

Hilltop

February / March 2015

Newsletter of Bents Green Methodist Church

Lent – time to reflect

Lent is best known for being a time to give something up and some of us take that more seriously than others! But Lent is also traditionally a time for reflection when we can spend time thinking about what is important in life and perhaps setting out new priorities. In this issue of Hilltop we reflect on what challenges 2015 may bring and what 'mountainous regions of life' may face us. With quotations from Bear Grylls, Sidney Carter and the Bible there is plenty to start off our own reflections. One person describes his experience of illness and relates this to his faith, challenging us to come to our own conclusions. Fair Trade fortnight takes place from February 23rd – March 8th: another issue we might want to think about and find out more. Finally, continuing the series about local shops and the community we visit a close neighbour of the church, *Home and Garden*.

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Mothering Sunday Service
Sunday 15th March 10.30 am
come with all the family

Messy Easter
Saturday 21st March 2 – 4 pm
Easter crafts and worship for children
aged 3 – 12 years with their parents
and carers

Coffee Morning
for Action for Children
Saturday 28th March 10 am – 12 noon
Coffee, tea, cakes, stalls

2015 – ‘To boldly go...’

Mary, the mother of Jesus, looks so serene in the Christmas cards we have just taken down – but was it really like that? Mary didn't ask to be pregnant, but she accepted that it was God's will for her, and she had to live with the consequences. She had to face family, friends and neighbours, who would be far more shocked than most people today about an unmarried pregnant teenager. Then the authorities intervened. The Romans required Mary and Joseph to travel to crowded Bethlehem, and when Herod heard about the baby he determined to kill him, so the young family had to flee, becoming refugees far from home.

Mary might have imagined that, because God had chosen her for a special job, everything would work out well. But it didn't. She didn't know what would happen, and she couldn't control events anyway, she just had to cope with life like everyone else. But her simple faith shines through – if God asked her to bear his Son, then she would trust him that all would be well in the end.

God has tasks for each of us in 2015. We don't know what that will be involved, and most things we cannot control anyway. We just have to accept the ups and downs as Mary did. Like her, we can put our trust in God, that he loves us more than we can possibly imagine, and that he will be with us whatever happens in the year ahead.

John Wilkins



*Fair Grounds fairtrade shop,
Whitham Road, Broomhill. S10 2SN*

Celebrating Fairtrade in Sheffield

2014 has been an exciting and challenging year for Fair Grounds, the fair trade shop. We have had the opportunity to open an actual shop in a busy area of Sheffield. It was originally going to be just a pop-up shop for fair trade fortnight collaborating with a couple of Fair Trade organisations in Sheffield. This quickly developed into a year-long opportunity. We now have a team of over 12 volunteers (of all ages including school and university students, full-time employed and retired people) who give up their time for a morning, afternoon or full day once a week or fortnight. On offer is a range of fair trade homeware, gifts, jewellery, food, cards and more - providing the people of Sheffield with a great range of ethical consumer choice!

ALICE



ALICE



ALICE



ALICE



ALICE



Q Why is Alice always curious? **A** Because she's in Wonder-land.

That joke was not good enough to be in our pantomime. Ours are much funnier. Why are there 5 Alices? Because she changes size, of course. We also have 53 cards (did you forget the Joker?), 3 upside-down flamingos, 2 fat bald gate-crashers, 1 caterpillar on a mushroom, 1 very famous clergyman, and all your favourite characters from the story. Is that all? Of course not. We also have assorted songs and dances, some slapstick and sweets, amazing costumes and videos, and definitely audience participation.

When is it on? Friday 20th February at 7.30, Saturday 21st February at 7.30, Sunday 22nd February at 4.30.

It's free, but you have to have a ticket to get in and currently there is a waiting list.

Phone Glenn Evans on 235 1057 or 07814 905883, or email dglennevans@hotmail.co.uk

Voluntary donations are always welcome for our considerable expenses.





