a hip. This was two days before her granddaughter's wedding – double blow because she was in hospital and was not able to attend. Our prayers are with Edith and Donald who is caring for her. Barbara Springthorpe also fell in August and broke her ankle. This was just before she and Ray celebrated their golden wedding. Mixed thoughts for Barbara and Ray! A speedy recovery, for Barbara and many congratulations for their special anniversary.

Several of our older members have died in the last three months. We said farewell to Florence Jackson on 15 June. Florence was an active, faithful member at church for many years. She and her husband John retired to Wombourne but sadly John did not live too long after. We ask God that he will bless the family at this sad time and that they will come to know his peace. John (Jack) Cartwright, husband of Ivy, died in July and it was with mixed feelings when we welcomed Ivy back to church to say goodbye to Jack. It was delightful to see her but what a sad occasion. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ivy and her two sons and their families.

We also think about Bob Hughes and his family in the sad loss of his brother Brian in June. Also Emma and Karen, the daughters of Pat Westwood on her sudden death. We also think of Val Moss who lost her younger brother. May God bless you all at this sad time.

September is the month which brings in many changes and it is with mixed feelings for many members and their families. It is the beginning of a new year in our church. This is also the time when young people will have graduated from university, or have left school and will be going on to university or college during the next few weeks. Children will be changing schools or going to school for the first time. All of these experiences will bring mixed feelings to them and their parents.

Our congratulations go to June Horton who celebrated her 75th birthday in June. Also congratulations to her granddaughters. Emily graduated from Wolverhampton University during the first week in September. Her degree gained was in Sociology and Politics. Sophie, despite losing a lot of time from school undergoing difficult surgery to her back, came out with at least 6 GCSE's at grade A. She will be returning to Ounsdale to carry on her education.

John and Val Philpott's grandchildren have also achieved excellent results. Hannah has gained 3 A* star A-levels and will be taking a year out as she hopes eventually to study medicine. Their grandson, Asher, will be going to Durham University in October and his twin sisters Gabriella and Tamara have gained several AS levels between them.

While I have been preparing this item I received news of Katy, Hannah's

younger sister. She was rushed into hospital while on holiday with the family in Italy and her appendix has been removed. The end of a wonderful holiday. She will be feeling very mixed up.

We welcomed back Alex and Pauline Blackmore to our family in Wombourne but they need our prayers and support. Alex has been in hospital receiving treatment which has meant that Pauline is in respite care. God bless them both.

We also welcomed into our church on Sunday 3 July Amelia Frame and her family to celebrate her baptism. They had made the long journey down from Scotland. She behaved very well throughout the service. On the same day we welcomed Kirsty Smith, from Kinver for baptism. A delightful young lady who gave her responses in a strong clear voice. A happy morning enjoyed by all present.

Our prayer circle continues to meet bi-monthly to think about those on our prayer list. We pray for each one daily.

We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can fly only by embracing each other” *Luciano de Crescenzo*

Martha’s Prayer

Lord, defend me from feeling hard done by when the chores are endless.
Forgive me when I am bored by the constantly recurring need to think about food.

Teach me to organise myself in order not to be ruled by organisation and always to have time to listen.

Make me laugh, not swear when the milk boils over.

Preserve me from getting in a fuss when the Grand-Joneses are coming to dinner.

Let me thank you daily for my home, for warmth and food and for my friends and family.

Lord, remind me often that “It takes a Martha as well as a Mary to serve you perfectly.”

Iona visit 2011

Helen Cook

Part of being a guest in Iona is taking part in a guest concert on the Wednesday night of your stay. The Wolverhampton Group decided that it would be fun to share a bit of our Black Country heritage with the other guests, so we each took it in turns to read a commandment, then asked the audience to see if they could try and guess which one it was. I apologise if you have read these before, but thought it would be good to share a bit of what we did when on Iona.

GOD'S BOSTIN' RULES:

- 1 "Ar bin the Lord yaar God, yow cor ave ova daft un's befower me"
- 2 "Dow put stuff befower God"
- 3 "Yow cor tek the naame o' the Lord yaah God in vain"
- 4 "Git yaself to Sunday meeting ay it"
- 5 "Honor ya dad un ya mom"
- 6 "Yow cor kill con ya"
- 7 "Yow woe av it off with sumone elses missus/bloke"
- 8 "No pinchin"
- 9 "Dow mek out ya muckers dun it"
- 10 "Dow get jealous of ya maates stuff"

Mission Shaped Church

Robert Ely

Have you read my "Message"? If so, you will know about the day at Gospel Ash with Rev Jeff Reynolds to talk about "Mission Shaped Church". He is our District Mission Enabler, and so just the person to help us. All you have to do is to come to Gospel Ash at 9:30 for a 10 o'clock start on Saturday 17 September with something to share at a "Faith Lunch". We need to think together about the future of our churches in this corner of the Circuit, and what we can do to extend God's mission here. We'll finish by 3 p.m. at the latest. Do please come! We need **your** ideas, as well as the guidance of the Holy Spirit of Jesus, if our churches are to flourish as God wants them to.

