

## ***The Link Magazine***

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### **MINISTER'S LETTER**

#### **JOY OF THE GUIDING STAR -CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

*The star "went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was" (Matthew 2:9).*

The Thesaurus Dictionary identifies twenty four synonyms for "Guiding Star" among them: lodestar, North Star, polestar, guiding light, inspiration, and principle. The most popular is Polaris, a point of reference, the guiding principle, a reference point in navigation or astronomy. Matthew's account of the Christmas story records that the birth of Jesus was accompanied by an extraordinary celestial event: a star led the magi (the "wise men") to the place where Jesus was born. Scholars have posited many speculations as to what the star was. The weight of evidence seems to point to supernatural guiding light.

During world War 2 a little boy and his dad were driving home on Christmas Eve. They drove past rows of houses with Christmas trees and decorations in the windows. In many of the windows the little boy noticed a star. He asked his father, "Dad, why do some of the people have a star in the windows?" His daddy said that the star meant that the family had a son in the war. As they passed the last house, suddenly the little boy caught sight of the Evening Star in the sky. "Look daddy, God must have a son in the war, too! He's got a star in the window." Indeed, God has a son who went to war, but Jesus came into the world to go to war with sin.

Each year in our modern society, consumerism seems to eclipse the real meaning of Christmas for most people, reducing it to spending, sales and bargains. The principle of exchanging presents is wonderful as it reflects on God's generosity and love, but if that is all there is then the main point of the meaning is missed. Christmas has to do with God breaking in time and space to dwell among us (Immanuel—God with us) and coming to us in the form of an unthreatening baby. It has to do with God providing his guiding light to a dark blind world and shedding light on the miasma of human relationships in his

divine transforming love.

May we allow the light of the Festival Season of Christmas, the love and goodwill shared, guide us into the New Year and into the future. May we enter into 2018 with determination to allow God to be the guiding principle and inspiration of our lives? May we be wise in the New Year and allow the Star of Bethlehem to guide our future as I once saw in a poster that stated ***“Wise men sought Jesus – they s?!! do”***.

I wish you Happy, blessed, peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours.

***Daniel***

**WITHIN GOD’S SIGHT.**

***‘I have engraved you on the palms of my hands’ Isaiah 49:16***

Not just on one hand, Lord, but on both of them!  
 My name must ever be within your sight.  
 And graven there by you! You are not loath  
 To let my name and needs stand in your light,  
 But more, if I am graven on your hands  
 I am involved in your activity,  
 And as your grace and mercy’s work expands  
 My name is granted a new dignity.

Dear Father God, I cannot comprehend  
 Why you should want my name before your eyes,  
 Or why I should permitted be to blend  
 With you in love’s redemptive enterprise.  
 I simply know if my name graven be  
 I want it always where my Lord can see.

*Commissioner Harry Read, Salvation Army, with permission (and thanks to Joyce Wood for sending it to us).*

**PRAYER FOR CHANGE** *Published also in the magazines of our covenanting partners  
St Edmund's CoE & St Andrew's URC.*

'Dear God.....'

All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth?

Not really Lord. 'But all I want.....' is a phrase so frequently on our lips, or maybe more often in our thoughts – 'If only.....' might be our preferred phrase or even 'If'. What are your 'If' thoughts now. The ones you really mean, not the ones that would be nice but will never happen? If you were writing your letter to God for Christmas what would you be putting in to it?

Usually when we write in our cards more than sending our good wishes, we include our hopes for the recipients well being and peace and of mind. We often include a little of our own news. Finally, we express our hopes for maintaining contact. We wouldn't be likely to make requests for gifts.

After Christmas when we express our gratitude for the cards, gifts, and good wishes we have received is it only out of politeness, or is it because we really appreciate that someone has thought about us, and valued us? Have we been given good wishes, cards or gifts that we have just taken and put aside without further thought?

What about God's gifts and blessings to us? How do we respond to them??????

'Whenever you did it for the least of these you did it for me'. (Matthew 25:40)

So here is your space to write your card to God this Christmas and then come back in the New Year to give your thanks.



**WORSHIP IN DECEMBER & JANUARY****LIDGETT PARK**

<b>3rd Dec</b>	10.30 am 6.30pm	Dr Karen Illingworth <i>St Edmund's</i>	<i>Advent Carols</i>
<b>10th Dec</b>	10.30 am 6.30 pm	Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu <i>Chapel Allerton MC</i>	<i>Gift Service</i>
<b>17th Dec</b>	3.00 pm	Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu	<i>Carol Service</i>
<b>24th Dec</b>	<b>10.30 am</b> <b>4.30 pm</b> <b>11.30 pm</b>	<b>Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu</b> <b>Mrs Patricia Davies</b> <b>Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu</b>	<b><i>Holy Communion</i></b> <b><i>Carols round the manger</i></b> <b><i>Holy Communion</i></b>
<b>25th Dec</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu</b>	<b><i>All Age Worship</i></b>
<b>31st Dec</b>	10.30 am	Mr Peter Harper	
<b>7th Jan</b>	10.30 am	Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu	<i>Covenant Service</i>
<b>14th Jan</b>	10.30 am 6.30 pm	Dr Stanley Pearson <i>Chapel Allerton MC</i>	
<b>21st Jan</b>	10.30 am 4.00 pm	Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu <i>Garforth</i>	<i>Circuit Service</i>
<b>28th Jan</b>	10.30 am	Mrs Janice Green	

