

GoodNEWS

LINDFIELD URC'S VILLAGE MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2009

Know your Bible

– Read it!



PLUS...

- Sharing your faith - John Goodway
- Life at University
- Dan MacQuillin writes on Barack Obama's promise of change

FREE
PLEASE HELP YOURSELF

Happy
2009!



Dear Friends...



Have you made any New Year's resolutions? You may be surprised to hear that I hope you haven't. Why? Because kept resolutions are a great source of pride and broken ones are a great source of discouragement. If there are two things we don't need, it's pride and discouragement.

God's Word tells us that we must do our best to live holy lives, because without holiness, no one will see the Lord. All the same, holiness is not something you can cultivate like a plant in a greenhouse. Holiness is a by-product of living close to God. Many who read this may think that rules them out, because only very good people live close to God. If you think that, you are mistaken. Speaking for myself, I try to live close to God, not because I am extra especially good, but because I am such a pathetic specimen of Christian discipleship, it's the only way I can possibly make any spiritual progress.

You see, over and over again, Jesus' teaching turns our natural understanding of things on its head. When the Disciples were arguing about who was going to be top-dog in God's Kingdom, He said

"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be your slave"

(St. Matthew 20:26)

Naturally we think that rulers and those with authority have the right to order other people around, but in Jesus' scheme of things, the opposite is true. It's the same with so-called "spiritual maturity".

In St. John 15 v.2, Jesus told His disciples that unless they lived closely to Him, as close as the branch of a vine is embedded into the stem, they could do absolutely nothing for Him, but that is a hard lesson to learn. Like the one about authority, it goes against all our natural instincts. Surely we think, the passing years bring greater strength and faith. We imagine that older, mature Christians know all the answers or most of them and that their experience equips them to face anything and everything.

Well, speaking as one of them, I have to say that's not how I see things. As I grow older in the Christian life, I don't get less inclined to fall victim to sin, indeed the temptations go on coming thick and fast. They may change, but they don't stop. The longer I serve

Dear Friends...

Jesus, the more I become aware of my inadequacy and that has one overwhelming effect. It drives me closer and closer to Him, because I am learning that He is my only security and that without His loving, guiding hand, I will certainly come to disaster. Instead of a duty, prayer becomes a necessity. It means that unless I feed on the Word of God each day, inwardly I starve. My body may be comfortably covered, but my soul is emaciated. That's how much I need Him.

So, as 2009 dawns, let me give you this advice. Make only one new year resolution.

Be honest about yourself, with yourself and with God.

You're not going to make it on your own. You're not going to become the shining Christian you want to be, through your own efforts. If you try to do that, instead of becoming like Jesus, you are much more likely to turn into one of the Pharisees who hounded Him to death. Instead, begin each day with an admission of your need and end it with a prayer for forgiveness. That's how the great saints lived - in total dependence on Christ and it's the way we have to live too. The Holy Spirit can do so much more with us, when we admit that we're helpless without Him. The wonderful thing is that when we do, the power of sin is broken and the grinding discouragement of failure gives way to what He is able to do in and through us. Ephesians 3 v. 21 says it all

"Now to Him Who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever."

Let me wish you a happy new year, as you become more and more conscious of your need to live close to Jesus!

Your minister and friend,
Charles Martin

GoodNEWS

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Editorial



Happy New Year

None of us know what this year will bring. Some are looking forward to special events others are anxious of the unknown or fearful of anticipated situations. Martin's article reminds us that the Bible is God's word to us, what ever the situation or how we feel. He encourages us to get to know our Bibles more by reading it.

We are most grateful to John Goodway for his article on 'Sharing our faith'. In his writing John is as enthusiastic as in his speaking, and he urges us to share our faith with our friends, family and those around us.

Four of the 'rarest' group in our church write about how they are doing. It's our Students. Alex and Helen describe their first term experiences, whilst Jonathan and Simon share what it's like being an old student or an ex-student. We do have other students but we are keeping their news until the next semester. There is a book-mark (on page 9) with all our students' names on so please do cut this out and keep it in your bible so that we can remember these precious people in our prayers.

There is more of the usual meetings and concerts too.

Val

Prayer *DIARY*



As we come to a new year and we make new resolutions and plans for the year ahead, prayer must be at the top of our list. We are all called to pray and each one of us prays differently. We need an open heart, a desire to find out what Gods purposes are, thereby allowing Him to transform our lives and that of others.

MONDAY :-) *Why is prayer important?* We are communicating with God, but also listening as God speaks to us, growing in our relationship with God and discovering more of his purpose for our lives. John13. 7

TUESDAY :-) *Why does prayer seem difficult at times?* We are all busy people and time seems so difficult to set aside for prayer. We must persevere, not stopping because we are tired but because we need to pray. Matt 26. 41

WEDNESDAY :-) *Is there a right way to pray?* I sometimes feel inadequate and think through in my head what I want to say and then the moment passes in church and we have moved onto something else! Whether it is silent prayer or out loud, our God will hear us. Our “uniqueness” is special to God. Romans 8 26-27. Ps 86. 1-7

THURSDAY :-) *Why does it appear that some prayers are unanswered?* Sometimes when we pray it is for our will and not Gods will. We want prayers answered in the way we expect and yet through great pain and sorrow, God's plans are greater than our own and his purpose for us much wiser. Hab. 3 17-19.

