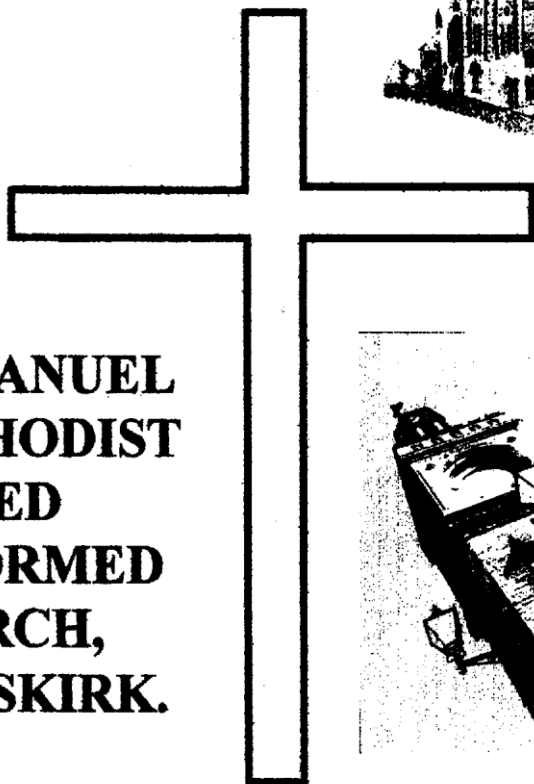


INTOUCH



**EMMANUEL
METHODIST
UNITED
REFORMED
CHURCH,
ORMSKIRK.**

DEC/JAN 2012

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MINISTER'S PEN

Dear Friends,

'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...'

These words from the book of the prophet Isaiah are familiar to us from Advent and Christmas services. They highlight, of course, the image of the coming of Jesus Christ as the coming of the Light of the World. Light is a very powerful symbol of the seasons of Advent and Christmas, especially since in our country these seasons fall in these winter times of short days and dark evenings.

During Advent God's people wait in prayerful hope for the dawning of the Messiah, the Light of the World, who comes to dispel the darkness of sin and alienation - all that separates us from God and from each other.

In the midst of shopping, decorating, cooking, writing cards and the host of other activities which keep us occupied between now and the New Year, the custom of the lighting candles in the Advent wreath helps us to keep the real meaning of Christmas in perspective.

Traditionally, the candles should be purple in colour, like the stole that I shall wear, a reminder of the spirit of penance preparation and prayer that marks the Advent season. Sometimes the third candle is rose-coloured to mark 'Gaudete Sunday'. Often, though, as is traditional here with us all four candles are red.

Whatever the colour of the candles, one candle is lit each week until all four are aglow on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. The

Advent themes we remember as each candle is lit are, traditionally, The Advent Hope, The Word of God in Scripture, John the Baptist, and the Annunciation to Mary.

If there is a wreath it is said to symbolize the eternity of God and the Father's presence throughout human history. The evergreen branches of holly and/or ivy often used to decorate the wreath symbolize the eternal life of God in Christ available to us all. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day the fifth candle, this time in white, in the centre of the wreath is lit as the climax of the season symbolizing the dawning of God's light amongst us in the Christ-child whose birth we celebrate.

Our Advent Services will include a ceremony of candle lighting in this tradition during which we shall sing verses from a hymn which I have especially chosen from "Singing the Faith" the Methodist Church's new hymn book.

May I warmly invite you all to join us week by week, and Sunday by Sunday in all our Advent and Christmas activities, and our acts of worship so that we may all feel that sense of togetherness this season uniquely brings. On Christmas day here at Emmanuel we shall remind ourselves as we sing: "Christ is with us: loving, giving, in us living, here today!" And as we sing so let us live!

Wishing you all much joy for Advent and Christmas,

Melvyn

Ormskirk Methodist United Reformed Church exists to promote the worship of Almighty God, to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and, in the power of the Spirit, to serve neighbours in Christ at home and abroad. It seeks to play a part in transforming the unjust structures of society and promoting strong communities based on Christian values. As part of the World Church, it will strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain the life on earth.

“O God make the door of this house wide enough to receive all those who need human love and a heavenly Father’s care, and narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and hatred. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children or straying feet, but rugged enough to turn back the tempter’s power. Make it the gateway to Thy Eternal Kingdom, through Jesus Christ. Amen

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EMMANUEL NEWS

There will be an additional Church council Meeting on Wednesday 14th December commencing at 8 p.m. to conclude business from the October meeting.

