

Dedicating ourselves this Lent

Lent is a time of preparation. This season of the Church year gives us six weeks to move from the mystery of Jesus' transfiguration and prepare for the intimacy of Maundy Thursday, the shock of arrest, the fear of prosecution, the pain of torture and crucifixion, the emptiness of Saturday, and the joyful mystery of Easter Day.

During these six weeks, traditionally of fasting, people give things up they know they shouldn't really do or take up new activities they've always known they should do. Churches also offer services that mark the way each Sunday, especially in Holy Week, and discussion groups each week.

This year we are making a special effort to make sure everyone has the opportunity of dedicating time this Lent to reflect on faith and how we live our lives. Together we will be exploring 'Christ and the Chocolaterie' a Lent course based on the film 'Chocolat'. The material takes the story and characters of the movie 'Chocolat', and relevant Bible passages, to explore what it means to be truly and completely human as God intended. (We will also be showing the film in church on a Sunday afternoon prior to the start of Lent.)

To help us plan there is a sign up sheet on the notice board.

Please give this prayerful consideration.

Lent is the period of six weeks, 40 days (not including Sundays), leading up to Easter. During Lent we remember the time when Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray before beginning his ministry declaring and living the kingdom of God. The climax of this time we have in the story of Jesus being tempted.

Lent is a time of giving things up. It is one way of remembering the time Jesus' fasted in the desert and is a test of self-discipline.

This year the elders are challenging the congregation to take something up. To commit to participating in these discussions, engaging with each other, and exploring what they have to teach each of us, and all of us as church.

We are not asking you to fast for 6 weeks, or retreat into the wilderness. We are asking you to consider spending time, talking, and sharing, with your brothers and sisters in Christ who make up Leyland United Reformed Church.

With every blessing, *Rev'd David R. Coaker*

REMINDER

In order to raise much needed money for our church, we do need the help of some of our members and friends, who are prepared to open their gardens to the congregation and friends for about 3 hours on a consecutive Saturday and Sunday afternoons, sometime between mid June and the end of July 2014. We already have 2 volunteers and 1 possible. If you love your garden and would like to show it, whether it be very small or large, or would like to discuss it, please contact Neil Fow on 01772 434166 or by email to fow.neil@yahoo.co.uk. For those who like to display plants or are prepared to give potted up plants for sale, but are not prepared to open their garden, we intend to open the church hall for that purpose at the same time. Again contact Neil if you are prepared to help in this way
Please contact Neil sooner rather than later in order that we can determine the commitment we are going to get to make it worthwhile.

**LINDA BARNES IS COLLECTING POSTAGE STAMPS IN
AID OF THE HEART FOUNDATION**

FAMILY NEWS

Marjorie Pugh, Olwyn Rayton, Lois Porter Doris Holt, and Brenda Farrer have all had problems affecting their health in recent weeks and we offer them our support.

Connie Finnigan has had two eye operations and it was good to see her back in circulation recently.

Betty Melling is having problems with mobility.

Because of these enforced restrictions we are grateful to Julie Key for stepping forward to help Jackie with the weekly church flowers arranging responsibility.

As a church we offer our sympathy to Alan and Linda Kay and family on the death of Alan's mother. Linda's parents both have health anxieties which are also a cause for concern.

We congratulate Ann and David Gill on the birth of another grandson, Reuben Jack, baby son of Emma and Andrew. We are glad that the concern that was felt for the health of the baby is no longer an issue.

Congratulations also to Bob and June Kay who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on January 23rd.

We welcome into the church family, Noah John David Newsham, baby son of Stephanie and Neil, a grandson for John and Valerie Bowling

Belated congratulations to Ivor and/or Marjorie Pugh who was judged winner of the Autumn Fair "Grand" Quiz. Since the chosen tiebreak 'Grand' word was "grandiose" we suspect that it was Ivor who had the casting vote. (If we had a special award for the agent who sold the most Quiz papers to 'outside' customers, Ivor would have won that hands down)

Congratulations to James Bamber who has successfully achieved his 3rd Mon in his recent Judo grading and also received the 2013 Judo Player of the Year at Houghton Judo Club - well done James.

Minister's Sabbatical

On the 10th July 2004 I was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament and inducted to serve a pastorate in Warrington. So this coming summer I will be marking my 10th anniversary and part of that will be my taking up the opportunity for a sabbatical. URC ministers are eligible to have a 3 month sabbatical every 10 years, so from early September to early December this year I will be dedicating my time to this.