FRIDAY :-) *How can I grow in prayer?* I try to keep a prayer diary, and when reading back, find some prayers are answered and others need to be re-worked? Jesus suggests we start with a reminder, move on to tell a story and end with a promise, a conclusion as to what we will do, be direct. Luke 11 1-13.

SATURDAY :-) *Does prayer change things?* No – God does, but prayer is the tool that He puts into our hands. Faith and prayer go together. God changes things and prayer is powerful. God is the source and prayer is the conclusion. Matt. 5. 5

SUNDAY :-) *A Praying Church?* Praying with others can help us with our own personal faith and discipline when we are weak willed! To be “me” and “we” in Gods presence in church is wonderful. It gives us focus and fellowship for the week ahead. 1 Timothy.2 1-2, 8.

Fiona Flett

Feature Article – Knowing your Bible

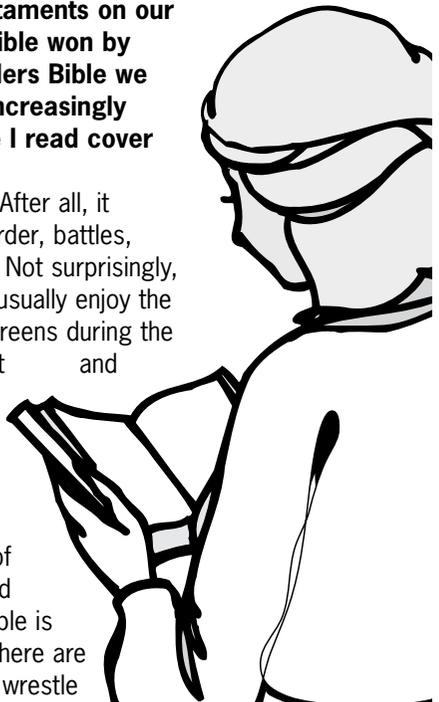
The editorial group thought that it would be good to encourage us all at the start of the year in a determination to read the Bible more and asked Martin to kick things off with a slimmed down version of an article he wrote for December 2007 Good News focusing on where the Bible came from (see Good News archives for the original!).

Know Your Bible – Read It more!

At the beginning of a New Year why not resolve to try and read the Bible more! Most of us are fortunate to have grown up with the Word of God, the Bible, freely available and near at hand on the family bookcase. Helen and I seem to have acquired fifteen Bibles or New Testaments on our shelves, such as my Christening Bible, a Bible won by regular attendance at “Crusaders”, a Toddlers Bible we bought for our own children and various, increasingly modern versions. How many of them have I read cover to cover? So far.....none!

Why is it that we struggle to read the Bible? After all, it is full of great stories – love (lost and won), murder, battles, natural and man made disasters and triumphs. Not surprisingly, many of these make for excellent cinema. We usually enjoy the gripping Biblical epics that appear on our TV screens during the Christmas and Easter holidays. How can we sit and watch them for two to three hours and yet fall asleep after just two to three minutes of bed-time reading of the same script?

Timothy wrote, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3: 16-17). So, reading the Bible is clearly a good thing for Christians to do! Yes, there are less gripping parts of the Bible and we need to wrestle



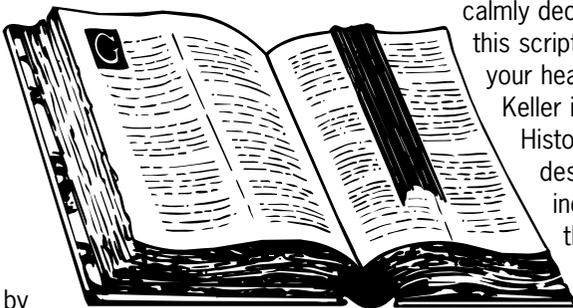
Feature Article – Knowing your Bible

with some passages to understand them. That's why it is so good to belong to one of the Church's Home Groups – to discuss the Bible on a regular basis with others and encourage each other – or to go to events like Spring Harvest or Celebr8. I am still so thankful to Alex Jacob for the clarity he brought at Celebr8 to Bible passages that I had previously struggled with.

As Christians we rightly concentrate on the teachings of Christ and these are found in the New Testament. Our focus on these teachings is demonstrated by the New Testament being available as a separate book. So, we might be inclined not to bother with the Old Testament. After all, wasn't the Covenant of Old Testament Laws that God made with Moses and the Israelites set aside by the New Covenant sealed with the blood of Jesus on the cross? However, we would be wrong to ignore the Old Testament because Jesus himself made constant reference to it, he obeyed its commands (indeed was the only person who was able to) and he fulfilled its prophecies.

It is amazing to think that what we read in the Old Testament today is an exact translation of what Jesus read in Hebrew 2,000 years ago. Luke 4: 16-20 describes when Jesus read the passage from Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue in Nazareth where he grew up: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.....". After reading that Jesus sat down and

calmly declared, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing". Werner Keller in "The Bible as History" (1956) describes the incredible find of the 'Dead Sea Scrolls' made by Bedouin



by



shepherds in 1947, in a cave near the Dead Sea. Included was a 23-foot leather scroll containing the complete Hebrew text of the book of Isaiah dating from 100 BC, providing unique evidence that what we read in the Old Testament today is the same as Jesus read all those years ago.