Mountains to climb

Just recently I watched Bear Grylls on one of his wild expeditions to the Isle of Skye with Ben Stiller. Ben Stiller, who is usually quite amusing, fails to laugh a lot as he dangles halfway up a rope 150ft high. Bear Grylls meanwhile appears to be the picture of calm as he leads him literally up hill and down dale.

As I watched this 'extreme mini break', I remembered that I had been sent a clip about Bear Grylls speaking in a church in London. This strong expedition leader had said that some people thought that faith was a crutch. Bear said, *'If that is the case, I confess I need that crutch. Does that make me weak? Well, what does a crutch do, it enables you to stand and makes you stronger.*

I need this crutch, my faith, as my backbone, so that whenever I am facing overwhelming odds, I know that through it all, whatever happens I am loved by God. In the mountains I face, and in the different mountains we all have to sometimes face in our lives, I know that my Saviour is beside me, and within.'

The Christian faith never promises that life will be easy with no suffering and without mountains to climb. But it does promise certain hope and resurrection, and that when we face what we have to face sometimes in the mountainous regions of life, we can know that we are loved and not abandoned by a God who does not care. Bear Grylls appears fearless, yet his strength, in good or difficult times, comes from his faith.

Glenn has written an article in this magazine that invites you to consider the power of God at work, through the healing he has experienced in his life. Glenn was healed of cancer of the oesophagus over a period of several months during which he faced chemotherapy and surgery.

It must have felt like a huge mountain to climb for Glenn and his family. Perhaps for many, you may be one of them, the greatest miracle is that because of his faith in Christ, and in the resurrection, Glenn was not afraid to die, and through the difficult days when Glenn did not know if he would physically survive this illness, he never doubted God's love for him.

No revolution will come
in time
To alter this man's life
Except the one surprise
Of being loved.
Sidney Carter

Read the article and seriously consider the question Glenn poses, 'What do you think?'

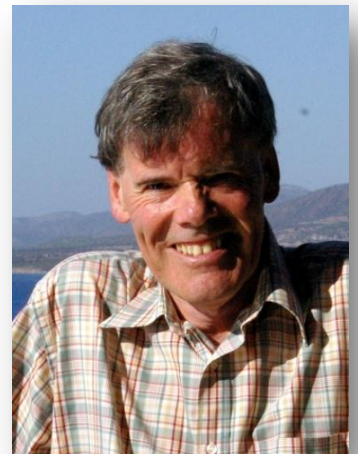
And, as we come to the period leading to Easter and resurrection, wonder where does your strength come from when there are mountains to climb, and peaks to dangle from? Can you, like Bear and Glenn, know that no matter what happens, however dark the time, we can be more than conquerors through Christ who loved us? (Romans 8:37). God bless, Louise.

What do you think?

Many of us will remember the Sunday morning when Glenn Evans told the congregation that he had been diagnosed with a serious form of cancer. Now, 6 years later, Glenn has written about his illness and gives his reflections on what happened to him.

"I don't want to see you again." Not a very nice thing to be said to you in most circumstances, but one of the most welcome things ever said to me. The speaker was my hospital consultant, and it meant that my 6-year journey to the edge of death and back was finally over. It was a very pleasant contrast to the time when my specialist said, "There is nothing we can do. Your illness is terminal."

Many of you will have heard or read the story of my illness and the start of my recovery, so you can skip the next few paragraphs if you want. In this article I want to add some details to that story, and ask you to decide if my recovery is a miracle.



If you want to read what I wrote at the time, email me for a copy. But, for now, just a quick summary of my illness.

Summary of illness

In February 2009 I was diagnosed with cancer of the oesophagus, caused by a hiatus hernia which I did not know I had. Because the cancer had grown to touch the bronchus, an operation was impossible. Cutting the bronchus meant death. Neither chemotherapy nor radiotherapy would shrink the cancer. There was no other treatment. There was nothing some of the best doctors in the country could do to save me. I had under a year to live. It was not a very pleasant place to be.

