January & February 2014

# StJohn's Reformed Church Reformed Church

Somerset & Mowbray Roads, New Barnet, Herts, EN5 1RH

### Seasonal Faith

t was after moving from the southern to the northern hemisphere that I began to realise why some of the festivals of the Christian Year have been put where they now occur in our calendar. The first Christian missionaries to northern Europe probably realised quite soon that attempting to abolish the existing pagan festivals was going to be very difficult and unpopular. Sensibly, they engaged in a 'baptising' exercise, replacing the midwinter Solstice with Christmas. However, the medieval Church was not nearly attentive enough to seasonal conditions when it imposed the fast of Lent. Fasting from some vegetables could have been feasible (and popular with children), coinciding with the leanest time of the year for locally-grown crops; but fasting from one of the few ready sources of protein—meat—was always going to be unpopular, especially in sausage-loving Switzerland and haggis-loving Scotland (both of which, coincidentally or not, had the most thoroughgoing of the Reformations).

In the southern hemisphere, the Christian festivals coincide with different seasons. Christmas and Epiphany are celebrated at the height of summer, when the light and heat of the sun predominate. Easter is celebrated in the autumn, when the leaves on deciduous trees change colour and fall. Naturally enough, then, Christian inhabitants of the southern hemisphere don't associate Christmas with cold temperatures and hot, stodgy food; and neither do they associate Easter with daffodils and new-born lambs.

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#### From the Minister... continued from page 1

As I write this article, I am looking out of my study window onto the trees and lake of Greenhill Gardens. Apart from a few evergreens, all the trees have lost their leaves. Winter is a time of waiting but also a revealing time. The trunks and branches and structure of the trees are clearly visible. Winter can also be a revealing time for us. Without ready recourse to outdoor activities, are we forced to confront our inability to wait patiently? The trees are conserving their energies in preparation for spring growth and summer fruitfulness. Should we also conserve our energies now in preparation for the summer growth and autumn fruitfulness of God's Kingdom?

There's a hymn written by New Zealander Shirley Murray that makes links between the seasons, human activity, and faith:

Our life has its seasons, and God has the reasons why spring follows winter, and new leaves grow, for there's a connection with our resurrection that flowers will bud after frost and snow.

so there's never a time to stop believing, there's never a time for hope to die, there's never a time to stop loving, these three things go on.

There's a time to be planting,

- a time to be plucking,
- a time to be laughing,
- a time to weep,
- a time to be building,
- a time to be breaking,
- a time to be waking,
- a time to sleep,

but there's never a time to stop believing . . .

Although urbanised developed-world peoples try to operate on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week basis, there is an important sense in which we neglect the seasonal ebb-and-flow at our peril. Try as we might, we cannot escape our biology and inter-connectedness with the natural world and its seasonal fluctuations. For example, I can't understand why we can't all agree to start work and school one hour later than normal from December to February. Wouldn't we all be less tired and therefore more productive?

Our practice of faith, too, must have its winter respite and dying down—punctuated with celebrations of light and sociality—in order to harbour the energies necessary for the resurrection of spring growth and the fruitfulness of summer and autumn. The Christian calendar recognises this in its festivals and seasons of waiting and growth. Above all, in the weekly demarcation of Sabbath, the Jewish and Christian calendars recognise the human need for regular rest and worship. We are not machines but creatures of the natural world. That is how we have evolved by God's long process of providence. Let us enjoy and celebrate the varied seasonal existence that God has given us in our latitude.

Julian Templeton



Julian is always happy to have assistance from the congregation to help illustrate the bible. Lawrence, Symran and Sabrina here donned cloaks to become the Magi bringing their gifts.

## Richard Harvey's Vespers

he long journey to St Saviour's, St Albans, in the pouring rain was well worth the effort to hear the world premiere of Richard Harvey's "Vespers" commissioned by the St Albans Choral Society. This is a choral piece for mixed choir and soloists with orchestral configuration to match the Gabriele Fauré "Cantique de Jean Racine" and "Requiem" that completed the programme.