**THORNER**

<b>3rd Dec</b>	9.30 am	Rev'd Marion Bright	<i>HC &amp; Church Anniversary</i>
<b>10th Dec</b>	9.30 am	Mr Michael Prince	
<b>17th Dec</b>	9.30 am	Mr David Laycock	
<b>24th Dec</b>	<b>9.30 am</b>	<b>Mrs Dorothy Turnpenny</b>	<b><i>Christmas Eve</i></b>
<b>25th Dec</b>	<b>9.30 am</b>	<b>Ms Mary Patchett</b>	<b><i>Christmas Day</i></b>
<b>31st Dec</b>	9.30 am	Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu	
<b>7th Jan</b>	9.30 am	Mrs Ann Johnson	
<b>14th Jan</b>	9.15 am	Rev'd Dr Daniel Mwailu	<i>Covenant Service</i> <i>St Peter's Church</i>
<b>21st Jan</b>	9.30 am 4.00 pm	Prof Peter Howdle <i>Garforth</i>	<i>United Service</i>
<b>28th Jan</b>	9.30 pm	Mr Edward Britton	

**CAROLS ROUND THE MANGER.**

The tradition of a service at 4.30 pm on Christmas Eve continues this year. It is an all-age service but with plenty of content for small children. This is now in its 13th year and it has always proved a very popular service with children and parents, making a nice start to our Christmas celebrations. All welcome.

## WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTINGLE?

Many churches have a Christingle Service and at Lidgett we have a Christingle tree. Where does this custom come from? The idea of Christingles came from the Moravian Church in Germany in 1747 when the minister, John de Watteville, gave children at the service a lighted candle with a red ribbon around it, which is the Christingle. The orange represents the world, the lighted candle represents Jesus as the light of the world and the red ribbon round the orange the blood of Jesus shed on the Cross. Four cocktail sticks in the orange represent North, South, East and West and also the four seasons.

Nuts and pieces of fruit on the sticks represent the fruit of the earth. The final prayer of that first service was "Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these children's hearts, that theirs like Thine become".



As Moravian Church spread, the Christingle custom went around the world with it and came to this country also in the 1700s. In Moravian churches, the Christingle Service is usually held on the Sunday before Christmas or on Christmas Eve. The word Christingle is probably an anglicised form of the German Christkindl, an old German word meaning little Christ child. The idea of a Christingle Service was made popular by The Children's Society with the first service being held in 1968 and it has since caught on.



As far as I can see, the custom of the Christingle tree originated from the Jesse tree, a branch or a small tree sprayed silver and hung with objects made by children tracing the ancestry of Jesus and events in the Bible from the Creation to the birth of Jesus. Jesse, of course, was the father of King David and the prophesy was that the Messiah would be a descendent of David (Isaiah 11.1). Have a look at our Christingle tree when it goes up and see if you can identify the different symbols and the stories associated with them.

### **Editor**

#### **THOUGHTS TO PONDER**

If you ever think the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, it's time to start watering your own. *Bear Grylls*

People demand freedom of speech to make up for the freedom of thought which they avoid. *Soren Kierkegaard*

## **WHAT DID LUTHER EVER DO FOR US? – A series reflecting on the influence of Martin Luther on Methodism by John Summerwill**

### **3. Salvation**

There is a striking similarity in the experiences of the three most influential shapers of Methodist thinking about salvation, namely St Paul, Martin Luther and John Wesley. All three were eager, pious, devout, sincere, diligent men who tried desperately hard to find peace of mind and soul by meticulous observance of God's laws and commandments as found in scripture. All of them failed in their endeavour until they discovered for themselves that divine grace cannot be earned; it is God's free gift to the undeserving; it is by grace alone that we are saved, and that grace is received by faith, i.e. believe it and you will possess it. All three found a personal relationship with the living Christ. For all three 'the gospel' is the good news that Christ's death and resurrection have won a salvation that can put us right with God regardless of the evil we may have done, and that salvation is now and for eternity.

Before Luther made this discovery he was oppressed by the sense that the righteousness of God means that God was justly condemning him, and his perception of Christ was as a judge. What he came to see is that the righteousness of God meant that God loved him and willed his good, and Christ was the saviour with whom he could have a personal relationship. Once we accept God's forgiveness by faith in Christ, Christ's righteousness becomes a garment wrapped around us, and God treats us as though we had not sinned. This salvation brings freedom from guilty feelings, power to resist temptation and a confident hope of a future beyond the grave in heaven. What grounds are there for believing it? Because God has made promises in the scriptures, and God is faithful. Luther's stance was always grounded in scripture.