Lay Witness Movement

E & C Walker

On Saturday 14 May we were privileged to attend a special celebration at Mansfield Baptist Church to give thanks for 35 years of Lay Witness in this country. It was encouraging to meet up with several members whom we hadn't seen for a few years. Also, it was good to make new friends and to put faces to those whom we had only either spoken to on the phone, or received written messages from over the past 5 years; and to hear how God has worked, and is still working, in their lives.

The speaker for the day was Steve Clifford, the General Director of the Evangelical Alliance. The Lay Witness movement is an affiliate member of the Evangelical Alliance which is made up of Christians from most mainstream denominations. It epitomises all that is good about the ethos and work of Lay Witness, by putting Jesus at the centre of all that we do. The underlying theme of Steve's talk was the hope that we have in Jesus. The Lay Witness movement's aims are threefold:

- to bring individuals into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ
- to bind the church family into a loving, caring community
- to encourage prayer and fellowship groups

The new "strap line" for the movement is: "Ordinary people sharing the extraordinary love of God".

The Battle

An old Cherokee told his grandson, "My son, there is a battle between two wolves inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, jealousy, greed, resentment, inferiority, lies and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, humanity, kindness, empathy and truth."

The boy thought about it and then asked, "Grandfather, which wolf wins?" The old man quietly replied, "The one you feed."

Ten Commandments for Choir

- 1 Remember FRIDAY evenings to keep them wholly for the practice.
- 2 THOU SHALT not tarry without the doors or on the stairs.
- 3 THOU SHALT give ear unto the voice of thy Conductor and hearken not to the babble of thy neighbour.
- 4 THOU SHALT not raise thy voice above thy neighbours - for this is the Choral law (unless they're going wrong!)
- 5 THOU SHALT not worship thy score unduly, for the eyes are the windows of the soul and if they be glued to the paper how shall the soul be lighted? (i.e. watch!)
- 6 THOU SHALT not lean upon thy neighbour but cultivate thine own understanding for he that followeth his neighbour from bar to bar shall stumble and perish, but he that counteth his own time can in no wise enter in at the wrong place. (probably goes for both types of 'bar'!)
- 7 THOU SHALT not grouse (nor drink it before rehearsal)
- 8 THOU SHALT not contemplate thy neighbour's hat, nor her coat nor her furs nor her ring nor any new thing that is thy neighbour's, lest when thy turn cometh thou be taken unaware and utterly confounded.
- 9 THOU SHALT not break thy covenant with the choir to follow after thy wife, nor thy best girl, nor thy second best girl nor thy friend nor thy enemy, for the choir will not hold him worthy that turneth 'Yay' to 'Nay'.
- 10 HONOUR THY Choir and thy Conductor and forget not regular attendance is also expected of thee on Sunday.

Moments

Happy moments - Praise God

Difficult moments - Seek God

Quiet moments - Worship God

Painful moments - Trust God

Every moment - Thank God

Springdale Bowling Group

John Hodgson

We continue to meet each Monday from 2-4pm with a break for tea and biscuits/cake about 3pm. We have 19 members on the book and attendances are normally about 14-16. Nine of our members are from the local community and the rest are Church members. We would welcome any one else who would like to come along - previous experience is not necessary. We are generally improving in quality over the years although sometimes you would think we have never played at all, such is our variation! We recently had a "match " with the bowling group from Fallings Park Methodist Church, although it was more of a social event rather than a competition, but everyone enjoyed the fellowship and we look forward to similar events in future.

We believe that it is possible that there are many more of our Church members and also the local community who would like to play but are unable to make Monday afternoons and it seems a great pity that the equipment we have is only used for 2 hours per week. So if anyone would like to play at other times which may be available during the week at Springdale then please feel free to organise a group. Just have a word with me or any member of the group and we will explain how it all works. We think that a minimum of 8 people is necessary and putting out the equipment and putting it away is not difficult or time consuming. And, what's more, it's all good fun!

Quiz (answers on page 33)

Jackie Neilson

- 1 What father made his son a coat of many colours?
- 2 Who is the first High Priest we read of in the Bible?
- 3 How many times was Paul shipwrecked?
- 4 Who was Saul's father?
- 5 Who was called a mother of Israel?

Wombourne Methodist Church

CHRISTMAS

BAZAAR

**Wombourne
Community Centre**

Saturday 26th November

2011

10:00am To 12:00 noon

Entrance, 30p

Lots of Stalls, Home made cakes, Jam, Raffle,
Toiletries, Hamper, & much more.



Refreshments

**Please come along and have a lovely
morning**

The Trinity – or What?

