

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Before Christmas, I read a short book called *The Contented Life: Spirituality and the gift of years*, by Robert Atwell (Canterbury Press, 2011). The book is a positive look at the opportunities, gifts and contributions of people in their 'older years'. I recognised if I was going to write about this book, I might have to tread carefully, being in a different age group!

Atwell writes about what is increasingly seen as the 'third age' in life, post-retirement. That may raise all sorts of questions. I can think of many who have retired from paid work but may not want to think of themselves as in their 'older years' – and some who don't think of themselves as 'post-retirement' because their pattern of work might not have been paid, or might not have ended as neatly as with retirement. However, I'll have to leave all those questions of definition for you to talk about.

There are tensions for those in the later stages of life in British society as it is at the moment. Many have a wonderful quality of life in comparison with previous generations, in terms of time, money and health. But that's not true for all (and might not be for some in the future – particularly in terms of finance). In tension with that is the youth-obsessed nature of our culture where there seems less respect for older people and less willingness to learn from their wisdom. I've been watching the 1979 TV version of *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, having seen the recent film version last year and one of my observations about the TV version is that characters were allowed to look older...

Robert Atwell's concern in his book is to encourage people to look at all that is possible in the later stages of life. He writes about the need for a continuing balance in life, about what's creative, about what's most important to us, and about difficult questions of regret, bitterness and what needs to be left behind.

In the context of growing older, Atwell writes: 'What sort of person do I wish to be? I have a choice. I can opt to live in the past, nursing my disappointments, and become resentful and embittered. Or I can live in the

present with thankfulness, excited by new ideas, enjoying the company of friends and family. And above all, prepared to take risks." His phrase about taking risks is inspired by the response of a 92 year old man to being told to 'take care': "I'm fed up with people telling me to take care. What I say is "Take risks!" (p.4)

Many of these questions and the attitudes Atwell wants to encourage are relevant to people of all ages. The Christian faith is all about moving on towards God, being creative in partnership with God, learning to forgive and deal with the mistakes of the past. All of us can be encouraged to live with curiosity about people and about life, with a sense of wonder that enriches life for us and for other people.

There were quotes and comments in *The Contented Life* that made me laugh out loud, but might not be entirely suitable for a church magazine letter – you'll have to read it for yourself to find out whether I judged that correctly! In the meantime, I hope all of us can approach the rest of this new year looking for its opportunities, and patient with the struggles, knowing that the message of God-with-us in Christ takes us on from Christmas, into the new year, and even towards the journey of Lent, this and every year.

Yours in Christ,

Jane

WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

05	10.30	Rev. Jane Craske	Holy Communion
	6.30	Mr. Michael Prince	
12	10.30	Prof. Peter Howdle	
	4.00	Trinity	United/Circuit Service
19	10.30	Mrs. Dorothy Turnpenny	
	6.30	Rev. Jane Craske	Holy Communion
26	8.00	Rev. Jane Craske	Holy Communion
	10.30	Mr. David Laycock	
	6.30	St Edmund's	Ecumenical Service

LADIES GROUP

The Ladies Group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 7.45 p.m. in the Gledhow Room.

2 nd February	Alun Pugh	“Dei Goes to War”
16th February	Mrs. Shirley Matthews	“Life as a Visually Impaired Parent”

CHRISTIANS TOGETHER IN ROUNDHAY

At the ecumenical service at St.Edmund's at 6.30pm on Sunday 26th February, we will be focussing on Our part in the World, when there will be an opportunity to meet our Christian Aid Local Director Lyndsey Pearson. If you have any questions you would like to submit about Christian Aid please would you email them to jpatonwilliams@gmail.com by 15th February. Just a few will be chosen given time constraints and passed to Lyndsey for consideration before the evening. Please consider this to be an apology now if your particular question is not chosen. Perhaps you could say if you would be willing to ask the question at the service. We are good at working together for Christian Aid Collections in Roundhay so we thought this would be an interesting opportunity for all of us to join in.

Many thanks

Jenny Paton-Williams

QUIZ NIGHT

We are having a Quiz Night on Saturday February 4th, as part of the Sylvia Wright Project. Dave Farrar will again be quiz-master, with the usual blend of questions and fun. Cost is £4 per person, including light refreshments. Teams to be from 6 to 8 people. If you are able to get a team together, please let one of the committee know. Alternatively, come individually and join a team - we will arrange teams before the night so that they are as balanced as possible. To this end, would you please let us know by Sunday January 29th if you are coming. More details from Margaret Farrar or any committee member.