Telling the family

The hardest thing was telling my children and my mother. My mother never for a moment accepted that I was going to die. I did accept it. I started planning for my funeral service. I discovered I was eligible for a death grant. I began to put my papers in order. It seemed to me that I had little choice other than to accept it.

My Reaction

I did not get angry with God. He had been very good to me. My life had been saved aged 21 when I almost drowned in West Africa and those with me had given up hope. I had been blessed with a lovely family, good friends, an enjoyable and well-paid job. It would have been wrong to get angry with God.

Neither was I afraid. I believe in resurrection and eternal life. Woody Allen once said, "I'm not afraid of dying. I just don't want to be there when it happens". Although the process of dying did not appeal at all, the outcome was something to look forward to. However, that did not mean at all that I wanted to die. There were lots of things I still wanted to do, places to go, people to see.

I did not pray fervently for healing. I am so grateful to those so many people who did pray for my healing, and I am certain that this was significant. For myself, however, I was content to leave it in God's loving hands. I never doubted that He loved me – the death of Jesus proved how much He loved me. Neither did I ever doubt for a moment that He could heal me. Of course God can and does heal people, but it's not nearly as often as we want. I have preached sermons on this theme, and this is not a sermon, so I'm not going into the theology now. If you want me to send you the sermons, just email me.

Although I never doubted that God could heal me, I did not see why I should be singled out for healing. But I have been healed, and the medical profession cannot really explain it. It happened like this.

Facing treatment

For various reasons I decided to have chemotherapy. It was made crystal clear to me that this would not cure me. Nevertheless, it was my choice. It was not a very pleasant experience, but the people who treated me could not have been kinder. It was a continuous 24/7 process, with extra drugs once every 3 weeks. After 9 weeks a routine X-ray showed that the cancer had shrunk a fraction. This was entirely unexpected, and it meant there was a chance of an operation after all. They would not know for certain until they opened me up to do the operation, but they could and did operate, and 8 hours later the cancer was gone. My son is now a doctor and has been part of a medical team carrying out the same operation, and he described it as "brutal". I certainly felt battered, but so incredibly grateful that I had been given another life to live.

'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.' Jeremiah 29: 11

The five years since have not always been easy, both physically and psychologically. I had an infected wound. I had to have another 9 weeks of precautionary chemotherapy. On my first birthday after the operation my consultant told me that there was a 50-50 chance that I had bone cancer, but a subsequent scan confirmed I hadn't. I have had to learn how to organise my eating and drinking so that I don't renew the cancer, or get insulin overload, and yet keep my weight steady. I am very lucky in that I find it very easy to lose weight! But now, over 5 years after the operation, my overwhelming feeling is the same gratitude as I had immediately afterwards.

Recovery

So what made me better? One of my doctors has used the word "miracle". My surgeon said it was "an unexpectedly good reaction to chemotherapy." But that begs the question, what caused the unexpectedly good

reaction? Certainly the odds were against it. Apart from the 50% chance of there not being bone cancer, the doctors always refused to quote survival rates. I now know that 20% of people die during my operation. I saw on the BBC news this year that only 5% of people survive cancer of the oesophagus. I know that for 3 months the best doctors in the country gave me a 0% chance of recovery. But I am still here to get on everyone's nerves.

A miracle?

So was it a miracle? I cannot prove that it was, but neither can anyone prove that it wasn't. It is really a matter of faith, of what you believe. But I'd like to tell you 2 things that happened to me that have helped convince me that it was a miracle.