Of particular note and enjoyment was the harmonisation

of the psalms in fourths and fifths reminiscent of plainsong used in early sacred music. The blend of voices, music and soloists was truly inspiring and uplifting. It is difficult to put in writing the impact of the composition only to say that we returned home renewed with a sense of privilege at being able to attend the concert. When will be able to hear it again and perhaps have a recording?

Milly Polasek and Helen Snider

# Committed to Making a Thames North Synod makes Church Growth its Priority

t the meeting of the Thames North Synod in November at High Cross United Reformed Church Tottenham, the Moderator, Andrew Prasad, argued that the church has been too focused on buildings and reminded representatives that the true church is made up of people gathering together to worship with the common purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ. He proposed, and the Synod agreed, to:

- Urge the churches and Synod Committees/Groups to pray and to engage in church growth by making it a core priority in their decisions and actions
- Consolidate the Synod's work around church growth investing its resources of people, staff, money and structures; this to be reviewed in three years
- **3.** Commit the Mission Fund in 2014 for church growth.
- **4.** Ask the Mission Initiative Group to work with the churches and Committees to implement 1, 2 and 3.

The move comes against a backdrop of several restructuring exercises in recent years, none of which have succeeded

in reversing a historic trend of numerical decline. A local church needs a certain number of Christians/members in order to function effectively and reach out to its local community. Almost one third of Thames North churches are functioning below critical mass (the minimum number of people and resources required to be sustainable). The Church's core functions are to worship God, spread the good news of Jesus Christ, and extend God's Kingdom. The growth of the Kingdom comes from God, but we must play our role in planting and watering (1 Corinthians 3:6). Discipling and social action must go hand in hand.

The plan consists of three strands: First, local churches and wider Synod committees/groups praying for growth and making it a core priority in their decisions and actions. Second, consolidation of Synod resources around church growth, in particular staff time, financial investment and in the priority placed upon it by the Synod's committees and working groups. Third, a newly created mission fund, which was introduced earlier this year, with £300,000 to invest in mission projects of local churches with the focus for 2014 being on church growth.

# Women's World Day of Prayer 2014 Annual Service

You are invited to the next Women's World Day of Prayer 2014 Annual Service.

#### Friday 7th March 2014 at 2.30pm

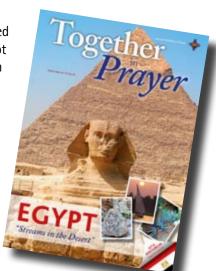
St James C of E, East Barnet Rd, New Barnet, EN4 (near Sainsbury's and Margaret Rd.)

The service has been arranged by Christian women of Egypt on the theme of 'Streams in the Desert'.

All are welcome (including men). There will be an opportunity after the service to socialise over refreshments. Hope to see you there. Do tell your friends.

You are invited by your St John's URC W.D.D.P.

Representatives, **Brenda Sandford and Marjorie O'Connor**.



# St Johns Men's Group meetings 2014

Dear All,

St John's Men's Group meet at 8.30pm once a month in The Railway Bell, East Barnet Road, New Barnet. It provides an opportunity for all men with a St John's connection, to meet informally and in relaxing surroundings, to discuss anything topical, whether to do with St John's or not.

We meet on different weekdays each month, to give everyone the chance to come along, just in case one particular weekday is inconvenient due to other engagements.

When the weekday falls on a Thursday, those who wish to can join us for a Curry Meal. On Curry Evenings, we meet at 8 pm. Those not wishing to eat are welcome to join us at the normal time of 8.30pm.

The first meeting in 2014 will be on Thursday 30 January – Curry Evening from 8.00 pm at The Railway Bell, and I look forward to seeing all those who can make it on that evening.

Please note your diaries, and if you know of any anyone else who might be interested in coming along, please invite them, or let me know, so that I can invite them.

