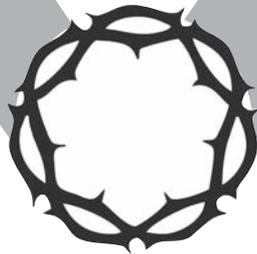


Triangle



'DO NOT BE AFRAID, FOR I KNOW
THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR JESUS,
WHO WAS CRUCIFIED. HE IS NOT HERE;
HE HAS RISEN, JUST AS HE SAID.'



The quarterly magazine of the
Methodist Churches of
Springdale and Wombourne

Spring 2015

Beauty in the shadows

David Hotchkiss, editor



Hello and welcome. A few days ago, after a late night, I stumbled into the bathroom long gone 9am. After 40-odd years of getting up nearer to 6am, as an early retiree I have no pangs of guilt about this. The sun was shining, but the room seemed strangely dark. Some penny dropped in the spacious vault I call my mind and I remembered there was to be a partial eclipse of the sun. I experienced the one in 1999, viewed through bits of exposed film from the office window, and now, having tried to watch the chewed-up disc of the sun unsuccessfully through items of domestic storage ware, put it all aside in the knowledge that it would be on TV later. It was. All night.

These days, such things are great fun and provide practical lessons for our children, but our ancient forefathers saw it differently. In various cultures an eclipse was seen as the sun being eaten up – maybe a warning of impending doom, a punishment for sin. Of course they soon learned that the dimming of the sun was only transitory. In the same way that the sun hid its life-giving light during the winter months, they expected, and were thankful for, its inevitable return to life.

Easter, of course, is all about new life. Our Lord Jesus was laid low, only to be restored to eternal life, as it will be for all those who believe in him. We have reports in this issue of Triangle of new life, and share in the joy of parents, grandparents and others. There is renewal, also, in the fabric of a church, and fresh, new views of the way in which we reach out to the world, through our work and worship.

I heard one of the TV eclipse commentators saying that, “just by coincidence”, the appearance of the moon from the earth is 50 times smaller than the sun, but the sun is just 50 times further away, so it exactly covers the sun every so often and allows scientists to peer into its secrets. Such “coincidences” seem to have created the beautiful world we inhabit, and I suspect we should hand over their interpretation to the “experts” only with caution.

In this season new life is all around us, and I trust we will all share in its beauty in every way we are allowed. I wish you all a very beautiful Easter.

The deadline for the next edition of Triangle is

June 28

Articles can be given to me or your stewards, sent by post to David Hotchkiss, or emailed to triangle@springdalechurch.org.uk

Hold and be held

The Reverend Christopher Collins



Friends,

“Nothing,” writes the apostle Paul to the church in Rome, “will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

However such hope can sometimes feel like sand that effortlessly falls through our fingers. At times such as these, things seem lost and we can’t see which way to turn.

There have been times when I have felt like that and we should feel no shame in admitting it. The important thing is what we do next. I am always encouraged by the story of the disciples we meet in the gospels. Full of faith and doubt they wrestle with the idea of faith.

Confused and dispirited by the events of Good Friday, we get a sense from John’s gospel account that the disciples were together in one place. We can only imagine what their conversation would have been but we are told that as they met together Jesus came and said: “Peace be with you”.

We read in Luke’s gospel that two disciples were on their way to Emmaus when they met a stranger. As he broke bread to eat, the risen Christ was revealed. These and countless other examples are moments of resurrection when fear is dispelled and hope abounds.

For me, that moment of resurrection came on a retreat. I was actively held within a community of faith and in that holding there was a moment of new life and new hope. There didn’t need to be any words – it was in the holding that resurrection burst in.

It was confirmed as we broke bread together – as disturbed crumbs tumbled from the torn loaf, Christ was revealed. As I felt the grains of my faith fall through my fingers, I felt Christ scoop them up and place them back into my hands and somehow multiply them.

As we approach Easter we are all aware of people and places where hope is dimmed. In the Middle East, for example, nations are groaning in despair and people are longing to be held by us in their search for renewed hope for peace and justice.

So as we come to this season of resurrection let us be willing to hold and be held. Let us be willing to break bread and find Christ in the brokenness. Let us pray that our hearts and minds be joined in Christ’s resurrection so that we might reveal the hope of resurrection to all who feel hopeless.

May the hope of resurrection be yours this Easter.

Rev’d Chris

Wake up to Women's Day

Bernard Davis finds himself the only man in church . . .

Why was I the only man at the service at St Bart's for Women's World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 6th? The service was at 7.30pm, so it was well past normal working hours.