David McKinlay

There is a story told in medieval times that the Roman Pope was persuaded by some of his more conservative advisors to endure no longer the presence of Jews in the very heart and core of world Christianity. The story is not true because the Pope would not have done some of this but it is your choice to decide which bits are!

The Jews of Rome were, therefore, ordered evicted from their homes by a certain date. To the Jews of Rome this was a great tragedy, for they knew no refuge where they might not expect worse treatment than in Rome. They appealed to the Pope for reconsideration and the Pope, a fair minded man, suggested a sporting proposition. If the Jews would appoint one of their own number to engage in a debate with him, in pantomime, and if the Jewish representative were to win the debate, the Jews might remain.

The Jewish leaders gathered in the synagogue that night and considered the proposition. It seemed the only way out, but none of their number wished to volunteer to debate. Then the chief rabbi said, "It is impossible to win a debate in which the Pope will be both participant and judge. And how can I face the possibility that the eviction of the Jews will be the result of my specific failure?"

The synagogue janitor who had been quietly sweeping the floor through all this, suddenly spoke up. "I'll debate," he said. They stared at him in astonishment. "You, a cheap janitor?" said the chief rabbi. "Debate with the Pope?" "Someone has to," said the janitor, "and none of you will." So the janitor was made the representative of the Jewish community to debate with the Pope.

The great date came. In the square before St. Peter's was the Pope, surrounded by the College of Cardinals in full panoply, with crowds of bishops and other churchly functionaries. Approaching was the Jewish janitor, surrounded by a few of the leaders of the Jewish community in their sombre black garb and their long gray beards.

The Pope faced the janitor, and the debate began.

Gravely the Pope raised one finger and swept it across the heavens. Without hesitation the janitor pointed firmly toward the ground. The Pope looked surprised.

Even more gravely, the Pope raised one finger again, keeping it firmly before the janitor's face. With the trace of a sneer the janitor raised three fingers, holding the pose just as firmly. A look of deep astonishment crossed the Pope's face.

Then the Pope thrust his hand deep into his robes and produced an apple. The janitor thereupon opened a paper bag that was sticking out of his hip pocket and took out a flat piece of matzo. At this, the Pope exclaimed in a loud voice, "The Jewish representative has won the debate. The Jews may remain in Rome." The janitor backed off, the Jewish leaders surrounded him, and all walked hastily out of the square.

They were no sooner gone than the church leaders clustered about the Pope. "What happened, your Holiness?" they demanded. "We could not follow the rapid give-and-take."

The Pope passed a shaking hand across his brow. "The man facing me," he said, "was a master at the art of debate. Consider! I began the debate by sweeping my hand across the sky to indicate that God ruled all the universe. Without pausing an instant, that old Jew pointed downward to indicate that nevertheless the Devil had been assigned a domination of his own below.

"I then raised one finger to indicate there was but one God, assuming I would catch him in the error of his own theology. Yet he instantly raised three fingers to indicate that the one God has three manifestations, a clear acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

"Abandoning theology, I produced an apple to indicate that certain blind upholders of so-called science were flying in the face of revealed truth by declaring the Earth was as round as an apple. Instantly, he produced a flat piece of unleavened bread to indicate that the Earth, in accord with revelation, was nevertheless flat. So I granted him victory."

By now, the Jews and the janitor had reached the ghetto. All surrounded the janitor, demanding, "What happened?" The janitor said indignantly, "The whole thing was nonsense. Listen. First the Pope waves his hand like he's saying, 'The Jews must get out of Rome.' So I pointed downward to say, 'Oh yeah? The Jews are going to stay right here.' So he points his finger at me as if to say, 'Drop dead, the Jews are leaving.' So I pointed three fingers at him to say 'Drop dead three times, the Jews are staying.' So then I see he's taking out his lunch, so I take out mine."

The Green Thing

In the line at the store the cashier told an older woman that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The woman apologised to him and explained, "We didn't have the green thing back in my day." The cashier responded, "That's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment."

He was right - our generation didn't have the green thing in its day. Back then we returned milk bottles, pop bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled.

But we didn't have the green thing back in our day. We walked up stairs because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two streets.

But she was right. We didn't have the green thing in our day. Back then we washed the baby's nappies because we didn't have the throw-away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 220 volts -- wind and solar power really did dry the clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that old lady is right; we didn't have the green thing back in our day.

Back then we had one TV, or radio, in the house, not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of the house. In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail we used a wadded up old newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then we didn't fire up an engine and burn gas just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she's right; we didn't have the green thing back then. We drank from a fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull.

But we didn't have the green thing back then. Back then, people took the tram or a bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their mums into a 24-hour taxi service. We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza place. But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the green thing back then?

Please forward this on to another selfish old person who needs a lesson in conservation from a clever young person!

Little Boy's Prayer

Dear God,

Take care of my family, take care of the world. And please, God, take care of yourself, or we're all sunk.