With best wishes to everyone

Malcolm Bond

Thursday	30 January	From 8.00pm	Curry Evening
Monday	24 February	From 8.30pm	
Wednesday	26 March	From 8.30pm	
Thursday	24 April	From 8.00pm	Curry Evening
Wednesday	28 May	From 8.30pm	
Monday	30 June	From 8.30pm	
Thursday	31 July	From 8.00pm	Curry Evening
Monday	18 August	From 8.30pm	
Tuesday	23 September	From 8.30pm	
Thursday	30 October	From 8.00pm	Curry Evening
Wednesday	26 November	From 8.30pm	
Thursday	11 December	From 8.00pm	Curry Evening

# Women's Group?

I wonder why the men should have all this fun! It seems a good idea to me to meet outside of church occasionally as social time is so limited on a Sunday. It may be that women have too many other commitments. If not, does anyone fancy joining me for a social evening?

Laura Templeton

# CHARITABLE SUPPORT for 2014

At the November church meeting, it was agreed that 5% of our regular giving in 2014 would be shared between the following four charities:

- Homeless Action in Barnet
- North London Hospice
- Miriam Dean Fund
- Commitment for Life (URC's link to Christian Aid partners).

# CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS

Thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas charitable collections in December 2013. From the collections at the Carol Service and on Christmas Eve, £306.32 was raised for 'Together in Barnet Night Shelter'. This will go towards start-up packs of basic kitchen equipment etc. for the homeless guests who are re-housed. The Christmas card (£121.50) and Christmas Day (£217.43) collections raised a total of £338.93 for CRISIS.



hank you to all those who supported the Philippines
Typhoon Appeal. Members and friends of St John's
raised £496.55, £233 of which was Gift Aided, so
will add a further £58.25 to the total. The following is
taken from Christian Aid's website:

## This will be a Christmas unlike any other in the Philippines.

It's usually a time of celebration, but this year thousands of families affected by Typhoon Haiyan still have no homes and no jobs. And for many, this will be the first Christmas without the loved ones they lost in the storm.

But thanks to the enormous generosity of our supporters, Christian Aid's Typhoon appeal has topped £2.2 million – money that is being used to provide long-term support to communities who have lost so much. We are hugely grateful to our supporters for their kindness.

Our partners in the Philippines will continue to deliver essential food and shelter to those who need it most over the Christmas period. To date, they have reached more than 83,000 people in some of the worst affected and most isolated areas of the Philippines, providing them with food parcels (including rice and canned meat), hygiene kits (including soap and toothpaste) and shelter materials (such as tarpaulin sheets and ropes). We hope to reach 100,000 people by the end of 2013.



'Helping people to recover and get back on their feet will be the focus of our work over the coming months and years,' says Alwynn Javier, Christian Aid's Senior Programme Manager in the Philippines.

'Supporting households and communities to build back stronger and become more resilient in the future has never been more important.'

In the New Year, Christian Aid will start to move towards longer term work. We'll be helping those who have lost their means of income to rebuild their businesses. We will also be implementing cash for work schemes to help kick-start local economies. Please continue to keep the people of the Philippines in your hearts and your prayers.

Alison Bond

#### Count Your Blessings 2014

#### Make Lent count

Instead of giving up treats this year, why not make Lent count in a different way with this *Count Your Blessings* calendar.

Throughout Lent, these bitesize reflections will inspire you to give thanks for the blessings in your life, and enable you to help change the lives of poor communities around the globe.

#### Free app

Forty daily reflections and actions, complete with inspirational photos from our partners around the world, delivered straight to your smart phone, iPad or iPod touch. Available fo free from the Apple Store or Google Play.



christianaid.org.uk/lent

- How to count your blessings

  1. Read the daily reflection.
- Count your blessings by recording your response in the space provided.\*
- Pray for the people, countries and issues mentioned here and give thanks for the blessings in your life.
- After Easter, send your total gift to Christian Aid with the form provided. You can also donate online at christian-aid.org.uk/lent
- The daily giving amounts are suggestions only. Please give what you can

Why not celebrate the good things in your life during Lent with this thought-provoking Count Your Blessings calendar? Available to download as an app or printable calendar. Please ask someone with a computer to help if you don't have access to one – it will be worth it!