Margaret Farrar



Lidgett Park Drama Group
presents the pantomime
'Babes in the Wood'



*on Friday & Saturday
10, 11 February and
Friday & Saturday
17, 18 February, 2012
(half-term week)*

Adults £6

Children £3

For tickets please ring 267 8506



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WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY “GOD IS THREE IN ONE”?

by Stan Pearson

Christianity arose in the context of Judaism and throughout the Hebrew Bible (our Old Testament) God is a god who is known to the people of Israel through God’s actions. The stories of the Bible describe a God who is known through creation, through the relationship with Noah, through the covenant with Abraham, through the exodus from slavery in Egypt, through the giving of the law on Sinai and through the exile to Babylon and the restoration of Israel. In other words, God is a god who is known through experience. This experience led the people of Israel to believe that they were dealing with a God of love and justice. Similarly, the Christian view of Jesus arises from the contact people had with this human being in his life, in the experience of his teaching and preaching and healing and in the events surrounding his death and resurrection. It was in order to make sense of this experience that people started to think about the nature of Jesus both during his life and subsequently in what they believed to be a continuing experience of his power after his death. The Trinitarian view of God is the way in which Christians try to make sense of the relationship between the God of creation, the God they believed they saw in the person of Jesus and the God they continue to experience in their lives.

The full doctrine of the Trinity took some time to emerge in the early Christian Church. It was established at the Council of Nicea (325 AD). The Council of Constantinople (381 AD) expanded the Nicene Creed to give an explicit recognition to the full divinity of the Holy Spirit and then the Chalcedonian formula (451 AD) further clarified the nature of Jesus in the light of contemporary heresies. However, although not explicitly stated, all the components of the Trinitarian doctrine are present in the writings of the New Testament. For example, Philippians 2: 6-11 is likely to be an early confessional statement of the divine nature of Jesus. The designation of Jesus as Lord by the early Church (see Romans 1:4, for example) emphasised that the Jesus who had proclaimed God during his lifetime had now become the one who was proclaimed, the one to be worshipped. Throughout the gospels Jesus points the way to God whom he addresses as Father and in the course of his life he highlighted the nature of the kingdom of love and justice that is God’s kingdom. However, also throughout the gospels God points to the special nature of Jesus in incidents such as the baptism and the story of the transfiguration and, above all, in the events of the crucifixion and the resurrection experiences which are centred on Jesus. The New Testament tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8) and this implies a relationship in so far as love requires someone to be loved and someone to do the loving. The first Christians believed that in the person of Jesus and in the love that he demonstrated in his life and death, they were seeing something of the nature

of God (Col 1:19; 2 Cor 4:6). Furthermore, they believed that this was something eternal and not simply limited to the earthly life of Jesus, that there was something in the nature of Jesus that had been there since the beginning of time (John 1: 1-5; Col 1: 15-17). They believed that it was part of the eternal nature of God to be self-giving and that this was seen in the person of Jesus.

The presence of the Spirit is seen throughout the Bible from the stories of the creation, where the Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters, to the experience of the early Christians as described in the events of Pentecost (Acts 2:4). The Spirit inspired the prophets, gave authority to leaders and guided and sustained the people of Israel. The gospels tell us that it was the Spirit that was active in the birth of Jesus, that drove him into the desert (Mark 1:12) and was present with him throughout his life (Luke 4: 18-19). It was the Spirit that Jesus promised his disciples would be with them to show them the truth and lead them into God's life after he had left them (John 15:26). The Bible makes it clear, I believe, that the Spirit is both the Spirit of God the Father and of Jesus and that, using the idea of Augustine of Hippo, it binds them together in a bond of love. In terms of the Church the Spirit makes Christ present to his people and unites them with Christ in the here and now. It is what binds us to each other as a worshipping community and is the agent of transformation, empowerment, liberation and promise.

The dangers of the doctrine of the Trinity are that it might be interpreted as a form of polytheism at one extreme (this would be the view of Jews and Muslims). At the other end of the spectrum would be the view that the Son and Spirit are simply derivative of the Father, that is, are created beings. This is the early Christian heresy of Sabellianism. The formulation of the doctrine was an attempt to avoid both of these interpretations. By describing God as triune it is saying that each aspect of God can only be understood in relation to the other two. We can only understand God the Father in the light of God the Son (and vice versa) and we can only understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the light of God as Father and as shown to us in Jesus as Son. No single one of these can fully contain what we understand of God. The three persons of the Trinity are defined by their relations to one another and there can be no experience of one that does not involve the other two. The Christian believes that we are drawn by the Spirit into Christ-like love that conforms us to the love uniting the Father and the Son. Perhaps it is better expressed by paraphrasing C.S. Lewis (Mere Christianity) in his representation of the threefold life of the Trinity as someone kneeling down in the privacy of his or her room to say their prayers. I think I have interpreted him correctly:

An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get in touch with God. -----but what is prompting him to pray is also God:

God, so to speak, inside him [the Holy Spirit]. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ. ---- God is the thing beyond the universe to which he is praying ---- God is also the thing inside him, which is pushing him on [the Holy Spirit] --- God is also the road or bridge [our understanding of God as seen in Jesus Christ] along which he is being pushed towards that goal.

