

MersEY News

Lent invites us to journey with Jesus through his time in the wilderness, the events leading to the cross and then on to resurrection. In the wilderness, Jesus probably felt disorientated, tested, challenged and, perhaps, alone without the usual supports. We too experience wilderness in our lives, difficult times when we feel without the usual supports or they just don't feel adequate for the way we feel, times when we feel overwhelmed, confused, tested, unable to make sense of it all.

This lent very real challenges face us. It feels like a wilderness where familiar, seemingly solid and safe institutions are crashing around us, security and trust seem a thing of the past, leaving many feeling vulnerable and afraid. Lent is a timely opportunity for us to re-assess our lives and ask have we got our priorities right, is our care and compassion beyond just our own needs, is our trust where it is safe; in the God who journeys with us, and to enjoy the glimpses of God we see in our lives?

As we journey with God, may we experience the goodness, compassion, love and wonder of the God of resurrection and share that good news with others. May we find our hope and trust in God renewed for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Sandra Wellington, *Training Officer*

NEWS OF PEOPLE AND CHURCHES

Allerton URC, Liverpool hosted the 'Raise the Roof' Auction of Promises, organised by Anna Briggs on behalf of the Malawi Group, on 21st February. The aim was to put a corrugated iron roof on Bangwe Church of Christ, near Blantyre, Malawi. The wonderful sum of £610 was raised on the night, Thomas Risley URC, Warrington added a further £414 to this and an anonymous donor has made it up to the £2,000 required. It was altogether a wonderful effort.

Liverpool Inner City Team of Churches

is planning three evenings over the year inviting elders from all five churches to meet for mutual support, encouragement, prayer and sharing. There will also be two joint meals and services for the congregations, which have proved very popular in the past.

Caradoc URC will be receiving five new members on Palm Sunday and have now advertised for their Outreach Worker.

Stoneycroft URC, Liverpool have a new Bible Study Group which goes from strength to strength. There are now eight members which makes for a very happy, lively group.

St. Stephen's URC, Wavertree, Liverpool are delighted at the prospect of having their hall back in action and are busy making it a pleasant space to be in. Getting the youth organisations involved in worship preparation on special occasions, such as Mothering Sunday, is proving much more creative than simply inviting them to attend parade services, which often did not feel geared to their needs.

Richard Landon, minister at Grange URC, Wirral, has a few services free (morning and evening) if any churches would like to invite him to preach. Please contact Richard on 0151 608 4747.

At **Oakvale URC, Liverpool** we are looking forward to Easter. We are using 'Words from Calvary' by Trevor J. Partridge for our Lent Study this year. We have invited guest Preachers to lead our study each Sunday evening during Lent and this will be followed by opportunities for discussion on the following Tuesday morning during Morning Prayers. Revd. Howard Sharp will lead our first study on Sunday 1st March. We would be delighted to welcome members and friends from the Synod on Sundays at 6.30 p.m. and on Tuesday at 11.00 a.m. Coffee is served from 10.00a.m.

Revd Graham Mercer, one of our retired ministers, has produced a very accessible six-session Bible Study course on the Acts of the Apostles. It is available from the Synod Office and can be sent electronically.

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

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

EVENTS AND INFORMATION

JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM During Lent go beyond hearing about the people in the Holy Land and hear from them instead. Every day through Lent Christian Aid's virtual pilgrimage will take you on an interactive journey. Using short videos, podcasts, photo galleries, prayers and stories it will bring the Holy Land alive. The route takes in many of the locations mentioned as part of Jesus' Journey towards Jerusalem. And along

the way you will be able to find out more about issues, connect with other users, share your views and take part in actions that will help change lives. To join the journey, go to <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/getinvolved/lent/journey-to-jerusalem.aspx>

Tear Fund Sunday - 1 March www.tearfund.org

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 3 March 2009

Sally Nelson

Whitley Lecture

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

'How Does Jesus' Death Save Us?' with Lawrence Moore, Director of the Windermere Centre, and Revd Dr Al Spence, a URC minister who has written on Atonement and Christology. This is for people who are uncomfortable with Atonement – uncomfortable because either they don't understand it, or don't like what they do understand! Monday 2 March – Thursday 5 March 2009 - Cost: £170

Psalms for more than Sundays with John Bell. A walk through the book of Psalms, looking at their immense variety, their relevance to contemporary life and finding new ways in which they can be prayed and sung. ! Monday 30 March – Thursday 2 April 2009 - Cost: £180

Both at The Windermere Centre, Lake Road, Windermere, LA23 2BY, Cumbria Phone: (015394) 44902
website:- www.windermere.urch.org.uk Email: Dave Holcroft (Bookings): windermere.centre@gmail.com

Women's World Day of Prayer - 6 March www.wwdp-natcomm.org

Church Saturdays at Luther King House, Manchester. A new shared learning opportunity for everyone involved in the life and ministry of their local church. The wide range of issues and areas covered all have particular relevance for local church life, and offer a practical approach. Sessions aim to appeal both to those involved in leading worship, and to those involved in the wider church community and pastoral care. Church Saturdays are divided into morning and afternoon sessions, with a choice of three subject areas in each. Each session costs only £5, and if you book both morning and afternoon a free lunch is provided. For further information or to book places in advance, please phone 0161 249 2504 or email learning@lkh.co.uk, or just come on the day and see if places are still available.