So what is a sabbatical? The Encarta Dictionary defines one as: 'a period of leave from work for research, study, or travel, often with pay and usually granted to university lecturers every seven years.' It has its root in the Biblical idea of Sabbath. The weekly day of rest, the cycle of leaving land fallow every seven years, and the year of Jubilee when debts are forgiven every 50.

The URC provides a grant for sabbaticals and this is claimed by filling out an application which has to be approved by the Synod Training Officer, and the Area. The criteria is that the proposal develops ministry 'through work related practical training, educational, spiritual, and professional development'. The URC also provides support for congregations affected to cover pulpit fees.

In principal my application has been agreed and will be finalised in the New Year. My intention is to explore how Progressive Christianity is lived out within congregations. I have personally found it a helpful framework to describe and ground my faith and I want to discover how congregations have engaged with it and are living it out in community. There are a number of URC affiliated with Progressive Christianity Network: Britain which is a network that affirms 8 points:

http://www.pcnbritain.org.uk/about/the_eight_points

So I will be sending out in the New Year a short questionnaire through Synod Clerks to URCs which may be receptive so discover which are on this path or might be interested in talking about it. Based on those responses I will then plan a series of visits in the autumn to experience their life together, talk and discuss, and compile case studies. I will also be taking time to attend courses, to read, and reflect upon my faith and ministry.

With every blessing, Rev'd David R. Coaker

Credit Union

It is a great privilege that we have established a collection point for Unify Credit Union Ltd as a project of Churches Together in Leyland to support the wider community.

The collection point is based in our Coffee Lounge on Tuesdays between 2-3pm.

To open up an account you can start from just a £1 and need two forms of identification (passport, driving license, utility bill, etc). You can open joint accounts and for ones for children (need birth certificate). You can come along to make deposits, set up a standing order or have money paid in directly if you don't have a bank account.

After 10 weeks of saving you can apply for a Saver Loan at 12.7% APR (i.e. 1% per month or £6.50 for every £100 repaid over a year.)

You could use the account to save up for a holiday, Christmas, a graduation gift, funeral costs, or just use it as an excuse to pop into town on a Tuesday afternoon!

Credit Unions are community savings and loans co-operatives, owned and run by the members. They provide a safe and viable alternative to pay day loans, enable people to save as well as offering low cost loans and provide a safe and ethical place to borrow from.

Membership of Unify is available to anyone who lives or works within Wigan, Leigh, Chorley, Leyland or Skelmersdale.

All deposits are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

<http://www.unifycu.org/>

Lent Groups

As part of our preparation for Easter during the six weeks of Lent (5th March—16th April) we will be offering evening and afternoon gatherings each week to explore 'Christ and the Chocolaterie' a Lent course based on the film 'Chocolat'.

These will be held in either elder's homes or church, led by our elders/minister, and include refreshments.

We will also be showing the film in church on a Sunday afternoon prior to the start of Lent.

Lent is traditionally a time of fasting and inward reflection, and was originally the time of preparation for being baptised on Easter Day, so we are encouraging the whole church family to take up this opportunity and dedicate time this Lent.

To help us organise things there is a signup sheet for you to indicate your interest in participating in this activity.

Hilary Brand is skilled and experienced in using the visual impact of art and film to explore Bible themes and their life changing application. She takes the story and characters of the movie 'Chocolat', and relevant Bible passages, to explore what it means to be truly and completely human as God intended.

It sets out five group sessions for each week of Lent exploring themes of giving, acceptance and change. Each includes extracts from the film, group discussion questions, exercises and meditations. Recognising Lent as a chance to embrace change and renewal, Hilary's meditations lead into private thought or group discussion around the daily challenge of growing, giving and getting real with life.

BUSY TUESDAY

For some (many?) people, church is a place to visit on a Sunday for worship. One Tuesday early in December I had occasion to visit church several times and was quite amazed to see just how busy our church buildings actually are.

Tuesday morning, all morning, The 'Little Mites' Mother and Toddler Group in full session. A score or more of mothers or carers each with one or two children all busy and a wonderful atmosphere of co-operation and happy fellowship.

Tuesday lunchtime 'Church Open' invitation board on show to welcome casual visitors.