Luther saw faith and works as inseparable. Faith comes first as a gift from God, and those who have faith naturally and joyously do good works.

'Faith is a work of God in us, which changes us and brings us to birth anew from God (cf. John 1). It kills the old Adam, makes us completely different people in heart, mind, senses, and all our powers, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. What a living, creative, active powerful thing is faith! It is impossible that faith ever stop doing good. Faith doesn't ask whether good works are to be done, but, before it is asked, it has done them. It is always active. This kind of trust in and knowledge of God's grace makes a person joyful, confident, and happy with

regard to God and all creatures.’ *Luther’s Commentary on Romans*

This understanding of salvation as something very personal and individual has been one of the distinctive marks of Protestantism in general and of Methodism in particular. The Wesleys were driven in their evangelistic mission by the belief that those who died unredeemed would perish for ever; that those who repented and put faith in Christ would be given eternal life; that the task of the Church, therefore, was to save souls by preaching this gospel at every opportunity; that salvation brought freedom and joy into people’s lives. Charles Wesley’s hymns return again and again to this personal experience of seeking and rejoicing in salvation by faith in Christ. And what ‘faith’ means in Protestantism is not what Catholicism understood it to be. It is not the believing of specific doctrines such as those set out in the creeds: it is a personal trust in Christ and in the promises of God in scripture. All this is very Lutheran, though it came to the Wesleys indirectly via the Moravian missionaries they met during their own mission to Georgia in 1735 and subsequently in London. The Moravian Brethren were Protestants even before Luther, tracing their origins to Jan Hus, the 15<sup>th</sup> century Czech reformer and martyr. The confident trust in God of the Moravian families who travelled with John and Charles Wesley on a stormy voyage across the Atlantic made such a deep impression that neither could rest afterwards until they had found the same faith.

The word ‘evangelical’ came to be associated with this message of personal salvation, especially during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and it was claimed by both Lutherans and Methodists. Evangelical faith suffered its first serious blows in the late Victorian period when the new methods of biblical criticisms coming from Germany challenged the accuracy and inspiration of the Bible, particularly undermining the concepts of Hell and eternal damnation. Were miracles credible? Could people enlightened by science still believe in virgin birth, resurrection, the deity of Christ, the existence of a heaven with harps and angels? And why bother to try to believe them if it didn’t make any difference now or after your death?

The evangelicalism of Methodism changed greatly during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as scepticism about much of the Bible and the traditional message spread both outside and instead the Church.

When theology began to be informed by psychology and sociology, and began to understand the techniques of propaganda used by the Nazis and others to such devastating effect, attempts to brainwash people into Christian faith became very

suspect, and Methodism increasingly drew back both from the individual buttonholing approach used by Jehovah's Witnesses and from the big rally approach of Billy Graham. Maybe the Church would be more effective, more honest, less manipulative, it was thought, by focusing on the 'social gospel', demonstrating faith in practice by feeding the hungry, caring for the needy, campaigning for justice and peace. 'Preach Christ, using words if necessary' was one slogan.

The ecumenical movement had a major impact too, especially after the new reformation that happened within the Catholic Church in the 1960s. Methodists, along with other Protestants, have rediscovered some of the Catholic perspectives they had partly lost. Among them is the recognition that salvation is as much a process as an event; we change and develop over time, influenced by others, by our environment and our experiences; we regress as well as advance; we need the community of the church, and specialist ministries; we are helped by rituals, sacraments and other 'means of grace' as long as we do not make them ends in themselves; and salvation is needed by communities as well as individuals; we have a social responsibility to bring healing, justice and peace to the world. None of these notes has ever been absent from Methodism, which has always had a social as well as personal dimension. They have, though, been more loudly sounded in the last half century. Some welcome the broader understanding of salvation: others think that the loss of focus on challenging individuals about their own salvation has been the root cause of the church's contraction.

It is difficult to say how much of Luther's doctrine of salvation is still central to Methodism now. What Methodism today means by 'the gospel' is more than Luther meant by it, and it is questionable whether either Luther or the Wesleys would think that modern Methodism is 'evangelical' as they would understand the term. But we cannot say, simplistically, that the church today would thrive if only we went back to preaching what they preached, using their methods. They were modern men in their generation, scholars at the cutting edge, using their knowledge and understanding to address the world as they found it and sweeping away legacies that were not useful any more. They might think us not nearly radical enough.

***Next time: Priests and Sacraments***

## **ANOTHER THOUGHT TO PONDER**

I find that the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have. *Thomas Jefferson*

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**BOOK REVIEW****Colm Tóibín*****The Master******A Portrait of Henry James***

The book is described as a novel, not a biography but the author combines the depth of his research into the life of James with his own insight in the role of novelist. “Tóibín in his portrait of James has the depth and finish of a great sculpture.” The book reveals the complexities of his character both in his relationships and his inner life.

