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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Dear friends

As a family we got to the cinema the week before Christmas to see a free preview of the film *The secret life of Walter Mitty*. This is a film that stars and is directed by Ben Stiller and has been on the receiving end of some fairly negative criticism from those who see themselves as professional critics. I have to say that as a film to watch without having to think too deeply it was enjoyable and a good pre-Christmas break for me.

Walter Mitty is a very ordinary man, many would describe him as nerdy, who works for an international magazine in the photography development department. He lives an ordinary life but spends much of it on a day dream world, living out the life he longs to live, which is much more adventurous, and in his eyes, exciting. Without spoiling the film for anyone Walter gains the opportunity to expand his horizons and experience in reality some of what he day dreams about.

This got me thinking about my daily life and how much I enjoy and value my daily life, the simple things as well as the more challenging and exciting things. It also made me reflect upon whether I am living my life to its full potential. I have always struggled to keep a regular written journal but my new tablet PC has a facility to keep a photographic/written journal. This got me thinking, could I keep a daily photographic journal to help me reflect upon the ordinary.

So the next day I began. We asked Eve our youngest if she'd wrap Christmas presents for us this year as we just ran out of time. So my first photo is a hand written note stuck on our living room door by Eve which simply said "Do not come in! Wrapping going on!" And each day I have managed to keep taking simple photos, sometimes with a few thoughts other times just the photo to help me enjoy the simple.

And so I ask you the same questions I asked myself as we journey into this new year, do you value and enjoy the simple and exciting things in your life and are you living life to the full?

Till next time.
Andrew

WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

| | | |
|----|---|------------------------|
| 02 | 10.30 Rev. Andrew Atkins 6.30 <i>Chapel Allerton</i> | Holy Communion |
| 09 | 10.30 Dr. Stanley Pearson 3.00 <i>Newbourne</i> | United/Circuit Service |
| 16 | 10.30 Mr. John Summerwill 6.30 Rev. Robert Creamer | Holy Communion |
| 23 | 10.30 Rev. Palo Tshume 6.30 <i>St Edmund's</i> | Holy Communion |

LIDGETT LADIES' GROUP

Meetings start at 7.45 pm in the Youth Hall

6th February Christabelle Davey will be hosting "An Evening with a Difference".

I think there is plenty of audience participation during this evening.

20th February Eddie Spence will visit us again with his "Audio Visual Experience".

His varied programme of films were so interesting last time, and he still has plenty more to show us.

Lynne Pullein

TEXT FOR THE MONTH

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

Hebrews ch.10 v.22



Lidgett Park Drama Group
presents the pantomime

'Mother Goose'
at Lidgett Park Methodist Church



on Friday & Saturday
14, 15 February and
Friday & Saturday
21, 22 February, 2014
at 7.00pm

Adults £6 ***Children £3***
For tickets please ring 2678506

GOOD NEWS FROM BELIZE

The total amount of money (including the contributions from our Church project) given to the Belmopan Methodist High School since the project was approved in October is nearly £48,000.

That is an amazing amount and will mean that the next phase of construction can really get moving, with local people being employed to work on the site, alongside the teams from the United Methodist Church going to Belize.

Maggie Patchett

CHRISTMAS, FACT OR FICTION?

I wonder how many Link readers were puzzled, like myself, by Andrew's recent article in The Link. I read it three times, but could not understand it. I asked myself what reasons there might be for not accepting the Biblical description of the Christmas story.

It begins with a known fact re a census. There is ample supporting evidence that this census did take place. We know also what its purpose was, to extort money. I myself was a taxman for over 40 years. I was able to bring many thousands of would-be tax avoiders back into the tax fold. I am neither proud nor ashamed about this. It was my job. So I have no difficulty in accepting that the census of AD 7 took place, nor that it included Joseph and Mary. The Romans, like Hitler's Third Reich, gave their victims a stark choice, "Accept or die !"

Thus, since Joseph must have come within the ambit of Rome, he must have attended the census, and no man who loved his wife dearly, would have left her behind. I have therefore no difficulty in accepting the rest of the Christmas story, it seems highly probable.

What about the Magi? Astronomers calculate that around AD 7 there was a conjunction of two supernovae which would certainly have blazed in the sky. And we also know that men were navigating by the stars long before Harrison invented his accurate chronometer.

Years ago, an American writer, using the pseudonym O. Henry, wrote a delightful idyll entitled: "The Gifts of the Magi" Its gist was that it was unnecessary to think about Gold and Frankincense and Myrrh. There were only two criteria, Love, and Sacrificial Giving. Was not that what our Lord did? There are many things which we do not understand, but can accept. I find that music can send me to Cloud Nine, but cannot explain why. There is much in the

Biblical account of the life of our Lord that I do not understand. I only know that I can stake my life on it.