Tuesday afternoon, (early) Credit Union Group meeting clients in the Coffee lounge.

Tuesday afternoon (later) Guild meeting in the Meeting Room.

Tuesday evening in the Primary Room and, then Main Hall, Rainbows, then Brownies, then Guides all with lots of leaders for the girls in their various age groups.

Later Tuesday evening in the Meeting Room, Leyland and Chorley Amnesty International Group meeting.

I did not make a head count but estimate that our church welcomed fully a hundred and fifty people of all ages that day alone.

Our church may have its problems - lack of car parking being one - but we are clearly using our location and our community involvement policy to play an important part as a town centre church.

It was also on a Tuesday in early January that this location importance was given national recognition on BBC TV. On January 7th, BBC2 showed an instalment of Michael Portillo's series 'Great British Railway Journeys' headed 'Southport to Leyland'. It showed something of the growth of tourism in Southport, industry in Wigan, Westhoughton and Bolton before coming to Leyland. The opening sequence for our town began with an aerial picture of the Hough Lane central area with our church, with its outstandingly prominent garden layout by far the main standout feature. We really stood out.

The Leyland section of the programme concentrated on Leyland Motors development and the commentary really picked out the part played by its founder, James Sumner - who was a member and one time Church Secretary of Leyland Congregational Church.

We are a church which has played a strikingly important part in the growth of our town and equally clearly has a clear role to play in the on going life of the community, now and in the future, as our Borough Council recognises.

We should be proud of our church, past and present, and be prepared to do all that we can to help it going on to play its part in the days ahead.

Ernest Wrennall

Atlantis Explorer Scout Unit News

Before Christmas a party of approx. 25 Atlantis Explorer Scouts and leaders went to Nando's Restaurant in Preston for a meal out to celebrate Christmas. We all had a lovely evening and also went on a few rides on the flag market – the evening went really well and as leaders we waited until all Explorers had been picked up by their parents before returning to Rachel's car to go home – alas, we discovered it was locked inside St Georges Shopping Centre car park so we had to call various people to come and rescue us. Thankfully Rachel was able to retrieve her car the morning after without any additional cost.

5 Explorers from Atlantis and 2 leaders have just successfully completed a 6 week Archery Course run by Chorley Bowmen at South Ribble Tennis Centre and have all received Archery Certificates. This was such a great success that 5 more Explorers and 4 leaders have just started the next Archery course. The Explorers need to develop new skills to meet one of the sections of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards and Chief Scout Platinum and Silver Awards – so they will be carrying on over the next few months to develop their Archery Skills at local campsite ranges.

Congratulations to Atlantis Explorer, Grace Derry, who was successfully selected to represent South Ribble and West Lancashire Scouts by attending the next World Scout Jamboree in Japan 2015. This was an amazing achievement as only 6 places were available to South Ribble and there were 28 applicants! Well done Grace! Grace has just recently joined Atlantis Explorers moving up to us from St Mary's Scout Group. Atlantis is now the only Explorer Unit based in Leyland so all the Scout Groups feed into us.

We have a lot of Explorers signed up for International Scouting trips abroad. Phil Hutchinson and Mike Wilson have just returned from a Wilderness Canoeing trip to Sweden in 2013 and are both signed up to an amazing Greenland experience in 2015 with training in Norway in 2014 all with West Lancashire Scouts Mountaineering Group. Phil and Mike gave a Presentation in our Church Hall in January where Scouters from both District & County attended. They were able to share their photos; experiences and memories of

a 10 day canoeing trip where they camped in the wild and cooked for themselves and from the sounds of it were also eaten alive by midges – but they had a fabulous time and should be very proud of their achievements for 16 year olds!

Saturday 1st of February we have Explorers on a selection day to attend a 3 week trip to Cambodia in 2015 this will involve 2 weeks to complete a community project and 1 week sightseeing places such as a visit to Angkor Wat. Angkor Wat is a Buddhist Temple and a world heritage site and is the setting for the film Tomb Raider. We shall let you know how the Explorers get on.

Explorer Scouts is for those aged 14-18 and Atlantis has 33 Explorers on the books at present, we are a very large unit and now have 7 leaders supporting the unit which runs a varied and exciting programme.

Alison Bamber
Explorer Scout Leader



FOOD BANK



The food bank relies on donations by the public, individuals or the churches of Leyland. The food is stored and distributed

by St Mary's Church Priory House.