### Travel Observations

### by David Porter The Americas

n God we trust" is the motto that adorns every US banknote. However, where is God when it comes to entering the country? There is no trust there allowed. Visitors or "aliens" line up in endless queues to be photographed and finger printed. These security checks would not be out of place in a British Police station. This may be a lasting legacy of 9–11 but for a country that places God in its official motto "In God we trust". Homeland Security relies on computer aided technology to try to keep criminals out.

Remember Katrina, the hurricane that devastated the New Orleans area? This was the deadliest and most destructive Atlantic tropical cyclone of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season as well as being the costliest natural disaster in the history of the US. At least 1,833 people died in the hurricane and subsequent floods, making it the deadliest U.S. hurricane since 1928. During a visit this year to "Nawlins" (New Orleans) a tour of the Lower Ninth Ward revealed that even eight years later many buildings have not been restored. Churches, if there were any here at all, were well hidden. However, the churches' collective response to the Katrina aftermath gained the plaudits of a local artist. Lauren Thomas, a specialist in knitted objects who runs Rhino, a cooperative retail outlet in a major retail mall, commented: "the response by churches was marvellous. They came in and provided soup kitchens

and asked no forms to complete to demonstrate need." The US federal government's response was not as swift. Well after the floods took hold of many areas president George "Dubya" Bush came down to the Lower Ninth Ward shook a few hands and posed for the cameras before hightailing it back to D.C.

Football is the alternative religion in South America. Roman Catholic in the main, most South American countries reserve Sunday for watching soccer matches as well as going to church. Mention football to anyone in Argentina or Brazil and they will have a view on a player or team. Residents are remarkably knowledgeable on the English Premier League and know many of the major players.

Interest is fuelled by countrymen playing for English teams. Well known Argentineans include Aguero (Man City), Coloccini (Newcastle), Lamela (Spurs) while Brazil's finest - da Silva, Luiz and Gomez play for Man U, Chelsea and Spurs. England play Uruguay in this year's World Cup where Liverpool's Luis Suarez will be the greatest threat. Roy Hodgson's team will also play Costa Rica. Ticos Bryan Oviedo and Bryan Ruiz are professionals at Everton and Fulham respectively. Citizens of these countries are avid followers of English football as a result of their best players being over here. Premier league games are shown in almost every bar.

#### Prayers for the People we Meet

May the light of faith burn brightly in us this week, so that those who are going through a difficult time may find encouragement through meeting us, so that those who are enjoying life may find their joy heightened by meeting us, so that those who are going wrong may find the challenge and help they need in meeting us.

May nothing in us prove a stumbling block to another's faith. May nothing in us cause quarrels or strife. May nothing in us cause pain to another.

O Light of the love of Christ, shine brightly in us, this week, and for ever.

#### O Jesus,

give us a deeper understanding of the people who dislike us, a purer joy in the people who love us, and a greater power to help those who need us.

Submitted by The Rev'd Hazel Day

#### What do you do after the service?

David has written another wonderful article on what he did one Sunday, which will appear in our next edition. This could be a regular feature, so please send your contributions about this, or any other topic to: Alison Cousins, Tel: 07816 115 817,

Email: acousins.sjnb@hotmail.co.uk

# With regret, we record the death of Janie Mills on the 30th of December 2013, at the age of 94.

A funeral service was held on the 9th of January at the Hendon Crematorium. A Service of Thanksgiving and Memorial will be held at St John's Church on Wednesday 22 January at 12 noon, to which all are invited. We will include an obituary for Janie in the next Church Record.

### **Sticky Toffee Pudding with Butterscotch Sauce**

By popular request at the Fellowship Christmas Dinner, Sue has provided this recipe.

#### **CAKE**

1 cup water.

200g. Fresh dates chopped. Or 300g packet chopped dates

Few pieces of chopped ginger (optional)

1 tspn bicarb soda

60g butter

Three quarter cup castor sugar

1 tspn vanilla essence

2 eggs (not cold)

One and Half cups SR Flour.



Lightly grease a deep 19cm square cake tin (or greased lasagne dish)

In a saucepan boil water and dates.

