

MersEy News

I thought I would begin this third e-newsletter with a thought from one of our younger members. A junior church teacher sat down beside one of the younger members of her group one Sunday and asked her what she was drawing so carefully. The little girl replied, 'I am drawing God.' The teacher paused for a moment then said, 'But no one knows what God looks like'. Without looking up from her drawing the girl replied, 'They will in a minute.'

Perhaps we sometimes overlook the great spiritual insights that can be gained by listening to the younger members of our communities.

Malcolm Evans, *Children and Youth Development Officer*

NEWS OF PEOPLE AND CHURCHES

We are pleased to welcome **Revd Martin Truscott** to Mersey Synod. Martin will be inducted to St. Andrew's Hoylake with Meols at 3.00 pm on 1st November.

We are sorry to report the deaths of two of our retired ministers:

Revd Florence Mowat who was a member at Heswall and shared ministry in the Salvation Army and the URC with her husband, John, and was a URC minister in Winson Green.

Revd Bill Peters who had ministries in Bradford, the RAF, Radcliffe, Wigan and Southport and was a member at Formby. There will be a service of cremation at Southport Crematorium at 10.30 a.m. on Monday 3rd of November followed by a Service of Thanksgiving for Bill's life and ministry at 11.30 a.m. at St. George's URC, Lord Street, Southport.

There will be an Organ Recital by Revd David Cooper at **Congleton URC** at 7.30 pm on Friday 7th November. Further details from Barbara Farrington 01260 273901 or RevRAllen@aol.com

Haslington and Crewe's morning service on 28th September was recorded and broadcast on Radio Stoke 3 weeks later. The church had fan mail as a result!

We've had an extra busy few weeks at **Oakvale**.

We incorporated '**Back to Church Sunday**' in our Celebration weekend. We invited past members and the local community to share in a Wedding, our Morning Service which included 2 Baptisms, a Concert by the Liverpool Male Voice Choir and an Organ Recital by Samuel Ferry. The Church was open all day on Saturday, refreshments were served and everyone had an opportunity to view the exhibition of our history and a year in the life of Oakvale.

We were privileged to host the '**Good Grief**' Sculpture Exhibition which Lady Grace Sheppard opened. Both she and Jean Parker, the Sculptor, spoke movingly of their experiences. Many people wrote in the Visitors Book of their appreciation of the work.

We celebrated **Harvest Thanksgiving** when 200 people shared in morning Worship and the whole of Northway School - from the Nursery to Year 6 - came for their Harvest Thanksgiving on the following Monday.

During Half-Term we have been holding a **Holiday Club**, 'Landlubbers', based on the journeys of St. Paul, when 30 young people have met daily from 9.45 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. to share in games, story, singing and craft activities.

West Kirby URC has a small group who meet to play **short mat indoor bowls** from October to April. We would be happy to join in any event which produces a time of sporting fellowship. However, it is noted that a challenge to play carpet bowls comes from Northern Synod, which could mean away matches perhaps in Carlisle, which would be a very long day out from the Wirral! How about some Mersey Synod inter-church matches? If you are interested, please contact Tom Wayles tomwayles@talktalk.net

Westminster Road URC held their closing service on 12 October. They have a piano and organ which are available to be collected free of charge for a good home. Please contact Betty McMinn on 0151 525 8626 for more information.

EVENTS AND INFORMATION

Surface Water charges - Changes in water charging structures in a number of regions mean that churches are charged on the same scale as businesses, leading to large (for example, 1300%) increases in annual water bills. The deadline for signing up to a petition to the Prime Minister to instruct water companies to return to charging churches as charities rather than as business premises which can be found at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/ChurchWaterBills/> is 6 December 2008.

First Tuesdays Luther King House, Manchester continues the popular programme of Tuesday evening talks which are open to everyone. This academic year, the talks follow the theme "Theology for the Twenty-First Century". You are invited to meet from 7pm for a 7.30pm start, finishing at 9pm.

Tuesday 4 November 2008 Anne Phillips *Daughters of God: Researching Girls' Growth in Faith*

Tuesday 2 December 2008 Brian Haymes *Saints*

For further information please phone 0161 249 2504 or email learning@lkh.co.uk

Faiths4Change

FREE training day is on Saturday Nov 15th from 9.30 -3.30 at Centre 63 (next to St Chads Church), Old Hall Lane in Kirkby. This is a day called Grounds4Nature and will be led by Biobank Merseyside, the local wildlife recording centre. Workshops will include, bird box making, wildlife photography, field work techniques and information on how churches can enter the John Muir Award Scheme.

Photography competition: the deadline has been extended for competition until Nov 7th, but also to turn it into a year long project, where we'll collect photos through the season and end with a photographic exhibition in 2009. Further information from **Helen Dawson** Email: helend@faiths4change.org.uk

CASAI (Churches Action on Sexual Abuse Issues) National Conference on 7th November from 10am – 4.30pm at Warrington Methodist Church. Further information from Col on 01925 245565 or email developmentworker@tesco.net

Mersey Synod will meet on 8th November at Bridge Chapel, Liverpool L19 4XR from 10am – 4pm.