The recipients are referred by social services, the Job Centre, support workers or word of mouth. A register is kept of all who receive a parcel, one per adult and one per two children, once a week.

Between 17th December and the 7th January, 117 parcels were given out. There has been an increase since the changes in the benefit system. Thank you all for your generous donations over Christmas which is now gone but the need hasn't!



CHURCH AND WORSHIP DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

Sun 2 nd	Worship led by Sally Watson	10.30am
Tues 4 th	Amnesty International	7.30pm
Sat 8 th	Lancashire Area meeting at Fulwood URC	1.00pm
Sun 9 th	Worship led by our minister Communion Church Meeting after the service(*1)	10.30am
Mon 10 th	Fabric Committee	7.30pm
Sat 15 th	Ramble	
Sun 16 th	Worship led by Anne Oakden 10.30am Taize service	4.00 pm
Thur 20 th	Elders meeting	7.30pm
Sat 22 nd	Last Night of the Proms (*2)	7.30pm
Sun 23 rd	Worship led by the minister Parade	10.30am

(*1) Following the service there will be a short refreshment break and, in view of a possible longer than usual Church Meeting, it is suggested that a small packed lunch might be a good idea. The Church Meeting is nominally the Annual Church Meeting with election of Elders and Church officers. (It is not too late for volunteers to offer themselves for consideration and possible election as Elders. Contact Dave or Anne without delay if you feel so called.)

There will also be a review of member's responses to the worship questions considered during a recent morning service as well as a presentation of the proposals for the central Lancashire Four Church partnership of which Leyland URC would be part.

(*2) The Last Night of the Proms will once again principally star Victoria Ward and Ivan Sharpe as soloists and the Lostock Hall Brass Band. As usual there will be the traditional flag waving finale and to make sure that we all can be suitably patriotic there will be a complimentary flag included with the free programme and refreshments, in the £10 admission cost. Last year we very nearly reached a 'House Full' situation so we recommend that you get a ticket in advance from Mollie or Marjorie.



CHURCH AND WORSHIP DIARY FOR MARCH

Sun 2 nd	Worship led by Ernest Wrennall	10.30am
Tues 4 th	Amnesty International	7.30pm
Wed 5 th	Ash Wednesday First day of Lent	
Fri 7 th	Women's World day of Prayer (details to be announced)	
Sat 8 th	Ramble	
	Synod meeting at Bramhall	
Sun 9 th	Worship led by the minister Communion Induction of Elders	10.30am
Mon 10 th	Fabric Committee	7.30pm
Wed 12 th	Lay Preachers meeting at Lytham (*1)	7.30pm
Fri 14 th	Rambler's Dinner (To be confirmed)	
Sun 16 th	Worship led by Revd Geoff Tolley Taize Service (*2)	10.30am 4.00pm
Thur 20 th	Elders Meeting	7.30pm
Sun 23 rd	Worship led by the minister Parade	10.30am

(*1) Though organised by the Fylde Lay Preachers members of individual church Worship Groups are also invited. Though we do not have an official such Group in Leyland (though several times a group has been assembled to share in leading worship) if you think that you might wish to be more involved in leading worship in our church have a word with Ernest and come along. We have a guest visitor who will be getting people involved in the techniques of individual drama which she did effectively at a recent lay preachers Conference.

(*2) (A footnote that would equally apply to Sunday 16th in last months Diary list)

The Taize services are quiet reflective worship experiences in candle light with soft music and times of silence. The whole thing lasts about half an hour and when you leave you feel quite relaxed and up-lifted. Numbers attending so far have been small but "Where two or three are gathered together, there You are in the midst" comes to mind.

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE TEAM MINISTRY

INTERIM MODERATOR'S UPDATE (December 2013/January 2014)

Dear Friends

At the beginning of November 2013 I agreed to a request from the Synod Moderator and Area Pastoral Committee to become the Interim Moderator of the United Reformed Churches of Fulwood and Kirkham (both in Ministerial vacancy) together with Leyland and Penwortham (both currently served by the Revd David Coaker). I have undertaken to be involved in this way for an initial period of six months.

My task is to help the churches to consider the possibility and desirability of forming a group of the four churches to be served by a Team Ministry of 1½ stipendiary Ministers and, if agreed, to assist in accomplishing that goal.