Born in America to a family with one older brother, William, a sister, Alice, and two younger brothers, Wilky and Bob, life was not easy. His father, William, was a very volatile man who veered between ridiculing and advising him, alongside a doting mother who was determined he should be an invalid with a back problem to which he seemed readily to concur. The fact that there was nothing wrong with his back was medically confirmed. He was close to his sister Alice who, early in life, developed mental health problems, but later found it to be a way of escape showing a reluctance to seek medical help and preferring the attentions of a friend until her death. Her death affected James himself deeply. Against a background of the American Civil War and being the second in the family he was ridden with guilt when the two younger sons joined the Unionist army while he chose to study Law. The guilt was intensified when Wilky returned home seriously wounded at the Battle of Fort Wagner and later when Bob was killed.

James’ personal life was a complex one and beset with contradictions. His time was divided between America with friends and family, and London where he enjoyed the high life of London society, vying with his need for privacy and solitude. It is believed that all his great works of fiction were based on his own life experiences and people closely involved with him. His lack of confidence may have originated in his childhood experiences with his father, William, and the total failure of his first theatre production, *Guy Domville*. His relationship with male and female friends captures his complexity as someone who was reticent but who longed for love and yet always withdrew from the prospect of it. He was deeply affected by the death of both his sister and a close friend Constance Woolson who committed suicide in Venice leaving Henry with more guilt as he felt responsible by declining an invitation to join her.

Although I found this book a difficult read I end with a quote from the Observer “Colm Tóibín the exquisite anguish of a man who circulated in the grand parlours and palazzos of Europe, who was astonishingly vibrant and alive in his art and yet whose attempts at intimacy inevitably failed him and those he tried to love. It is a powerful account of the hazards of putting the life of the mind before affairs of the heart.”

**Barbara Holmes**

## THOUGHTS FROM A HOUSE GROUP.

The combined Shadwell and Lidgett house group continues to meet and study John Pritchard's book "How do I pray?" We all have times when we feel spiritually dry and find it hard to pray. We doubt and nothing seems to make sense. It all seems meaningless. Pritchard refers to Henri Nouwen, a man who had written extensively on prayer and helped many others. Nouwen found prayer more and more difficult as he got older, becoming more dark and dry with none of his five senses being touched. He referred to this as the dark night of the soul and wondered if it occurs when we are being moved on by God to a profounder union when the darkness that descends is teaching us not to rely on the senses but on God alone.

Whether this is the case or not, the practical point is that many things can get in the way of prayer, for example, stress and tiredness, worry or a stale routine and a need for fresh approaches. Pritchard makes the point that prayer is not a self-indulgence divorced from life, but that there must be a direct link between how we pray and how we act. This is the way for our prayer life to become meaningful. We should:

1. pray about world issues and struggle with God if necessary.
2. listen to the voice in our heart that tells us to get on and do something about the things we see and hear of.
3. recognise that true prayer purifies the heart and mind of self-deception.
4. when we pray for someone we should ask the question as to whether there is anything we could be doing to help.
5. when we read Jesus' proclamation "The kingdom of God is at hand" recognise the social and political challenge inherent in that.

Intercession is the commonest form of prayer and what most people understand by prayer, but it is often difficult to see how it can work. Our belief is that God takes and honours our prayers but may answer the deeper prayer rather than the superficial one put to him. If you like he addresses the need rather than the want. Pritchard makes the important point that praying for others is a way of loving them. The fact that we bother to pray for them means we have them in our thoughts. We hold them before God and expose them to the power of love and, if we care for them, it is something we should do regularly. The basis of praying for each other is that we all belong together. If one part of the body suffers then so does the whole body. By praying for others we are joining God's campaign to transform the earth.

***Stan Pearson***



## THORNER NEWSLETTER

Many thanks to all who supported us at our Christmas Fayre' which took place on Sat Nov 18<sup>th</sup> from 10-12 noon and where we served our usual bacon butties and also mince pies, Christmas cakes etc. This event was held for Thorner Church Funds so we thank you all for your generous support!!!

On Tuesday December 12<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm there will be Carols in the BUPA Elmwood Nursing Home on Wetherby Rd. We are also hoping to visit the BUPA Park Ave and Sabourn Court Oakwood Lane Nursing Homes as we've had requests to sing there too. As last year, it would be lovely if folk from Lidgett would join with those of us from Oakwood and Thorner who are going to be there to sing carols and help bring the spirit of Christmas into these Nursing Home. Please meet with us at Elmwood in the Foyer at around 2:20pm for a prompt 2:30pm start. You'll have a warm welcome from all the residents who are looking forward to this event already!

As this magazine issue covers January I have to inform you that in 2018 we are only going to hold FOUR coffee mornings. These are shown below. We will not be doing any fund raising for ourselves next year.

We will hold our Covenant Service on the second Sunday in January next year, which will fall on Sun Jan 14<sup>th</sup> in 2018. We will also be celebrating early The Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity (OPCU) on this Sunday too and, as usual, this will be a joint service with our Anglican sisters and brothers and will be held at St. Peter's church with both the Rector, the Rev'd Andy Nicholson, and our own Minister, the Rev'd Dr. Daniel Mwilu presiding. There won't be a service at Thorner Methodists on this Sunday.