Remove from heat, add bicarb – mix or blend with wooden spoon. Cool slightly.

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs (not cold). Beat well, fold in sifted flour.

Pour in date mix and blend. Pour into tin or dish, cook in moderate slow oven for about 45 minutes or cooked when tested.

Before serving pour on butterscotch sauce, place in warmish oven - about 30 minutes

#### **BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE**

300 mls. Double cream.

One and half cups firmly packed soft brown sugar.

Place cream and sugar in saucepan on low heat. Stir until sugar is dissolved. (Do not boil).

Stir till smooth.

TOP TIP: Cake can be made couple of days before its needed.

Sue Taylor

These are the details of the next quiz evening from Gideon and Joel's Explorer Group for the group's trip to Namibia this summer. **Venue:** Church House, Waterfall

Road, Southgate, N14 7EG **Cost** per ticket: £10

**Refreshments:** Substantial Ploughman's Supper including meats and cheeses, nibbles, deserts. No need to eat beforehand! Bring your own

drinks (and glasses if required)

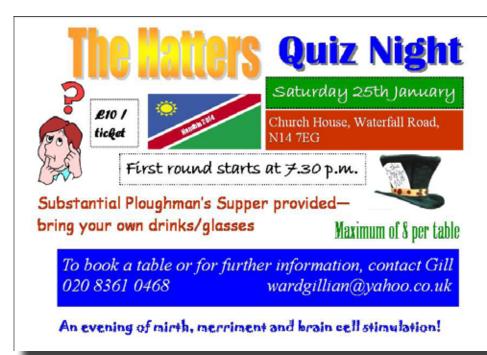
**Numbers:** No more than EIGHT per table, but you can book as many

tables as you want

**Deadline:** Sunday 19.1.14 - don't leave it till the last minute!!!

If you or any friends wish to attend, please contact Paul Elsdon

who will pass on the numbers to the organiser.





### **November Meeting**

t is always a pleasure to welcome Diane Nightingale to Fellowship, and at our November meeting she entertained and informed us with "A Cuban Adventure". A quick gallop through history established that the Spanish had arrived in the 1500s, and soon realized the strategic value of the island. Further developments included sugar production, the Batista regime, the rise to power of Fidel Castro, and the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1962.

However, Diane and her husband are really more interested in the ordinary people, whom they found to be very friendly, and we were treated to snapshots of a selection of guides and other "characters" found off the beaten track and away from the well-worn paths followed by the many package tourists. One point of concern is that the sea is encroaching in some places. A feature of Cuba today is over- employment, since it is decreed that everyone has a job even if there is no real work to be done in that area. However, the shackles of communism are being slackened, and private enterprise is flourishing to an increasing extent. Our thanks go to Diane for showing us, in words and pictures, a fascinating place few of us have visited.

**Hugh Martin** 

### **December Meeting**

he Fellowship AGM on 18 Dec. 2013 followed its usual format and the Committee were duly re-elected enbloc. Proposed increases to the Meeting Fee for both Members and Non-Members were approved.

The AGM was followed by a Dinner, the main course of which was provided by an outside caterer whilst the 2nd course alternatives were prepared by some of our own Fellowship Members and all were very popular. (Sue Taylor's Sticky Toffee Pudding was such a hit the much requested recipe is printed on Page 7.) The whole seemed to be enjoyed by everyone and many thanks are due to all the Committee Members and other Members who helped in so many different ways (see photos).

Ron and Sue then gave us a short quiz which proved to be educational and entertaining at the same time. Thanks Ron & Sue for making the time to do this as well as for your work on the AGM and Dinner.

Finally Julian addressed us with some thoughts about the Christian Christmas message in our contemporary World and led us in prayer and in singing two carols. (Laura and Julian arrived hotfoot from seeing their newly born grandson! We thank them for taking the time to spend this evening with the Fellowship Members and Friends.)