Methodist Conference 2011

Brenda Shuttleworth

The Methodist Conference gathered in Southport on 30th June. The ceremonial events of the weekend followed the ministerial session. The address of the new President, Revd Leo Osborn, focused on pastoral care and included the exhortation for us to take a good look at the welcome we offer to those who are on the edges of our churches. The Vice President's focus was on learning and growing as disciples; expanding on the idea of the life of faith being a journey which begins as we look out on the world, open the door and step out into the unknown.

It would be impossible in this short space to do justice to the Conference agenda which was in excess of 800 pages. Some of you may have already read some of the reports on the Methodist Church website or followed them on the live stream from Conference, Twitter or the Conference blog.

For me the most significant debate was the one which arose out of two major reports: *The Big Society* and *Of Equal Value: Poverty and Equality in the United Kingdom*. The reports highlighted that 13 1/2 million people are living in poverty, the most common reason being that you were born into it. As cuts in public expenditure increase, the gap between the poorest 10% of people in the UK and those on middle and higher incomes gets ever wider. Attention was also drawn to the issue of rural poverty. All the major denominations in Britain are attempting to respond to growing poverty; calling for justice in the taxation system, working with other partners to deliver practical support and speaking prophetically to our society. It was noted that churches must be cautious in saying that they have been 'doing Big Society' for a long time as if we appear to own the government's agenda, we cannot challenge that process. Cuts in public expenditure actually make it very hard to deliver the Big Society and it is hard to achieve localism in equal measures across the country as some communities find it harder to tap into resources than others. This was a challenging afternoon and I do hope that our churches will engage with these reports in the coming months.

Conference moved into parallel sessions to enable us to give closer scrutiny to eight of the reports. I was part of the session which was looking at

the interim report of the Education Commission. This commission had consulted widely around the Connexion with a range of practitioners in its attempt to formulate an updated policy across the Connexion whilst acknowledging that here is a smaller resource to implement it. Items debated included our concerns that Methodist schools in the state sector should operate an open admissions policy to enable more disadvantaged families access to schools offering a distinctive spiritual input. It is hoped that the independent Methodist schools will be able to offer resources and expertise to schools in the state sector. Conference needed to give permission to one primary school to apply for academy status as a matter of urgency. The school had been listed as failing and in order to keep its Christian ethos, the Church needed to act quickly in this instance, without necessarily offering endorsement to the government strategy of working towards academies.

A notice of motion was brought by our own Chair concerning the increasing use of drones or unmanned military aircraft in warfare. This followed a fringe meeting of the Methodist Peace Fellowship which brought this matter to our attention, emphasising the numbers of civilians wrongfully killed by unarmed aircraft. Conference was moved by a speech from the Methodist Bishop of Pakistan who spoke of first-hand experiences of communities shattered by the use of drones and of the increase in tension that they have caused. The Joint Public Issues Team based at Methodist Church House will do further research on this issue.

There was so much more that I cannot include but would urge you to look at the Methodist Conference website to fill in the gaps.

Motorway Experience - so watch your speed!

For those who like speed on the motorway here are a few hymns for you:

60mph	God will take care of you
70mph	Guide me, O thou great Jehovah
80mph	Just a closer walk with thee
90mph	Nearer my God to thee
100mph	Precious memories
100mph+	Lord, I'm coming home

Springdale Development

Nicola Jones

Hopefully when you are sitting reading this the brand new Atrium will be finished and we will be getting ready for the Anniversary celebrations and official dedication service. It has been many years since we embarked on this ambitious project and I decided I would put pen to paper with some of my thoughts on the whole project.

Almost a quarter of my life ago (yes, I'm that young!) the Church Council asked if I would take on the role of fundraising Secretary/Grants Officer on the Development Committee. At this stage we were looking at turning around the church worship area and providing a safe and secure entrance at the same time, making it warm and inviting, amongst other reasons. After a few questions and some prayerful consideration I agreed. Little did I know that 10 years later I would still be 'at it'! In fact I am sure that if Barbara, Lesley, and I had known what we were letting ourselves in for we may have had second thoughts. Donald of course had done it all before (which makes me wonder if he had had a blow to the head when he agreed to spearhead the project!) His knowledge of the Methodist Church and its workings is incredible and his pastoral support a God send.

I cannot tell you how many letters have been written or application forms filled in, the number of meetings held, the minutes and accounts kept, as I haven't kept a note, but if you want to see a copy of the paperwork we all have I think it would definitely fill a 4 drawer cabinet! I can't wait to shred all but the essential stuff!