On the day I was first diagnosed with cancer, before I knew it was terminal, I was at the hospital by myself. My wife was at work, and neither of us had expected a diagnosis like that. I had had to park the car about a mile away up a hill. It was early February. As I left the hospital and walked up the hill, it was sleeting in a real blizzard. The sleet was cutting into my face as I walked, thinking about the diagnosis. Yet by the time I got back to the car, the sleet had stopped, the clouds had cleared, and the sky was blue. I remember thinking that this could well be a sign, with a very unpleasant period to be followed by a time of sunshine. Now I do not believe that God had organised the timing of the storm of sleet (Jesus makes it clear in Matthew chapter 5 verse 45 that God does not work like that), but I do believe that God had used the circumstances around me to speak to me, and that His promise had been kept.

Feeling well

Secondly, as the chemotherapy was proceeding, I started to feel a little better. I did not really realise this, as the nature of the process meant that I sometimes felt quite good and sometimes I didn't, but one particular morning I suddenly felt "well". I remember standing there and thinking "I feel well." The next day I told my wife how I felt. The day after that the hospital phoned to say that my consultant unexpectedly wanted to see me the next day. What she said to me on that next day was that the cancer had shrunk that vital fraction, and an operation might be possible. But the really significant thing for me was that the morning when I'd suddenly felt "well" was Whitsun (Pentecost) morning, and the reason I was standing was that I was in church singing God's praise for His gift of His Spirit, the bringer of new life to Christians.

Now of course both these things may have been coincidence. I'm always astonished that atheists don't believe in God but do have such strong belief in coincidence. So yes, they may have been coincidence, but that's not what I believe. I am incredibly grateful to God that I once had 0% chance of staying alive, but at this moment, over 5 years later, I am 100% alive.

Glenn Evans

Notes: *I know that this article may raise difficult issues for some of you, especially if you have lost a loved one, but if I can do anything to help, please contact me. At the very least I can pray. If you wish to reproduce this article, or receive my earlier account, please contact me. My email address is djlennevs@hotmail.co.uk*



Games, chat and crafts group starting Wednesday 11th March 12.30 to 3 pm in the church

Knit, Natter, craft and chatter has been meeting since last April. We are a friendly group wishing to include some social activities as an alternative to knitting, eg scrabble, chess, dominoes, card games, jigsaws. We hope to start on Wednesday 11th March and meet weekly. If you want, come at 12.30 and bring your lunch and have time for a chat before starting activities at 1 pm. Enter through the main door of the church.

Any men or women interested in joining us contact Sue Ratheram 2682334 or Ruth Larder 2686507 or simply come on 11th March. We look forward to seeing you.

Charitable Giving

Last year the church gave £8k to charity. That might seem strange, when we were doing all we could to raise the £200k we spent on our buildings, but we wanted to be generous with what God had generously given us. The Church Council has decided to give £8k again this year. That might seem strange when we expect our expenditure to exceed our income by £10k, but we want to be generous with what God has generously given us. So far the Leadership Team has committed half of the £8k, as shown in Table 1.

We have another £4k to give by August. We would welcome suggestions of suitable charities to me, **John Wilkins, by 8 March**, please, briefly explaining why the charity is one the Church should support. We would prefer to give relatively few large donations to the same charities each year, rather than a lot of small ones, since we understand that helps charities plan their work better.

As a guide, the other charities we supported last year are shown in Table 2.

Christians and Sheffield Schools	£500
Children with Hope and Destiny (Malawi)	£750
Ecclesall Live at Home Scheme	£500
Entebbe Early Learning Centre (Uganda)	£750
Sheffield Council for Community Care	£500
St Luke's	£500
WORK Ltd	£500

<i>Del Cook Memorial Fund</i>	<i>£500</i>
<i>Methodist Homes</i>	<i>£200</i>
<i>Methodist Women in Britain</i>	<i>£200</i>
<i>Methodist General Property Fund</i>	<i>£200</i>
<i>Mission for Seafarers</i>	<i>£500</i>
<i>Release International</i>	<i>£500</i>
<i>Samaritans' Purse</i>	<i>£500</i>
<i>Emergencies</i>	<i>£700</i>

Friendship Club Spring 2015

As a brand New Year arrives we reflect on the previous one, but more importantly we look forward to what the new one will bring. Reflecting on 2014 at Friendship Club we remember lots of lovely moments....some great speakers and entertainers, birthdays celebrated, Christmas celebrated with a lovely choir, a Victorian Christmas, a pie and pea lunch followed by carols and Christmas readings and, of course, the arrival of Father Christmas. Throughout all the interesting Tuesday afternoon sessions at Bents Green we continue to experience the feelings of support, friendship and comradeship.