The Revd David Coaker would exercise the 100% ministry and would be joined in due course by a colleague. Both of the Ministers would be equally Ministers of all the churches but each Minister would have prime responsibility:

David: Leyland & Penwortham (50% each = 100% total)

New Minister: Fulwood & Kirkham (37½% each = 75% total)

The Lancashire Area of the United Reformed Church will create a 25% Area Minister post, in order to permit a new full time minister to serve here. The task of the Area Minister will be to assist URCs in the Lancashire Area who from time to time may require urgent or specific help, and will be exercised under the direction of the Area Pastoral Committee. Any slack time left over from the Area ministry will be given to Leyland and Penwortham to help compensate for David's time as Convener of the Area Pastoral Committee.

Advantages of the proposed new arrangements

- Ministry can only in this way be provided for Fulwood and Kirkham; and additional Ministry be given to Leyland and Penwortham.
- The four churches would receive ordained ministry from two Ministers – both offering skills which we hope would complement each other.

- Closer relationships between the four churches might facilitate more efficient and effective practices: e.g., occasional joint meetings of the Elders; team planning of Sunday worship by Ministers, Lay Preachers and Worship Groups (whilst still allowing room for local arrangements), Bible Study etc.
- Ministerial cover is available when one Minister is on holiday or unwell.

Progress so far

A well-attended meeting for Elders from all four churches took place on 20th November. Broad initial agreement was given to the proposals, those present feeling able to commend the proposals to their churches; and a Pastorate Working Party was established, consisting of three representatives per church, the Revd David Coaker, the Pastoral Advisers for Fulwood and Kirkham, and the Interim Moderator.

Since then each Elders' Meeting, and a Church Meeting in two of the churches, has had the "Central Lancashire Team Ministry" on their agendas.

The Pastorate Working Party met on 11th December when its business included:

- Initial responses from the churches.
- Manse arrangements: it is likely the Fulwood manse will be used.
- Financial arrangements: a Finance Task Group has been set up, including the Treasurer of each church.
- A Constitution Task Group, representing each church, will suggest a defined relationship between the churches to outline ways of working in partnership.
- Initial consideration of how a new Minister will be appointed, notably the measure of support needed from each of the four church meetings before a Call might be sent. This very important matter requires further work by the Pastorate Working Party before suggestions or recommendations are passed on to Elders' and Church Meetings.

- Agreement for David to invite those from within the churches who conduct worship to meet to consider how to plan and work more closely together.

How long will all this take?

Long enough for each church to take time to consider the proposals: I do not intend to “steam roller” any church into a decision which it is not ready to take.

However, we are conscious that the members of Fulwood and Kirkham are already without a Minister; so only for very good reasons should we delay any part of the process.

If we do decide to proceed, there is no way of knowing how quickly a candidate or candidates may express an interest in the vacancy.

A suggested Time Line to help progress notes the procedures necessary before a Ministerial Vacancy can be declared: it combines time for consideration with maintaining momentum.

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2014

Church Meetings discuss this paper, reporting to a Pastorate Working Party meeting on 12th February.

MARCH 2014

Recommendations to Elders’ & Church Meetings from the Pastorate Working Party.

APRIL & EARLY-MAY 2014

Final decisions to be made by Church Meetings including adoption of the Constitution, if at all possible.

LATE-MAY 2014

Church Profiles to be finalised. The Pastorate Working Party to submit all Profiles and the Constitution to the Area Pastoral Committee for its concurrence. If agreed:

1. the new arrangements can begin to be implemented
2. a vacancy can be agreed for the 75/25% Minister.

JUNE 2014

The Revd David Coaker to meet with Fulwood and Kirkham with a view to being called as their “secondary” Minister. (In this transitional stage it is not intended for this to alter his pattern of working until the second minister is in place.)

The 75/25% vacancy be published on denominational lists.

A “Calling Committee” be established to meet any prospective candidates in connection with the 75/25% post.

JULY 2014

A Service to inaugurate the new Central Lancashire Team Ministry, and to induct the Revd David Coaker as its first Minister (with the continued support of an Interim Moderator and Pastoral Advisors in relation to Fulwood and Kirkham).

AUTUMN 2014

The Revd David Coaker will be on sabbatical leave.

I hope all I have written will help you understand the journey upon which we have embarked. If you are unsure of anything or wish for more Information, please ask your Elders. Alternatively, if you wish to speak with me please contact me as shown below.