After the success of the first phase and following Richard's retirement (what a joke!) he was co-opted on to the committee, and thank goodness he was. New blood and ideas for us all! Obviously the plans were ready and as we had started the work (the white metal double doors and the temporary ramp into church kept the project from needing to go back for planning permission again) it was only another £200,000 we needed!!! We carried on. Little by little the fund grew. Small jars of bronze coins by a dedicated few swelled the coffers, and cake sales, coffee mornings and

many small donations joined the larger ones made at concerts, food evenings and many more events too numerous to mention. It was taking ages. There were those who understandably wondered why we had started 'all this' when our general finances were not brilliant, but my job was not to worry about that as I was charged with pushing through with the fundraising for the plans in place.

Two years ago we felt that things were becoming laboured; we were all tired (well maybe Donald wasn't!) and I was perhaps a little worn down, but not quite to the bone, and with the additional help of a professional fundraiser we set to work again. Robert joined us and added yet more support and we carried on.

I can honestly say that I am not sure who suggested the make up of the committee, although I have my suspicions, and I have never asked, but I would say that in all of the years we have been meeting there has not been a cross word. We haven't always agreed on everything but the support I have received from the others has been amazing.

When we asked at the beginning of every meeting for God's blessing on our development it was surely given. Many of you prayed for us and that was comforting. Many of you verbalised your support and the amount of your own time and the money from your own pockets has been astonishing.

I would also like to pay tribute to our spouses. No one of us could have spent the time and energy required without the support of someone at home. Not all of our spouses are here along side us every week but each one of them supports Springdale and their partner in the most incredible way. They obviously love us and I'm sure I am not wrong when I say we love them.

Springdale has been part of my whole life. It gives to me far more than I give to it and I hope that the time and effort I have contributed is a small part of the jigsaw which has enabled the work to go on here. I may have been the loud voice of the Development Committee at Church Council and General Church Meetings but the only reason we have been able to secure all of the money from the many Trusts who have supported us, is because of all the work that Springdale members put in. Every

voluntary organisation using the premises, every single volunteer that enables the events and activities to go on, has all contributed to the success of these grants. No one of us is greater than the other. I am here because I believe in serving the community. Showing the love of Christ in action and looking after a place where people can 'belong'.

It has been an emotional journey for me, and one which is not yet over - the fencing and the car park are yet to be finished! I am looking really forward to the celebrations and I hope you are too. Let us rejoice and praise God for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come!

Thoughts from Springdale's Chairman of Property and Finance

Richard Gould

I have been amazed by the number of favourable comments from all sorts of people from within the church community and from outside on the completion of the atrium. Our thanks should go to those who had the vision so many years ago of what could be achieved. I would particularly like to thank those who have worked alongside the builders to refurbish the old entrance so that it all looks part of the new development. Please be patient while some of the details of lighting and the ceiling are completed.

The car park and fencing are part of the redevelopment and will be done as soon as funds are available. The car park has to be the first priority and we are a significant way towards getting this done.

Inevitably, when part of a building is renewed or refurbished it makes other bits look shabby. We need to be mindful of this and look to what we need to do next. My thoughts are that we should turn our attention next to the large hall, possibly to renew the ceiling, refurbish the floor and decorate the relatively small areas which are painted. Obviously decisions on this are down to Property and Finance Committee which will discuss the way forward when we meet in the autumn.

All our Varied Skills and Arts

Wendy Gould

There have already been many expressions of joy and thankfulness on the completion of Springdale's new atrium, marking the long-awaited Phase 3 of the development scheme. The Church Anniversary and Dedication celebrations on 16 October will, I'm sure, be an opportunity for expressing our gratitude to God, and also to the many individuals and groups whose commitment and generosity have made it possible. The members of the Development Committee will be named and thanked. But I have had the opportunity of close observation of how this committee has worked, and I would like to commend it as a splendid example of six people of very different experience and personality, bringing their particular gifts, working collaboratively, and quietly covering for each other during times of absence, illness etc.

There is Donald Ryan, whose wisdom and pastoral experience of church building development has been invaluable in his chairing of the committee. Nicola Jones has brought amazing energy to the often uphill task of spear-heading the fundraising, and Barbara Morris has managed the accounts with cheerful efficiency, as well as keeping the committee firmly rooted in practicality. Lesley Cook has never failed to bring to the group the perspectives of all ages of church life and of the community, together with her infectious enthusiasm; (she's taken the Minutes too). Richard Gould's technical knowledge and experience have been integral to the planning and management of the project, and Robert, though not always able to fit meetings into his busy schedule, has offered constant spiritual support and inspired vision.

Many others, of course, have contributed, and will continue to do so. But if we're talking about dedication, skill and hard work, then we must also thank Dennis Baldwin for all he has done. For I am not the only one who could sign herself "An Atrium Widow"!