"Looking back on the months gone by,
 As a new year starts and an old one ends,
 We contemplate what brought us joy,
 And we think of our loved ones and our friends.
 Recalling all the happy times,
 Remembering how they enriched our lives,
 We reflect upon who really counts,
 As the fresh and bright new year arrives."

For 2015 we have a varied programme again; several 'old' friends will return to entertain us such as Suzanne Bingham who gives us great presentations of social history, Stephen Gay who entertains us with his railway walks, Sally Moseley who inspires us with her recollections of Derbyshire, Hugh Finnigan who gives us lovely music . We will also have several 'new' speakers who will entertain and inform us.



We have welcomed new members, one of whom said to me , 'I just love the lovely friendly atmosphere at Friendship Club' and we hope to welcome even more. We continue to receive the support of Louise for which we are very gratefulshe always makes time to chat to us and share her thoughts on what is important.

And so we look forward to the spring and whatever the new year will bring.

Pat Hutchinson

Home and Garden

Continuing the series about Bents Green shops and community

Home and Garden is the longest running shop at Bents Green. It opened in 1986 and has seen many other shops come and go. John already knew Bents Green when he heard of the shop vacancy and decided to open a hardware shop in the area. The previous Bents Green hardware store run by Bill Ryan had closed by then.

John first began in the hardware business in 1969 when his father and he opened a hardware shop in Handsworth. His father had been a motor mechanic and run a garage and petrol station before choosing to take on the hardware shop. His father died in 1975 and John continued the business himself. For a while he ran both businesses but then decided to focus on the shop at Bents Green.

Home and Garden aims to stock what people want. John has found that many customers would rather come to a small shop where they can discuss what they need and buy items in small quantities rather than go to a large, impersonal store where items are packaged in quantities. He is able to obtain anything which he does not have in stock within 7 days. If a customer needs help with fixing or installing an item John is able to pass on names of local tradespeople to help with the task. He used to do some of this himself and enjoyed the practical jobs but the demands of the shop now make it impossible to offer this service himself.



The shop officially opens from 9 – 3.30 but John is usually here well before 9 and, if he is in, the shop is open. To its regular customers it is affectionately known as Open all Hours. The resemblance of the shop to Arkwrights Store in the TV programme Open All hours led to an appearance on national television in an advert for Johnsons Barley Water. Not many local stores can boast of an appearance on national TV!

When entering the shop you hear the song of the 2 budgerigars resident behind the scenes. They are a favourite of children who enjoy being taken round to see the birds. The shop stocks all sorts of pet food and equipment including hay for rabbits and guinea pigs. Some of the stock is seasonal and the current items on display at the front of the shop are snow shovels and sledges. Soon these will be replaced by spring flowers and gardening items.

It is a 7 day a week job to maintain the stock and staff the shop. Most of the time John is in the shop himself, though he does have help available from others when needed. He sees the shop as a community shop and values being part of the community at Bents Green. He would like to see the community life develop further and is keen to support local events. He also stressed that shops need customers and community support if we want them to continue.