Without doing a survey of men I can only surmise possible reasons:

- 1 The title means that it is only for women. Yet this is not the case and I know for a fact that the service was advertised for several weeks in St Bart's Blog and Springdale Notices as being for men and women.
- 2 Men think they are superior to women and that women cannot structure a service of good quality that is relevant to both sexes.
- 3 Men are apathetic to what women think and to women's needs.
- 4 Men are afraid of women and think that men will be pilloried because of the way some men treat women.

There are, of course, other reasons that I have not thought of or listed.

I have been to at least half-a-dozen Women's World day of Prayer services. Always I have been challenged to think and have derived much benefit from the services. This year was one of the best yet.

It was prepared by Christian women of the Bahamas. Lively Caribbean music was played before and after the service.

The hymns were very moving and relevant. The theme was about praising and loving God and loving one another. John 13: 1-17 was dramatised to show how we must follow Christ's example, not actually by washing people's feet but by caring and supporting them with practical love.

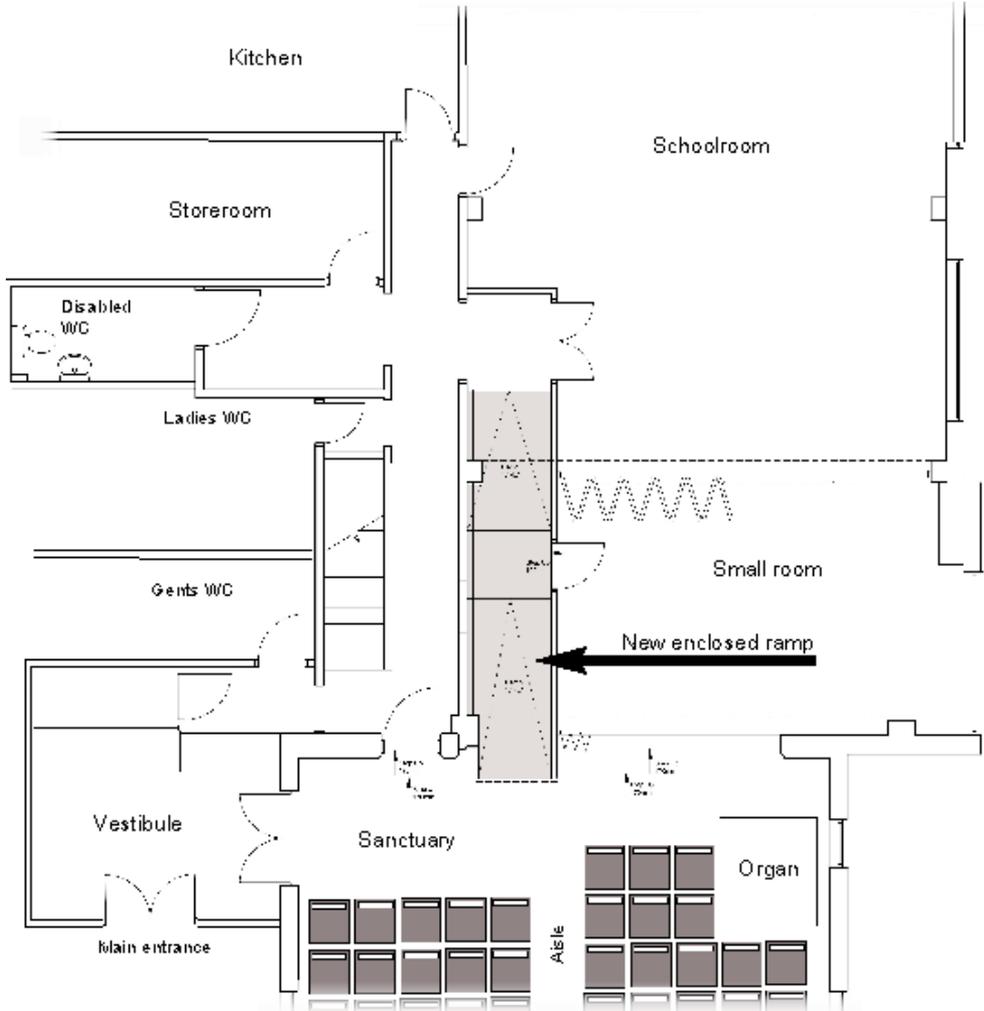
We ended the prayer of confession by saying "Lord, we are amazed by you. How you love us! How deep and radical is your love. Teach us how to be more like you and to model your all-embracing love and gracious hospitality to all your children."

In our prayers of intercession we prayed for people living in poverty, those suffering from domestic violence, teenage mothers, HIV and Aids sufferers, women with breast cancer and refugees, migrant workers and illegal immigrants who are held in the detention centre in New Providence Island. All the speakers had clear voices that modulated well to make the words meaningful.