By the year 200, the mainstream church was using just the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as a 'New Testament'. About that time Paul's letters gained acceptance as of equal importance. Gradually the church discovered that certain other books had a clear authority – and those books truthfully represented the experience of the apostles, those who lived closest to Jesus. At the Council of Carthage (397 AD) the Bishops agreed a list of books identical to those we use today, with just Revelation being added since the Council of Laodicea (363 AD). The accepted New Testament consists of 27 books written within the century following the death of Jesus, five are narrative documents telling us what Jesus did and how the early church grew (the four Gospels and the Acts), 21 are letters instructing the early church how to live as Christians and one is a revelation, a glimpse of the future.

The first translation of all Biblical scriptures into one language was the Vulgate, or Common Version, written in Latin by Jerome at the instruction of Pope Damasus in about 384 AD. John Wycliffe, an Oxford theologian, first translated the Vulgate Bible into a hand written English version around 1384. In 1526 William Tyndale printed the first English language New Testament, translated from the original Greek. The story of subsequent versions of the Bible, from translations such as the *King James (Authorized) Version* (1611) and the *New International Version* (1978) through to paraphrases such as *The Living Bible* (1971) and *The Message* (1993) is fascinating and information on more than 100 versions of the Bible can be found at the web site of Tyndale House, Cambridge (<http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/scriptures/>).

Feature Article – Knowing your Bible ---

Many scripts were left out of the Bible for various reasons, e.g., the Gnostic gospels, attacked as heresy by Paul and the Church founders and the Apocrypha, not included in the Protestant Bible because “there is nothing of theological value in the Apocryphal books that cannot be duplicated in canonical [accepted] scripture” (NIV Study Bible).

The complete Bible has been around for almost 2,000 years and is as relevant today as it was then. How we use it is up to us, but it would be great if we followed Jeremiah's example, **“When your words came, I ate them: they were my joy and my heart's delight”** (*Jeremiah 15: 16*). There are many aids to Bible reading these days: daily Bible readings with explanation, read-the-Bible-in-a-year studies and so forth. The “Lucas on Life Every Day” series that I try to keep up with gives some advice for getting the best out of Bible study, summarised as:-

Ideally have a regular time and place each day to study, with limited distractions.

At the beginning ask God to speak to you through the passage and at the end ask for his help in applying it.

I think the important thing is not to put things off or look for excuses but just to get started at a comfortable level, one you know you can sustain. Reading five verses a day is better than five hundred verses “when I have time”. Adapting a quote of Dom Chapman on prayer: “Read the Bible as you can and not as you can't”. I hope that 2009 might be the year you, and I, start or restart our regular study of the Bible.

Martin Hall

Student News

We have asked our young people who are currently living away to tell us something of what they are up to. This month we have Simon and Helen Merrett and Jonathan and Alex Hall. Next month we shall have are other students.

First Year at University

Well they do say that time flies when you're enjoying yourself so maybe that's why I'm suddenly finding myself at the end of my first term at university! I've been working (sort of!?) but I've dedicated these first few weeks to getting involved so I can make the most of my 6 years!

Where to begin? Well the start seems like a good place so here goes...I moved into halls on the 4th of October and after a hectic fresher's fortnight we began lectures which have been really fascinating – practicals have included taking each other's blood, steady hands required!

But beyond Medicine I'm playing for ICSM Badminton team, I've signed up to volunteer in the community with a group of guys from Imperial, I'm part of a student enterprise group, on the lighter side I've been persuaded to go to KnitSock (Imperial's Knitting Society!) and to top it all off tomorrow I'm getting a blood test to become a bone marrow donor...not sure how I ended up signing for that one but hey ho...life is indeed hectic! I've been really lucky as literally right behind my halls is Holy Trinity Brompton, a thriving inner city church that I've done my best to get really involved with. There's a packed out student group who I'm going away with this coming weekend and last week I had an audition to play drums in church which went really well...maybe I'll be playing with

Please **pray**
for our Young
People;

Helen Merrett
– Exeter, French

Simon Merrett
– Temp job with
National Trust

Alex Hall
– Imperial College,
Medicine

Jonathan Hall
– Leicester, Medicine

James Dew
– Bournemouth, Business
Studies

Jonny Dew
– Portsmouth, Criminology

Sam Griffith
– Sheffield, Landscape
Architecture

Andrew Cookney
– Sheffield Geography

Katie Cookney
– India Gap Year

Jess Elphick
– Plumpton college,
Out Door Pursuits

Tim Hughes by the end of '09...well I can dream!

There's loads left to say if only there was room, if you're still interested I'll be happy to bore you when I'm back home for Christmas!...and on that note Merry Christmas everyone!

Alex Hall

Second Year at University

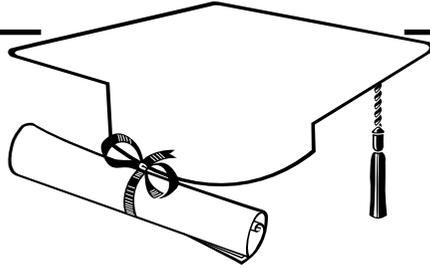
My second year studying in Leicester has kicked off with tremendous pace. I'm living in a house this year, instead of halls, not that I feel I spend much time in it except to eat and sleep. Having to fend for ourselves in this house, I have found a new appreciation for the ability of my Mum to produce a fully satisfying meal every night, without resorting to a mountain of pasta. But I do love pasta and happily eat my own body weight in it.