Ray Hopwood

## **January & February Meetings**

n January Robin Webb returns to talk to us this time about the Cromer Windmill. In 2012 Robin gave us a talk about the history and restoration of his home which was most interesting. As his home has been flooded by a nearby stream on more than one occasion, I shall certainly be interested to hear how he has fared in the recent very wet weather, both with the windmill and his home!

In February we have a speaker who is new to the Fellowship: Dr Rod Armstrong. However, I have previously heard this talk by Dr Armstrong, who before his retirement was a consultant anesthetist, and can tell you that you will be surprised by some of the statistics which Dr Armstrong presents and by some of the courses of action suggested by him. Come and hear the talk!

Ray Hopwood



# Calendar January – February 2014

			<u> </u>	
	Sunday 12th	10.30am	Messy Church	
		11.00am	Worship led by Sarah Beaumont & Roz Douglas	
	Tuesday 14th	8.00pm	Elders Meeting, Vestry	
	Wednesday 15th	0.00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	vveunesuay 15th	0.00		
	T1 1 1 2 2 1	8.00pm	Fellowship: Robin Webb, Last of The Hertfordshire Windmills	
January	Thursday 16th	12 noon	Prayer at Noon, Vestry	
	Sat 18th / Sun 19th	pm/am	Winter Shelter	
	Sunday 19th	11.00am	Worship led by Julian Templeton	nuar
	Wednesday 22nd	4.00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	Thursday 23rd	12 noon	Prayer at Noon, Vestry	툹
-	Sat 25th / Sun 26th	pm/am	Winter Shelter	-
	Sunday 26th	11.00am	Worship led by John Stibbs	
	Sunday 20th	3.00pm	Causeway	
	Tues 28th	•	•	
		8.00pm	Prayer & Discussion Group at 37 Greenhill Park	
	Wednesday 29th	4.00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	Thursday 30th	12 noon	Prayer at Noon, Vestry	
		8.00pm	Men's Group at The Railway Bell (Curry Evening)	
	Sat 1st / Sun 2nd	pm/am	Winter Shelter	
	Sunday 2nd	11.00am	Worship with Holy Communion led by Julian Templeton	
	Wednesday 5th	4.00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
	,	7.00pm	Nosh and Natter at 10 Leicester Road	
	Thursday 6th	12 noon	Prayer at Noon, Vestry	
	Sat 8th / Sun 9th	pm/am	Winter Shelter	
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	Sunday 9th	10.30am	Messy Church	
		11.00am	Worship led by Helen Snider & Andrew Summers	
		8.00pm	Soul Food	
2	Tuesday 11th	8.00pm	Elders Meeting, Vestry	2
<u>a</u>	Wednesday 12th	4.00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	<u>a</u>
	Thursday 13th	12 noon	Prayer at Noon, Vestry	
묾	Sat 15th / Sun 16th	pm/am	Winter Shelter	묾
	Sunday 16th	11.00am	Worship led by Julian Templeton	E.
	Wednesday 19th	8.00pm	Fellowship: Dr Rod Armstrong, Medical Emergencies in the Home	
	Thursday 20th	12 noon	Prayer at Noon, Vestry	
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	Friday 21st	10.00pm	Copy submission deadline for next issue of Church Record	
	Sat 22nd / Sun 23rd	pm/am	Winter Shelter	
	Sunday 23rd	11.00am	Worship led by Richard Harvey & Brenda Sandford	
		3.00pm	Causeway	
	Monday 24th	3.00pm	Pastoral Team, Vestry	
		8.30pm	Men's Group at The Railway Bell	
	Tuesday 25th	8.00pm	Prayer & Discussion Group at 37 Greenhill Park	
	Wednesday 26th	4.00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	
March	Thursday 27th	12 noon	Prayer at Noon, Vestry	
	Sunday 2nd	11.00am	Worship with Holy Communion led by Julian Templeton	
	Wednesday 5th	4.00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club	5
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	Thursday Ctls	7.00pm	Nosh and Natter at 10 Leicester Road	
	Thursday 6th	12 noon	Prayer at Noon, Vestry	
	Sunday 9th	11.00am	Worship Led by Alison Bond & Alison Cousins	