So Andrew, please no more negative articles in the Link, if you don't want to bore us silly!

Ken Massey

I've been editing The Link for nearly ten years and this is the first time I can remember anyone criticising the minister's letter. I'm not taking sides on the issue of the nativity narratives (I believe them entirely on Christmas Eve but not the rest of the year) but think that it must be a good thing to have honest discussion about what exactly we do and don't believe. And it is surely the task of our ministers and preachers to prod us and make us uncomfortable? It doesn't mean we have to agree with them! And if we don't we should be like Ken and let everyone know that..

NEWS FROM SRI LANKA

***Irene and Mano Rajah** are back in Sri Lanka for the winter. They had a good Christmas although Irene had a fall just before it. But she was able to get out and attend a covenant service in Colombo. She reports that the weather is hot and getting hotter (I'm not sure that we want to know that!). And she sends the following message for those who would like to try Nicky Gumbel's on-line Bible study.*

Happy New Year Everyone!

Just click on this link to either subscribe and/or download the app onto your Smartphone.

<http://www.htb.org.uk/bioy/commentary/> One Year Bible with Nicky

Mano & I look forward to our Bible reading notes everyday especially TWFT & C.H.Spurgeon's Cheque Book of Faith and the Methodist Prayer Book Light & Hope, but I've felt for some time that it wasn't enough and that as Rev. Selwyn Hughes and Bob Gas always said we should read the Bible too. For those of you who make do with Daily Bible reading Notes I would like to recommend you give this a try. I have always meant to, but never found the time to do so!!

With Love & God Bless you all!

Irene

CAPTION TIME



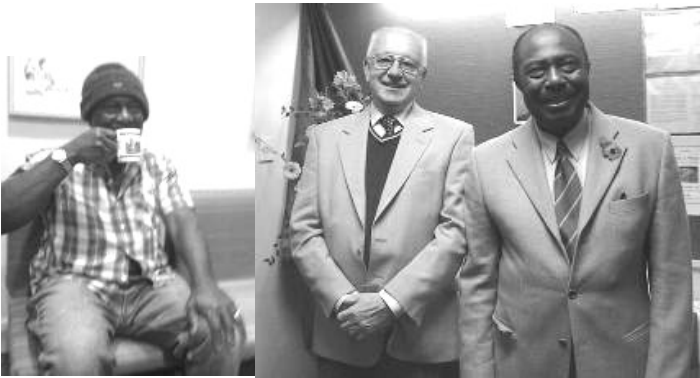
Gill and Drew Cooper have contributed –

"But remember, we're both spoken for"
or

*"I beg you, you must change into your
costume - the curtain is just about to go up"*
which could be followed with
*"Sorry, but I'm going nowhere until I've
finished this delicious mug of tea".*

While Colin Watson has got –

*"Andrew, I'll say this just once, I may have lost something at midnight at the
after show party, but it was not a size 6 Jimmy Choo silver slipper".*



And for these Colin has come up with-

*"Should have been in my lodge Gilbert, we would have provided you with a
proper work apron and help from an entered apprentice."*



*And, believe it or not, Colin is still
moaning that I forgot his entry for
the September issue. The only way to
keep him quiet is to put it in now.*

*"I'll talk to you outside the van just
this once Mr Bennett".*

*I have to admit that actually it is
pretty good.*

THIS MONTH'S QUIZ

Set by our own *Quiz Inquisitor*, **Gillian Clements**.

Only one quiz for you this month -and if you get number 5 you are a lot smarter than me!

Each clue gives a one-word answer, but each answer includes the name of an animal or two. (eg Copy. (7) Answer: EMULATE - EMU)

1. You need these and some snakes for a game. (7)
 2. I wish I weighed as little as this boxer! (12)
 3. Now won. Eat tea. (8)
 4. Spot on. (8)
 5. Two dozen carrot (I hear) in an unminted state. (7)
 6. This tree can be a copper! (5)
 7. Cheapest way to travel by ship. (8)
-

SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND

Rosemary Boud has kindly sent in this quiz. She managed to get 29 of the 30 answers. See if you can do better.

For the lazy ones the answers are given on page 20 – but don't peek.

The following puzzle contains the hidden names of 30 Books of the Bible.

This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much that he passed it on to some friends.

One friend from Illinois worked on this whilst fishing from his John-boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it, she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving that she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That is a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the books are not necessarily capitalised. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in these paragraphs. During a recent fundraising event, which features this puzzle, the Alpha-Delta-phi lemonade booth set a new sales record.