Jackie Cann

THANK YOU

How can I begin to thank you for all the loving kindness you have shown Don and I and our family during the recent past? Thank you for your support, ‘food parcels’, flowers and more during Don’s illness and the many, many messages and cards

since his death. Thank you too to Melvyn and everyone involved in the wonderful Service of Thanksgiving. The Catering Committee -those who baked, prepared and served refreshments ensured that the time after the service was most enjoyable.

Thank you most sincerely

Yes, God is good!

Anne Baldwin and Family

I have now moved into my new home in St Albans. I would like to Say a big thank-you for all the good wishes, which I have received. I can assure you that they have been much appreciated.

I send my good wishes to everyone at Emmanuel, as Christmas time approaches.

Louie Moyle

Ken and Betty Edwards send Christmas greetings to friends at Emmanuel and are grateful for the support and prayers of friends.

In the Nov issue of the “Ormskirk & District Family History Society” magazine is a report of their “Dig Up Your Roots” event held in September at Emmanuel in the Langham Hall. The last part of their port reads “ The Society received very positive feedback from those groups who supported Dig Up Your Roots in West Lancashire and also from the public who visited the hall that day. Additionally, the excellent catering provided by the ladies of the Methodist Church was greatly appreciated and very well received by all who called into one of the side rooms for refreshments –the home-baked cakes were of the very highest standard! ”

I thought the bakers should know their efforts were really appreciated. Thanks should go to Lyn Jenkins and her team for organizing the catering and to Cynthia Rimmer for her extra work involved with the event.

Wendy Moores

The Formby and Ormskirk branch of **Guide Dogs for the Blind** has disbanded. Postage stamps may be placed in a box in the foyer of Southport Hospital. The group is grateful for the support given by Emmanuel.

Nick's Trek

As many of you will know, Nick Roxburgh is part way through an 1,014 mile epic trek that will take him the length of Britain and to the highest summits of Scotland, England & Wales by foot alone. Nick set out on the trek from John O'Groats at the start of September and has now reached the two thirds point at

Llanidloes in mid Wales with the summits of Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon ticked off.

The adventure combines two classics, the Three Peaks and the End-to-End Challenge making it one of the longest and toughest endurance tests Britain has to offer.

The mammoth challenge is part of a fundraising effort for the Disasters Emergency Committee's East Africa crisis appeal for which Nick aims to raise £1,014, equivalent to a pound per mile.

More than 13 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and the newly-formed Republic of South Sudan have been left in desperate need of food, water and emergency healthcare because of one of the worst droughts in 60 years. Although the crisis has fallen out of the national headlines it has not diminished.

Asked about the trek Nick said:

'It has been a massive challenge, both physically and mentally. As we move into winter the walking is getting more challenging but it is all worth it for the cause'

People can show their support for Nick as he begins the final 350 miles of his challenge by donating what you can to help him raise funds for the East Africa Crisis Appeal. You can donate and follow his progress by going to his website www.walking.gb.net.

FINANCE

Firstly I would like to say a few big thank you this month – we have received a couple of generous donations and these along with some money we have been left in a bequest are very welcome to help swell the coffers to pay for some necessary repairs that need to be made on top of our usual expenditure. I would also like to thank those who have already looked at their regular giving and have increased either their standing orders or the amount they contribute via the envelope system.

I would also like to thank Duncan Boulton who has agreed to take over as Finance Committee Secretary and Malcolm Roxburgh who is to chair our meetings.

The actual position of our finances at the moment is, as it ever is, that we can continue to pay our way but there is little extra left over for unexpected emergencies such as repairs to the fire alarm system, heating and the now necessary repairs to the car park. The car park will cost some £3000 to repair which along with an expected bill of approximately £6000 for the annual insurance of our property puts a strain on our bank balance. Just as at home gas and electric costs take up a large part of our budget and I would urge people to think as much as possible about keeping these as low as possible. Please turn lights off in rooms, toilets etc when not in use for more than 5 minutes, if it is too warm in the Langham hall this can be turned off, see either Cynthia or myself if you don't know how to do this, if you cancel a meeting for some reason again let Cynthia know so that the heating program can be changed. If we save just £3 a day on average on our costs that results in a saving of over £1000 in a year!

We rely heavily on not just our regular giving but also on events such as the Christmas Fair, and we ask that you support events such as these in the best way you can. I would also remind you that all donations can be Gift Aided if you are a tax payer, resulting in an extra 25% for the church at no cost to yourself. The only stipulation being that it must be suitably recorded in the church records.

