

LYNDON MAGAZINE



**MAY &
JUNE 2024**

Lyndon Methodist Church



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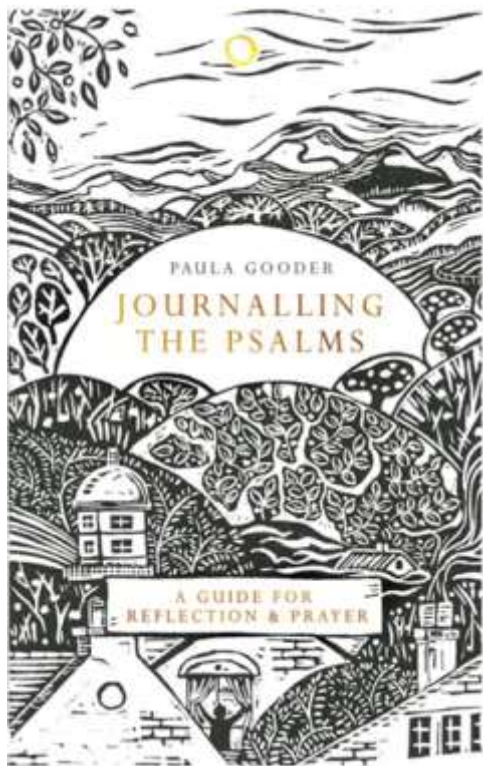
INDEX

Page	Title
4	Minister's Letter
6	Do You Know Your Numbers?
9	Prayer For May & June
10	Fragility of Freedom
17	Thought for the Month
18	Thoughts From a Hospital Bed
20	A New Experience – A Circuit Meeting
22	Our Car Accident – A Miracle
23	Christian Aid Week
24	Easter at Lyndon 2024
27	Guest Churches at Lyndon
28	Quiz & Puzzles
30	Lyndon Community Page
32	Notices & Events
34	Upcoming Services

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Ministerial team or the Editor

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends



As I write this newsletter I'm preparing to have planned knee surgery at the beginning of May. Thank you all for your prayers and best wishes. You are very kind and your prayers are much appreciated.

From the beginning of May therefore, it seems like I will be out of action for a while in order to recover. Those who know me however, will know that I don't really do sitting still for long periods all that well. So, in preparation for the down time, I have a few things up my sleeve to keep me occupied, other than the mandatory exercises I will be expected to do post-surgery in order to increase the prospect of regaining full mobility.

I have a few books lined up, one of which is, *Journalling the Psalms* by Paula Gooder. This book has been on my bookshelf since I received it as a gift for Christmas. It will be so good, at last, to have some time to creatively pray and

reflect on a few of those Psalms that are less familiar to me.

I love engaging with the less familiar. I find it has the ability to stretch my mind and heart which, in the long run, is only ever a good thing. Staying permanently within my safety zones at all times means I can often become overly comfortable. That's definitely not what any of us are called to in our journey of discipleship. In fact, as one theologian put it:

"The role of scripture, is to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable." (A J Levine)

It looks like I am certainly going to be physically afflicted for a while so I might just as well be spiritually afflicted too or, as I like to say, spiritually challenged.

Another thing I have up my sleeve to keep me occupied while I'm recuperating is my knitting/crocheting. Some of you will know that Carl and I are expecting our first Grandchild in July. This means I have a box full of wool and baby patterns sitting in a cupboard in my house which is screaming to me that I am running out of time to get anything finished before the baby is born.

We've had a run of family deaths recently, which has left us with a lot of sadness, so having a new baby to look forward to is giving us a new focus and making us all feel much more hopeful. I always feel much more hopeful when I am knitting or crocheting. Here's then to lots of baby hats, jackets, blankets and toys.

I'll really miss you all, but I leave you in the safe hands of the Circuit and the Pastoral team, who know who to contact should the need arise.

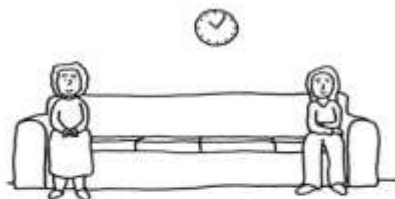
For now, though, I have to take the advice I often give to others about looking after themselves. After all, didn't Jesus say, "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.....and love your neighbour as yourself."

I think we often forget the last bit – as yourself. We're often too busy running around looking after others and forget about ourselves. Please remember, in all that *you* are doing now, to take time to heed those words and look after *you*, too. Only when our own hearts, minds, bodies and souls are healthy can we love and take care of others from a healthy place. It's not easy to give what you don't really have.

So, take good care all and I'll see you on the other side of surgery.

Go Well, Karen

AWKWARD PASTORAL VISITS



CarlsonChurch.com

Editor's note: Hope all goes well Karen and that any visits you get are better than these!

Do You Know Your Numbers? (part 1)

This title has nothing to do with the book of Numbers in the Old Testament but with the significance numbers have in the Bible. In this issue we are going to look at two numbers which have special significance in scripture.

Three

Groups of three are symbolic of completeness, wholeness, and harmony.

The most important of these is the Trinity. The triune godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three parts are in total harmony and make up the unity of the godhead and make for completeness.



Words and phrases repeated three times often carry a significant spiritual meaning or an important message.

The first example of this is the three patriarchs in the book of Genesis. Their names are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who are the men God used to establish the nation of Israel. They were all men of faith. In the Old Testament, God is often referred to as “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”.

The wise men brought three gifts to the infant Jesus representing his kingship, priesthood, and death.

Pilate said three times that he found no fault in Jesus. (Luke 23 v4,14 & 22). Pilate was convinced of the truth but did not have the courage to act in accordance with it.

Peter denied Christ three times which emphasised his denial and made his denial complete. (John 18 v17 & v25-27)

Jesus was crucified with two others. During the crucifixion there was darkness for three hours. Three days later Jesus rose from the dead.

During a resurrection appearance Jesus challenged Peter about his denial by asking Peter three times if he loved him. (John 21 v15-19)

The restoration of Peter was complete.

Seven

The number seven is the perfect number and is the sign of perfection. It symbolises the oneness of God and his authority over all creatures of the earth.

It is possible that the idea of using seven days for a week stems from the primary lunar cycle which approximates to seven days. It is 7.4 days.

The period of creation is likened to the seven days of the week. Each stage of creation, over many years, is regarded as a day, albeit not a twenty-four-hour day. Genesis 1 v 31 tells us that on the sixth day God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. On the seventh day he rested. Here we see perfection before sin entered into the world.

St John's Gospel only includes seven miracles. Of these miracles five do not appear in any other Gospel. It appears as if the writer is saying that these are sufficient and are perfect in themselves to show that Jesus was who he said he was. In fact, the miracles he has chosen are those which no one else could do. They are the most supernatural and sensational works Jesus could do. The writer does not include any about the casting out of demons as there were people in the ancient world doing that, including the Pharisees.