The local paper, the Chronicle, surveyed over 50 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, “the books are all right here in plain view, hidden from sight”. Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books Timothy and Samuel appear without their numbers. Also, keep in mind that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mass exodus. There really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in these paragraphs waiting to be found.

AN ENDING AND A BEGINNING

I am writing this amidst packing boxes and sorting much paper. We are moving! In a few days time this manse will cease to be the home of the Chair of the Leeds District. It has been the District Manse since 1957, so as I pack the boxes I find myself reflecting upon all the living, thinking, praying and conversing that these walls have held during those 56 years. I think of all the visitors who have been welcomed, the meals shared, the laughter enjoyed; the phone calls taken, and emails responded to; all the business conducted through these rooms when the District Office was based here; the cups of tea and coffee consumed, tears shed, encouragement shared; and all the profound thinking and theologising of my predecessors in this role (!) The role of Chair of District has changed and developed during these years, and we continue to be challenged by further significant changes to our ways of being Methodists across the connexion. My thoughts are not all about the past. At this time of moving house, I am already wondering how the new manse will work, wanting to make that too a place that is home and prayerful, and that offers a welcome, for family and for others.

In parallel with this domestic ending and beginning, I have been listening to some of the many commentaries on the life of Nelson Mandela. His passing marks the end of a monumental chapter in the history of South Africa, and of the wider world. For many people, however, his death has also invited or provoked a recommitment to the ideals of peace, racial justice, and reconciliation for the next generation, and not only in South Africa.

At a service of commemoration for Mandela in Leeds Minster, the final Act of Commitment began with these words:

We cannot live in the past; neither should we forget it. We are here in the present because those who have gone before us have given it to us. We have the future to explore: may we not waste it, but live it to the full.

These are perhaps fitting thoughts as we all embark upon the challenge of another year. I pray that it will be a peaceful and fulfilling year for each of us, and in our shared journey of discipleship.

Liz Smith

Chair of Leeds Methodist District

LETTER TO THE EDITOR – FAITH

Dear Ed

In October "Link" you said Joyce Wood has been having a go at me for my lack of faith. I am so sorry Ed! My faith. Your faith. Only God has the measure and he has no favourites. God knows that we both have faith.

My friend Commissioner Harry Read of the Salvation Army writes beautiful God inspired poetry. Recently in his letter he enclosed this poem which you might like for the February Link.

I particularly like the last two lines; "faith a gift for the common man.

FAITH AND SIGHT

In God's sure judgment faith is more than sight:
For that which can be seen by naked eye
More often shows the facts in lesser light,
And fails eternal truths to signify.

Faith looks beyond the obvious and sees
Out there, another kingdom, much more real
Than earthbound superficialities,
Those things that eyes can see and hands can feel.

Faith is another eye: a special lens
Enabling us a whole new world to view,
A gift divine, not naturally men's
Which, in times past alone the prophets knew.

But now, this gift is for the common man,
Such is the glory of God's master plan.

God bless you and yours in 2014 .

JOYCE WOOD

NO PRAYER FOR CHANGE

I don't know why but once again the prayer for change hasn't arrived in time. What to put in its place? Well this is an indulgence on my part but, as the grumpy old man said in the November Link, we had far too few carols in our run up to Christmas; so I have picked a couple of verses of my Barbara's favourite carol. As Neil Richardson told us "Christmas continues".

Cradled in a manger meanly
Laid the Son of Man his head,
Sleeping his first earthly slumber
Where the oxen had been fed.
Happy were those shepherds listening
To the holy angel's word;
Happy they within that stable,
Worshipping their infant Lord

.....

And to those who never listened
To the message of thy birth,
Who have winter, but no Christmas
Bringing them thy peace on earth,
Send to these the joyful tidings;
By all people, in each home,
Be there heard the Christmas anthem
Praise to God, the Christ has come!

George Stringer Rowe

CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS

A real plum pudding – did anyone manage to complete them all?

Quiz 1. Each answer can be changed into a different word by putting another four-letter word in front. This word is the same for all the clues, and is part of the Christmas story.

1. During the Cold War, would you fear finding this under the bed. (3)

RED

2. Call. (4)

RING

3. Allow or lease. (3)

LET

4. Does this have a chairman? (5)

BOARD

5. Find this in water or on the moor. (4)

LING

6. Heath? Not moorland. (3)

TED

7. Sound as a bell. (4)

TING

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| 8. | Used to sing with Sonny. (4) | CHER |
| 9. | Plant which sounds like a viral skin blemish. (4) | WORT |
| 10. | Can't see much without it. (5) | LIGHT |
| 11. | Not more. (4) | LESS |
| 12. | TV – “Don't get done get ___”. (3) | DOM |

All the answers can be preceded by STAR.

