

Important current issues

At the recent Family Forum some important and key issues were discussed and prayed about. As part of our recognising the importance of sharing with all of our Fellowship on these issues we wish to use this IN HOUSE issue to share with you about these key matters.

Leadership

Mike Levy

Following nearly 10 years of involvement with our Leadership Team Mike has asked to step down from this role but will still be serving TBC in various ways. We have been blessed by Mike's help and input in the Team meetings over several years and we wish to take this opportunity to express our thanks to him and his wife Carol for their help.

Lis Pearce

Lis has shared that for some time she and the family have been seeking where God would have them be in the future. Over several months they have experienced a strong leading and received confirmation through various 'words' shared that the family should - very reluctantly - leave Thornbury for a new place to call home. This is likely to be in the area of Exmoor - a place they have had on their heart for some years but has come much more into focus over recent months. The actual moving date is not clear yet but Lis will be stepping down from her role with us at the end of August. As you will appreciate Lis has been a great blessing to us at TBC and has brought something special into our Fellowship and Leadership Team. This decision is obviously a disappointment to us at TBC. However, we have been aware that even since the time we have supported Lis in her desire to be trained for 'full time Christian ministry' that she may sense God's direction to move from Thornbury at some future time. We pray that Lis, Andrew and the family will enjoy their new location. We very much wish to express sincere thanks for all they have been able to share with us over the years they have been at TBC and assure them of our prayers and that God will bless them in their exciting move.

For us at TBC we have been in similar positions before and God has directed and guided us on each occasion and we do not doubt His willingness to direct us in the future. We ask that you pray with us as we seek to learn and know God's direction for this part of His body here in Thornbury both during the period of Paul's recovery from surgery and beyond into the period after Lis and Andrew leave us. We invite you to

share with us if you sense a prompting or word from God for us to weigh with the other words we receive.

We all find change a little difficult to deal with at times and that certainly applies in church life but it is good to remind ourselves that our Lord Jesus is 'Head' of the church and it was He who said 'I will build my church....'

Finance

As a Church we do not like to put too great an emphasis on finance as we have seen God's faithfulness in this area over many years and we do not doubt this will continue but we feel it right to share with you the current situation we are facing. You will be aware that as a Fellowship we always seek to be generous in Mission giving and support, and this continues to be our position. However, in the near future there will be extra calls on our finances. Some of these are listed below:-

- Urgent roof repairs (estimated as being over £10,800)
- Urgent flooring replacement and rectifying water penetration in Lower Lounge - the extent of repair and pricing has yet to be established
- Agreed ongoing support of Patchway Church - setting up the Book / coffee shop
- Ongoing salaries for employed staff
- In coming months the need to upgrade the sound and projection system

At present our General Funds are very low.

We are led to the Biblical encouragement of bringing our regular tithes and gifts to God and would ask you to consider whether there is anything you, as an individual or family, can undertake on a regular basis. Further details on how this can be undertaken will be circulated in the Newsletter over the next few weeks. As part of our desire to show thanks to God for all He has done for us as individuals and as a Fellowship and to give an opportunity to contribute towards these needs we have decided to set a 'Day of Thanksgiving' for people to bring an offering to God in order to provide for the above needs.

The 'Day of Thanksgiving' has been set for Sunday 16th May 2010 and we ask you all to prayerfully consider how you may be able to respond to this current position. Envelopes will be made available for use from the 1st May onwards.

Thank you from Bev, Dave and Terry on behalf of all the Leadership Team

Ray Verlaque reports on his Haiti visit

My five weeks in Haiti were spent working with the Haiti Hospital Appeal Charity in Quartier Morin near Cap-Haitian which is Haiti's second City, situated to the north of the island.

My ability to speak Creole and French made communication easier.

The first two weeks were spent sorting out the thousands of items donated to enable even distribution to the neediest people. Other jobs comprised painting the nursing home, fixing the automatic gearbox and generator, which had not been working for weeks, and carpentry.

The third and fourth weeks were mainly distributing goods to pastors of churches who were supporting the earthquake

victims and driving to remote areas of Haiti to deliver aid which enabled me to see much of the island. The roads are dirt tracks with huge craters and deep cracks with cliffs and ravines; the air clouded with thick dust. The road to Cap-Haitian was crowded with heavily laden trucks and lined with people carrying and carting. The rain fell frequently which transformed the tracks into deep rivers of mud, thick and black. The centre was heaving with trucks, swarming with buyers and sellers. There seemed to be an absolute disregard for personal safety with mopeds carrying families, masses of cargo, propane cylinders, straddled pigs or clutches of live fowl making their way to market with urgency and determination. Taxi buses (Tap-tap) were crammed to bursting, with faces staring out enduring long journeys of delays, braking and careering. The mountainous region was especially dangerous after nightfall because of ravines. They were a challenge to me especially when muddy water would reach over the lights of the pickup truck I was driving; great fun. Thank you for praying for our safety, there has been little margin for error but praise God for our safety.