A new year has brought new responsibilities in another form too; I'm secretary of the Boat Club. It has been really satisfying seeing all our efforts on the committee increase our club from less than 30 members last year to nearly 100 members this year. I continue to train in the senior squad and have rowed in a couple of races this term, gaining my first victory in one of them.

I've found a church in Leicester! Trinity Life Church is a really energetic, enthusiastic and friendly church which I've been to a few times now with one of my housemates. They are really welcoming to students and give us lots of free food (the key to our hearts). I may start going to one of their student "life groups" next term, which are like house groups really, but with a significantly lower average age.

I'm looking forward to a great Christmas holiday now. It will be useful to get all that stuff I've been taught this term to sink in, without worrying about what I'm going to be taught tomorrow. Mostly though, it will be great to relax and catch up with the family and my friends.

Jonathan Hall



First Year at University

I started at Exeter University in September and although it was difficult at first to adapt to the change it's now going really well. I am enjoying studying French and German full-time, despite the course being quite difficult. I am also looking forward to a trip to the Rhineland in April 2009. I am a member of the badminton team here which has already given me the opportunity to play matches in London, Cambridge and Cardiff, as well as a team tournament in Nottingham! I would appreciate any prayers in respect of the coming months at university and also that everything continues to go well.

Helen Merrett

Having finished university in July I wasn't completely sure of what I wished to do with my life so perhaps inevitably I have ended up working in temporary roles for the last few months. From January, however, I have a six-month placement with the National Trust working at Scotney Castle, a site in Kent, where I will be supporting their work whilst gaining invaluable experience. This will hopefully be a far more fulfilling role as it is something that I will hopefully thoroughly enjoy and will also stand me in good stead if I wished to pursue a career in the heritage industry. This will be until July/August when, if all goes to plan, I will be moving out to New York to work with a law firm for a year, an opportunity that I couldn't really decline!

I would be grateful for prayer that as I move into these roles I would be able to keep Christ at the centre of my life and that I would strive to be a witness to those around me. I will also be needing accommodation when I move out to New York so would appreciate prayer as I seek this out in the months ahead.

Simon Merrett

We start 2009 by supporting persecuted Christians through the work of...

Release International

Release International was inspired and founded through the first-hand experience of persecution by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, who was imprisoned and tortured by the Romanian secret police during the Cold War years of the 1950s and 1960s. Out of fourteen years in jail under the Communists in Romania he spent three years alone in a cell thirty feet below ground, never seeing sun, moon or stars, flowers or snow, never seeing another man except for the guards and interrogators who beat and tortured him.

Release International was founded in 1968, when it was known as Christian Mission to the Communist World. Richard Wurmbrand himself died in February 2001, but his vision and passion to serve persecuted Christians around the world continues in the ministry of Release International today.

Release International serves the persecuted church around the world in five key ways:

1. Providing for the needs of the families of martyrs and prisoners. Release International has a special ministry to these families and those imprisoned for their Christian faith. Financial and medical help is provided, assistance for families to become self-sufficient in the longer term and orphans cared for.
2. Helping evangelical churches to survive persecution and its effects, assisting leaders and believers to pay fines imposed on them by the police, providing "safe houses" for new believers in dangerous circumstances and supplying "Life Support" packs to Christians under pressure



3. Helping the persecuted church win to Christ those who are opposed to the gospel. Release International helps to strengthen the persecuted church in its mission by supporting the work of local pastors and evangelists, who often minister the gospel in difficult and dangerous circumstances. Literature is provided with other resources and equipment for evangelistic presentations.
4. Providing Bibles, literature and qualified teachers to equip the church to survive and grow despite difficult circumstances, sponsoring Christian radio broadcasts, supporting underground Bible schools to train emerging Christian leaders in areas where the church is being persecuted
5. Being advocates and a voice for the martyrs and the oppressed by raising public awareness of particular situations, campaigning through letter-writing on behalf of those who are imprisoned and tortured for their Christian faith

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL produces excellent publications giving information about what is happening to the Christian Church across the world. They also have an excellent website (www.releaseinternational.org), where you can sign up to receive regular e-mails giving up-to-date prayer requests



More information is available from the mission display area. If you would like to give please use the special envelopes and place your donation in the offertory at any Sunday service. Please complete a Gift Aid Slip if appropriate.

Thank you

January church diary

1st

Thursday 10.30am Church Open
– 12.00pm for prayer

3rd

Saturday 8.45am Prayer Meeting
– 9.30am at URC

4th

Sunday 10.30am Service for all
the Family with
Communion
Dan McQuillin
6.30pm Ron Goodenough

8th

Thursday 8.00pm Church Meeting

10th

Saturday 8.45am Prayer Meeting
– 9.30am at URC

11th

Sunday 9.30am Charles Martin
11.00am Charles Martin
6.30pm Communion
Charles Martin

14th

Wednesday 12.30pm Lunch Fellowship

16th

Friday 12.30pm Lunch Fellowship

17th

Saturday 8.45am Prayer Meeting
– 9.30am at URC

18th

Sunday 9.30am Mike Gardiner
11.00am Mike Gardiner
6.30pm Charles Martin

24th

Saturday 8.45am Prayer Meeting
– 9.30am at URC

25th

Sunday 9.30am James Clarke from
All Saints
11.00am James Clarke –
Communion
6.30pm Charles Martin

27th

Tuesday In Touch Ladies Meal Out

28th

Wednesday 2.45pm The Fellowship

31st

Saturday 8.45am Prayer Meeting
– 9.30am at URC

OTHER LOCAL EVENTS LISTED ON BACK COVER

Balcombe United Reformed Church



Bramble Hill, Balcombe, RH17 6HR.
Contact: Mrs Leonie Wren (01444 811253)

Our services are held weekly at 10.30am.
 Visitors are welcome to join us.