Those included are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| • *Turning water into wine | Ch 2 v 1-10 |
| • *Healing a nobleman's son from a great distance | Ch 4 v 46-54 |
| • *Healing the man by the pool of Bethesda | Ch 5 v 1-16 |
| • *Giving sight to the man born blind | Ch 9 v 1-17 |
| • Feeding the 5,000 | Ch 6 v 5-13 |
| • Walking on water | Ch 6 v 16-21 |
| • *Raising Lazarus from the dead | Ch 11 v 1-44 |

*Only in John's Gospel.

John is the only writer to include the "I am" statements of what Jesus said about himself. They show that he regarded himself as being God in human form and the perfect way to salvation.

John also records the words of seven witnesses who testify to the divinity of Jesus:

- John the Baptist Ch 1 v 29
- Nathaniel Ch 1 v 49
- Peter Ch 6 v 69
- Martha Ch 11 v 27
- Thomas Ch 20 v 28
- John the beloved disciple Ch 21 v 24
- Jesus himself. Ch 8 v 58 and Ch 17 v 5 & 24

In their own words, all the above testified to the fact that Jesus was the Son of God.

In a Jewish court two or three witnesses are sufficient to appear to give testimony, but John, in effect, calls on the perfect number of seven to witness that Jesus is the Son of the living God.

Whereas the other gospel writers included more miracles and sayings, John emphasised the fact that seven were sufficient to complete his argument.

Over the four gospels there are recorded seven utterances which Jesus made from the cross:

- Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing.
Luke 23 v 34
- Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.
Luke 23 v 43
- Woman, here is your son, and to the disciple, here is your mother.
John 19 v 26-27
- My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.
Matt. 27 v 46 and Mark 15 v 34
- I thirst.
John 19 v 28
- It is finished.
John 19 v 30
- Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.
Luke 23 v 46

It is quite remarkable that when the sayings of Jesus from the cross are listed from the four gospels, they total to the perfect number of seven.

Do look up the scripture references to read in detail what was said or happened during the incidents mentioned throughout this article.

In the next issue we shall look at twelve, forty and seventy.

Barry Davis

Prayer For May and June

Please pray for all those people caught up in areas of conflict in the world. We pray particularly for those people in Gaza and Ukraine where life is becoming increasingly difficult with the emphasis just on surviving with the need for adequate food, water and medicines.

Pray for those who have wealth, power and influence, that those who govern and the negotiators, will use their power with fairness, understanding and compassion for all people to bring conflict and fighting to an end and peace back to the world.

Also please pray for:

Pray for those we know who are unwell or with serious illness, and for those who are anxiously waiting for test results, operations or just an answer as to why and what can be done to help. Not all illness is visible. Pray that God will be with them and those who support them, embracing them with his healing arms.

Pray for all those that have been recently bereaved, that they too may feel God's supporting arms. Pray for comfort for those that are left behind, for the realisation that those that have gone from our lives remain with Him, and no longer feel pain or sorrow but rest with God in eternal rest and peace.

Pray for the doctors, nurses, care workers and volunteers. Give them the skills and strength they need to support those in need.

Pray for the work of the MHA and Christian Aid.

We pray for those members of our congregation who, for whatever reason, are unable to join us in our acts of worship. May they know that they are still in our hearts and minds.

Pray for Rev Karen as she has her operation, for the medical staff involved in her care and for her family as they support her.

Pray for our services in May and June and all those that lead them. We also pray for all those volunteers that help our services to run smoothly, so that we can bring your love and message to our community.

Amen



Fragility of Freedom

Fragility of Freedom is the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024, which this year is on 6 May. The following has been produced by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, www.hmd.org.uk. Perhaps this article is even more poignant as it was almost certainly produced before some of the more recent world events including the crisis in Israel, Gaza and the Middle East.

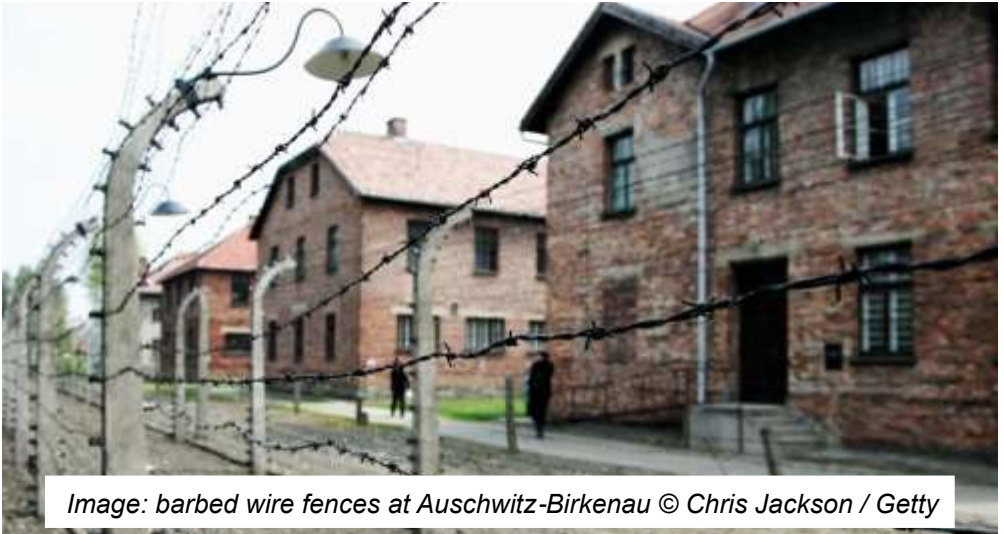


Image: barbed wire fences at Auschwitz-Birkenau © Chris Jackson / Getty

That is when the trouble started for the Jews. Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees.

– Anne Frank, diary entry, Saturday 20 June, 1942 – reflecting back on May 1940 when the Germans arrived in the Netherlands

1. Introduction

Freedom means different things to different people. What is clear is that in every genocide that has taken place, those who are targeted for persecution have had their freedom restricted and removed, before many of them are murdered. This is often a subtle, slow process. The ten stages of genocide, as identified by Professor Gregory Stanton, demonstrate that genocide never just happens. There is always a set of circumstances which occur, or which are created, to build the climate in which genocide can take place and in which perpetrator regimes can remove the freedoms of those they are targeting.

Not only do perpetrator regimes erode the freedom of the people they are targeting, demonstrating how fragile freedom is, they also restrict the freedoms of others around them, to prevent people from challenging the regime. Despite this, in every genocide there are those who risk their own freedom to help others, to preserve others' freedom or to stand up to the regime.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the genocide

against the Tutsi in Rwanda. 49 years after the Holocaust ended, 19 years after the genocide in Cambodia, the world stood by as Hutu extremists shattered the fragile freedom in Rwanda, following decades of tension and violence, culminating in the murder of over one million Tutsis in just one hundred days.