Come on men who worship at the Churches Together in Penn! Wake up! Realise what you are missing and pray for guidance in making a decision to attend the service in 2016.

Appeal launched for disabled access

Plans for ramp approved at Wombourne



This is the exciting new plan for ramp access at Wombourne. The scheme, which is estimated will cost about £12,000, was approved by the Church Council in February, and fund-raising is already under way. The layout was chosen from four basic options, and was thought to be the least intrusive on the Sanctuary and to be the most modest for potential users. A toilet for disabled visitors is already in place on the upper level. The new corridor will slope gently up to the schoolroom level. Existing double doors will be moved to the new stud walling, leaving open access to the toilet. The architect will now draw up detailed plans to be submitted to three possible builders. Fund-raising plans will shortly be announced.

Springdale vestry news

Phillippa Cooper, senior steward

As I write this report I can't help but marvel at the wonderful sunny weather so early in March and the abundance of spring flowers all around us. It is also a time to reflect on the very busy last few months that included some new initiatives here at Springdale.

On Saturday, December 6th, we held an extremely successful Christmas Fair. The weather was kind to us and we are grateful to everyone who helped us to raise more than £2,000. Our toy service and parade, held on the following day, provided a very large number of toys and other gifts for the Haven. We were pleased that Hayley Edwards, from the Haven, was able to join us and receive the gifts on behalf of this very worthwhile charity.

On December 21st our Junior Church delighted us with an extremely moving nativity. This was the start of a very busy week. On Monday 22nd we held our first Sheep Trail Nativity. This service included a wonderful performance by the Penn Puppets that entranced our very young congregation. After such amazing feedback I know that we are hoping that this can be repeated.

Our candlelit carol concert once again packed the church, with the atrium needed for extra seating. The Springdale Orchestra were excellent, as usual, and we are very grateful to all of our very talented musicians for their continuing commitment.

The Springdale covenant service was on January 11th and this was followed three weeks later by the circuit service at Darlington Street.

In February we had the first of the "meet and eat" lunchtime social events. This is a monthly gathering for the older members of our Springdale family. The feedback from the meeting has been tremendously positive. Once again, we are lucky to have a group of willing volunteers to organise the food, transport and activities.

The ecumenical Lent house groups are well under way. The course this year is entitled "Another Story Must Begin" and is based on the film Les Miserables. This is a great opportunity to have bible study and chat with members of the other three churches in Penn.

During this season of Lent we are continuing and extending our support for the Good Shepherd Ministry by taking part in the 2015 Metre Mountain of Tins Lenten Appeal. It is very satisfying to see the pyramid of cans taking shape in the atrium.

The scouts are helping with an Easter Sunday barbecue which precedes the morning service when our Lent liturgy will culminate with a crown of flowers being placed on the cross. On the horizon, we are eagerly looking forward to the ordination of Rev'd Chris on June 28th. More details to follow in the next magazine.

As this is my last report as senior steward I would like to thank all of the team for their tremendous help and support throughout the year. My particular thanks are

extended to Sheila Sanders and Judy Staley as they come to the end of their term of office. It has been a real privilege to work alongside them both. I have certainly benefitted from their immense knowledge on all things “vestry related”. James Peterson will be taking on the role of senior steward at the beginning of May and we also look forward to new stewards being nominated at the annual church meeting on April 19th.

Yours in Christ . . .

Springdale pastoral news

Jane Rawlings, pastoral secretary

Spring is starting to spring into life as God’s amazing creation is blooming all around us.

On the topic of new life, we have had the joy of celebrating two baptisms in the past few months. On December 14th we welcomed the family of Alfie Smith and then on February 8th Daniel Smith. A special day for all concerned. May they both continue to grow with the reassuring knowledge that God is with them every step of the way.

Sadly some of our family are finding things difficult at the moment due to health concerns. We think especially of John Roberts, recovering following his fall, and Dot and Denis Merrick, who continue to be in our thoughts with Dot’s failing health. We remember all who are recovering from operations or who have undergone tests. We give thanks for all in the medical professions who offer care and compassion at these difficult times.

Congratulations to anyone who has celebrated a birthday or has one coming up. We pass on our congratulations again to Winsome and Fiona who have both celebrated significant birthdays in the past month.

The baby boom continues here at Springdale with the safe arrival of Wesley on March 11th, a grandson for Phillipa and John Cooper. With new life comes new responsibilities, concerns and a lack of sleep. But God’s amazing creation will also bring endless amounts of joy and love.

God bless . . .