It just remains for me, on behalf of all of us here at Thorner Methodists, to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for 2018. May the love and peace of the Christ Child fill your hearts this Christmas and throughout the coming New Year.

God Bless

***Ann Johnson***

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## “ OPEN WELCOME “ PROJECT NEWS - DECEMBER

As you may already know, the November Coffee Morning raised over £450 when we include the sale of cakes on the following Sunday morning. Thank you all for such wonderful support. It was good to see some new faces there, too, and we are pleased that the Coffee Mornings are becoming known within the wider community.

Our next event is the ***Afternoon Tea “ a la Betty's “*** which have been such a success in the past. This will be held on ***Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup>*** and tickets can be purchased from any committee member. They are priced at £10 each and numbers are limited to a total of 60, so do please book early. We will open at 3.30pm and close at 6pm. You can come at anytime between those times but please note that the last serving will be at 5pm. Your tea includes a selection of sandwiches, scones and a variety of cakes and tray bakes – all home-made , of course, plus tea or coffee.

Details of the Christmas Concert on ***Tuesday December 19<sup>th</sup>*** by the Wendell Singers and YEP Brass are featured elsewhere in the magazine. Mince pies and hot spiced cordial will be served during the interval.

Moving on to January, we invite you to banish the post – Christmas blues by joining a Sunday lunch for all , after the service on ***January 14<sup>th</sup>***. ( Apology by Chair : this is not a casserole lunch with comic interludes, as previously advertised, but a hearty sausage and mash main course followed by a favourite pudding. I was getting confused with a later event!) The cost of this is £8.50 and again, we will have to limit numbers to 60 .

We do hope you will be able to support some or all of our events and we look forward to seeing you there.

***Margaret Farrar ( Chair ) on behalf of the project group( Betty Ashton, Kathy Benson, Pat Brooke, Heather Crosby, Jenny Dalton, Jan Sanders.)***

### MORE THOUGHTS TO PONDER

The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts. *Bertrand Russell*

Everyone is entitled to his or her own opinions, but no one is entitled to his or her own facts. *Daniel Moynihan*

I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use. *Galileo Galilei*

## **PUT YOUR HAND INTO THE HAND OF GOD - thoughts for the New Year**

Psalm 43 is the prayer of an exile who asks God these questions: 'Why have you abandoned me?' The exile then poses these questions: 'Why am I so sad?' 'Why am I so troubled?' And in response says: 'I will put my hope in God, and once again I will praise him, my saviour and my God'.

The Christian's hope is a confident looking forward to a future beyond this world, promised by God, and this gives the Christian comfort in times of trouble. The resurrection of the crucified Jesus, sacrificed for the sin of mankind, is the great foundation of the Christian's hope. It fills us with a living hope, confirmed by the gift of the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of the Christian's own future resurrection.

At the end of his Christmas Message in 1939, King George VI said: "A new year is at hand. We cannot tell what it will bring. If it brings peace how thankful we shall all be. If it brings continued struggle, we shall remain undaunted". Then he quoted these words from the poem 'God Knows' by Minnie Louise Haskins, 'I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown". And he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way"'. Like the psalmist the King turned to God to send light and truth to lead him forward.

For some, adversity can bring doubt as to the existence of God. They have read the Holy Bible and though they will not have found a rational answer to the problem of suffering, they will have found a practical answer: God took responsibility for it in the death of his Son. They will have read of how the early Christians endured persecution because of their faith. Their heart may have been strangely warmed. But they feel abandoned by God.

Even though Jesus did not doubt the existence of God, we read in Mathew chapter 27, verse 46 that Jesus on the Cross shouted "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" Here Jesus plumbs the uttermost depths of the human situation so that there might be no place that we might go where he has not been before. But Jesus did not die with that cry upon his lips. John chapter 19, verse 30, tells us that Jesus died with a shout, "It is finished". In Greek, it is the victor's shout and is the cry of the man who has completed his task.

If we too cling to God, even when there seems to be no God, invincibly clutching the remnants of our faith, quite certainly the dawn will break and we will win through. But in adversity, some feel that they cannot believe in God. In adversity, others cling to God. In adversity, there can be anger with God.

Job in the Old Testament, was an unusually good and righteous man and cannot understand how God can let so much evil happen to one like himself and he boldly challenges God. God does not give an answer to Job's questions, but he responds to Job's faith by overwhelming him with a picture of his divine power and wisdom. Job then humbly acknowledges God as wise and great and repents of the angry words he had used, and is restored to his former condition, with even greater prosperity than before.

Some time ago I met a lady called Norma who lived out in the countryside with her husband and young daughter. One day the little girl ran out from behind the school bus and was killed by a passing car. Norma was angry with God. Every night she asked God why her little girl was dead while the prostitute in the village still had her little girl. Norma became worn down and in the depths of depression, her prayer one night was simply, "God, I need your help". From that moment, her depression lifted and though the void her little girl left would never fill, Norma was able to move forward.