Speakers for this month are as follows:-

January 4th	to be arranged
January 11th	Philip Wren
January 18th	David Jones
January 25th	Charles Martin – COMMUNION SERVICE

FlowerRota



Arranging

Distributing

January

4th	Gladys Porter	Kay Phillpot
11th	Lucy Thom	Jo Bloxham
18th	Lesley Sparks	Iris Bingham
25th	Mary Comber	Heather Swann

February

1st	Janet Wade	Sue Tester
8th	Carol Walters	Jacqueline Wood
15th	Jessie Green	Barbara Shepherd
22nd	Chris Caswell	Margaret Gomme

Sunday services explained...

The **9.30am service** is an opportunity for all age groups to join in a relaxed informal time. There is a crèche, and after about 20 minutes children and young people up to age 14 go out to their own groups on most Sundays.

Coffee is normally served between the morning services and after the evening one.

The **11.00am service** is usually more set and formal.

At **6.30pm** it is sometimes a celebration, sometimes a quieter ministry time and sometimes an open communion service or something quite different!

Personal prayer is available after every service. Prayer requests and brief statements of praise for answered prayer can be put in the red book on the concourse table. We can also offer personal prayer ministry at home or in hospital.

We **do not take up an offering** during the services, but all those wishing to give are invited to place a gift in one of the bowls at the doors before or after the service. Thank you.

Cassette **recordings of services** can be borrowed free from the church.

The change we seek

2008 was a year of great change. China hosted the Olympic games for the first time and opened its doors to the world. House prices, stockmarkets and banks around the world lost trillions of pounds and several of the world largest companies disappeared. Conflict in Georgia threatened a rekindling of the cold war, terrorism in India and old wars in Afghanistan and D.R. Congo flared up dangerously.

Then in November 2008 as a difficult year drew to a close America voted for an African American; raised by a single white mother as Democratic president elect, Barack Obama – On January 20th he will be sworn in as president.

Change was central to the slogans for both presidential campaigns as it became clear that America and by implication the world is not comfortable with the direction it is heading.

People have become suspicious of politicians and of unrestricted free market economics; tired of the politics of fear, greed and spin. Change is in the air.

American politics is a world where complex issues have long been distilled into simple primary colours. Political rallies and conventions have all the depth, subtly and predictable heroes or villains of WWE wrestling.

It was Reagan who first persuaded evangelical Christians (a large and active block of voters) to switch to the Republican party using touchstone issues like abortion and gay marriage. The religious right became a powerful political force jealously guarded by the Republicans. Yet much militarily, economically and socially about the past 8 years has left Christians uncomfortable with the direction the country was heading.

In truth no political party should be seen to represent



Christianity, rather Christians should be represented in all parties. The ideological divisions between left and right in politics are mostly about execution of political strategy, the core beliefs of Christians can and should be central to all parties.

This year real politics and real issues matter, the role that people of faith play has never been more important. Society is broken and we need politicians with strong leadership skills and deep moral fibre. Barack Obama's inspirational campaign didn't just lift the American people it revealed the tremendous potential waiting to be released by a leader willing to trade the politics of fear for the politics of hope.

Expectations for the Obama presidency are so high it is likely he will not satisfy everyone; but through his campaign and his election he has already changed American politics and the perception of America in the

wider world forever.

That in itself is a tremendous achievement. His more thoughtful brand of politics is welcome, but it will be his success in motivating individuals to bring about change for themselves and for their community which will make the difference between success and failure. His political campaign certainly motivated young and old in unprecedented numbers to believe that their voice matters, and that they can make a difference.

What did you change during 2008 or perhaps it was 2008 that changed you?

What will you set out to change in 2009?

'Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek'
– Barack Obama

Dan MacQuillin

Mama's Bible

Four brothers left home for college, and they became successful doctors and lawyers and prospered. Some years later, they chatted after having dinner together. They discussed the gifts they were able to give their elderly mother who lived far away in another city.

The first said, "I had a big house built for Mama."

The second said, "I had a hundred thousand dollar theatre built in the house."

The third said, "I had my Mercedes dealer deliver an SL 600 to her."

The fourth said, "You know how Mamma loved reading the Bible and you know she can't read anymore because she can't see very well. I met this preacher who told me about a parrot that can recite the entire Bible. It took twenty preachers 12 years to teach him. I had to pledge to contribute \$100,000 a year for twenty years to the church, but it was worth it. Mamma just has to name the chapter and verse and the parrot will recite it." The other brothers were impressed.

After the holidays Mom sent out her Thank You notes. She wrote:

"Milton, the house you built is so huge I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house. Thanks anyway."

"Marvin, I am too old to travel. I stay home; I have my groceries delivered, so I never use the Mercedes. The thought was good.