2. Eroding freedom

Freedom is fragile and it cannot be taken for granted. Here are some examples of ways in which the freedoms of people targeted during genocide are restricted, showing how fragile freedom is and how we must not be complacent about it.

Freedom of religion and freedom to self-identify



Jewish shops and businesses were destroyed during The Night of Broken Glass in 1938 © Bettmann / Getty

In 1933 the Nazis came to power in Germany, and life became increasingly difficult for German Jews. Anti-Jewish legislation was passed, which denied Jews many freedoms and restricted their rights, starting with removing them from certain professions and schools and universities. The Nuremberg Laws in 1935 restricted who Jews could marry, and went further than that: they defined anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents as a Jew, regardless of whether or not that person saw themselves as Jewish. Thus the Nuremberg laws took away people's freedom of religion and freedom to self-identify. On 9 November 1938, Jewish shops and businesses in Nazi territories

were attacked and destroyed. The night became known as The Night of Broken Glass. Jewish people were banned from cinemas, theatres and sports facilities.

As the German army swept through and started occupying European countries, Jewish people in those countries often had many of their freedoms taken away: they were forced into ghettos, living in cramped conditions and often doing hard labour for the Nazis or for German industries; they were deported to concentration or death camps. Being imprisoned or enslaved is the very antithesis of freedom. And this was simply because they were Jewish.

After the arrival of the Germans in the Netherlands, Anne Frank wrote in her diary:

That is when the trouble started for the Jews. Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees: Jews were required to wear a yellow star; Jews were required to turn in their bicycles; Jews were forbidden to use trams; Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, even their own; Jews were required to do their shopping between 3.00 and 5.00p.m.; Jews were required to frequent only Jewish-owned barbershops and beauty salons; Jews were forbidden to be out on the streets between 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.; Jews were forbidden to go to theatres, cinemas or any other forms of entertainments; Jews were forbidden to use

swimming pools, tennis courts, hockey fields or any other athletic fields; Jews were forbidden to go rowing; Jews were forbidden to take part in any athletic activity in public; Jews were forbidden to sit in their gardens or those of their friends after 8.00 p.m.; Jews were forbidden to visit Christians in their homes; Jews were required to attend Jewish schools, etc. You couldn't do this and you couldn't do that, but life went on.

Anne and her family went into hiding, but they were betrayed and Anne died in Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp, just three months short of her 16th birthday.

Freedom of reproduction

As part of the T4 euthanasia programme the Nazis sterilised hundreds of thousands of people because they were disabled or perceived to be disabled, physically or mentally. Franziska Mikus had her freedom of reproduction taken away by the Nazis, forcibly sterilised not once but twice, simply because she was deaf.

With a heavy heart I [had] to be sterilised a second time. This was the cruellest thing I ever had to endure. I will never be able to forget that.

Read Franziska's full life story at hmd.org.uk/franziska.

Freedom of movement

In the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, Eric Murangwa Eugène MBE's freedom of movement was shattered after the plane carrying the President of Rwanda was shot down on 6 April 1994. Radio broadcasts demanded people stay in their homes while soldiers crashed down their front doors to find those they deemed 'responsible'. Demanding people to stay home enabled perpetrators to find their target groups.

Read Eric's full life story at hmd.org.uk/eric.

In 1992, Kemal Pervanić was one of many Bosnian Muslim men incarcerated in the notorious Omarska Concentration Camp. One of his former schoolteachers became his camp guard. Kemal's freedoms were lost: every aspect of his life was controlled, living conditions were appalling and he suffered beatings and deprivations.

You can read more about his life at hmd.org.uk/kemal.

False freedom

Perpetrator regimes often deliberately conceal their genocidal actions and mislead those they are targeting, to keep them calm, for example, and to prevent revolts, creating a sense of false freedom among those who are persecuted. The gates at several concentration camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau, welcomed prisoners with the now infamous slogan 'Arbeit Macht Frei', literally meaning 'work gives you freedom', but this was far from the reality.

In 1981, having survived the genocide in Cambodia, Var Ashe Houston BEM learned in a letter from a friend that her husband, Virak Phong, had flown back to Phnom Penh in early 1976 with several hundred other Khmer intellectuals. The

group had been told that the communist regime led by Pol Pot could use their skills to rebuild the country, but this was not true. In reality, they were imprisoned upon arrival in Phnom Penh. Virak Phong died in prison that year.

You can read more about Var's life at hmd.org.uk/var.

The Khmer Rouge told Sokphal Din BEM that he was going to leave the labour camp they had imprisoned him in, to be reunited with the rest of their family. Sokphal was suspicious, but excited. However, his optimism was short lived.



Sokphal Din BEM holding a photo of his mother, taken in a refugee camp in Thailand

The Khmer Rouge led Sokphal deep into the jungle where he was abandoned without food, water or tools to help him survive. The Khmer Rouge had lied and Sokphal realised that he would never see his father again.

You can read more about Sokphal's life at hmd.org.uk/sokphal.

There are often limited options available to people attempting to flee persecution as their freedoms are restricted. Jewish people trying to leave Germany in the 1930s had to pay an increasingly heavy emigration tax, for example, and securing a visa became progressively difficult.

El Sadiq 'Debay' Mahmoud Manees fled persecution in Sudan, choosing 'to go across the Mediterranean Sea – hoping either to be able to live in peace, or to die.' This was not an easy decision to make, but if Debay had stayed in Sudan, he would almost certainly have been murdered. Debay was luckier than many others who attempted the journey. He was rescued and taken to Italy, where he slept rough. He had a long and difficult journey through Europe, unable to find work or safety, until he eventually reached the UK where he claimed asylum. Today, Debay lives in the UK, and was a key worker during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. He is grateful to be safe, but his freedom feels incomplete because he cannot be with his family in Sudan. He says:

Still my heart is in my village and the refugee camps with those I left in Darfur.

You can read more about Debay's life at hmd.org.uk/debay.

Freedom of expression

Often in genocides, people's freedom of expression is limited and restricted, with state-controlled media ensuring propaganda is fed to the general population. Those who speak out are often imprisoned or murdered. Jean Baptiste Kayigamba, a survivor of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, now living in the UK said:

The infamous hate Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines was spewing its venom against the Tutsis, blaming them for assassinating the president.

Even after genocides have ended and societies are rebuilt, survivors making new lives in different countries may not be allowed to express themselves freely as new regimes make accommodations with the past, and when relatives in the home country may still face danger.

Freedom to live

Genocide is the ultimate manifestation of violence ending freedom to live. During the Holocaust, six million Jewish people – men, women, children and babies – were brutally murdered in fields, ghettos, concentration camps and death camps. In more recent genocides, vast numbers of people have been murdered purely because of their faith, ethnicity, or other form of identity.