The doctrine of the Trinity is complicated and vulnerable to misunderstanding but it is, I believe, very important for an understanding of the life of Jesus and particularly what was achieved in his death on the cross. It is also important for an understanding of our present relationship with Christ and what lies at the heart of our Christian community.

Stan Pearson

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year we at Lidgett Park will host the annual Womens' World Day of Prayer service, with the theme 'Let Justice Prevail'. It has been prepared by Christian women of Malaysia, and will take place on Friday 2nd March. To encourage people who need to meet children from school, and those who are reluctant to come out after dark, we will meet at 1.30pm. Please join us! We welcome all.....young, old, men and women. We hope to see you then.

Pat Nolan

CHANGES IN THE CIRCUIT

I noticed as we moved from 2011 to 2012 that a number of TV and radio programmes commented on the changes that happened in 2011 but which were not really 'finished'. Much still seemed uncertain, in both world politics (the 'Arab spring') and global and local economics (Eurozone debt and public spending cuts) as 2012 approached. But that is so at every year end and new beginning. It is true for churches as well.

In November's *Link*, I wrote about the proposed change in Lidgett's relationship to presbyters (ministers) appointed to serve the Leeds North East Circuit. Some changes have to happen as a consequence of where the Circuit finds itself financially, but we have to anticipate some further changes when the Leeds North East and Leeds East Circuits form one new Circuit from September 2013. All this takes place when the Methodist Church as a whole is realising that different patterns of ministry and church life are necessary if

we are to reach out to 21st century people who know very little about Christian faith or church life.

The particular arrangement I wrote about – pastoral responsibility for Lidgett along with other churches shared by Andrew Atkins and Graeme Dutton – is still a *proposed* change. It continues to seem to the Circuit Leadership Team one element in the best possible use of available resources across the whole Circuit *while trying to keep changes to current pastoral relationships to a minimum*, in case further changes are needed in 2013. Because shared pastoral responsibility would be a considerable change for Lidgett, energy at the moment is being put into considering how it would work, particularly in response to questions people are asking.

Please remember that not all questions can be answered at this stage! This would be true, also, if Lidgett were anticipating a new minister from next September. Even by the time you read this at the beginning of February, some things will be further on than when I write in late December. Since I wrote in late September, for the November magazine, Revd George Bailey has accepted an invitation to join the Circuit from September 2012, with initial responsibilities mainly at Roundhay and Thorner.

But what about the situation at Lidgett from September 2012 and the things that might be different for this congregation if the proposed shared responsibility goes ahead?

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- **Worship** would still be arranged through the Circuit preaching plan. The variety of preachers, lay and ordained, who lead worship at Lidgett is likely to increase and some in the congregation will welcome that. It would be good to increase the number of Worship Leaders at Lidgett who can be responsive to the particular situation of the congregation.
- **Holy Communion** is provided for regularly within the Circuit preaching plan. Though there are fewer presbyters in the Circuit, there are also fewer services than there were even 2 years ago, so general provision should not be difficult, although there may need to be adjustments across the Circuit to some churches' 'normal' Sunday for a monthly service of Holy Communion. On Easter Sunday we already need other presbyters to help out, and we still would.
- **Pastoral care** is a crucial ministry shared between pastoral visitors and ministers, with pastoral visitors taking the lion's share of visiting and keeping in touch with people, and ministers often concentrating on the most urgent needs. That pattern would continue, but with one of the ministers as the 'first port of call' for urgent

pastoral matters. Both ministers would be available to people pastorally, though; both would be visiting. Urgent hospital visits could be easier to arrange between the diaries of two ministers than one. Both would be taking opportunities to get to know people, at worship and fellowship and social events.

- **Ecumenical relationships**, including meeting with other clergy, and Churches Together in Roundhay, would be the responsibility of one minister rather than both.

- **Communication** between ministers in shared pastoral charge is crucial and is handled at the moment through a regular Monday breakfast meeting. After that meeting, any matters that need the attention of stewards, or churches generally, are communicated via email. (Email has made some matters of communication much easier since something can be 'said' to a number of people at the same time, rather than through a succession of conversations. It's not suitable for everything of course!) For members of the congregation and local community, there would be two possible ministers to contact (who have different days off, so a quicker answer might be possible than at present).