Thanks."

"Michael, you gave me an expensive theatre with Dolby sound, it could hold 50 people but all of my friends are dead, I've lost my hearing and I'm nearly blind. I'll never use it. Thank you for the gesture just the same."

"Dearest Melvin, you were the only son to have the good sense to give a little thought to your gift. The chicken was delicious. Thank you."

Luv Ya, Mama

A Celebration

On 23rd November 2008, it was my 90th birthday and I was privileged to celebrate it at the Pilgrim Hall, with many members of Lindfield URC. On arrival the welcome we received was lovely.

Speaking for myself, I have been overwhelmed by the love and kindness shown to me by the members of the church, and also all involved with Compton Nursing Home, and Little Compton the Sheltered Accommodation since I came to live in Lindfield five and half years ago.

I accepted the Lord as my personal Saviour when I was 20 years old, and I can truly say that I have experienced His Love and care during the many ups and downs of life.

I have been truly blessed in my later years to have three wonderful stepdaughters and their husbands.

During the War Years I was enabled through prayer to become a nurse, and eventually was a Ward Sister in the Local Hospital for 30 years. Yes God has been very good to me.

To all who may read this testimony I would say The Lord Bless you and keep you and cause His face to shine on you, and give you peace.

Alice Piercy

The Art Group

We shall be joining the Fellowship at their Coffee morning on **Saturday 10th January** when we will display some of our latest work. The group is very grateful to the anonymous friend who has helped us purchase items of art equipment and enabled us to arrange for a well-known artist to give us a practical demonstration.

Doreen Fowler

Thanks

I would like to say a big thank you to my friends at church who supported me during the mysterious 'virus' I had in October/November

Vera Dorton

A Big Thank You

I would like to thank all my friends at Lindfield URC for their kindness, support, phone calls and visits; letters, cards, flowers plants, food, prayers, hugs and friendship. I am now back to work having made a wonderful recovery from my back surgery and praise God for his steadfastness.

Fiona Flett

90th Birthday

On November 23rd 2008, I celebrated my 90th birthday.

I would like to say a very big thank you to all who celebrated it with me, and for the many cards and presents. May God bless you all and give you all a very happy New Year

Alice Piercy

The Fellowship

We are having two meetings in January; the first being a **Coffee Morning on Saturday 10th January**, between **10.30am and 12noon**.

On this occasion we will be joined by members of the Art Group, who will be showing us some of their work.

The second meeting is on **Wednesday 28th January** at **2.45pm** when we welcome our Pastor, Rev. Charles Martin.

At this meeting there will be a Bring and Buy Stall. We look forward to seeing old friends and extend a warm welcome to any new friends who may like to join us.

Winifred Scopes

In Touch

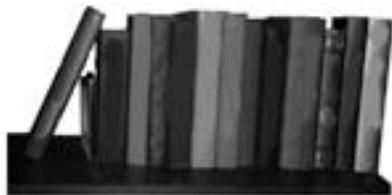
In Touch are planning a meal out on the evening of **Tuesday 27th January**. The venue is yet to be confirmed.

Barbara Shepherd

Tell everyone about it!

If you run a club or group in the local community that you would like to talk more about, submit an article/information to the editor – it would be great to see more of what is going on in/around the village.

Contact details on page 2.



*Good***NEWS**

Book Club

Back in the November issue some of you may remember that Martin provided us with a list of some of the top Christian Books. Shortly after that during a conversation with friends it came up that the majority of Christians don't read Christian books. This set us on the Editorial team to thinking, could we run a Good News Book Club? We wouldn't meet as an ordinary Book Club but rather we would recommend a book and then 2 months later we would publish people's comments about it.

So the book for January to March is going to be Philip Yancey's 'What's so amazing about Grace.'

You may already have this book on the bookshelf if so do read it again and then pass it on to someone else. Otherwise there is a Christian Bookshop in Brighton or you should be able to get the book online. However you get it please do so and read it and then contribute to the discussion in the March issue.

Val Cookney

*Good***NEWS** Online

Don't forget that you can view this and past editions of GoodNEWS at the Lindfield URC website: www.lindfieldurc.org.uk

Christmas House Plant care

Many people receive attractive house plants for Christmas. Ideal to cheer you up and to brighten up your home in January once the decorations are down. But how do you look after them? Each has varying needs;

INDOOR AZALEAS

Position

Azaleas like bright indirect light. An east or north facing window is ideal.

Temperature

Do not put near a radiator or other heat source. Azaleas need to be kept cool at 10-16°C (50°-61°F)

Watering

They need to be kept damp at all times but not waterlogged. As they also appreciate high humidity, mist them daily or keep on a pebble tray.

CHRISTMAS CACTUS (Schlumbergera)

Position

Well-lit but not direct sunlight

Temperature

15-21°C (59-70°F) while in bud

and flowering. In the rest period after flowering, it should be lower at 10-13°C (50-55°F). They can be put out in the garden for a 'holiday' in the summer but watch out for slugs and early frosts.

Watering

Water generously when in bud and flower but ensure that the compost dries out between waterings.