Wolverhampton Riots - Sikh support for Springdale Methodist Church and Community Centre

Adapted from an article in the *Methodist Recorder*

At the time of the recent Wolverhampton August riots there was an uplifting act of generosity and an outstanding Inter Faith goodwill gesture. The Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji Sikh temple in Wolverhampton gave a 'Friendship' cheque of £5000 to support the imaginative Community Church development scheme of the Springdale Methodist Church. Even though the Prime Minister was on his way to meet the leaders, police and politicians and to view the extensive riot damage in Wolverhampton Paul Uppal M.P. for Wolverhampton South West kept his appointment as a trustee of the Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji Sikh temple to present a cheque to the Springdale Methodist Church and Community Centre. At the presentation Paul Uppal said, "What has impressed me most was the community pulling together, people from different faiths working together for a common goal. The money donated today will go a long way to completing the community centre, which I hope will be enjoyed by all members of the community." Donald Ryan responded, "We are extremely grateful for the generous gift from our Sikh friends for the community centre. With so many negative things in our society it is good to see Multi faith in action and for one group to support the community work of another. Many people of different faiths and none use the community facilities at Springdale and they are all very welcome."

As soon as the ceremony was over Paul Uppal had to rush away to keep his appointment with David Cameron. After Paul Uppal had left, Donald Ryan was pleased to accept an invitation extended to the Springdale Development Committee to be guests at the Temple. Rev Ryan then gave an outline of the beginnings of Methodism and John and Charles Wesley stressing that alongside their evangelical mission the Wesley's visionary social and community projects.

Sikh Gift

Robert Ely

I am thrilled that we have been able to complete the “Atrium” at Springdale, which is such a wonderful extension to our building there. We are so grateful to the Development Group which has battled for so long under the dedicated leadership of Rev Donald Ryan to bring this about.

I am also delighted that we have received a gift of £5000 from Wolverhampton’s Sikh Community towards the cost of the development. If you get the Methodist Recorder you’ll have seen a great picture of Donald receiving the cheque in the 25 August edition. I really hope that this can be the beginning of a fruitful and interesting interchange of ideas and ways of working. I do not know much about the Sikh religion but I believe it would be good for us all to know more. They have invited us to go and visit them and I look forward to doing that, not just because they are renowned for their hospitality, but because I see this as a way of developing our relationship. So look out for a date, and come if you can!

Date for your diary!

Please keep 16 October free so that you can be part of the special Anniversary and Dedication Day.

8.00am You are invited to start this special day around the 'Lord's Table'.

10.30am A special 'Cafe Church' when you will be able to be part of the 'Opening the Atrium Doors to welcome to the Community' ceremony.

3.00pm The Highlight Dedication Service with Robert preaching & Donald leading the service with special guests taking part.

Why do we still need to support Traidcraft?

Teresa Ely

Paul Chandler, Traidcraft's Chief Executive, puts it like this:

“The growth of the fair trade movement in the UK is a success story for which the church can claim much of the credit. Thank you for the part your church has played in helping to make the UK the world's largest fair trade market.

It's a great achievement and one for which we give thanks to God. But the job's not done, which is why we need our church supporters more than ever. The spread of fair trade into the mainstream – which we helped pioneer – is giving hope and opportunity to millions of small-scale growers and their families. However, supermarkets deal in large volumes so they can only work with producer organisations that have already achieved Fairtrade certification and have the capacity to supply them in the quantities they need. That offers no opportunity to those commodity producers who are not yet at the Fairtrade Mark level – but would like to be – or to the millions struggling to support themselves and their families making crafts, textiles, jewellery, ceramics, or paper and card products, for which no Fairtrade Mark yet exists.

As a Christian response to poverty Traidcraft directs much of its efforts towards these poor and marginalised producers, working with them to help improve their products, refine their techniques and develop their small businesses in ways which will allow them to gain their share of the global fair trade market.

People selling Traidcraft products in churches around the UK are a vital part of that picture. As well as providing a significant proportion of the income that pays for the work we do with producers, they are a “shop window” for our Christian values and our response to the scriptural call to seek justice for the poor. As such, they play a powerful role in our advocacy and outreach towards the church community and to the world beyond the church doors.

We are earnestly asking you and your congregation to continue your support for our work by supporting your local Traidcraft Fair Trader or outlet – and through your excellent example, encourage other churches to do the same.”

So please continue to support us in any or all of the following ways:

- Buy or order from us at our stalls after worship
- Go to **Wolverhampton Fairtrade** in Darlington Street Church –
Wednesdays 10am - 4pm & 5.30 - 7.30pm
Thursdays 5.30 - 7.30pm
Fridays 11am - 4 pm.
- Come to the **Circuit Just Fayre** on Saturday 15 October at Beckminster from 11am - 3pm with stalls, refreshments and the Fashion Show.
- Come to the **Traidcraft Open House** at 34 Bellencroft Gardens on Friday 4 November 10am - 9pm and Saturday 5 November 10am – 5pm.
- Take a Traidcraft Catalogue to work.
- Help at **Wolverhampton Fairtrade, Circuit Just Fayre** or **Traidcraft Open House**

Many thanks to all of you who have bought from us so regularly over the past year. Teresa Ely 686807, Diana Beaumont 895585.