- **Chairing of meetings** is shared between lay people and minister at Lidgett at the moment. It would seem sensible for one of the ministers to chair the Church Council consistently, but both would need to be aware of what's going on at that important meeting.

The hardest question is 'how long?' Is this an arrangement for one year or several years? That question is impossible to answer because we can't yet anticipate exact arrangements for 2013 in two respects. One is stationing: we won't know for certain which ministers will be in the Circuit in September 2013 till next summer or autumn. The other is that the question of groupings of churches and ministerial responsibilities for 2013 will continue to be talked about in the year ahead, even if major change is not anticipated at the moment.

This article is long enough already without going into any more detail! The situation feels unsettling to many people. Other churches in the Circuit have faced changes in minister, or in relationships with other churches, or changes in their pattern of worship and resourcing, more recently than Lidgett, so perhaps the situation feels particularly strange at Lidgett. But what you value and need in the life of a community of Christ's disciples will continue, just as it has for other churches – because it depends not so much as you sometimes think on ministers, but on you as members of that community.

There will be further opportunities to talk about these matters, as plans move on, at the Church Council in February, at the Pastoral Visitors' meeting in March and at the General Church Meeting in April.

Jane Craske

COFFEE MORNING AT THE WITTRICK'S



FEBRUARY PRAYER FOR CHANGE



This prayer appear in the magazines of Lidgett Park, St Andrew's and St Edmund's.

At the end of this month the church calendar asks us to remember George Herbert, priest and poet. One of his best known poems is "Redemption" in which he seeks Jesus. He writes:

I knowing his great birth

Sought him accordingly in great resorts;
In cities, theatres, gardens, parks and courts.
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth
Of thieves and murderers: there I him espied

Most gracious and loving God we ask that we, like George Herbert, may recognise Jesus among the marginalised and the suffering and may we seek to serve you by serving them. Forgive us and change us when we praise in our words but not in our actions. As we pray for your kingdom to come on earth help us to be instruments for that change.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Amen

CHURCH PROJECT

A very big thank you to Sue and Alan Wittrick for hosting their coffee and lunch event in January. They raised over £560 for the Sylvia Wright Trust. It was a lovely event and I know that everyone enjoyed themselves. Thank you Sue and Alan for all your hard work.

Barbara Dodman and the Fund Raising Committee

PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF DISTRICT RUN THE RACE

I have never been a runner, and have therefore never experienced the exhilaration of being first across the line in a race. Perhaps it is my lack of athleticism that has always made me slightly uncomfortable with the image of ‘running the race’ used by St Paul in his epistles. Serious runners run the race in order to win, not simply to complete the course, and as we know, there can only be one gold medallist in each event. This seems to be the very antithesis of what we might want to say about the journey of faith. As someone who enjoys walking in the Dales or on a coastal path, I prefer to think of the journey of faith as the unpredictable mix of green pastures and the steep and rugged pathway that we ‘tread rejoicingly’ [H&P 436].

However, we are being reminded in 2012 of the many ways in which the theme of ‘running the race’ might link our experience of life and faith with the Olympics. Even for those of us who have been sceptical about much of the hype, it is undeniable that the hosting of the Olympics in our nation this year brings a host of challenges and possibilities to us as churches and people of Christian faith. It may be that you have obtained tickets for an event. Alternatively, you may be planning to leave the country for the duration of the games. For most of us, however, there will be the more mixed and middling question of how we might engage with events from our own armchairs, or at least in our own communities. Will there be a big screen near

you? Have you planned ahead to obtain a license for such an event on church premises? Could you volunteer to be a 'games pastor' in Leeds or London? We are also invited as a Church to engage in some symbolic torch or baton-passing in the context of a prayer relay, and being alerted to some of the more ugly issues around the games, such as the trafficking and prostitution of vulnerable young women.

There is an opportunity to discover how you and your church community might get involved with one or all of these aspects of **Olympic Challenge at the District Forum Night** on **Monday 27th February**, (coffee from 7pm) at Oxford Place Methodist Church. The evening is open to all who are able to attend, so that we can share plans and ideas across the district. See you there!

Liz Smith Chair of Leeds Methodist District

MAGGIE PATCHETT IN BELIZE

Can you believe that this Christmas was Maggie's FIFTH in Belize? It hardly seems any time since she was desperately studying Spanish in preparation to going out there. Her experiences out there have led to her candidating for the ordained ministry. She will be back in the U.K. in March, both on furlough and for continuation of the candidature process, returning to Belize in May. We all wish her well in both her physical and spiritual journeys.