14 March 2009

Morning 10.30-12.30

Art and Good Friday with Revd Dr Richard Kidd
Introduction to Pastoral Care (TiMM)

Working with Refuges and Asylum Seekers with
Revd Dr Rosemary Kidd

Afternoon 1.30-3.30

Art and Easter with Revd Dr Richard Kidd

Pastoral Care of Children (TiMM)

Working with Refuges and Asylum Seekers with
Revd Dr Rosemary Kidd

The Pratt Green Trust are holding a 25th anniversary Celebration Day in Coventry Cathedral on Saturday 28th March 2009 from 10.30 am – 5.00 pm. Pre-booking is recommended to guarantee access to the afternoon group sessions. Further information from your Church Secretary or Synod Office.

Merseypray invite you to attend the launch event for the next prayer focus "The Church and Business" breakfast at 8.30 am on 17th April. Speaker: John Weaver, Baptist Union President, who has written extensively about the church's engagement with business and commerce. Venue to be announced.

Merseypray is an ecumenical initiative of the Liverpool Free Church Federal Council.

Vision4Life - Mersey Synod has signed up as a Vision4Life Synod. Perhaps, if your church has not yet done so, you would also consider signing up.

Has **Vision4Life** fired your enthusiasm? Would you like to know more about the Bible? Then come along to "Getting to Grips with the Bible" at Tunstall URC, Wed evenings 22nd April – 20 May at 7.30 pm and Sat 16 May 10 am – 4 pm. For further details and to order course booklet (£2.50) contact Revd Marion Thomas by 1st April 01782 723858 hathaway.bear@btinternet.com

Think of a World How often do we sing that hymn and find that we are stuck trying to make sure that a world "without any flowers" does not happen?

To find out what you can do to make creation sing, come to Swanwick from Friday 17 April to Sunday 19 April for a conference that will help make connections between the Creator and creation. The keynote speaker is Mary Colwell who works for the Alliance for Religions and Conservation, is a film producer and

environment advisor to the Roman Catholic Church. The weekend will include seminars and a children's programme on the theme. A booking form is downloadable from http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/wn_think_of_a_world_booking_form.pdf as well as being available from Val Lovett, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London SW1 5JR tel: 020 7467 5209

Chaplaincy Training - Are you interested in retail chaplaincy? Are you already doing some chaplaincy and would like training? Mission in the Economy (MitE) will be holding a training day in "Basic Skills for Chaplaincy" on Saturday 25th April 2009 from 10am – 4pm Venue: Quaker Meeting House, 22 School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BT For enquiries and bookings please contact the MitE office, tel: 0151 709 6908 or e-mail: missionintheeconomy@hotmail.com

Church and Society Network - We are seeking to establish a network of URC people/churches involved in the support of refugees and asylum seekers or with interest in the issues. Several years ago we started to compile a list but it does need updating. The intention is that the new network will enable mutual support and sharing of information. If you would like to be part of this network, please let us have your details and a brief outline of your involvement. Please also copy your response to Geoff Duncan at Thames North Synod who is helping set up the network (world.churchandsociety@urcthamesnorth.org.uk). Wendy Cooper, Joint Public Issues Team - Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches working together. 020 7916 8632 Administrator for Church and Society, United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

Leprosy Mission - Derek Hartley, the local Area Co-ordinator for The Leprosy Mission can give a talk on the work of the mission in Kenya with power point slides, or the work in India with a short film. He is prepared to present these to group meetings, schools or as input to a church service. His contact details are : Derek Hartley, Leprosy Mission Area Co-ordinator, 154 Shear Brow, Blackburn, BB1 8DZ Tel. 01254 470145.

The next **Kirchentag** in Bremen will be 20 – 24 May 2009. We are planning to organise a group from Merseyside to participate together as we have done in past years. The cost this time will be 106 euros (66 euros for those aged under 26, pensioners or registered disabled). This includes all entry costs, programme books, bed and breakfast accommodation with families in Bremen, and free travel in and around the city for the time of the Kirchentag. You will be responsible for travelling to Bremen yourself, but options will be suggested. Further details will be sent to Church Secretaries in January mailing or from Revd Bob Andrews bobandkay36@btinternet.com

'Walking Tall – Getting your church noticed' - a day's practical training for local church press officers at Crossways Centre, Yardley Hastings, Northamptonshire on Saturday 13th June 2009 cost £15, including lunch. Easy things a volunteer press officer can do to get publicity for a local congregation: writing press releases, going on radio and TV, handling interviews, being the voice of the church, what to do with 'bad news'. Tel. 01604 696307 or email contact@crosswayscentre.org.uk to book a place.

Eldership - Advanced notice is being given for a special Elders' morning to be held on 27th June 2009 9.30 a.m. for 10.00 a.m. start until 1.00 p.m. focussing on prayer and enhancing spiritual growth. Venue to be arranged.

Enquirers' Conference will be Saturday 27th June 2009 and it's probably going to be at Westminster College, Cambridge.

Lay Preachers' events at Westminster College, 2009 - As in previous years there will be two consecutive events for Lay Preachers: Friday-Sunday 4th - 6th September and Monday-Wednesday 7th – 9th September, details to follow. Put the dates in your diary now!

Flower Festival - Allerton URC, Liverpool, and the Church of England Flower Arrangers Association present "Sing to the Lord" on 17th – 20th September 2009. Put the date in your diary for this very special event.

* 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 April Mersey News, please contact Synod Office by 20th March.

Please send any comments or feedback to Lynne Barker:

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