3. Risking freedom

It isn't only those directly targeted for persecution whose freedoms are affected by perpetrator regimes. Vali Rácz risked her freedom and her life to save Jews in Hungary during the Second World War. Despite knowing she would likely be murdered if caught, she built a false partition into a large wardrobe to hide people. She was arrested several times but with no proof that she was hiding Jews, was released.



Vali Rácz, who risked her life to save Jews during the Holocaust © Monica Porter

Listen to a podcast with Monica Porter, Vali Rácz's daughter, at hmd.org.uk/vali.

Despite the horrific scenes taking place across Rwanda there were also acts of great bravery. Sula Karuhimbi was an elderly woman who lived alone on a small farm and had knowledge of natural medicines. When the genocide began she hid more than 20 Tutsis in her animal shed and fed them from her small stock of vegetables. When attackers came to her farm she used her

reputation as a 'witch' to frighten them off and protect the people hiding, risking her freedom as she did so.

Five students from Munich University and one of their professors challenged the Nazi regime by forming the White Rose group. They asked German people to react to the violence and oppression which were all around them by standing up and fighting for freedom.

Although they were successful in spreading their messages, the members of the White Rose group were all beheaded by the Nazis, who wanted to discourage anyone else from fighting for freedom.

Read more about the White Rose group at hmd.org.uk/whiterose.

4. Liberated but not completely free

It is a misconception that liberation from the perpetrator regime means the end of

suffering and the start of a free life. Whilst allied liberators freed Holocaust survivors from the physical imprisonment of concentration camps, and dreadful conditions, the prisoners then found themselves alone, often unable to return home, and having to move to a new country, learn a new language and rebuild their lives from scratch. They had to rebuild new lives with the painful absence of family members and friends. Many have described the years post-liberation as 'being physically free, but not mentally free.'

Holocaust survivor Esther Brunstein said:

The first few days after liberation were joyous and yet sad, confusing and bewildering. I did not know how to cope with freedom after years of painful imprisonment.

Read Esther's full life story at hmd.org.uk/esther.



Otto Rosenberg (front) with his mother and siblings, many of whom were murdered by the Nazis

As Otto Rosenberg who was persecuted by the Nazis because he was Sinti noted, it was hard to enjoy freedom knowing his family members had been murdered:

They say: "you have your freedom now, be happy". There was no way I could be all joyful, because I missed my brothers and sisters, always, to this very day. When the holidays came and people celebrated, or the families sat together, that was when this inner thing, this nervous strain came. That was very hard.

Read his full life story at hmd.org.uk/otto.

Indeed, gay men who were imprisoned by the Nazis did not find the freedom they had hoped for as they were still regarded as criminals after liberation and it wasn't until 1968 when they would be safe from prosecution.

Read more about the persecution of gay people and what happened afterwards at hmd.org.uk/gay-people.

Just because one person was liberated, it did not mean that the rest of their family were safe. As Sabit Jakupović, a survivor of the genocide in Bosnia explains:

And that was one of the very hard moments because I felt safe, and I felt lost. I was in a completely different country, different weather, different language. Then I remembered that I left my brothers behind. Those emotions were tearing me apart, you can't enjoy the freedom and liberty because the war is still happening.

Read Sabit's full life story at hmd.org.uk/sabit.

5. Enjoying freedom

Some survivors were able to enjoy their freedom. After surviving ghettos,

concentration camps and a death march, Holocaust survivor Alec Ward came to England. He said:

We lived in Southampton for a while where I was intoxicated with the freedom in England. I could walk freely wherever I wanted, I could ride a bicycle and everyone was so extremely kind and helpful to me.

Read his full life story at hmd.org.uk/alec.

6. Vulnerability of freedom

For some survivors, post-genocide freedom remains always vulnerable to being snatched away. Denial and distortion follow all genocides, and are on the increase where countries attempt to reshape their past. Holocaust distortion and antisemitism (anti-Jewish hatred) have been present since the end of World War Two and remain prevalent today.

Leon Greenman built a life in the UK after surviving Auschwitz, only to suffer an antisemitic attack on his home in London in the 1990s.

Antoinette Mutabazi did not feel free to return to her home village after the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda when she heard that a perpetrator had been released from prison and had returned to the village.

7. Freedom today

Today many people in western democracies take freedoms for granted – this HMD, we can reflect on how these freedoms need to be valued, and on how many people around the world face restrictions to their freedoms to live, worship, work and love freely.

For example, Uyghur Muslims in China are facing forced relocation to Xinjiang province, ‘re-education’ that threatens to eradicate the Uyghur culture, and other limits to free expression, free movement and freedom of worship.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims are living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, having escaped religious persecution in Myanmar.

Conflict is still ongoing in the Darfur region of Sudan. Survivors of the genocide, now safe in the UK, are terrified for the safety of their family members still in Darfur, and scared to speak out publicly in the UK lest their family members’ lives are threatened.

8. Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

Anne Frank’s comment, quoted above, concludes ‘You couldn’t do this and you couldn’t do that, but life went on’. But of course, for Anne, and millions of others, life did not go on – they were deliberately murdered. Building upon the multiple restrictions on their freedoms, their freedom of life was destroyed.

On HMD 2024, we can all reflect on how freedom is fragile and vulnerable to abuse. As we come together in communities around the UK, let’s pledge not to take our freedoms for granted, and consider what we can do to strengthen freedoms around the world.

Sheep and Shepherds - Thought for the Month

"The Lord is my Shepherd" (Psalm 23:1)

Of all the illustrations David could use to describe his relationship with the Lord why shepherd and sheep? Honestly, it doesn't paint me or you in the best light (my apologies to any fans of sheep for the rant that follows)

1) *Sheep are Dumb!* They can't be trained and don't do tricks. They wander off and get themselves in all sorts of predicaments. If you've ever driven through the countryside you'll know that, despite endless acres to live it up in, they always somehow find themselves in the middle of the road!

2) *Sheep are Defenceless!* They don't have fangs or claws to protect themselves. They aren't fast, agile, nor nimble to evade predators. They pose a threat to nobody and nothing.... except maybe grass.

3) *Sheep are Dirty!* Where birds have baths and bears bathe in rivers, sheep don't and can't. With their absorbent coats, if they try to wash, they often drown under the weight of their wool. They get dirty and stay dirty.

I rest my case.

Could David not have thought of a better metaphor? After all, he was a warrior, a king, and a poet. I have a few suggestions for Ole Dave...

'The Lord is my commander and I his warrior

'The Lord is my maestro and I his minstrel'

'The Lord is my King and I his ambassador'

Much better, right? People applaud warriors when they show up, listen to minstrels when they sing, and stand at attention when ambassadors speak. No one cares about sheep..... no one except the shepherd.

Maybe that's the point?!

I can't always relate to warriors or maestros, or ambassadors..... but I can relate to the sheep.