A date for your diary

**The circuit Fair Trade Group is
organising a social at Springdale on
Friday, July 10th at 7pm.**

Brenda

GENERAL ELECTION 2015

Local Hustings

Friday, April 17th

7.30pm

PENN UNITED

REFORMED CHURCH

Penn Road WV4 5QF

Come and hear candidates for

WOLVERHAMPTON SOUTH WEST

Constituency

Questions in advance by March 30th to

K B Watts

pechustings2015@~~zed~~hotmail.com

**Organised by the Penn Ecumenical Council of the
Four Churches of Penn:**

***Penn URC, Springdale Methodist Church,
St Bartholomew's, St Michael's***

The legacy of poor Olive

David Hotchkiss



The sad story of a vulnerable elderly lady who died needlessly in a fire prompted the founding of the Olive Branch initiative more than four years ago. Recently, members from Wombourne attended an evening at Beckminster Methodist Church where, as people who may have contact with those at risk, they were made aware of the hazards they should recognise, so that the appropriate authorities could be involved.

Olive Branch is organised by Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service. Olive was a rather eccentric old lady who lived in an isolated, overgrown cottage near to where the V Festival is held in Staffordshire. Her social work team were already aware of some danger signals – poor cooking facilities, burnt pots and pans on the stove, vermin infestations, blocked exits and the fact that Olive was a smoker. But they were unsure to whom they should pass on their concerns.

She died in a fire at the cottage just days before she was due to move out.

The day after, a meeting was called between Olive's care team and the fire service where it was proposed to provide training for partner agencies – recognise hazards, and if no simple solution was available, inform the fire service for immediate attention. Those involved with pastoral visiting were clearly a target, hence the meeting at Beckminster.

The meeting was led by Community Safety Officer Rachael Spruce, who told Olive's story and showed us slides of the cottage. Safety checks, she told us, were free in Staffordshire, but at present only available free to the over-65s in the West Midlands. They provide referrals for people with mobility problems, for instance, and help identify fire hazards. The over-55 age group was by far the most vulnerable group.

Rachael also showed us a video – staged especially – which, scene by scene, asked us to look at the risks facing an elderly woman as she allowed a stranger into her dreadfully risk-laden home. We were asked to identify the problems, such as trailing flex and other poor electrics – and even to ask the question "Who is this woman?" (the unidentified visitor, whose intention was unclear).

Another video showed how a fire can take hold so quickly, starting with a carelessly-placed candle next to a TV. And older people weren't the only ones at risk, said Rachael, as was shown in the story of a police officer, living alone, who died in a fire caused by a chip pan. Substance abuse, alcohol and smoking were all risk factors. The fitting and upkeep of smoke detectors helped reduce the risk.

We went home and checked ours . . .

For more information contact your local station or email

[olivebranch\[at\]staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:olivebranch[at]staffordshirefire.gov.uk)

A generous helping of 3Generate

Lesley Cook on fun and faith in Shropshire

“When we go again next year . . .” – well, I think that told me how much five junior church members from Springdale enjoyed themselves at 3Generate, held at the Pioneer Centre, Cleobury Mortimer, over a cold November weekend.

What is 3Generate? It is an assembly of children and young people, aged 8-23, from the Methodist Church of Great Britain. The Youth President and six representatives are elected there and



they make sure that the voices of young people at 3Generate and throughout the Connexion get heard at Methodist Conference.

But of course they also had a lot of fun as the Pioneer Centre has many outdoor activities, including high ropes. Combine this with stop-animation, art, drama, discussion groups, Godly Play, Psalm Drummers and Bob Hartman’s story-telling and much more! The food and accommodation were also excellent – “Just like a hotel but with no TV”; “I liked lunchtimes best”.

The theme for the weekend was “A Generous Life”, considering generosity in all its meanings. They were also encouraged to speak out and participate in their local churches – so watch out! I asked the children, all aged between eight and 11, what they thought of the weekend.

Tia and Sam enjoyed all the activities and also the chance to be somewhere new with new friends. Tia particularly enjoyed the challenge of the high ropes and pushing herself further than she thought possible. She also enjoyed appearing on 3Gen TV on YouTube. Sam enjoyed having a midnight feast. Leo enjoyed the high ropes, the inflatable games and the entertainment.

Dylan and Daniel particularly enjoyed the stop-animation, using Plasticine and Lego. Their other comments show just how much they have thought about what they heard and did: “It has inspired me to write some prayers for church. I’d really like to do that.” “Some of the people inspired me, like the Youth President. He showed me that you can be really into God, but in a fun way. He was really funny.” “It was all about generosity. In Advent we could save some of our pocket money and give it to charity. We made loom band bracelets in different colours to remind us about being generous.”

As a Junior Church teacher, I tagged along too. Our group, Generate+, consisted of paid and unpaid children and youth workers, who had brought children along to the event, and we were based at the golf club next door. Some of us shared holiday chalets, others were minibussed in from Kidderminster Travel Lodge. There

were also day delegates for both events.