With best wishes for 2014,

Revd Paul Pells

01772-740784 paul.pells@tiscali.co.uk

ITEMS FOR NEXT MAGAZINE

APRIL/MAY TO LINDA KAY BY 23 MARCH

AT THE LATEST PLEASE

Email: lindakay@blueyonder.co.uk

Summary of responses to ‘Worship Questionnaire’ and ‘Challenges/Opportunities’

Copies of the full analysis are available on the table in the worship space but here is an overview for us to reflect upon, discuss, and propose actions.

What does ‘Worship’ mean to Leyland URC?

The parts of Sunday morning which are most important to us are the time for fellowship, hymns and prayers.

We are drawn closer to God through our prayers, music and being together. On the whole for most of us the balance is about right.

We prefer to sing the old favourites, are open to familiar tunes having fresh words, and are happy with a variety of styles. Hymns are important to us because of the words and we enjoy singing.

We think the purpose Children’s address is to involve the children, but 2/3 of those that mentioned they were in Junior Church said it was to summarise the theme.

Most of us listen when the Bible is read. Some of us read the Bible at home but most of us do so rarely. The majority of us are comfortable finding books within the Bible. We would prefer it if we explored the Bible exploring modern situations and Biblical themes.

Most of us are happy with the amount of time we have in prayer, but some think it’s too long. We would be open to more silence, not to have space for individuals to respond out loud, are divided about congregational responses but prefer responding with phrases to singing.

We prefer sermons that teach us something and explain the Bible, and are content for them to remain and be unchanged in length. Some are open to having discussions but most aren’t.

Our preference is to continue celebrating communion monthly, it is important to us, we understand it, and most of us don’t need it to be explained.

When it comes to the Church family we each know most people, talk to some of them, say hello to new people, speak to friends over refreshments, and a handful of us make the effort to speak to those by themselves.

How could we engage with our challenges / opportunities?

1. Building Development (a. SRBC creating town square based in our garden, b. Option 1 toilet, coffee bar and space under balcony, c. Option 2 remove all pews.)

Most of us are in favour of (a) and (b), but we have differing opinions with regard to (c).

2. Progressive Christianity (Church meeting decisions to live out the '8 points' and to register for civil partnerships. How can we better express and declare this understanding of faith?)

We want more time to discuss and engage with this.

The further government legislation since the creation of civil partnerships to 'Equal Marriage' requires reflection.

3. Team ministry (Working with Penwortham, Fulwood, Kirkham and an additional minister to gain extra ministry and other benefits.)

We want this explained clearly to us and the finances and benefits described.

We also need to be clear that this will mainly affect how our minister, elders, treasurer, and pulpit supply work with the other churches and not when and where we worship. Our minister will continue to have oversight of us, but we would have additional support from another minister and the other churches. We may have occasional joint services or events but 10.30am each Sunday at Leyland URC will carry on much as before.

(The decision to have a joint service at Penwortham on Christmas Day was made reflecting on the lack of support for the service at Leyland.)

4. Little Mites (How can we support this activity? Volunteer to help?)

General support for the group, we have ideas to share, and a couple of our folk volunteered to help.

5. Hough Lane (How can we reach out to the centre of Leyland?)

We mainly see this as part of the Building Development, and some ideas to share.

6. Credit Union (How can we support this activity? Volunteer? Sign up?)

We think it is a good idea, want to find out more, and look to sign up.

We are hosting the collection point, but it is a project of Churches Together

RAMBLES AND PLODS

We always include this heading in our magazine, but for the first time, there are no Rambles or Plods on which to report.

We decided that midwinter is not the ideal time to Plod so we will wait until early spring to resume – and hope that someone with no dodgy knee will be willing to do the planning.

Ramblers tend to be more hardy folk so, though December was left un-programmed we did have the traditional New Years Day visit to Cuerden valley to look forward to. However heavy rain all morning and a dodgy weather forecast led to a lunch time decision and telephone ring around to call off the walk. (Actually we could have gone ahead as it happened for that afternoon downpour did not take place). But it was too late to change again so we just had the real pleasure of a late afternoon visit to Greenbank Farm to enjoy Mollie's splendid hospitality and one or three of her mince tarts. This was our 25th consecutive New Years visit. which Mollie and Peter have hosted. Thank you so very much. Keep baking!