I too have made my fair share of dumb decisions. I too have felt defenceless against the things life throws at me. I too have felt dirty and ashamed; unable to 'right my wrongs'.

Would the same be true for you?

If so, It's ok.

There is an invitation today to come to Jesus just as you are. Why? He's a shepherd who loves, cares for, and lays down his life for you, his sheep.

Prayer: Thank you that you love me despite me. Help me come to you honestly today. For where I've made mistakes and gone my own way, forgive me. For where I feel defenceless and overwhelmed by life, protect me. Be my shepherd.

Reuben Williams - Birmingham Methodist Circuit Office

Thoughts From a Hospital Bed

I recognise that not everyone has a good experience when an inpatient in hospital but I thought I would share some of the thoughts and experiences I had whilst in St James Hospital in Leeds. Most of you will be aware that I was in for 2 weeks in January for successful major cancer surgery.



I had to report to the admissions ward at 7am on Monday morning and was quickly seen by the surgeon and the anaesthetist. I then walked into the operating ante-room and was very soon asleep. I thought to myself “well I’m in the best of hands and there is really no choice but to go ahead.” so there was no point in worrying. I have no recollection of the rest of that day and on the Tuesday I was in a high dependency ward and mostly asleep. I was aware of nurses gently turning me and reassuring me that all was well. I was not in pain. By the end of Tuesday I was well enough to go to the ward.

I was very fortunate that the ward was in a new block – the design very reminiscent of the QE in Birmingham. My bed was against the window with a view out over Leeds. For many days the sky was blue and the sunsets were very dramatic. Being triple glazed we did not feel the freezing conditions but enjoyed the beauty. This environment helped us to feel a part of the world – last year I had been in a ward with no outside view and it made you feel quite isolated from life.

I shared a 4-bed bay with 3 other ladies who I got to know very well. I was the last one in and first of us to go home so rather than a series of new faces it was us four for 2 weeks. One lady had been in hospital for 15 weeks, another 5 weeks and the third 3 or 4 weeks. We shared our stories and talked about our families and friends, our work lives and holidays. We helped each other out, especially calling for a nurse if one of us couldn’t reach our buzzer (that was often a problem I had!)

Anna was getting rather fed up so she suggested we had a party which we did one Sunday morning. We pooled our resources and each made a party hat from cardboard vomit bowls. Anna had lots of craft materials with her so the hats turned out rather well. We each choose a piece of music – mine was “You Raised Me Up” – which she played on her phone whilst we played a game of throwing paper towels into a bowl in the middle of the floor. We then did a drawing game which created some very strange looking creatures. We taped these drawings to the bottom of our beds. It caused much amusement for the staff and lifted our spirits.

I found ways to amuse myself. I was very glad that I had taken in 2 charger plugs and 2 three metre leads. This meant they were in easy reach and I could charge my phone and kindle daily without bothering anyone. Before going into hospital. I had put some favourite music into Spotify and loaded a book of short stories on my kindle. I was very glad for both of those. It was easy and relaxing to listen to music,

especially when I had some discomfort. My concentration span was poor so the short stories were ideal – no need to remember what I had read the day before! (Just some tips there should you ever need to spend time in hospital.)

I enjoyed afternoon visits from family and friends most days but I told them not to come out in the dark cold evenings. During evening visiting I had “virtual” visits – I phoned family and friends who lived across the country and enjoyed many a catch-up with them. Such is the beauty of modern phones.



I also found out why you need strong arms! Before my surgery I had been on a “build up for cancer surgery” programme which included weight lifting activities at the local gym. (I would never by choice be spending time in a gym!). Well with a weak and painful stomach the only way in and out of bed was to use those arm muscles to haul on the bed rails to roll out.

I thought a lot about the organisation that goes into running a large hospital to create a really good patient experience. Who recruited the porters, the cleaners, the kitchen staff – did they intentionally pick people with a sense of humour and a caring attitude and who can whizz you along the maze of corridors at the speed of lightening!? Who organises the rotas? Who devises the menus – the food was tasty and well-presented – did they know that for me that was instrumental in my being able to eat again and so be able to go home? Who recruits, trains and supports the nurses, therapists and dieticians? What about building maintenance? And so the list goes on. What an amazing feat of team work and dedication.

Then of course there are the wonderful doctors with their immense knowledge and skill. And what about all the patients in the past who were the guinea pigs for the current treatments – taking chances that a procedure might work – what courage!

These were some of my experiences and thoughts and I must say that I was surprised at the range of them and impact that they had on me.

I also need to include everyone who prayed for me – friends when they visited, the hospital chaplains who came 3 times and on one occasion brought me Holy Communion. I include all of you at Lyndon because I know that you held me in your thoughts and prayers. In the past I have visited people in hospital and care homes and prayed for them but having been on the receiving end I now know for certain that you feel encased in prayer and love at a time when you need it most but are least able to pray for yourself.

So was God in that hospital - absolutely he was in every kind act, every efficient action, every reassuring word, every act of healing. I hope that he also worked through me to bring friendship and comfort to my 3 fellow companions.

Wendy Magee

A New Experience – A Circuit Meeting

At the last Church Council Meeting I agreed that I would be one of the Circuit Representatives for Lyndon having ascertained that this would normally involve attending two meetings a year - one in March held on a Saturday which would be the longer meeting and another one held at the beginning of the new Methodist Year which would be an evening meeting - and so it was with some trepidation and apprehension that I attended the March Meeting.

From a personal viewpoint, I felt that I needed to prepare myself for a 'lecture' type of day and hence reflected on how I had managed other such days in the past and came up with a strategy which normally worked for me and so decided to put it into practice once again! I turned down a lift to Selly Oak Methodist Church as I felt that I needed to get some fresh air and a walk before the Meeting began and so elected to get there by Public Transport.



I arrived at the Church in plenty of time having had a good walk and a quiet time of reflection and was warmly welcomed with greetings and refreshments. The whole Meeting was planned and executed in a very good way and there were several breaks throughout the Meeting including a buffet lunch which was provided.

It was interesting to talk to other individuals who were at the Meeting and even meet a couple of people who I had communicated with electronically but who I had never met face-to-face. What was apparent to me was that other Churches are also experiencing difficulties in getting volunteer posts filled but nevertheless there is a lot of good Work and Projects being undertaken within various Churches in the Circuit.

On the way home I reflected on the day and realised that for me it had been a worthwhile experience. Perhaps sometimes I need to try something 'new' and see how I get on with it and maybe it could be an approach used in trying to fill vacant posts? I had also gained insight into how plans were being made in the Circuit to tackle getting posts filled and maybe some of these ideas could be implemented at Lyndon?

I list below the main outcomes/discussions of the Meeting so that you are aware of what is happening Circuit Wide.