Amidst the poverty, I found the Haitians genuine and free with great faith and integrity. A people barely surviving, yet on Sundays they fill the churches and praise God with complete dedication. At times the people seem content and engaged with living but the truth is that they lack the essentials that most of us take for granted: like access to basic healthcare, good education and fair government. It is a country of extremes and their norms are not ours. This country's progress has been stifled by corruption, abuse, foreign manipulation, extortion *and* natural disasters; but our help can cut through the politics and recent events by giving a hand and simply caring for our brothers and



sisters with compassion and love.

Going to Haiti to help brought with it a strange kind of responsibility. I couldn't make a long-term difference on my own but being part of the Haiti Hospital Appeal does mean we can, as a team, contribute to the wonderful work being done there collectively. It was a huge privilege, a wonderful opportunity and a life-changing experience for me. Thank you for your prayers and financial support

Your donations are certainly making a difference to the people of Haiti and they are very grateful but this is only the beginning for a people in a land of devastation and grief.

Ray Verlaque



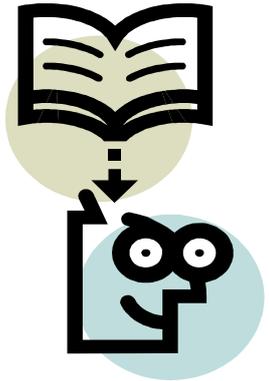
TBC Open The Book Assembly Group

If you come into the church foyer on a Thursday afternoon you will find us preparing for our weekly visit to the late afternoon assembly at Christ the King Catholic Primary School in Thornbury.

Several years ago the Head Teacher, Carol Lawler, welcomed the group in to do assemblies and though the group members have changed over time this important link with our community has continued. A group of 6 of us follow the Open the Book programme, an initiative from the Gloucester Diocese, which introduces young children to The Book (The Bible).

This has been widely accepted in this area by primary and junior schools as part of their act of worship for their assemblies: churches form teams to go into their local schools on a regular basis. We present episodes from the Bible in various ways: acting, miming, singing, puppets, quizzes etc. All this is under the skilful and long suffering direction of Heather Staley. Heather is so versatile and gives us all tremendous encouragement. Above all she has an incredible rapport with the children. We are all blessed by the relationship which has grown between us and the children and teachers at Christ the King: the teachers often introduce us as 'the assembly they enjoy' and the children are so responsive. It is humbling to glimpse their faith and understanding of what they are taught. We involve children in the presentations as often as we can - they are bursting to join in. Each assembly includes a prayer and a song as well as the Bible story.

The most important thing however, is they show a good understanding of what is being taught. In



quizzes at the end of term we are amazed by how they have followed the sequence of episodes and remember characters and stories.

We are so thankful for the material we use and the willingness of the school to have us in every week. We go into several other schools for a once a term presentation with a drama chosen by us and this is also well received and

eagerly entered into by us and the children. I thank God that now I am available in the daytime I can be part of such an exciting outreach. If you are free on Thursday afternoons why not pray about offering some time to this work? Do talk to Heather about what it involves. I know this ministry could not continue without God's blessing and sustaining power: we don't always feel confident about what we have prepared but He takes what we have to offer and multiplies it and His word is powerful and effective.

Helen Hope-Bell

Thornbury Churches Together

Thornbury Churches Together celebrates its 21st birthday this year.

Prior to 1980 several attempts had been made to improve links between churches, but only on a bi-partisan basis, e.g. Anglican/Methodist; Methodist/URC, but all shared a common failing. They were the products of ministers/incumbents who 'got on well' and when the personalities changed the schemes collapsed.

From June 1981 representatives of the seven denominations in Thornbury began meeting on a regular basis to explore the possibilities. After two years of gentle talking and probing a 'constitution' was drafted and agreed (after much prayer and heart searching by those churches who function as a rule without creeds) and ACCT (The Association of Christian Churches in Thornbury) was launched.



A pattern of key annual events became established, accepted and welcomed: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; Ecumenical Lent House Groups; Good Friday March of Witness; One World Week; and lastly, Carols in the Town Centre on the last

Saturday before Christmas. For a number of years the evening of the fifth Sunday in a month was used for joint services, choosing a different host church on each occasion.