Thank You
Mark Taylor Treasurer

News from Churches Together

Breakfast Club at Ormskirk School: Vikki Shacklady is the part-time youth worker at Ormskirk Parish Church. Her work takes her into Ormskirk where she has started a Breakfast Club with children from homes where breakfast and a stable home life is lacking. The hope is to come alongside these children, and whilst offering them breakfast also looking to nurture and care for them in terms of giving them a place to relax and, if necessary, allow them to share the issues they face. Vikki asks if you can pray for this important work.

How do you like your worship?

If you like to worship in quietness there is no better time than early in the morning.

Did you know that every quarter some of us meet at 8.30am as advertised on the plan to share in Holy Communion together? Sadly of late we have had very few people coming to this service – would you like to join them?

All those who do and have come to this service will tell you that there is something special about it. They are right but don't just take their word for it – come and see for yourself. The next early communion is on Sunday 5th February 2012 at 8.30am. See you there!?

Extraordinary gifts for Christmas

Extraordinary Gifts from the Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) are good news for you, for your loved ones and for some of the world's poorest communities. Gifts include: 'super-ram', 'on your bike', 'get fruity' and 'send a teacher to school'.

Your 'gift' is a donation to the work of one of MRDF's partners in Nepal, Kenya, Ethiopia or Togo.

Go shopping on the MRDF website www.mrdf.org.uk

Melvyn

TAPED SERVICES

If you would like to receive a taped copy of the Sunday morning Service, then please contact Ynyr Jones. Thank you

A BABY IN NEED

There is a young girl who lives at Formby, who is expecting a baby at Christmas. She has nothing for her child. The Guild will bring an empty tree to the Christmas Fair, and hope to fill it with new gifts for a new baby. We invite any one to bring a small present for the baby and place it on or near our tree.

Joyce Cundall

Pastoral Care and Home Communion

Our Church has numerous members and friends who are no longer able to worship with us Sunday by Sunday because of age or infirmity; some live at home still, others are in residential homes. These friends are still very much a part of the Emmanuel family. Many of them keep 'in touch' with us through the monthly newsletter, and support us still, not least in their prayers. It is part of the Church's pastoral concern to visit these folk regularly and this is done faithfully week by week by pastoral visitors. The Church is still looking to encourage more people to get involved in this important work. Do give prayerful thought as to whether you feel able to offer this service in the Church.

I already have arrangements with some members who cannot get to Sunday worship for taking communion to them at home. I know there may be others who would welcome this. If you would like me to bring communion to you at home, or if you know of someone who would like me to do that then please give me a ring and let me know or ask your pastoral visitor to speak with me.

Rev. Melvyn Kelly (Tel: 572812)

Students!

Have you noticed that now Ormskirk is a University town there are a few students about? I wonder what you feel about that?

Are they a nuisance? Are they an inevitable presence simply to be tolerated? Are they the cause of the town centre being turned into an extended campus? Or are they a welcome addition to the community of Ormskirk to be nurtured, and cared for, served and disciplined just like any other members of our diverse and changing community?

Occasionally it is a delight to welcome some of them –whether British or international students - into our Church fellowship at Emmanuel.

I am proud to have been appointed to serve as one of the Chaplains in the multi-faith chaplaincy service set up at the University. For the first time in ten years my chaplaincy to students and staff is recognised, encouraged and supported by

the University itself. I do this work on behalf of the Lancashire West Circuit and it is an important part of the Circuit's vision for mission.

There is a thriving Christian Union at Edge Hill and I'm sure there are many, many more students there for whom the CU is not their cup of tea but who are also on a journey of faith. Emmanuel is in a prime position to provide spiritual and pastoral support to the students at Edge Hill – some of them actually live next door! What can we do for them? How can we reach out to them in the name of our Church and Circuit? Perhaps we could feed some of them – we tried that once. After all students enjoy their food don't they? And food always tastes better when someone else has prepared it (or it did when I was a student)!

I would welcome any ideas and then offers of help in putting those ideas into practice. In the meantime, would keep the University in your prayers?

Melvyn

THE GUILD

December 6th - This will be a NETWORK Carol Service led by Joyce. All are welcome and the ladies of the circuit will be joining us.

December 13th - 'Spicy Fruit Punch', mince pies and 'bring and buy' at Freda's 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

January 10th - An advance notice. Our Christmas Meal will be held at 'The Farm', Burscough. £11 per head plus transport costs. Les has the details.

January 24th - We welcome Melvyn to our meeting.

Freda Cottier

EMMANUEL FELLOWSHIP - Tuesday's 8 p.m.

December 6th - *Foot in the Door* with George Barnes

December 13th - We join with the Women's Evening Group for our joint Carol Service, which is open to all

January 17th - We welcome Rev Melvyn Kelly

January 31st - *Strait Across the Menai* with Dr Alan Patterson.