The oil painting, 'The Light of the World' by William Holman – Hunt depicts the figure of Christ standing at a door with no handle, representing the human soul, which cannot be opened from the outside. The writing beneath the painting is taken from Revelation 3, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me'. It is for us to open the door to Jesus and to put our hand into the hand of God.

In Matthew chapter 23, verse 37 to 39, in response to the question 'which is the greatest commandment in the Law?', Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it, "Love your neighbour as you love yourself."

And so, as we put our hand into the hand of God, let us extend our other hand to our neighbour. When we become a Christian, having confidence and trust in God, we receive the 'gift' of the Holy Spirit which lives within the Christian working to reproduce the character of Jesus in the life of every Christian. As we extend our hand to our neighbour we do so as under shepherds of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, comforting his people and teaching them to obey everything he has commanded us.

Let us thus go forward.

**Tom Alexander**

# SING FREEDOM

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One of these is Rusty Bernstein.**



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daughter Frances and the choir  
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liberation songs that touch the soul  
along with emotive images.**

**Followed by a Q&A**

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RANGE** with Roscoe Methodist Church.

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**SAT 9<sup>TH</sup> DEC 7PM**  
Roscoe Methodist Church  
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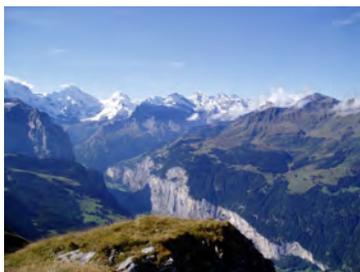
## MOUNTAINS – A MEDITATION

Many of us will have climbed hills and mountains in our younger days. Perhaps, physically, you can do this no longer. So, in this meditation, you are invited to climb a mountain in your imagination.

The first important consideration when we are contemplating climbing a mountain is **preparation**. After consulting the long term weather forecast, what looks like being the best day for the venture? Are we sure that we have got the most appropriate footwear? Have we got the correct clothing for any eventual weather condition? What will we be able to do should an emergency occur during the climb? And so on!

The second important consideration is to **decide** on the route that we will take to reach the summit. Our journey, of course, starts at the broad base of the mountain where there will be many paths to choose from. Some of these will appear easier than others and our choice will, to some extent, depend on our knowledge of the ease or difficulty of the alternative routes, and on our fitness level.

Once we have chosen our path, and started the climb with our companions, the mountain challenges us. We may find that our chosen path is more difficult than we anticipated, and it may even be necessary to retrace our steps because our chosen path is too difficult, and find an alternative path that is more suitable for our



stamina, or more compatible with the strength and fitness of our companions. As we climb the terrain changes, the wind becomes stronger, and as we continue upwards we encounter bifurcations on our path at which we have to decide whether to go right or left, depending on which alternative appears most suitable to our mountaineering ability.

At last, after considerable effort, we reach the summit. And what a sense of achievement! The wonderful views that open up before us as we look around; the bracing wind that blows into our faces and refreshes us; the sense of awe and wonder as we gaze out over the beauty of nature; the spiritual uplift that we feel and which seems to enclose us.

After soaking up the wonderment of the mountain top it is time to make our descent. But we reach the bottom a different person to what we were when we started our ascent. Something has happened on that strenuous climb. We have been refreshed and re-invigorated by something 'beyond ourselves' and we are the better for it. And perhaps our attitudes and responses to the people and conditions

around us will also have changed as a result. In our own particular spiritual journeying do we prepare ourselves adequately and set ourselves an appropriate goal? If we encounter difficulties do we give up or do we retrace our steps and find an alternative path that takes us towards **our** spiritual goal?

***Gerry Leake***

## **REMEMBERING ANNA.**

This novel is the story of a modern-day pilgrimage. Anna was a young woman who, when dying, asked her friends and family to walk the Pilgrims' Way to Canterbury in her memory. I am not sure that 'inspiring' is quite the best way to describe the book, but it is certainly worth reading.

However, the reason I am putting this notice in the Link is because I have lent the book to one or two people, and somehow I have lost track of it, in spite of asking around. I am quite happy to lend it, but I don't want to lose it. If anyone knows of its whereabouts, I should be very glad if you could let me know. And then I shall be happy to continue lending it, provided I know where it is!

***Margaret Mattocks***

## **LAST YEAR'S PROJECT (Christian Aid & Leeds Autism Services)**

The Treasurer is now in a position to give us more information about the money raised for the project which has just ended. The total for the two charities was £11,754. Alan also thought members would be interested to know how much each of our events raised. The breakdown is as follows:

Saturday morning coffee	£3286
Sunday morning coffee	£1054
Christmas concert	£1022
Free range concert	£ 467
Italian meal	£ 465
Strawberries and Art	£ 502
Young musicians concert	£ 596
Swing dance	£ 730
Donations from church groups	£1540
Personal donations	£1102
Other including Gift Aid	£ 990

## EXTRACTS FROM THE MEDIA

### *Cloud cover*

We fly blind. In a cable car crossing high mountains above Kyoto, we slipped skywards into thick cloud. The ridge we'd come from and the ridge we were heading towards were invisible, as were the forest and valley beneath. Through our glass cocoon I could only see, ahead and behind, four sharp black lines: the suspension cable, the guide cable, the traction cable and a power cable, all disappearing into cloud. Did they meet at infinity? What were they fixed to and where? A metaphor for one's own life from the dawning of consciousness: suspended on, drawn by, guided along cables vanishing into fog; origin and destination unknown.