I was able to learn amongst other things, about Voice Activated, which is a new Methodist resource to help children and young people participate fully in church activities, according to their age. On Church Council? Stewards? Planning?

Worship leading? Another resource is Voice Activated – Making Change Happen. This helps us encourage young people to find out and campaign on issues.

We also had an excellent bible study from the Rev'd Ken Howcroft, President of Conference, on Matthew 10: 5-15. But best of all was meeting children and youth workers from all over the Connexion, even Guernsey, and sharing our stories.

Places for 3Generate are unfortunately limited. Look out for booking information on The Well (on-line resource of Methodist children and youth) around June. For those who can't get to 3Generate, there are The Big Sleepover and the Big Weekend which you can organise yourself.

Bob's brainteaser

See if you can tell what these seven words have in common?

1. **Banana**
2. **Dresser**
3. **Grammar**
4. **Potato**
5. **Revive**
6. **Uneven**
7. **Assess**

You'll kick yourself when you find out. Answer below.

Bob Hughes

In all of the words, if you take the first letter, place it at the end of the word, and then spell the word backwards, it will be the same word. Did you figure it out?

Why?

A thought from Carole Walker

Wisdom is . . .

Not knowing all the answers to all the problems of each day.

Not knowing why this has happened to me and not to someone else.

Not soaking up all the knowledge this world can offer, but knowing that behind the whole of life, for now and evermore, God is sovereign and, though I may not understand, He is working to make us each according to His plan.

If we ask, there is an answer to each problem, though it may not be the one we want to hear. Believe, your God will take your hand if you allow.

Let Him guide your every step, and, when you feel unsure, believe that He knows best.

Wombourne pastoral news

Pauline Hotchkiss, pastoral secretary

Each morning I walk my dog along the east section of the Wombrook. I love spring, I would say it is my favourite season of the year. The snowdrops have been wonderful. Watch out for the tale of Ty's Snowdrop Walk.

My favourite Christian festival is Easter, which is fast approaching. Next Sunday will be Palm Sunday which will be a very joyful time.

A group from Wombourne visit The Maltings each month to share with them the love of Jesus. Last Thursday was our visit and we were able to share a number of the events during Lent and Easter, including Palm Sunday. We all had palm crosses and we were very joyful, waving them in the air as we sang the well-loved hymns for the season. They appreciate the visit and we feel it is an important part of our pastoral care in the community.

Another group from church visits Himley Mill Care Home each month. They witness to two units at the home and I am sure the residents and staff enjoy this time of fellowship.

If anyone is interested in joining in with either of these monthly events, please ask Carole Walker about The Maltings and Denis Beaumont about Himley Mill. I am sure there will be a welcome for new people to join them

GOOD NEWS

We have heard about the birth of three babies since the last Triangle and have managed to obtain photographs, and permission from their parents to



Isabella



Jack



Zara

use them. So let me introduce you to them:

Isabella Jasmine Tomlinson weighed in at 7lbs. The grand-daughter of Keith and Val Moss was born on November 29th.

Jack Alexander Jevons was born on December 21st, 2014. He weighed 7lb 1oz. Jack is the first child of Claire and Ben. Claire is the daughter of Jane and Dave Meddings and he is their first grandchild.

Zara Louisa Hughes, Louise and Jonathan Hughes's second child. was born on March 10th, 2015. She will have a big brother, Michael, to help look after her. She is the grand-daughter of Joyce and Bob Hughes.

Congratulations to all our families above and congratulations also to:

Lee Cresswell, the youngest son of Gail and Martin. I am sure we all remember Lee from Junior Church. Lee became engaged on Christmas Eve 2014 to Kayleigh Lawrence. They are planning to get married in May 2016. They currently live in Hereford with Dominic, aged 8, who will be Lee's stepson.

The prayer-circle meets every two months to up-date our prayer cards. At the meetings in November and January we prayed for the families of those who have lost loved ones. We remembered those who are sick and in need of God's healing hand. We always remember our older loved ones who are no longer able to care for themselves and are in residential care. New names are added to the list and those who are well and no longer in need of the prayer circle are removed. As well it is a time of shared fellowship of the members of the group. We ask God to sustain those who pray daily for those in need.

I reported in the last Triangle that Margaret Shadlock, Val Moss's mum, had moved into the village to be near Val. Unfortunately Margaret has had a couple of falls which has resulted in her being in hospital. She is now moving, happily, into a care home. I am sure that as soon as she is able she will be joining us in worship. God bless you, Margaret. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Our prayers are with those who are in hospital, or have been in hospital and ask God to place His healing hand on all those who are sick. We ask Him to sustain their loved ones during this time. Our thoughts are with Sue Moyle, who has been in hospital for surgery on her knee. Jesus, we thank and praise you for their continuing return to good health

We continue to pray for Cathy Anderson, Robyn, the grand-daughter of Eric and Carole Walker, and for Lynne Nicholls and her family. We ask that Your Holy Spirit will watch over them.