We are pleased that Alan is returning a second time after his very interesting talk last year. This is sure to be informative, historical and well researched

Do you have a favourite Bible verse?

At a recent service we shared some of the verses that meant a lot to us. We thought it would be good to make a book of verses compiled by people of Emmanuel. If you would like to share a verse that is special to you please pass it to **Jane Langdon**. You may also wish to include a few words about why it is special to you. If we get enough contributions, we will compile this into a small booklet.

PASTORALIA

12th November

Christopher Fry and Karen Wharton were married

CHURCH WEEKEND ST WINIFRED'S RHOS-ON-SEA
Come and share in our Church Weekend in North Wales, 13th - 15th April 2012. This is a weekend for ALL ages, and 'newcomers' are always welcome. If you have not yet obtained a booking form, or If you would like more information, please contact DENNIS HELLIWELL either at church on Sunday or by telephone.

Please note that this year there will be some twin/double rooms available for use as ‘singles’, these may incur a supplementary charge of £5 per night. The ‘singles’ they used to offer have been used to create more ‘en-suite facilities’.

The Benevolence Fund

The Communion Stewards have asked me to remind you of the significance and purpose of the Benevolence Fund.

It has long been the tradition within Methodism to take up a retiring collection after every communion service.

Unless a specific collection is announced by the stewards for any specific emergency appeal – this retiring collection will be for the Church Benevolence Fund.

The Benevolence Fund is a restricted fund from which the Church, through me as the minister, may respond to circumstances of poverty and distress that come to my notice during the year.

Where there remains a balance on the fund at the year end then the Church Council may decide to dispose of that balance by gifting it to a charity whose purposes are aimed at the relief of poverty and distress.

Melvyn

The Fruitful Field

The Fruitful Field is a project about learning, formation, training, theological education, scholarship, research and development. It’s about the future of the Methodist Church’s connexional learning resources. It’s about equipping the Church

and its ministries, equipping the Methodist movement in all of its contexts and formational communities, and equipping God's people for discipleship and mission.

The Ministries Committee has issued a consultation document about The Fruitful Field. The Methodist people and all of our partners, colleagues and friends are invited to read and reflect on the document. We welcome your reflections up to 23 December 2011.

Go to the Fruitful Field page of the Methodist Church website and you will be able to:

- download the consultation document
- request printed copies of the document
- submit your reflections

Melvyn

AND FINALLY!!!!!!!

This is the story of the poor blonde flying in a two-seater airplane with just the pilot.

He has a heart attack and dies.

She frantically calls a May Day:

"May Day! May Day! Help me! Help me!"

My pilot had a heart attack and is dead and I don't know how to fly.

Help me! Please help me!"

All of a sudden she hears a voice over the radio saying:

"This is the tower.

I have received your message and I will talk you through it.

I've had a lot of experience with this kind of problem.

Now, just relax.

Everything will be fine!

Now give me your height and position."

She says, "I'm 5'4" and I'm in the front seat."

"O.K." says the voice from the tower.

"Repeat after me:

"Our Father. . Who art in Heaven. . . ."

FORTHCOMING SERVICES AT EMMANUEL

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Dec 4 th | 10 30 a.m. 6 30 p.m. | Rev Melvyn Kelly Rev Michael Tindsley | Parade Service |
| Dec 11 th | 10 30 a.m. 6 30 p.m. | Rev Melvyn Kelly Informal Service | Nativity Service |
| Dec 18 th | 10 30 a.m. 6 30 p.m. | Mrs Joyce Cundall Rev Melvyn Kelly | Carol Service |
| Dec 24 th | 4 00 p.m. 11 30 p.m. | Rev Melvyn Kelly Rev Melvyn Kelly | Communion Communion |
| Dec 25 th | 9 00 a.m. | Rev Melvyn Kelly | Family Celebration |
| Jan 1 st | 10 30 a.m. | Rev Melvyn Kelly | |
| Jan 8 th | 10 30 a.m. 6 30 p.m. | Rev Melvyn Kelly United Service at Burscough | Covenant Service |
| Jan 15 th | 10 30 a.m. 6 30 p.m. | Mrs Jenny Ashcroft Rev Sylvia Jacquest | |
| Jan 22 nd | 10 30 a.m. 6 30 p.m. | Mrs Merle Bradley Rev Melvyn Kelly | |
| Jan 29 th | 10 30 a.m. 6 30 p.m. | Mrs Monica Rhead United Service at Parish Church | |

Please note what times the services commence

Items for the FEBRUARY edition by 18th January
please to Bill Jones
Email - billjones10@sky.com