(1). There is a proposed plan for the merger of the Birmingham Methodist Circuit with the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Circuit to form the West Midlands Circuit. If this takes place the area would cover most of Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire as well as Birmingham and the Black Country. At the moment it is at consultation stage and the proposal is being presented to each

Circuit. A vote was taken at the Meeting and the result was in favour of this happening. The proposed merger date is September, 2025 if everything progresses.

(2). It is envisaged that in the coming years, there will be more outward involvement of the Community in general within the life of the Church.

(3). At the moment the Methodist Church as a whole has seen a reduction in the number of Ministers and also a reduction in the number of Members. This has meant that ways of streamlining things and undertaking roles differently have to be considered. There is for instance a shortage of Circuit Stewards and in this direction the role is being looked at to see if filling them would be more appealing if the task was less demanding by being broken down into different areas of work such as Human Resources, Stationing (this involves appointments of Circuit Staff) etc. and for an individual to take on just one of the elements which might be of particular interest or which that individual may have an expertise in.

(4). Share information between the Churches. In this connection a new Communications Officer has just been appointed and a Newsletter is sent out electronically to those on the Mailing List. Each Church can forward information about forthcoming events in their Church for inclusion in the Newsletter which normally is circulated on Wednesday on a weekly basis.

(5). A new Circuit Initiative is being undertaken in the Stechford District of Birmingham. This is an area where there is no Methodist Church within the vicinity and where a number of people live on the margins of Society for a variety of reasons and circumstances. At the moment this project is in its infancy and work is currently being undertaken to try and ascertain the precise needs of this Community.

(6). Circuit initiatives are being undertaken which include a Youth Weekend away, a Circuit Service to be held at Shirley Methodist Church and services for departing Ministers in June and then a Welcome Service for new Ministers in September.

(7). In recent years there has been a change in the role of the Minister due to extra demands being put on them. This is likely to be ongoing with less Ministerial Staff and is a matter that needs to be explored further in the future so that the individuals concerned are not under immense pressure and the Congregation as a whole are aware of the changes that are taking place. In this connection a discussion took place to give suggestions to try to create an improved life balance between work and time off whether it be for Ministers, lay employees of the Circuit or indeed the many individuals who take on responsibilities within the Church and Circuit on a voluntary basis. All people should be encouraged to have appropriate 'time off' and there may be occasions where there is a need to promote a culture where 'no' is an acceptable answer owing to the present workload/commitments was the general conclusion reached.

Janet Rudge

P.S. If anyone would like to receive the Circuit Newsletter please let me have your e-mail address so that it can be sent to you but please note that your e-mail address will be held on the Circuit Database.

Our Car Accident – A Miracle

On 6th February 2024, my husband and I went out in our car. When leaving home, the CD in the car was playing one of my favourite songs 'No never alone, He promised never to leave me, He claimed me for his own.'

As I was driving along normally, I heard a big bang behind the car. A car sped past on the right hand side of the road up on to the embankment, turned over on to the bonnet and then rolled back down halfway into the road.

We were sitting in our car watching what was going on unaware that it was our car that was hit and damaged.

We were calm, there was no fear, no shock symptoms. We had our seatbelts on and were not hurt.

Following this a crowd of people ran towards us, still sitting in our car and asked us if we were hurt and if we were ok.

We replied, 'No, not hurt - all is well. God saved us, Praise God.'

Following this, policemen, firemen and the ambulance arrived. They surrounded the car looking amazed and asked us if we were hurt. We answered, 'No - Praise God'.

A supermarket from nearby sent a bag with drinks and chocolate cookies. They were so kind and thoughtful. Everyone was shocked that we were alive.

Then the emergency services tried to open the bonnet of the car but were having some difficulty. We then realised what they were doing and saw a part of our car on the grass with the front lights and other bits and pieces. The car was a right off. We got out of the car in the normal way, walked across the road with the policemen and went into the ambulance to be checked medically. All the necessary checks were given - all was well, no hurt, no fear, no shock symptoms, or after shock.

I believe that the Bible is the true word of God and was reflecting after the accident and Psalm 117: 1-2 came to my mind proving God's merciful kindness. The words of the Psalm say "the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise the Lord."

Other Bible passages that I reflected on after the accident are shown below:

Psalm 46: 1, Daniel 6: 16. The God whom we serve continually is a miracle working God who is able to deliver, and a very present help in trouble.

1 Peter 5: 8-9. Be Sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil is a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour; resist him, stand steadfast in the faith.


Psalm 91: 1-5. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely he shall deliver you; you shall not be afraid for the terror; for he shall give his angels charge over you.

Daniel 3: 17 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego says, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace.

Daniel 6: 22. Daniel says - my God hath sent his angels and hath shut the lion's mouth that they have not hurt me. Daniel's God is the same God we serve today.

Here are some scriptures that will build your faith in God. Hebrews 13:5-6 v 8. Psalm 119: 160. Daniel 6: 26-27. Jeremiah 1: 8. Psalm 34: 7. I Peter 1:23 -25, Psalm 91: 1-5. Job 22: 21.

Mr and Mrs Ira and Joyce Greaves.



Aline is pushing back against poverty.

Abused, homeless and hungry, Aline was on the brink of survival in Burundi.

But she transformed her life with a little help from Christian Aid, and secured a vital income and a home for her and her children.

Push back against the inhumanity of poverty this Christian Aid Week. **Donate today.**

Join us this Christian Aid Week 12-18 May

Please donate at **caweek.org** or contact:

Christian Aid Week this year focuses on "Act on Poverty" in Burundi, one of the world's poorest countries, where 90% rely on agriculture and 52% are malnourished. Despite financial challenges, last year's supporters raised £5 million. Christian Aid works through local partners, not governments, addressing root causes of poverty, gender justice, and climate resilience. They seek continued commitment and prayer from supporters.

Easter at Lyndon 2024

On the fifth Sunday in Lent, we held an own arrangement service in the form of a Songs in Praise which was led by Lorraine Sibson and Claire Frew. Along with singing some of people's favourite hymns we followed the Lent liturgy for that week "Changed from Glory into Glory" which focussed on a packet of seeds. In order to reflect this as an activity during the service, everybody was invited up to receive a sunflower seed, a disc of compost and a small compostable pot to put it in and encouraged to take the seed home and plant it. Hopefully by the end of the summer there will be loads of sunflowers in people's gardens reminding them of the service. It would be great to feature pictures of the sunflowers in the next issue of the magazine.



The Palm Sunday service this year was led by Rev Karen Webber and included activities for all ages. The first activity involved the creation of a palm tree using hands. Everybody in church was encouraged to draw round one of their hands, colour it in and then cut it out. Tables were placed at the front and back of the church and the less able to move about were given boards to rest on. There was lots of chatter, just like you would have expected on the first Palm Sunday with everybody having a go at the activity, with or without help. All the "hands" were taken to the front of the church and stuck on the palm tree which was then hung from the pulpit.