PART OF A LETTER FROM PAUL CHANDLER, DIRECTOR OF TRAIDCRAFT

'Given the economic climate and the continued competition from supermarkets' own label Fairtrade products, it is not surprising that market conditions are tough. We are finding that although our supporters and customers are placing as many orders as ever with us, each order is for a smaller amount than was the typical pattern in previous years. Consequently our overall turnover is well down on the levels achieved in 2010. This makes it very likely that in the 2011/2012 financial year we will make a loss, and- more importantly- it will have a big impact on the volume of purchases we can place with our producers around the world.

Could I therefore urge you to do anything you can to encourage family, friends, colleagues and fellow church members to continue to buy Traidcraft grocery products over the coming months. Our online shop (www.traidcraftshop.co.uk) also has an amazing array of high quality and good value gifts and products for the home, and we have an exciting new range in our Spring catalogue (to be published in early February)

Times are hard for us all, but it is vital to find ways of supporting those who are even worse off than ourselves-and the support Traidcraft provides through trading can be a vital lifeline and message of hope to many communities around the world'

THIS MONTH'S QUIZ

Each answer to a clue is an anagram of a colour. Take the first letter of each colour and rearrange them into two unrelated five-letter words. The clues to these words are "A Scandinavian goblin" and "Grab".

Ed's difficulty rating for this quiz is "Medium" – so go for it.

1. This ass is wild! (6)
2. The German is a definite article. (3)
3. This classical guitarist could go well with chips. (5)
4. A kind of film. (5)
5. Inter in Greater Manchester. (4)
6. One of many in a hill. (3)
7. _ _ _ _ _ er by the dozen. (5)
8. Bundles of hay. (5)
9. Few people can do this in 4 minutes. (4)
10. One yellow fruit gives another yellow fruit. (5)

December's Solution

1. This opening prevents entry. (5) STOMA, MOATS (S, M)
2. Trim the harvest. (4) PARE, REAP (P,R)
3. You don't get the dunce's cap twice. (4) CONE, ONCE (C,O)
4. Dolts on the divan. (4) SOFA, OAFS (O,A)
6. Let in the prongs. (5) INSET, TINES (N, I)

COMPARISON

LUNCH AT THE WITTRICK'S



It's lovely to see you out and about again Barbara.



Wow – look at those cakes

NEW YEAR BRAIN BUSTER SOLUTION

1. study study point queen (9) CONDENSER
2. note wrong (6) RETORT
3. tube n-note (7) PIPETTE
4. mountain church (5) BENCH
5. fluid enquire (5) FLASK
6. magistrate hesitation (6) BEAKER
7. journey ring penny (6) TRIPOD
8. hit unknown (7) BATTERY

TAN PAINT

MY FAVOURITE BIBLE VERSES

Joyce Wood suggested to me at a recent coffee morning that we ask people to send in their favourite Bible verse or story with an explanation as to why it means a lot to them. This seems a very good idea. To give you inspiration she has sent her contribution, originally printed in "The War Cry". Many of you know Joyce and Lester, her son, often attends our morning service.

LUKE 5, 18-26

My favourite Bible story is about the friends of a helpless paralysed man. This has truly fascinated me because I am the mother of Lester Robert Wood, who has Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism. He lives with us at home. As time goes by, parents in our situation recognise that we cannot live for ever. What then? Who will care about our vulnerable offspring? Who will be there for them?

We have observed that while society can be concerned for children, it can lose interest in them when they become vulnerable adults. Who cares then? The friends of the helpless man were compassionate, caring, and full of faith, mercy and determination. Nothing would prevent them from bringing him to Jesus. How wonderful they were!

I do wish that we knew more about these friends. What a marvellous example they were, with their practical act of love and kindness —exactly how Jesus would like us to be.

This story gives much hope and encouragement to parents such as myself. May the Lord guide each one of us to be compassionate and to show mercy, acceptance and knowledgeable understanding of all the vulnerable 'rejects' of society.

Joyce Wood

AT THE WITTRICK'S – THE HELPERS



Well Pat and Kathy may have aprons on but it's pretty clear who is doing all the work here.

COMPETITION TIME

It's been a long time since we have had a caption competition so now seems a good time to have the first one of the new year. Send in your captions for any (or all) of the pictures in this edition and you could win yourself a huge prize.



Finally, here's a picture of probably the most famous (or maybe notorious) Christian in the USA today. For the chance of another huge prize let us know who he is and what new word he has been responsible for introducing to the English language.

**“If Winter comes can Spring be far behind?”
Percy Bysshe Shelley**