*This is an extract taken from **Matthew Parris' column in The Times Oct 25th 2017.** He writes as an atheist, but one not unsympathetic to religious belief.*

**Editor.**

### *Good news for a change*

I came across this 'Letter To The Editor' in the *i* newspaper recently. Since it contains good news for a change, I thought it was worth sharing with readers of The Link.

" I am 81 and use a walking stick. I plucked up my courage to visit friends by train and had to cross London by Tube. Steps and a suitcase were of concern, but I received so much help that I will do it again. My case was carried up and down steps and in and out of trains; seats were always offered. London is full of kind people. It made me be hopeful about the future."

*Name given, Norwich*

Thankfully, there are many kind and thoughtful people in all parts of our country. The sad thing is that we very rarely hear or read about them.

**Gerry Leake**

### *We are told what computers think we want to hear.*

Two billion people world wide use Facebook and around 45% of Americans get their news from Facebook feeds. Most of the content is generated by the posts of users themselves. The content presented to individuals (such as you and me) is sorted and ranked by computer algorithms and it is based on the probability that we will like, comment on and share it. We see only what the computer thinks we will like. Similar considerations apply to what we are shown in advertisements. The whole organisation depends on reinforcing our stereotypes.

**See Niall Ferguson, The Sunday Times, 5th November 2017**

**DRAMA GROUP MURDER MYSTERY****“Cuckoo in the nest”****Written by Irving Theaker and performed by the Lidgett Park Players**

What an enjoyable evening this was for many reasons.

The Play was delightful, written in the Alan Ayckbourn style, bringing out the different characters and their relationships with one another. Many of the actors had monologues, which they sustained with ease and developed their characters through this. There was excellent dialogue, expertly delivered. And so the scene was set as we learned how many lives were being uprooted by the ambitions of Lady Louise Witton.

The cast were actors rehearsing a play and the very clever part came when they were saying their lines in the play as the character in the play. Then they would be interrupted and reverted to their own character. That was very clever as they jumped from one character to the other.

As is usual with the Lidgett Park Murder Mysteries, the majority of the cast were off stage when the murder occurred, thus allowing the audience full rein for their imaginations as they decided who had “dun it”. Only 2 remained in full view on stage and I wasn’t sure that it couldn’t have been one of them, so devious are Irving’s plots.

Now it was the turn of our excellent catering team to shine, as they served a hot supper followed by delicious cake. Then the fun began as we enjoyed the supper prepared for us and tried to decide who the murderer was. This gave us the opportunity to meet friends old and new from other churches in the circuit and our local neighbours. Conversations flowed, sometimes about solving the murder, but also catching up with one another.

As the supper was cleared away, we gathered again to hear the results of the groups’ deliberations. These were many and varied. When the winning theory was read out, I was most impressed. Why hadn’t I realised that possibility? How had I missed that clue?

Many people were saying at the end that they hoped this wouldn’t be the only performance but we know that the Players will take this round to many other churches for them to enjoy and hopefully it will return to Lidgett Park in the future for those who missed it to have the same pleasure we had. The whole evening was a delight. We are grateful to the team, who faithfully do the catering for these fund-raising events; to the backroom workers, including those who put out the chairs and put them away again, without whom it would not be possible; and to the actors who give their time to learning their lines and presenting the work of Irving in such an

accomplished way.

Thank you all for a lovely evening.

***Patricia Davies***

### **ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PENCILS.**

We all love the Lake District, walking on the fells, taking tea or coffee in lakeside cafes, strolling through the villages. But what do you do if you find yourself in Keswick with the rain pouring down and the wind blowing hard? You go to the Pencil Museum, a truly educational experience.

Keswick rose to prominence with the discovery of seams of high quality graphite and this was put to use in the manufacture of pencils, traditionally made from Californian cedar wood. Unfortunately, it was also found that Keswick graphite was good for making moulds for cannon balls and musket balls and the government bought most of it so that in 1650 graphite became more valuable than gold. Theft of graphite carried sentences of whipping, 1 year hard labour and 7 years transportation. The military-industrial complex is nothing new it would seem.

If you lined up all the pencils made in one year they would go around the world 62 times (some 14,000,000,000 pencils). I haven't checked if those two figures tally but it must depend on the length of the average pencil. You can sharpen a pencil, on average, 17 times and one pencil can draw a line 35 miles long. The world's longest pencil was a yellow one and measured 7.91 metres. If you lose your pencil rubber and make a mistake then the traditional way of erasing pencil marks was to use bread crumbs.