The Lent Liturgy theme for the day related to casting off our status symbols with a coat being placed at the foot of the cross. Helen then led us into the prayers of intercession. As each person came into church that morning, they were invited to take a strip of cloth. As part of the prayer we were all encouraged to lay our strips of cloth on a sheet leading to the foot of the cross representing not only our 'status symbols', but also to leave our troubles and worries at His feet, a very powerful symbol.

Good Friday started with the children, with the help of Barry and Brenda creating a wonderful Easter garden in the vestibule, whilst their parents and other members of the church enjoyed hot drinks and hot cross buns in the lounge. As each





part of the garden was created by the children, Barry told the Easter story, starting with the crucifixion on the hill at Calgary on the first Good Friday, Jesus' body being placed in the tomb and his resurrection on Easter Sunday, with the stone at the entrance to the tomb being rolled away leaving an empty tomb.

We then all walked together down to the Coventry Road with members of RCCG as a walk of witness, meeting members of St Thomas More's church on the way and then joining with other members of Hatchford Brook Churches Together (HBCT) for a joint Good Friday service opposite the Wheatsheaf. Although the weather wasn't kind to us at the start, by the end of the service the sun came out from behind the clouds to dry up all the rain!

Easter Sunday started very early for some of our members, who, even though the clocks went forward that day, joined together with other members of HBCT for a sunrise service in the park starting at 6.30am. With the moon above, and in sight of the Park's ancient



Sweet Chestnut, some 'early birds' gathered to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. It's interesting to reflect that this tree has lived through more than a quarter of the days since the women discovered the empty tomb.

The Easter Sunday service at Lyndon was led by Rev Caroline Homan. As people arrived at church, they were encouraged to place a flower in the cross which was then taken up to the

front of the church at the start of the service, symbolising new life and the hope and promise of the resurrection. The service included an Easter Egg hunt in the church for all with the minister explaining the symbolism of the egg at Easter. Hopefully we found them all! The church was once again decorated beautifully, and we must again thanks to all those who gave up their time to decorate the church and those who helped to distribute the flowers afterwards. The daffodils included within the arrangements had opened out by the service and looked amazing.



Guest Churches at Lyndon

As many Lyndon folk will have noticed, Lyndon Methodist Church now hosts two 'Guest Churches' who would currently have nowhere else to meet. One has its roots in Nigeria, The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), and the other is from Romania, 'The Burning Bush'. The Burning Bush movement grew during the Communist period in Romania and has its roots in the Orthodox Church.

Nationally the RCCG is a member of Churches Together in England, and RCCG CRA Sheldon is a member of Hatchford Brook Churches Together.

As well as contributing to Lyndon's finances by way of rent for their use of the premises, they have already started to help with maintenance jobs around the building. The picture shows Pastor Kenny Anishere and some RCCG members getting stuck in during our recent 'workday'.

Roger Hancock



May & June Quiz

All your answers will contain the word RON. E.g First man on the moon – Neil Armstrong, Which alloy is made mainly of copper with a small amount of tin = Bronze

1	What title does the widow of a Baron have?	
2	Which T V programme of the 60's/70's starred Raymond Burr as a wheelchair bound detective?	
3	What is the 5th Book of the Old Testament?	
4	Which TV programme always ended with 'So it's goodnight from me and goodnight from him'?	
5	The musical Evita is based on the life of which Argentinian political leader?	
6	Which mechanical device indicates the exact tempo of a piece of music?	
7	Which chemical element has the symbol Fe and atomic number 26?	
8	What does 'exactly what it says on the tin'?	
9	What spice is obtained from the flower of the crocus?	
10	In the Bible, who was the elder brother of Moses?	
11	The Krona is the currency of Sweden, but what currency is used in Denmark, Norway and Iceland?	
12	Which classical Italian soup is made of Cannellini beans, broken up Spaghetti, onions, carrots and any other left over vegetables you might have?	
13	C.S. Lewis wrote a series of 7 fantasy novels; The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe is the most famous. What are the novels known as collectively?	
14	Which long running T V programme (first shown in 1959) was devised by Tony Warren?	
15	Which British Poet and Peer was born in 1788 and died in 1826 aged just 38?	

**Answers please to Lynne Tyler or Church Email
by Saturday 15th June 2024**

Fire Safety Word Search

P	L	N	T	G	N	I	D	R	A	O	H
E	M	K	A	I	A	S	E	Z	H	A	S
N	U	D	B	W	S	A	M	O	S	S	E
G	N	I	S	K	L	I	M	O	G	B	C
I	F	Y	S	A	U	E	V	Q	K	A	U
N	F	I	R	E	F	I	G	H	T	E	R
E	R	M	A	C	Q	E	L	V	U	O	I
H	S	I	U	G	N	I	T	X	E	R	T
V	L	O	I	Z	H	S	W	Y	E	L	Y
H	L	A	S	S	E	S	S	M	E	N	T
W	E	R	O	T	C	E	T	E	D	C	K
E	W	M	O	B	I	L	I	T	Y	H	P

ALARM

ENGINE

HOARDING

RISK

SMOKE

ASSESSMENT

EXTINGUISH

HOME

SAFETY

VISIT

DETECTOR

FIREFIGHTER

MOBILITY

SECURITY

WELL

March - April Quiz Answers

1) Margaret THATCHER 2) BARBER of Seville 3) CONSTABLE 4) All COOPERS 5) FLETCHER Christian 6) Christopher PLUMMER 7) Beatrix POTTER 8) POSTMAN Pat 9) DANCER 10) SINGER 11) Pat BUTCHER 12) SHEPHERDS 13) Nicholas PARSONS 14) BUTLER 15) BAKERS 16) DOCTOR No

Unfortunately there were no entries again this month with 100% correct answers. Commiserations to Tom and Kate Collen and Margaret Bolland who both got one wrong. The Hunt family also got one wrong but missed out an answer as well! Question 13 fooled everyone and I had 3 different answers, all incorrect!

Lyndon Community Page

We really would like to make this page and the whole magazine relevant, therefore, please get in touch. Let us know what you like and don't like and send or give any important events, ideas, offers, stories, feedback or tips personally to Lynne Tyler or by e-mail to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com.

As previously mentioned, to keep this section going, improve this magazine and to try and create a closer community we really need your interaction.

SAFE AND WELL - WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE (wmfs.net)

Safe and Well visits are offered by the West Midlands Fire Service and may be of interest to you or someone you know. Below are the details provided by WMFS.

Safe and Well visits are an important part of our prevention activity. They enable us to advise and educate on safety at home, with a particular focus on our most vulnerable residents.

What's involved in a Safe and Well visit?

Safe and Well visits involve much more than just fitting smoke detectors.