Many thanks are due to Denis, our Lay Pastoral Worker, and all the Pastoral Group visitors, for all the work they do in caring for us all in so many ways.

I don't think there have been any special birthdays or anniversaries, but if I have failed to mention anyone with a need or with good news then I apologise. Jesus knows our every need and will watch over us.

I leave you with some thoughts.

“As individual Christians we leave a mark. Most of us lead unspectacular lives, rarely producing headlines in the newspapers. Yet our presence in the world, our faithful performance of the little acts of daily living, makes its mark. God grant the mark we leave is the mark of the cross.”

Taken from: A Little Book of Easter Thoughts by Eddie Askew

Wombourne vestry news

Diana Beaumont, senior steward

We started the year with our annual covenant service, a solemn occasion when we rededicate our lives to God. Later in January we marked the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with short meditations in the different churches, culminating in a Sunday service at St Bernadette's.

On a less serious note, at the start of February, Brenda Shuttleworth, Janet Fenney, Pat Bedall and I took the opportunity to take part in a circuit beetle drive at Bilston – the idea being for people from each church to get to know others on a social occasion. A good time was had by all, especially Brenda, who won the prize with the highest score (a box of chocolates).

Later in the month we had the rededication of workers with young people, which was also a parade service.

Various activities took place just before and during Fairtrade Fortnight. Some of us went to the Traidcraft Roadshow at Cranmer, where people from the headquarters at Gateshead showed us their latest products, including clothes, crafts and a new range of very hot spices. We saw some short DVDs describing some of the communities and people growing and producing the Fairtrade products we buy. We were encouraged to support the "Fair Necessities Appeal" in our Fairtrade service, and we raised £141, which the Government will match, doubling it to £282.

During Lent we have again had the opportunity to meet and worship ecumenically. Each Tuesday there has been a short meditation followed by a simple but delicious meal of home-made soup, bread and fruit. We are grateful to all those who prepared these for us.

Each year we look forward to the Women's World Day of Prayer on the first Friday in March. This year, the women of the Bahamas had prepared the service, which was presented colourfully at the United Reformed Church by women from each of the churches.

Mothering Sunday was also Home Missions Day. Bill Caldwell, a lay worker in Gornal, spoke to us about the different roles he plays, in a very informative and entertaining manner. He is part of a team of chaplains in a secondary school and takes part in the Open Book assemblies in primary schools, when teams relate and act out Bible stories. He has another, more unusual role as chaplain in a public house known as The Chapel House, so called because at one stage in its existence a group of worshippers met there before they had a church.

During the Lent period we have also had the chance to help others in need, using the Christian Aid "Count Your Blessings" information, saving our coppers for WaterAid and collecting tins of food for the Little Brothers' "Metre of Tins" appeal.

Our monthly meetings continue, such as the coffee and hymns and the Men's

Fellowship. They have a speaker, followed by a pub lunch. One of the recent speakers was Bob Hughes, who talked about the Battle of Tettenhall, which finished in Battlefield Lane, Wombourne. If any gentleman from Wombourne or Springdale feel these informal meetings would be of interest, they would be very welcome on the second Thursday of each month (starting at the church around noon). The weekly Toddlers, Tea and Toast group continues to go well, which is very welcome, especially as our Good News for Kids club has sadly closed after a number of years.

I shall finish my term as steward shortly, and should like to thank all those who have helped me over the last four years, both in the vestry and outside.

Love your neighbour: Think, Pray, Vote

Lesley Cook at the third JPIT Conference

On Saturday, February 21st, I was lucky enough to attend the third JPIT Conference at Coventry Central Hall. Lucky because it was sold out and my daughter and I got returns. JPIT stands for Joint Public Issues Team. For nine years, the Baptist Union, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church have worked together to produce reports and conferences on public issues in Great Britain.

The keynote speaker was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. He was an excellent speaker – very astute but also humorous. I shall try to give you a flavour of what he said: It is impossible to love Jesus Christ and not to care about the welfare of his people. John Wesley was a good example of this.

We are able to vote without fear in this country, and we should celebrate this privilege by taking part in politics, and by voting in the election and by persuading others to do so.

Since the 1980s, we have built a “market society” which is built on consumerism. Even though this approach failed us in the crash of 2008 still the politicians appeal to this self-centred attitude with their promises of “You’ll be better off with our party.”