Tricia North

Bible Crossword

	1				2			3	
4									
		5							
6				7					
8				9		10			
									11
					12				
		13							

Across	
4	The last book in the bible
6	The fear of the Lord is the beginning of (Proverbs 1 v 7)
8	Blessed are the pure in heart, for they willGod (Matthew 5 v 8)
9	Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown (Matthew 5 v 7)
11	God the Father, God the and God the Holy Spirit but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like they will run and not grow weary, (Isaiah 40:31)
12	The name of Jesus' disciple who denied him three times (Matthew 26v75)
Down	
1 the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength (Mark 12 : 30)
2	Now is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see (Hebrews 11 : 1)
3	They brought Daniel and threw him in to the den of (Daniel 6 : 16)
4	"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the (Matthew 7 : 24)
5	For the law was given through ; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1 v 17)
7	The eye is theof the body (Matthew 6 v 22)
10	Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said,of living water will flow from within them (John 7 v 38)

Services at Bents Green Methodist Church

All are welcome at these services

Sunday mornings at 10.30 am

During morning services there is a crèche for little ones, Sparks Club for younger children and Sunday Club for older children.

Sunday evenings at 6.30 pm

An informal service often including tea, coffee and time to chat about subjects relating to the Christian faith.

Wednesdays at 10 am: Midweek service

Service of Healing: Sunday February 1st at 6.30 pm

Mothering Sunday: March 15th at 10.30 am

Activities for Children and Young People

New members are welcome at these activities at the church.

Contact the named person for more details.

For younger children

Crèche	0-3	Sun 10.30am	Ruth	2686507
Mums & Toddlers	0-4	Wed 10.00am	Irene	2660612

For children and young people

Girls' Brigade	5-18	Thurs evening	Marian	2361316
Football	11-18	Fri 5-7pm	Glenn	2351057
Holiday Club	5-11	Summer	Cherry	07853278612
Lighthouse	5-11	Wed 3.45	Cherry	07853278612
Messy Services	3-12	Festivals	Sue	2307556
Sparks	4-11	Sun 10.30	John	2307556
Sunday Club	12-18	Sun 10.30	Sue	2307556
Torch	Teens	Tues 6.30	Cherry	07853278612
Lampstand	12-18	Fri 8-10pm	Cherry	07853278612
Badminton	All ages	Tues evening	Don	2662218
Drama group	All ages	Various	Glenn	2351057
Pantomime	All ages	Annually	Glenn	2351057
Musical	All ages	Annually	Christèle	07912207661

Friendship Club Programme:

Tuesdays at 2 pm in the Church Hall (enter by side door opposite the shops). A warm welcome awaits any who would like to come along – especially men and women over 50

Tues 3 rd Feb	RAILWAYS IN A CORNISH SCENE
Tues 10 th Feb	A SHEPHERDESS SPEAKS
Tues 17 th Feb	LOVELY LEATHER
Tues 24 th Feb	VARIETY SHOW
Tues 3 rd March	CHOCOLATE
Tues 10 th March	SICK CHILDREN'S TRUST
Tues 17 th March	MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT
Tues 24 th March	THE SWEET 50'S
Tues 31 st March	EASTER SERVICE

For more information contact: Pat Hutchinson: 0114 2497280
or Jackie Smith: 0114 3483069

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If you would like to receive Hilltop by email (and in colour) please email the editor.

Please send material for the next issue to the editor by Sun 15th March 2015

Coffee Mornings in the Church:

On the first Saturday of every month from 10.30 am – 12

Knit & Natter:

Wednesday 12 – 3 pm every week
Bring your knitting or come and knit with patterns and wool provided. In the Church.
Contact Sue: 0114 2682334

Harbour Coffee:

On Wednesdays in term-time from 3.30 – 5.45 pm in the Music Room

Tea, Toast & Time 4 Thinking:

Thursdays @ 10.30 am each week.
Upstairs in the Church Lounge.
A time to reflect on what following Jesus is all about. A place for all those seeking answers.
Carers of young children especially welcome.

Contact Sue: Tel 0114 2307556

House groups

Many people in the church belong to a house group and meet regularly to pray together, read the bible and talk about the Christian faith. If you are interested in joining a house group contact Sue: Tel 0114 2307556

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