A world freed from the scandal of poverty where trade is just and people and communities can flourish. That is the vision that has led Traidcraft to set itself the following targets for the next three years:

- To work directly with at least 400,000 people in the developing world each year – 500,000 by 2014.
- To integrate environmental goals into our programmes
- To prioritise the needs of women
- To demonstrate that at least 80% of those we work with report improvements in income, dignity and hope
- To increase the awareness of Traidcraft especially in the Christian community
- To grow sales of Traidcraft products by 10% per annum
- To attract 10% more Traidcraft supporters each year
- To increase the scale of the work of our charity by 15%.

Can you help this vision come to reality?

Walking the streets

Jackie Neilson

En-route to our holiday destination in Scotland we visited the City of Glasgow. Catching the train from our accommodation to the city was a 20minute journey. It saved the hassle of driving and parking, especially as there was the inevitable road-works on our link road to the city.

The day we visited proved to be somewhat showery, thankfully mild, but waterproofs were certainly needed. We walked most of the day, from 10.30 to 5.00. Queen Street Station took us into St. George's Square with impressive buildings, the hub of Glasgow. The architecture was amazing. They don't build like this anymore, such attention to detail. "Sky high", perhaps America copied the plan. We heard in the media on our return that an American film is to be made in the city. One feels dwarfed walking in the streets below. During the day we managed to visit the Cathedral, an immense building built over many centuries, a rare example of a complete pre-Reformation Scottish cathedral with many memorials inside and a beautiful Celtic cross. The Undercroft church obviously as big as the cathedral contains the shrine of St. Mungo.

Provand's Lordship (the oldest house in the city - 15th century) is across the road from the cathedral, built originally as a three storey tenement, then as a Manse for the Preceptor of the chapel and hospital of St. Nicholas, caring for twelve old men. In the late 19th century it became identified as The Manse for the Preben of Provan or Barlanark, later known as Lord of Provan, hence its current name .As it was showery we sat in the cloisters to eat our packed lunch, like many other people - obviously a popular spot.

We walked along Saltmarket, an extremely long road of Victorian buildings comprising houses, flats, various businesses, and shops busy with traffic. There were many unusual features on the buildings but very little greenery around. Glasgow Green was a complete contrast - a park at the side of the River Clyde, but as it was raining we trekked on to The Gorbals, for old times sake - family connections, but very much altered. There are lots of railway bridges here which are no longer used, with

plenty of traffic on the roads, high rise flats, housing developments, but not many tenements here now. A church that is derelict, boarded up, the ground covered with weeds - a sad sight. But we found the location we were looking for, though the tenement is now long gone.

So we walked back along Saltmarket and veered off towards Sauchiehall Street to take high tea at The Willow Tearooms. It was decorated by Charles Rennie Mackintosh - very elegant décor' - with delicious cakes to eat. One has to enter the jewellers shop and climb the stairs to reach the tea room. Well worth a visit!

Back on the walk to Buchanan Street passing some lovely shops and the statue of Donald Dewar, Scottish MP. We continued along this street to a small alleyway where The Lighthouse is situated. This building is the former offices of the Glasgow Daily Herald newspaper. It's now a Design Centre and gallery. You can climb 153 steps to see the Glasgow sky line - I chose the escalator instead! We had a good view though as there was a clearer sky by late afternoon.

Our days walking almost complete. We scurried back to Queen Street station to catch the train. Luckily this station is all on the ground floor! A lovely relaxing journey back to Cumbernauld to rest our weary legs!

Calling the Disciples

Elwyn Davies, based on Mark 3 vv13-19

By Galilee's lake, where Jesus was teaching,
There were many boats and people were fishing;
He then bid the men, "Come leave your calling,
For 'Fishers of Men' you are in the making."
Simon and Andrew, without hesitation
With James and John, took the invitation
Simon the Zealot and, of course, Thaddaeus,
Matthew and James, the sons of Alphaeus,
Philip, Bartholomew, they followed that day,
And even Judas, who was to betray.

St Mungo

Jackie Neilson

The church in Glasgow was established by Saint Kentigern (commonly known as Saint Mungo) in the 6th century, and the cathedral was dedicated in his honour. The cathedral was built over many centuries.



St. Mungo is the patron saint of Glasgow, and is on the city coat of arms. The symbols refer to the stories and legends associated with him -

The bird that never flew
The tree that never grew
The fish that never swam
The bell that never rang

His shrine is still marked in the lower church of the cathedral. The Black Adder, or Car Fergus Aisle, on the south side of the cathedral was probably constructed as a new resting place for his remains.

God's Wonderful World

Jackie Neilson

During June I was one of many people gazing and taking photos of a field of poppies, not a green field dotted with poppies, but a sea of red, as far as the eye could see - an amazing sight at Wall Heath off the A449 that lasted three or four weeks.