Churches need to proclaim a vision that is transforming. Instead of “Something must be done,” we say “I will do something”. Indeed people from churches provide 23 million hours of voluntary work per month. We can “change the wind” of politics if we engage with it. We must also pray for politicians, who are often struggling and certainly fallible.

The rest of the day consisted of two workshops (I did “Preaching and Praying Social Justice” and “Building relationships with your MP – hustings and beyond”). The conference ended with an address by the Rev’d Ruth Gee, former President of Conference, on the message of Micah 6:8.

A taste of Fair Trade Fortnight

Brenda Shuttleworth

How many activities can you pack into two weeks? Looking at what our churches have been doing and at the many activities in our schools, college and university, we have collectively done much to support the work of fair trade over the last month.

It all began in mid-February when Traidcraft brought their roadshow to Cranmer, which gave us a particular sense of pride, acting as host to this very significant event which showcased new items – both craft goods and new food items. For those of you who like it hot, Black Mamba has produced a new range of chilli sauces with a kick. They are available from Wolverhampton Fairtraid.

In the first week proper of Fair Trade Fortnight we hosted two Palestinian farmers whose products are imported by Zaytoun. It was a huge privilege to meet and hear the stories of people who somehow produce high-quality olive oil and almonds despite the constant setbacks they face living under occupation. They visited the City of Wolverhampton College and gave an interesting presentation to business studies students there. That evening they spoke to an open meeting in Wolverhampton, telling us with great enthusiasm how they harvest and export their products.

The following day members of the City Fair Trade Partnership were invited to a reception in the Mayor's parlour. Three primary schools were presented with prizes for artwork with a fair trade theme and then Sainsbury's and the University Business School gave us presentations on the ethics of business, particularly in relation to fair trade. It was interesting to hear Sainsbury's story. They have five corporate responsibility goals, one of which is "sourcing with integrity", which is where fair trade fits in. Sainsbury's is proud that it has a wide range of fair trade products giving 1.24 million workers the benefit of the fair trade premium. Since 2007 all Sainsbury's bananas have been fairly traded – bananas are their biggest selling product by volume with 700 million being sold each year. Since 2010 all their own-label tea, ground coffee, sugar and drinking chocolate have carried the fair trade logo.

I am sure that all our supermarkets would want to highlight their ethical trading



practices, but it was good to hear somebody who obviously felt passionately about the subject tell us about his commitment to fair trade.

The presentation from the business school was somewhat different. All the children present enjoyed some chocolate tasting but were also invited to look at the cocoa content in different bars. Some of the better-known brands contain a lot of sugar and less cocoa. Prof Haynes introduced us to a chocolate bar produced by Madacassa, the only chocolate bar produced in Africa and sold to an African market as well as being exported. Almost all cocoa beans are exported from Africa and the sad reality is that African cocoa farmers never taste the finished product. Hmm.

The City of Wolverhampton College is working hard to gain fair trade college status and produced a wonderful three course meal, having researched fair trade ingredients and created their own recipes.

As this meal, to which members of the city Fair Trade Partnership were invited, coincided with our wedding anniversary, I was particularly pleased to attend with Phil!

Churches have held coffee mornings – our own Methodist Church at Wombourne joined with friends at the URC for a fair trade coffee morning and also very generously donated in excess of £140 to the Fair Necessities appeal being run by Traidcraft at a retiring collection. This money will be doubled by the government and will really make a difference.

We have also been encouraging congregations to buy fair trade Easter eggs. In particular we have highlighted the “Real Easter Egg”, which contains not only fair trade chocolate but also a little egg-shaped concertina booklet with the Easter story. We felt this was a good opportunity for members to share their faith in an appealing way with young children who may have lost touch with the church.

Worship resources were provided to give all churches the opportunity to keep the pledge they made when they became a Fair Trade Church that fair trade would feature in worship during Fair Trade Fortnight.

Thank you to everybody who has done anything to raise the profile of fair trade over the last few weeks. Well done!

**Yesterday is
history –
tomorrow is a
mystery.
Today is a gift –
that is why it is
called
The Present**

Penn Poets' 10th anniversary

Sheila Barnfather takes a turn for the verse

*We've read of Bees by Carol Ann Duffy,
Ode to the West Wind by Percy Bysshe Shelley,
The Ballad of the Breadman from Charles Causley,
St Francis and the Birds by Seamus Heaney.*

*Nicholson shows the Burning Bush,
Chris Smart presents us with enigma.
If so clear in Kipling's mind,
Yet Wordsworth's Prelude needs some stamina.*

*We can't but marvel at Andrew Marvell,
Get lost in mists with John Keats,
Castaway with William Cowper,
Sail to Byzantium with W B Yeats.*