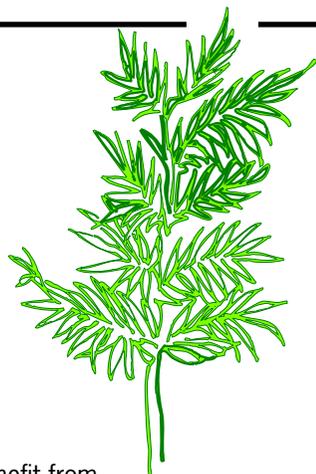
INDOOR CYCLAMEN

Position

Bright indirect light such as a north facing window sill is ideal

Temperature

A cool temperature of 10-15°C (50-59°F) is essential. As many rooms are centrally heated to a much higher temperature a spare room is ideal for a longer life.



Watering

Water from below; whether in a tray or by immersion. Water must not be allowed to stand on the crown. The compost should be kept moist but not waterlogged.

POINSETTIA

With their red, pink or cream bracts (leaves not flowers) Poinsettias are the archetypal Christmas house plant.

Position

They need a well-lit position and will tolerate full winter sunshine, but move away from the window sill as the sun gets stronger.

Temperature

15-20°C (59-68°F) during the growing season but they can be kept at higher temperatures for short periods.

Watering

Water generously but allow the compost to dry out a little between watering.

GENERAL

Feeding

Most houseplants benefit from a liquid feed twice in the winter, and once a month during the growing season

POTTED BULBS

These mostly enjoy a coolish position especially if you want to keep them flowering indoors. Once they have finished flowering put them out in the garden to enjoy year after year.

Enjoy your houseplants and don't forget to buy yourself a green leaved plant to cheer up your house over the months.

HAPPY NEW HOUSEPLANT YEAR!!

Stuart Marsh



A Village Night

– A Great Success

The weather was very much kinder to us this year, very cold but starlit and dry.

Lindfield United Reform Church was, as usual, very much at the centre of most activities besides the various stalls lining the High Street.

Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus provided a very effective tableau in the garage of 'Ryecroft'. Full marks to the audience and actors for persevering with the cold weather!

Inside the church, coffee, tea, mince pies and sausage rolls were available for a small donation, the total of which amounted to some £250 for last month's Mission Giving project, the Worthing Churches Homeless Project. Well Done!

Specifically for the children was an unusual opportunity to meet the real Father Christmas and, in the church, the puppets attracted a good deal of interest with their Christmas songs. Singing in a more traditional and serious vein were the Ashdown Singers who really brought home the real meaning of Christmas.

In the foyer, Traidcraft, Fair Trade products were available for sale (N.B. also available on the third Sunday of the month between our two services from 10:30 – 11a.m.), together with Christmas cards and products from the Phoenix Organisation.

Last but not least, our friend John Goodway, the Evangelist was with us.

A night to remember, see you next year.

Stuart Marsh

Daily Interaction

– Sharing our faith

I have been working with Outreach UK (formerly Home Evangelism) for 5 years full time and 2 years before that part time. In my ministry as a door to door evangelist I come across people from all walks of life and find people in different circumstances and places in their journey of life. Many find themselves in difficulties, both financial and social, through making the wrong choices. We need to make sure that the Christian faith is a choice for them to consider.

To reach the 'unchurched' and the, as yet, unbelievers we have to be fully prepared – by that I mean we need to pray, read God's Word and be open to God's leading. "Elementary my dear Watson" I hear you say but are we always as prepared as we should be, or do we sometimes try 'to go it alone', relying in our own strength or just be in a rush to do something else.

So how do we witness to

others? Methods vary because we are not all alike and we have different gifts. My previous jobs, as a milkman and a Disc Jockey, and Head Gardener, have enabled me to converse easily with people – 'the gift of the gab' - but one has to be genuine. People see through our pretence. Sometimes Christians try too hard to be 'Christian'. God wants us to be who we are, to be natural and to use our individual God-given gifts. The way in which we behave is important because, although you may not be aware of it, the person you want to witness to is watching you.

When trying to witness to others some of us are desperate to quote Scriptures and leave a tract, rather than giving them the one thing they really need which is our time. The other week two of us were 'on the doors' and met a man in his 70's, who lives alone after a divorce some years ago, lost his large house etc. He has just finished doing a Christianity Explored course and

it posed more questions than answers, He was very tearful as he had just received bad news on his health. He confessed to knowing of God and Jesus but he felt it was all knowledge. I explained he needed to ask Jesus into his life, but he said he was scared to do such a thing, obviously he needs more of our time, we have to be willing to wait for him.

Another time we noticed a lady, struggling to mow long grass with a tiny mower. I offered to go the next week and trim the front and back. She then broke down in tears. I gave her a hug and said "I have a deep and meaningful question for you and you need to be honest". She looked concerned and said "OK". So I asked "Do you have a kettle?" "Yes" she said. "Does it work?". "Yes" she said looking somewhat amazed, so I said "go and put it on". She was now laughing and invited us in. She had been divorced some while ago, she lives with her son who has had prison sentences for drug related offences, and she said she needed to attend court, so S offered to take her. She cried so much at our

offers and we felt God touch the whole situation. S asked, whilst this lady was out of the room, "Shall I leave a tract?" "NO" I said, "let our actions be the witness for now." These are but a few meetings we have been involved in, this is Christian love and witness in action - showing we care about people and their situations, coming alongside them where they are - just like Jesus did. Sometimes we have to deal with the practical situation before we can move them into the spiritual arena.

There is a poem which says:-
"I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

I'd rather you would walk with me than merely show the way.....