I was also fortunate to see The Field of Dreams in South Somerset late August.. Once again an awesome sight. 57 varieties of wild flowers were sown in a field. A tapestry of colour. Its been in flower since July and even though some flowers have finished there were plenty of varieties to be seen. I spotted cosmos (pink), coreopsis (yellow), cornflower (blue), mallow (pink), everlasting flower (pink), larkspur (blue), poppy (red), chrysanthemum (white), golden mane (yellow), corn chamomile (white),

and sunflowers (yellow). There were many more flowers that I couldn't name. The Field of Dreams was inspired by a visit to Kew and South Africa. It truly is a sight to behold.

Both locations leave you with a feel good factor, at peace with God and his creation. What a wonderful world! No-one could look at these sights without smiling.

Leisure

W. H. Davies

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare? -
No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

Quiz Answers (from page 14)

- | | | |
|----|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Jacob | Genesis 37 v3 |
| 2 | Aaron | Exodus 30 vv7-10 |
| 3 | Three times | 2 nd Corinthians 11 v25 |
| 4 | Kish | 1 Samuel 9 v3 |
| 5. | Deborah | Judges 5 v7 |

Rev Thomas Coke

Jackie Neilson

On visiting South Petherton, in Somerset a stroll around the village was very illuminating. I spotted a blue plaque above a building in the main street. The Rev. Thomas Coke lived here, the curate of the parish from 1771-1777. He was a friend of John Wesley, the Father of Methodist Missions, and the First Bishop of the Methodist Church in America – this title he shared together with Francis Asbury (from Great Barr, Birmingham).

Thomas Coke was born in Brecon, South Wales, in 1747, attended Oxford gaining a BA and MA, and also became a Doctor of Civil Law. He served as Mayor in 1771 where he was born. In the same year he was ordained in the Church of England and served at South Petherton as curate. He'd already allied himself with the Methodist Movement, which made for trouble when a new rector arrived, as Coke was preaching open air services. He was dismissed in 1777 but returned to preach outside in 1807.

He met John Wesley in 1776 becoming one of his closest assistants. He was appointed Superintendent of London District in 1780, and President of the Methodist Church in Ireland in 1782. A conference of Methodist preachers was held at Baltimore, USA, at which Coke and Asbury were elected bishops. Coke returned to England in 1785 but made many more visits. He spoke out on slavery and met George Washington, later travelling to the West Indies. Following Wesley's death in 1791 Coke became Secretary to the English Conference. and President twice. He also travelled to Paris and preached in French. Further missions followed to Gibraltar and Sierra Leone and he promoted others to set up missions in Canada and Scotland.

In 1805, aged 58, he married Penelope Smith, a wealthy lady, who happily spent her own fortune furthering the missions. She travelled with him until her death. In 1811 he married for a second time but his new wife died the following year. He died in 1814 after 4 months at sea en-route to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) hoping to set up missions in the East Indies. Asbury described Coke as “a gentleman, a scholar, a bishop to us and as a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labours, in services, the greatest man in the last century.” In the church at South Petherton a dedication is inscribed to Rev. Thomas Coke on the choir stalls.

Mother Superior - A 17th Century Nun's Prayer

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself, that I am growing older and will someday be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other's pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a Saint – some of them are so hard to live with – but a sour old person is one of the crowing works of the Devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Amen

Springdale Wives

This year £2400 has been raised for Help for Heroes - thank you all for your support! Please keep your support up for next year when our charity will be Compton Hospice.

Sorry for the Moan!

Helen Cooper, editor

I am very grateful that most articles are now being forwarded in electronic form - thank you all very much - in that respect my life as editor of Triangle has become much easier! However, some articles are being sent in seemingly without being checked for errors. Some folk are even sending in articles that virtually need rewriting! **Please** - this isn't my job!!!

Please, please, please check for spellings and punctuation - if there are red lines in your article it means that there are mistakes - right click the word/area and you should be offered some alternatives. Take care though as you may well be offered American spellings, which aren't required! Please only use standard abbreviations, for example, e.g., etc., and i.e.. And no ampersands (&)!

Feeling adventurous and have to create a list? Why not use the tab button (left hand side of your keyboard) to indent? This also means that the space bar does not need to be hit loads of times, followed by trying to align words without success!

One last thing - when emailing please use the address below - many articles are being sent directly to my personal email and could end up as spam! Cheers me dears!!! ;)

Deadline for the next edition of Triangle is
Sunday 20 November, 2011

Remember! No photocopies! Please check copyright and gain permission where necessary! Email if you can - it makes things so much easier!

Please hand in your articles directly, or via your stewards, to **Helen Cooper**. Alternatively, follow the link on the Springdale website in the "contacts" section (www.springdalechurch.org.uk) or just email to [triangle\[at\]springdalechurch.org.uk](mailto:triangle[at]springdalechurch.org.uk)