Roberta Rominger, General Secretary of the URC, will be preaching in our Synod on 16th November 10.30am at Eshe Road URC, Crosby and 3.00pm at Heswall URC, Wirral. All are very welcome at these services.

Minister's Day with Roberta Rominger Monday 17th November, 2008 from 10am – 3.30pm at Bishops Lodge, Liverpool.

Prisons Week - 16-22 November: theme: 'Worthless or Talented?'. To order copies of the prayer leaflet and download other resources (outline sermon, additional prayers, sketch, PowerPoint presentation), see www.prisonweek.org

Local Church Designated Safe Church Representatives morning at Upton-by-Chester on Saturday 22nd November 2008 from 10.00 am – 1.00 pm to explore what representatives are being asked to do and what they are not being asked to do. Led by Sandra Wellington, Synod Training Officer, Col Lerczak from CASAI will also be around so that you can meet her.

Advent Quiet Day for everyone with the Moderator on Saturday 29th November, 2008 from 10 am - 3pm at Heswall URC reflecting on the four themes of Hope, Joy, Love and Peace. Please bring your own sandwiches, drinks provided. Please book in with Synod Office by 14th November.

'**Lookout**' - the last date for submitting copy for the January edition to the Synod Office is 5th December.

World Aids Day 1st December 2008: ACET, the Christian HIV and AIDS charity, has produced a free resource pack to help churches mark World AIDS day in 2008. The pack, *Facts for Life*, contains service ideas, presentations, stories and encouragement from around the world as well as a challenge to the local church to get more involved. It is available by e-mailing enquiries@acet-international.org, telephoning 0208 5687770 or by writing to ACET at PO Box 46242, London, W5 2WG.

The Coward Trust, aware that at least some of the wealth of the Trust has come from slavery, are inviting:

- entries to a hymn competition - a song to sing for an end to slavery in all its forms. Entries due in by 20 December 2008, prize £100.
- applications for grants from ministers for particular projects that would face squarely and theologically issues of slavery today.

See September's REFORM or contact clerk@cowardtrust.org.uk or www.cowardtrust.org.uk

Worship Leaders' Day with Trevor Dennis "The Bible and Story-telling" on 7 February 2009 from 10am – 4pm at St. Columba, Hunts Cross URC. Please book via Synod Office by 23 January 2009.

If you would like a **link for your church website** to appear on the new Mersey Synod website, simply send your web address to Gerry Simons, Synod Communications Officer at comdevoff@mersey.urch2.org.uk

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Vision4life Please log into the website, accessed via www.vision4life.org.uk to register your church's involvement in this exciting URC initiative. Year one officially begins in Advent on the Bible theme.

Christingle - the Children's Society have a very helpful site by for themed ideas, free resources, downloads, history, services etc. at www.christingle.org.uk

Updated 2008 **Christmas on-line resources** with great downloads; service outlines, prayer stations etc. www.sgmlifewords.com/christmas/

Christmas Tree Festival

This idea is very simple. Invite all groups connected with your church to decorate a Christmas Tree. The results are then displayed in the church over a weekend during Advent. For church based groups you could suggest a Biblical text as the starting point for a theme around which to base the decoration; for community groups the starting point could be a Christmas Carol.

An open weekend would be opportunity to advertise Advent and Christmas events and at some point a carol service could incorporate the readings and carols illustrated in the tree decorations.

Christmas leaflets produced by "Lifewords" offered to visitors provides as additional opportunity to share the Christmas story. www.sgmlifewords.com

Congleton is planning a Christmas Tree festival for December. The theme will be 'Christmas Carols', and the proceeds will go to the Mayor's Charities. At the moment we have sufficient community sponsorship to cover 8 trees, but we're hoping to achieve 12.

St David's URC, Eastham is holding a Festival of Christmas Trees during the first week in December 2008. Local schools, businesses and community groups have promised to donate dressed Christmas Trees using the theme "The Twelve Days of Christmas". The trees will be on display in the church from Tuesday 2nd Dec (10am 'til 2pm), refreshments will be served, and some sort of entertainment will be put on each day, both during the day and hopefully in the evening.

FROM YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE

FURY Assembly Jan 23 – 25 2009. Application forms for this youth event are available from Malcolm Evans at Synod Office and should be returned to Synod Office by 21 November 2008.

Malawi Visitors. We are hoping that a small group of young people from our partner church in Malawi will be visiting the Synod in July 2009. As part of the programme some of the young people would like to spend two days helping in a church holiday club. If your church is planning to run a holiday club at the end of July 2009 could you contact Malcolm at Synod Office to discuss possible placements, please?

HOPE08

Hours of kindness: the Mersey Synod total of hours of kindness donated to the national total to date is 634. If you have not yet logged in your hours to the Mersey Synod Office please do so as soon as possible.

The "**Vision4life**" material for use in Advent to start off the 'Bible' Year will be circulated to churches that have signed up for the programme in the week beginning November 17th; for more information contact John Oldershaw via Synod Office.

Please forward this e-newsletter to members of your congregation or anyone who would like to receive it. If you do not wish to continue receiving it please contact admin@mersey.urch2.org.uk

If you have any items you would like to include in the December Mersey News, please contact Synod Office by 21st November.

Please send any comments or feedback to Lynne Barker:

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