In June 1981 ACCT became TCT (Thornbury Churches Together) linking the churches of Thornbury into the nationwide Churches Together movement. This involved the signing of a covenant by members of each church. The covenant begins:

Rejoicing in our one-ness in Christ which we are already experiencing in Thornbury and looking for the coming

together of all God's people in the unity of faith and fellowship which is Christ's will and prayer, we, the members of Thornbury Baptist Church, Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, Thornbury Methodist Church, St Mary's and St Paul's C. of E. Church, Thornbury United Reformed Church, The Religious Society of Friends (Thornbury), Bristol Christian Fellowship (Thornbury) commit ourselves to working together. We will remain faithful to the disciplines and heritage of our different traditions while being open to the Holy Spirit's leading us on as we serve, share, pray and witness together. Thus we hope to proclaim the reconciling power of Christ in the world. A Fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

To celebrate our 21st birthday TCT is planning an afternoon and evening of events on Pentecost Sunday, 23rd May, here at TBC. We will start with a Gospel choir workshop between 3pm and 5pm led by Geraldine Latty (open to anyone of any ability and any or no belief, so invite your friends). This will be followed by refreshments, including the cutting of a birthday cake by two of the original signatories of the covenant (including our own Terry Wicks!). During the refreshments there will be photos of activities from the various churches and a summary of the results of the faith audit. At 6.30pm there will be a service of worship and celebration.

Sally Heath

A tale of two robins

Last week I had workmen in to lay a patio and replace my tatty old shed and so I had to empty the old shed ready for its removal, but to my dismay, when I went to take down my robin nest box I found a fresh nest and three, still warm, creamy brown eggs. After guiltily removing the box the poor little robins went frantic as they flapped wildly around the corner of the shed where their nest had once been ... and Lyn and I watched them with big lumps in our throats.

I then decided to knock a nail into the adjacent wall and hung the box on it ... but I knew without any doubt at all that the robins would desert their nest ... I was just going through the motions so that Lyn wouldn't feel so bad about it all. I had a little prayer for the homeless creatures as I walked away and went back to watching them fluttering round in circles.



Imagine my surprise when, after I had finished digging up some bulbs where the new patio would be laid, I glanced up at the nest box and saw two little chestnut eyes looking back at me.

When we pray even a half-hearted, faithless, going through the motions kind of prayer God is still listening.

God sees us.
God hears us.

Church Calendar: May 2010 to July 2010

MAY

Sunday 2

11.00am Community service & meal

Philip Jinadu

6.30pm Sally Heath

Saturday 8

8.00am Men's breakfast

Sunday 9

9.15/11.00am Mike Levy

6.30pm Feedback from Nicaragua & Haiti

Monday 10

2.30pm Inside out, Heritage trail walk

7.30pm Possible start of new Alpha course

Wednesday 12

8.00pm Connections (Welcome) evening

Sunday 16

9.15/11.00am Lis Pearce, The healer comes to town

6.30pm Rob Scott-Cook

Monday 17

10.30am Senior's service

Thursday 20

8.00pm Prayer Evening

Sunday 23

9.15/11.00am Terry Wicks, Pentecost

6.30pm David Primrose, TCT Celebration

Sunday 30

9.15/11.00am Lis Pearce, Tradition versus truth

6.30pm Ed Stuart

JUNE

Tuesday 1 to Friday 4

Sacred Space in The Upper Room

Sunday 6

11.00am Ruth Rice, Community service & meal

6.30pm David Ling

Friday 11 to Sunday 13

Men's Walking Weekend

Saturday 12

8.00am Men's breakfast

Pm Fit to Live World Cup Afternoon

Sunday 13

9.15/11.00am Stephen Pacht, Clean and unclean

6.30pm Stephen Pacht

Monday 14

Inside Out, visit to Lavender Farm

Thursday 17

8.00pm Prayer Evening

Sunday 20

9.15/11.00am Lis Pearce, Going to the dogs

6.30pm Changing Tunes

Sunday 27

9.15/11.00am Mike Levy, Open ears and loosened tongues

6.30pm 20 to 30's group

JULY

Saturday 3

1.00pm Fit to Live large screen event!

Sunday 4

11.00am Community service & meal

6.30pm David Lawrence

Saturday 10

8.00am Men's breakfast

Sunday 11

9.15/11.00am Ken Payne, Don't you get it yet?

6.30pm John Moseley

Monday 12

Inside Out, Picnic tea

Thursday 15

8.00pm Prayer Evening

Sunday 18

9.15/11.00am Mary Groves, Seeing everything clearly

6.30pm Terry Wicks

Sunday 25 - start of summer programme

10.00am Lis Pearce, A new beginning

6.30pm Neil Mobbs

Tuesday 27 to Friday 30

Youth and children's activity week