P.S. In fact a January ramble did take place in the Pleasington area. Though there was plenty of mud, the rain kept off and eleven walkers wish to thank Chris for getting the year off to a good start.

A small group of ramblers has met to arrange the 2014 programme which provisionally looks like this.

Feb 15 th	To be arranged	Led by Chris Baines
Mar 8 th	To be arranged.	Led by Mollie and Peter Ward
April 5 th	Clayton-le Moors.	Led by Chris Baines
May 17 th	Grange-over-Sands	Led by David Lamb
June 21 st	Appley Bridge?	Led by Roy Barnes and Rosamund
July 19 th	Catforth BBQ	Led by Ian and June Holt
Aug 23 rd	Downham.	Led by Chris Baines
Sept 20 th	Wrea Green	Led by Arnold Rayton
Oct 18 th	Latterbarrow	Led by David Lamb
Nov 15 th	Local walk	(Tea at the Berrills)
Jan 1 st 2015	Mollie's Meander	

GARDENING

At the time of writing we have been relatively clear of any frosts and snow has not made an appearance yet. However, the population are beginning to develop webbed feet due to all the rain. My back garden is in a mess at the moment due to large amounts of water coming off the building site behind and this is washing mud and builders sand to almost my back door.

Jobs to do at the moment, check that any spring bulbs planted in containers or pots indoors are kept watered. Also any dahlia tubers or begonia corms should be checked for rot if they are kept in store. Look out for snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils poking through the soil, they should be early due to the mild weather. It is now time to give the wisteria it's winter pruning to encourage next summers flush of flowers. Each branch needs to be shortened to just 2 or 3 leaf nodes. In the not too distant future garden centres will be stocking up with supplies of bedding plants, but don't be tempted to buy anything yet it is far too early.

If eventually we do get a dry spell coat your fences and sheds with a good quality preservative, it is always much easier to do this in winter when there are fewer plants getting in the way. Keep topping up bird feeders with food, birds are always a welcome sight in winter, During last weekend of this month the RSPB are asking all householders to conduct a one hour survey in their gardens to count the number and variety of birds visiting. This will tell them if numbers are declining.

Enjoy your garden.



Eddie



CHRISTMAS 2013

Christmas began very early this year as South Ribble Borough Council wanted us to play a prominent part in the town centre 'Christmas in Leyland' celebrations. The opening for this actually took place in November before Advent had even started so our church was decorated and the Christmas tree erected in our front garden very early indeed. Perhaps this was tempting fate for there were strong gales and the original tree was snapped off and needed last minute repairs. The inside decorations were wonderful and we thank all who were responsible - Jackie, Linda, Julie, Mollie, Betty, Irene, Brenda, Ian and the Uniformed Organisations.

On Saturday 30th November Hough Lane was a busy place with a procession, numerous stalls, Santa's Grotto and such. We too were busy with some outside stalls, the Scout Group supplying food and busy card making activity in the church. Then at 5.30 we hosted a Christingle Service which saw the church absolutely full with people of all ages. We sang Christingle songs, heard the Christingle story, assembled the decorated oranges (with the materials prepared by Ann, Linda, Ian, Alison, William, Sally, Glynis, Sylvia and Jackie) and then went outside for the Tree lighting ceremony. A splendid opening to the Christmas season.

The other Christmas services went well. The uniformed organisations were all fully involved in the service which they planned and led. Every age group in both Scouts and Guides contributed with the Guides Australian version of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' and the Cub's Scandinavian version of 'Rudolph' being memorable features. At the end of the service, 'best of the year' awards were presented for each unit.

We thank those people who brought Shoe Box gifts to be distributed overseas by International Aid as well as generous donations for distribution through St Mary's food bank. The Junior Church Festival had an interesting playlet about

the commercialisation of Christmas and this was followed by the creation of a nativity tableau built up step by step as Sarah read the appropriate Bible passages. There was a real mother and child (Becky and Riley) to play Mary and Jesus and an assortment of people of a variety of ages to be the shepherds, Magi etc. As is so often the case, Mollie provided appropriate costumes - the old dressing gown and tea-cloth days being a thing of the past. It was a good service and we thank all who were involved.

Unfortunately it was rather downhill from then on. We experimented with a traditional early evening Lessons and Carols service on Christmas Eve but apart from the readers only a handful of others from our congregation were present though three family groups came to swell our number. The next morning, Christmas Day, we did not have any service at all in our church and it again is sad that so few Leyland people went to Penwortham URC where Dave led the worship and clearly many of their families came along in groups .