Finally, pencils can be used in all sorts of environment, in outer space and under water amongst others. NASA spent a lot of time developing a pressurised ball point pen that could be used in zero gravity by astronauts (the pressure being necessary to make the ink flow). At one time, you could buy these as Christmas presents. The Russians didn't bother. They just used pencils. In WW2 pencils were used to conceal silk maps and compasses to be used by aircrew if shot down.

I am sure there are many more things I missed on my visit. If any of you go for a visit, perhaps you could let me know. Graphite, of course, has many other uses apart from pencils and cannon ball manufacture but, unfortunately, the seams around Keswick are now exhausted.

***Editor***

**LIDGETT PARK LADIES' GROUP**

Meetings are usually held fortnightly in the Community Hall at 7.45 pm.

**7th Dec. *Our Carol Service.*** OPEN to all, so come along and enjoy the start of the Christmas celebrations. David Wilkes and the Lidgett Singers will be entertaining us, and refreshments will be provided. Bring your relatives and friends along too. PLEASE NOTE the earlier start time of 7.30 pm

**11th Jan. *New Year Lunch*** - tba

**25th Jan. *Our own Hilary Hallewell*** will be telling us about her "South African Saga". Hilary is an entertaining tale-teller, so come along and experience the warmth both on and off screen.

*Lynne and Anne*

**Thorner MC Fund Raising Events Programme for 2018**

Sat Mar 17 <sup>th</sup>	10-12noon	Martin House
Sat Jun 23 <sup>rd</sup>	10-12noon	Home and Overseas Missions
Sat Sept 15 <sup>th</sup>	10-12noon	St Gemma's
Sat Nov 17 <sup>th</sup>	10-12noon	MHA/AFC (50/50)

**SHADWELL METHODIST CHURCH *Cafe Morning* 10.00 am - 12.30 pm**

*Dates and specialties as follows :*

**19th December** Christmas food

**16th January** Bacon Butties

**20th February** Pancakes

**20th March** Soups

There is also a wide range of delicious home-baked cakes and scones and a variety of styles of coffee.

**ECUMENICAL SOUP LUNCHEAS 2017 - 2018**

St Andrew's	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> January
Quakers	Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February
Immaculate Heart	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> March at 12.30pm
Raising money for Christian Aid and CAFOD	

**WHO'S WHO**

Minister	Rev. Dr Daniel Mwilu	2681757
Church Stewards	Val Faint	2663433
	Daphne Barton	2664999
	Jenny Dalton	2934588
	Malcolm Speed	2689506
Church Council Secretary	Diza Randolph	dizarandolph2@gmail.com
Church Treasurer	Alan Wittrick	2613392
Treasurer's Assistant	Jackie Bennett	2684914
Senior Property Steward	Peter Bennett	2667380
Senior Communion Steward	Val Faint	2663433
Room Bookings (long term)	Jackie Bennett	2684914
Room Bookings (one-off )	Patricia Davies	2663090
Junior Church Contact	Peter Bennett	2667380
Pastoral Secretary	Marion Bright	8084187
Worship Consultation	Patricia Davies	2663090
Organist/Lidgett Singers	David Wilks	2932960
Car Rota Organiser	John Wells	2661952
Church Notices	Pat Brooke	2678506
Editor of The Link	Stanley Pearson	2736463
Benevolent Fund Secretary	Barbara Holmes	2686499
Christian Aid Organiser	Heather Fry	2933784
Churches Together Rep	Barbara Belsham	273719
Link Distribution Manager	Joyce Toms	2933693
Church Flowers	Margaret Lee	2663876

Chair of Project Group	Margaret Farrar	2931867
House Groups	Margaret Mattocks	2668727
	Stanley Pearson	2736463
	Gerry Leake	2664856
Stewardship Envelopes	Paul Nolan	2663160
Gift Aid Secretary	Garth White	2730313
Ladies Group Secretaries	Lynne Pullein	2665303
	Anne Millett	2666910
Badminton	Jackie Bennett	2684914
Church Walking Group	Peter Harper	2662310
Drama Group	Carol Russell	2698341
Simply Stitching	Audrey Gabbitas	2664979
Women's World Day of Prayer	Pat Nolan	2663160
Church Cleaning	Angela Bowers	07749877933
3rd Roundhay Brownies	Jan Ridsdale	07796272541
Candy Stripes	Office	2757697
Play Centre Group	Jeanette Bartle	07985569146
Toddler Group (Thursday)	<a href="mailto:lidgettparktodds@hotmail.co.uk">lidgettparktodds@hotmail.co.uk</a>	
Safeguarding Officers	Margaret Farrar (adults)	2931867
	Judith Clinkard (children)	2672986
	Peter Bennett (children)	2667380

For the fulfilment of his purpose God needs more than priests, bishops, pastors and missionaries. He needs mechanics and chemists, gardeners and street sweepers, dressmakers and cooks, tradesmen, physicians, philosophers, judges and shorthand typists.

***Paul Tournier (Swiss physician and author 1898—1986)***

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### **THE TEA COSY + DEMENTIA CAFÉ**

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