I may not always understand the high advice you give,

But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live."

Isobel Khun, the missionary wrote,

"What you say speaks so loud I can't hear what you say."

Witnessing to others is not easy, for you come into contact with people who are "not your



type”, who may be difficult to deal with, who insult and mock you. But as I said before, they are watching you - to see your reactions, whether you stick with it or whether you reject them. Some time ago I gave some Christian literature to a lady, who promptly tore it up and threw it in the waste bin and made sure that I saw what she did. Whenever I passed her in the street I always greeted her, until one day she stopped and asked me why I still spoke to her and then I was able to tell her why I do this work. Your personal testimony of how God changed you can be more powerful than a tract or a quotation.

“Flatter me, I won’t believe you.

Criticise me, I won’t like you.

Encourage me and I will remember you.”

Scripture tells us “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:30 -31) “Go and make disciples of all nations....” (Matt: 28 19-20) We need to encourage each other to obey these words. Not all of us are called to ‘door to door’ work, but what about speaking to our friends, neighbours, people we meet daily. In most cases you are the first Bible they’ll ever read. What a responsibility, what a privilege!

We remind ourselves that it is God’s work of salvation which converts; we are simply the messengers he uses. Are we willing?

God bless, John,
(www.goodways-to-god.co.uk)

SERMON NOTEBOOK: Hope and a Future

As we enter 2009, we are very aware of living in an uncertain world, especially with regard to our financial institutions and economic prospects. Jeremiah was writing to Jewish exiles in Babylon who were also facing insecure times. God's promise through the prophet is one that we share, *'I have....plans to give you hope and a future'* (Jer. 29:11). Jeremiah's letter shows how we should conduct ourselves, as *'aliens and strangers'* (1 Peter 2:11), in a culture alienated from God.

Engage With The World In Which We Live

It would have been easy for the exiles to simply feel sorry for themselves and complain bitterly! However, God tells them to *'seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile'* (7). It's a call to engage with the people and situations in which he has placed us, even if they are not the places we

would choose ourselves! In this coming year, God wants to give us opportunities of bringing his kingdom to the places where we live and work, as we work for peace (ie wholeness) in society.

*Where is God calling us to engage with the issues we face?

Engage With The God Whom We Serve

God's answers to the difficulties we face in our lives and society are not ready made! They have to be discovered by prayerful listening to God, 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' (13). As we wait on him, God promises to show us the way forward.

* In what areas do we need seek God for 2009?

'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11).

The Rev Paul Hardingham,
rector of Bolton,

Source Parish Pump

Church activities

SUNDAY WORSHIP:

- 9.30am Service for all the family, including crèche and Light house (Junior church). (Most weeks, children leave after 20 minutes for their own activities)
Holy Communion (1st Sunday)
- 11.00am Morning Worship
Holy Communion (4th Sunday)
- 6.30pm Evening Service
Holy Communion (2nd Sunday)
- Healing services as announced*

PRAYER MEETINGS:

- Mon 9.30am An Hour of Prayer
- Wed 9.45am Short Service of Intercession
- Thur 8.00pm Church Prayer Evening
(As announced)
- Sat 8.45 Three Churches Prayer Meeting.
– 9.30am Venue rotates between the three churches.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES:

- Mon 10.00am Art Group
- 6.30pm Boys' Brigade – Junior Section
(8–11 years)
- 7.45pm Boys' Brigade – Company
Section (11+ years)
- Tue 10.00am Stepping Stones
(Parents and toddlers)
- 7.45pm In Touch (4th Tuesday)
- Wed 2.45pm The Fellowship (4th Wed.)
- 5:30pm Zest 1:2:3
- 6:45pm Zest 4:5:6
- Thur 10.00am Pop-In (for coffee and a chat)
- 8.00pm Church Meeting (2nd Thur.)
- Fri 5.30pm Boys' Brigade – Anchor Boys
(5–7 years)
- 7:30pm Zest Plus (Years 7–10)

House Groups normally meet 1st and 3rd Thursday

**The church is open Monday to Saturday
from 10.00am to 12.30pm**

Phonebook

Church (payphone):

01444 484620

Boys' Brigade:

Geoffrey Cocksedge
01444 474007

Cradle Roll:

Sue Tester 01444 482810

Flowers:

Betty Billins 01444 484494

Hall Booking Secretary:

Carol Walters 01444 457938

In Touch:

Sue Waller 01444 455047

Lunch Fellowship:

Wednesday:
Janet Drayton 01444 483621

Friday:

Gwen Hillman 01444 456963
Anne Parker 01444 473519

Magazine: Editor:

Val Cookney 01444 440029

The Fellowship:

Chris Comber 01444 482641

Stepping Stones:

Janet Goodenough
01444 417002

Transport:

Tina Elphick 01444 484440

Zest Co-ordinator:

Clare Nibloe 01444 484683

Light house (Junior church)

Co-ordinator:

Dawn Walters 01444 441601

Local events



For more information on activities going on in Lindfield, **Lindfield Times** is also available from around the village.

HAYWARDS HEATH MUSIC SOCIETY

Alec Frank-Gemmill
(French Horn)

Geoffrey Paterson
(piano)

Saturday 17th January, 7.45 pm
St Wilfrid's

To publicise your community event here see contact details on page 2. Diary entries included at the editor's discretion.