So Christmas this year had its highs and its lows and we need perhaps to make rather more of Christmas itself next year. We thank all who played a part in achieving those high points especially those involved in the church decoration, Jackie for all the extra visual screen work she had to do and Janet for the lead she gave in music. Indeed the real high point for me came on the first Sunday in December when I took the morning service, arising from a chance remark during the sermon, Janet was moved to follow the final Blessing with a tremendous performance of the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's 'Messiah' which most of the congregation stayed put to marvel. It was wonderful to be taken back to the days when this was the choir's piece de resistance in the days when Teddy Fairhurst was the Choir's conductor. Thank you Janet!

We also thank everyone who helped and supported the Christmas lunch especially Lorna and Pat for preparing the lovely meal.

Ernest Wrennall

FLOWER LIST FOR FEB/MARCH 14

- 2 Feb Vacancy
- 9 Feb Memories of Ivy Ainsworth from the family
- 16 Feb Julie Keys—Memories of mum
- 23 Feb Diane and Greg Bolan—Memories of parents
Ann Gill and family—Memories of dad
- 2 Mar Eddie and Alison—Memories of Mary
- 9 Mar Brenda Holmes—Memories of mother
Janet Baxter-Bennett—Memories of mother
- 16 Mar Olwen and Arnold Rayton—Memories
- 23 Mar Vacancy
- 30 Mar Barbara and frank McHugh—memories



FOOD BANK

**We are collecting items of food to donate to
St Mary's food bank.
Lists of appropriate food items are available in
church and it is hoped that this will become a
regular weekly activity.
The food box is located in the left hand side
porch.**

**Please look out for details in church and try to
support this worthwhile initiative.**

ROTAS FOR FEBRUARY

	Steward	Lessons	Flower Distribution
2nd	Marjorie Wrennall	Linda Kay Linda Barnes	Alison Dempsey Marjorie Wrennall
9th	Frank McHugh	Ian Dempsey Stephen Crump	Sylvia Bairstow Mollie Ward
16th	Julie Key	Mollie Ward Arnold Rayton	Jan Chapman Jackie Cochrane
23rd	Linda Crump	Uniformed Organisations	Barbara McHugh

If you need to change your place on the Lessons rota please arrange you own swap and then let Stella Eccleston know

SUNDAY REFRESHMENTS FOR FEBRUARY

2nd	Linda Barnes	Sylvia Bairstow
9th	Linda Barnes	Mollie Ward
16th	Brenda Farrer	Irene Entwistle
23rd	Uniformed Organisations	

SATURDAY CAFÉ FEBRUARY

1st	Ernest Wrennall	Linda Barnes
8th	Ann ill	Jackie cochrane
15th	Brenda Farrer	Irene entwistle
22nd	Lois Porter	Linda Barnes

ROTAS FOR MARCH

	Stewards	Lessons	Flower distribution
2nd	Irene Entwistle	Jackie Cochrane David Holmes	Lois Porter Linda Barnes
9th	Eddie Reynolds	Sarah Goldson Ann Gill	Alison Dempsey Marjorie Wrennall
16th	Sylvia Bairstow	An Chapman Linda KAY	Sylvia Bairstow Mollie Ward
23rd	Stella Eccleston	Uniformed Orgs	Jan Chapman Jackie Cochrane
30th	Frank McHugh	Linda Barnes Stephen Crump	Barbara McHugh Linda Crump
(6th April)	Julie Key Rhys Pownall	Ian Dempsey Mille Ward	Lois Porter Linda Barnes

SUNDAY REFRESHMENTS FOR MARCH

2nd	Linda Crump	Barbara McHugh
9th	Sylvia Bairstow	Ann Gill
16th	Brenda Farrer	Irene Entwistle
23rd	Uniformed Organisations	
30th	Barbara McHugh	Linda Crump
(6th April)	Sylvia Bairstow	Lorna Bowling

SATURDAY CAFÉ MARCH

1st	Sylvia Bairstow	Mollie Ward
8th	Ernest Wrennall	Ann Gill
15th	Lois Porter	Jackie Cochrane
22nd	Brenda Farrer	Irene Entwistle
29th	Sylvia Bairstow	Mollie Ward
(5th April)	Ernest Wrennall	Ann Gill