*Pam Ayres can really make us laugh,
Betjeman's satire hits the nail,
As Hopkin's Broken box and nard
Or Chaucer's A Canterbury tale.*

*We have travelled with Eliot's Magi,
Breathed country air with John Clare,
Seen Chesterton's donkey in passiontide,
Felt farewell from De La Mare.*

Verse in dialect entertains,

*Milton leads through Paradise Lost,
Isaac Watts Sweet Muse Descends,
Hear The Bluebird from Robert Frost.*

*Samuel Johnson's Power of Prayer
And happily there's Paradise Found.
Meredith finds Love in the Valley;
Explore the thoughts of Ezra Pound.
The Thomas poets touch the heart,
Dylon warns of "that goodnight".
Edward remembers Aldestrop,
Ronald S has God in sight.*

*Sassoon and Owen write of war,
John Donne's thoughts on love go deep.
Shakespeare's sonnets seek the truth,
Herbert's Love's Welcome makes us weep.*

*The names are endless their words fill volumes,
Herrick, Byron, McNeice and Auden,
Motion, Raine, Sitwell and Joyce,
Masefield, Bridges, Houseman and Farjeon.*

*Words of Laureates and Anon
Read by Poetry Lovers in Penn,
With delight we've shared the years,
Today, together, we celebrate ten.*

Life is not the way it's supposed to be.

It's the way it is.

**The way we cope with it
is what makes the difference.**

Walks of discovery

Jackie Neilson in the South West

On visiting Exmoor recently we went to the Tarr Steps, which was first mentioned in the 17th century, although people think it is older. It is an amazing construction of slabs of rock, balanced to make a clapper bridge. One has to walk carefully because of the slats on the walkway.

In summer there is a convenient ford through the river (Barle), but in winter the river overtops the bridge. In 1952 it had to be re-built, as it was in 2012. The massive coping stones were swept away, showing the terrifying power of water. The River Barle rose by nearly three metres. On the day of our visit families were enjoying a heatwave, with children paddling and splashing in the water, having great fun.

Dappled sunshine danced on the crystal clear water, cascading over stones. What a joyous sight and sound. Trees were dressed in summer finery, lichens and mosses on the branches and bark, ferns peeping through the banks and verges. We had a relaxing hour's walk, culminating with a cream tea at the riverside inn. Delicious scones (huge), clotted cream and strawberry jam, with a refreshing pot of tea, sitting on the terrace looking to Winsford Hill. A wonderful balmy day, with sunshine and light cloud. Chaffinches were darting around to pick up any crumbs dropped. All's well with God's world. Aren't we lucky to be part of it.

Another afternoon we strolled around Dunster, a beautiful mediaeval village. Every visit you see something memorable. Last time we visited, for an evening meal, an owl flew past on the secluded car park. This time (evening again) we saw a newly-thatched cottage with a mass of beautiful flowers, including roses and hollyhocks in the front garden. A little brook running along the road enhanced the scene.

We walked down the road, which was a cul-de-sac, leading to a ford (the River Avill) complete with a pack-horse bridge. In the field alongside a cricket match was being played. What a wonderful scene.

Also, apparently, this idyllic spot was the place where The Duke of Monmouth's rebels were killed. But on a pleasanter note, Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander composed the hymn "All thing bright and beautiful" on Grabbist Hill, above the village. She also wrote "Once in royal David's city" and "There is a green hill far away." Amazing what you discover when strolling around in different areas of our lovely island, especially with snippets of information in local books and tourist information centres. It makes the visit more memorable.

The Wesley day school in Dunster opened in 1825, and was rebuilt in 1855, according to the stone on the building. It is now a private house (in a row of houses). Interestingly another tablet stone below the first one mentioned has the following inscription: *Ebenezer, 1 Sam 7 Chap 12 Vers, Sept 2 1811*. Something else to find out next time we visit – and we'll read the Bible text in the meantime.

Crucifixion of Jesus

Jackie Neilson brings us D Elwyn Davies' poem

*Simon of Cyrene shouldered His cross
On the way to Golgotha hill,
And between the robbers, Jesus was nailed –
The Passover Lamb, for the kill.*

*He was taunted and asked by passers-by,
“Son of God why can't you come free?”
And there He was heard to say, “O my God,
My God, why have you forsaken Me?”*

*“The Saviour can't save himself,” said the scribes
In jest, and demanded a sign;
The robbers and others called on the “King”
To display his powers divine.*

*The soldiers satched as they gambled His clothes,
And gave Him sour-wine on a rod;
When the sky went dark and Temple veil tore,
They said, “This was the Son of God.”*

*His beloved disciple and Mary
Became, there, a mother and son.
Jesus, committing His spirit to God,
Said, “All is accomplished and done.”*

John19, 17-30