Our visits, are carried out by operational firefighters, based at our 38 community fire stations, and usually take around an hour. We know there are strong links between health, well-being and lifestyle choices and the risk of fire. This is why, with the residents' permission, we cover a range of topics with a link to fire risk, including:

- smoking, alcohol, medication and drugs
- mobility including slips, trips and falls
- loneliness and social isolation
- home security
- mental health, dementia
- hoarding
- healthy eating and lifestyles
- road safety

A handbook complements the visits, providing vital fire safety information, general safety and health or well-being advice. A copy is left with the household, along with information on any actions or referrals/signposting made by the visiting crew. These visits used to be called home safety checks or safety visits, so you may find them referred to as that in some leaflets or media.

Any firefighting crew attending a person's home for a Safe and Well visit will always carry their identity cards, and you should ask to see this before allowing them entry to your home.

Who are they for?

We prioritise and target our Safe and Well visits, with a focus on the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Staff in our Home Safety Centre carefully assess each referral and identify people who most need the service.

If you're not eligible for a visit, the online home safety check portal, (also on the web page) will still give you vital personalised information on how to keep you and your family safe at home.

How to book

Initially, we ask you to complete the online referral through our provider, Safelincs. They worked with the National Fire Chiefs Council to provide a national online home safety check service.

This easy-to-follow online home fire safety check will take you through your home one room at a time and the simple questions will:

- Help you spot fire risks as you go around your home
- Offer tips and advice on the steps you can take to reduce those risks
- Provide you with a personalised fire safety action plan to help keep you and your household safe from fire.

Depending on the risk identified, you may be offered the option to submit your details to your 'local fire and rescue service'. If you do and you're based in the West Midlands, this information is securely shared with us and a member of our team will contact you to arrange either a telephone, or face to face Safe and Well visit.

Online Home Safety Check

This is the initial check and there is a link on our page to the home fire safety check. If it's identified that a home visit is required, you will be given the option to submit your details, which are then sent securely to us to organise a visit by our local firefighters.

Safe and Well Booklet

This booklet, which often accompanies our Safe and Well visits, contains a wealth of information on keeping your home, family and yourself safe. It can be downloaded from our website.

Live outside the West Midlands?

We offer Safe and Well visits for residents who live in the West Midlands area. If you live in other areas, you can still complete the online home fire safety check.

How to access all of this help and information?

Website: www.wmfs.net/our-services/safe-and-well/

If you need advice or cannot use our online form you can call our team for free on 08003895525 or email homesafetycentre@wmfs.net.

Notices & Events

Ladies Club - 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Wednesday 1st, 15th and 29th May

Wednesday 12th and 26th June

Lunch Club - Fridays 12pm to 1pm

MAY

3rd Ham Salad

10th Chicken and Mushroom Pie

17th Cheese and Potato Pie

24th Moussaka

31st CLOSED - HALF TERM

JUNE

7th Roast Beef

14th Pork Pie Salad

21st Mixed Grill

28th Chilli and Rice

Price: starter £1, main £5, pudding £1

No need to book - Just come along

Monthly Prayer and Bible Study - 7.00pm - 8.30pm

Wednesday 1st May

Wednesday 5th June

Hobs Moat WI - 7pm to 9pm

Monday 20th May

Monday 17th June

Notices & Events

EASTER FLOWERS

Thank you to all who gave donations towards the purchase of Easter flowers and those who helped decorate our church and made it look so beautiful over the Easter period. It is much appreciated. Please see the pictures in the article about Easter at Lyndon. *Brenda*

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

On Sunday 7th April, Rev Karen received four new people into membership at Lyndon. So a big, warm welcome to Carolyn, Angela, Marion and Donna.



DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

For all those that knew Diane Wakeman, previous Captain of 2nd Solihull Girls' Brigade, we invite you to come and share refreshments with us on Saturday 21st September between 2pm and 4pm here at Lyndon. *Sarah Marks*

CHURCH WORKING DAY

Thanks to all who helped out at the church working day on Saturday 23rd March. Many jobs were completed. If you weren't available to help out this time, I'm sure there'll be another one soon. Watch this space!

QUIZ

Thanks to all who attended the quiz night on 13th April. 57 people attended and had a great night out, managing to raise £272 in the process. Thanks also to Claire Frew and her team for organising such a great evening.

Services in May

Sunday 5th May

10:30am Communion Service

6.00pm Lyndon People

Sunday 12th May

10:30am Service

Sunday 19th May

10:30am Service

Sunday 26th May

10:30am Service

Note : The Circuit has asked that we do not include details of the preachers on our service listing.

Services in June

Sunday 2nd June

10:30am Communion Service

6.00pm Lyndon People

Sunday 9th June

10:30am Service

Sunday 16th June

10:30am Service

Sunday 23rd June

10.30am Service

Sunday 30th June

10:30am Service including baptism

Note : The Circuit has asked that we do not include details of the preachers on our service listing.

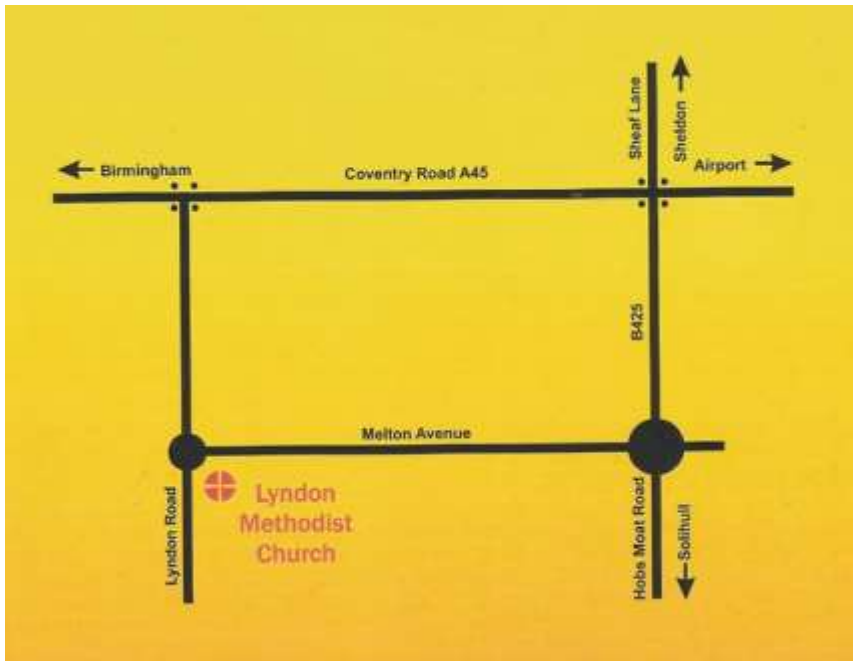
Our next issue will be July 2024

I am looking forward to receiving your contributions by

15th June 2024

by email to Lynne Tyler or to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

or by post to Church – address below



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