Quiz 2. When you've answered all the clues, rearrange the words to make the start of a Christmas carol.

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------|
| 1. | Royalty or a book. (5) | KINGS |
| 2. | Demeanour or orientation. (7) | BEARING |
| 3. | The east. (6) | ORIENT |
| 4. | Cross. (8) | TRAVERSE |
| 5. | Knock a point off the sheep to get us. (2) | WE |
| 6. | Almost tiny. (2) | WE |
| 7. | Distance found in a safari. (4) | AFAR |
| 8. | Trio. (5) | THREE |
| 9. | Add a note to Read Only Memory. (4) | FROM |
| 10. | Presents. (5) | GIFTS |
| 11. | Take the first from an archaic weed. (3) | ARE |

WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE, BEARING GIFTS WE TRAVERSE
AFAR

Quiz 3. Each clue gives rise to two words which differ by one letter. These differing letters spell out something often used as a decoration at Christmas.

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|
| 1. | When the ancient word was translated it read “dried plum”. (4,5) | RUNE, PRUNE - P |
| 2. | I worked hard to get slated. (6,5) | TOILED, TILED – O |
| 3. | Can you play a trick to get money? (3,4) | CON, COIN - I |
| 4. | The water bird went for a ramble. (5,6) | WADER, WANDER - N |
| 5. | Cut the hair on the eyelid. (5,4) | SLASH, LASH - S |
| 6. | I look at the bright object in the sky. (5,4) | STARE, STAR - E |
| 7. | Father could hear the _____ of tiny feet. (5,6) | PATER, PATTERN - T |
| 8. | Use it to encourage your horse or dig in the garden. (5,6) | ROWEL, TROWEL - T |
| 9. | I don't think this mathematical diagram can transport blood. (3,4) | VEN, VEIN - I |
| 10. | Is it a very sore place on your foot or a potential oak tree? (4,5) | CORN, ACORN - A |

POINSETTIA

Quiz 4.

The clues are straight and all the solutions have something in common.

1. To take a look at (slang). (6) GANDER
2. Money (slang). (5) RHINO
3. To pucker. (6) COCKLE
4. Glutton. (3) PIG
5. This would please a golfer. (5) EAGLE
6. To tail someone. (3) DOG
7. Not a nice thing to call a small person. (6) SHRIMP
8. To dupe. (4) GULL

THEY ARE ALL ANIMALS

Quiz 5.

Fill in the blanks to find the animals. All the solutions contain at least one more animal (eg SEA-LION (SEAL, LION)).

1. _ E _ _ _ E BEAGLE (EAGLE)
2. _ A _ _ _ ER PANTHER (ANT)
3. _ AR _ _ O _ WARTHOG (HOG)
4. _ _ EL _ WHELK (ELK)
5. _ O _ _ RO _ _ _ COCKROACH (COCK, ROACH)
6. _ _ AL _ I _ _ STALLION (LION)
7. A _ _ A _ _ O _ _ ALBATROSS (BAT)
8. _ IT _ E _ _ BITTERN (TERN)
9. _ A _ _ O _ A _ Y CASSOWARY (SOW)
10. _ O _ _ O _ _ E MONGOOSE (GOOSE)

BIBLE BOOKS SOLUTION

These are the 30 books of the Bible in the order in which they appear in the text, and in the different paragraphs:

Amos, Mark, Luke.

John, Joel, Judges, Job, Hebrews, Esther, Acts, James, Ruth, Romans, Titus, Matthew, Genesis, Philemon.

Chronicles, Daniel, Nahum, Hosea, Lamentations, Revelation, Timothy, Samuel, Numbers, Malachi, Peter, Exodus, Kings.

WELL I THINK IT'S FUNNY

Sign on the door of the outdoor Gent's toilet at Cavendish Pavilion, Bolton Abbey –

Please keep this door closed to prevent pipework freezing.

RED KITE



We are very short of pictures this month. So I felt you would like to see a picture of a magnificent red kite. Beautiful birds and, after their reintroduction at Harewood a few years ago, becoming quite common in the skies above Leeds.

What we need for next time is pictures from the magnificent "Afternoon tea a la Betty" which we all enjoyed so much recently. Personally I thought the suave, debonair maitre d'

was the star attraction but most people seemed to prefer the wonderful food and the elegant ambience.

FINAL WORDS

As we have recently lost a truly great man it seems appropriate to finish with a couple of his sayings.

"I am not a saint, unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps trying."

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite"

Nelson Mandela