

Christward

The magazine of



September 4th–October 30th
2016

~ From the Minister's Desk ~

Well, didn't those five years fly by? As I write this thirtieth and final article before I depart Union Chapel at the end of September, I feel a certain pressure to leave you with something profound and memorable. Perhaps I should attempt to highlight the significant moments of those years and edit a highlights reel; like the romantic back-stories of Olympic athletes that the BBC assumes we wish to see every five minutes. Perhaps now, at the last, I should reveal the grand master plan that has been patiently unfolding before your unseeing eyes; finally establishing order out of the chaos. Perhaps I should explain how my time at Union has clarified the future, imbued me with a clear vision, and left me with a certainty about what is to come next. Chance would be a fine thing!

To be honest there are no highlights, not because it's been rubbish, but because there were so many unassuming moments of pleasure. There were also awkward moments, which frustratingly tend to linger in the mind longer than they should, but these were few and far between. Ultimately, we simply shared a part of our lives over this time, and it was good. We didn't achieve any gold medals or break any records, we talked and celebrated and mourned and cleaned and ate and walked and debated and washed up and planned and smiled and took deep breaths, and it was good.

There was certainly no master plan. More like a series of intuitive guesses about what it would be good to try, followed by plenty of conversation and reflection. It remains tempting to consider achievements as a measure of success, but these are difficult to quantify and can distract us from arguably the most important thing – the richness of our 'being'. There is always more to be done, always things that get left, and I think that's OK as long as a spirit of togetherness and sense of growth remain.

I have little idea as to what the future holds. In my first Minister's Desk article five years ago I observed how much messier my new desk was than the one that I worked at in industry. I reflected that faith and ministry and church were also likely to be messier; harder

to articulate and tie down, more creative than ordered – and that was fine. Five years on and the same things remain messy! It is therefore not surprising that it is difficult to explain why it's time for me to move on. I guess in many ways it is because I still have questions. There were questions in my Ministerial Profile which you read before inviting me and there have been plenty of questions since. These were rarely rhetorical devices or simple intrigues; they were and remain fundamentally important to me. I don't ask because I expect answers. I ask because I recognise that the energy in the asking often leads to otherwise unexplored territory and otherwise inaccessible newness. Sometimes this can happen with others and sometimes it must be done separately. You too will have your questions, as individuals and as church. You know the fundamental ones. Ask them.

If all this is maddeningly vague then there is still time to tie me down and wring something more tangible out of me! This article is slightly premature in some ways, but the timing is what it is – and maybe if I've done it here then we can make less fuss in a few weeks! One of the main things I want to do is thank everyone. This will obviously happen mainly in person, but there might be some instances where it can't. So thank you. Thank you for your support of me as I explored what my ministry looked like. Thank you for your care of Sarah as she balanced life in and out of church. Thank you for taking Anna under your wing and including her. Thank you for being a safe and encouraging place for Nathan and enduring his growing love of ball sports. Thank you for being open and real and hard-working and gracious.

I am reminded of a novel that I have recently finished. At the conclusion the author ponders the difference between 'like' and 'love'. Of course love is the ultimate goal and the essence of our life and faith, but it can also be rather elusive and formless. It might feel like a duty or inherent in our role as family, friend, or Christian. It might feel noble as we strive to love neighbour and outcast. Like might feel a little less, but maybe all the more powerful because we can get the measure of it, to think about being liked. If you like

someone you enjoy their company. You're on their side. You feel happy when they're around. There is an equality in such liking, and often no explanation. And actually, we all need to believe we are likeable, perhaps just as much as we need to know we are loved; 'to trust that what holds us and our friendships and communities together is not politeness, not habit, not fear of change, but that we are likeable, and that we are wanted.'

Union Chapel is a very likeable place, and the Geere family will miss it greatly. Which is to say that you as people of Union Chapel are very likeable, and we will miss you greatly. We won't be far away however, and although we are not sharing the same journey, we will want to know where your adventure takes you. Travel well.

Ian Geere

~Church Weekend 2016 ~

Church weekend 2016 took place at Scargill House in the very beautiful country of Wharfedale, North Yorkshire. The weekend differed from previous such occasions because we did not have sole use of the building. Since 2009, Scargill House has been run as a Christian Conference Centre by the Scargill Trust and during our stay there were a number of people (mostly young) from all around the world staying. They sat with us at mealtimes and were the "servers" at each table and were more than happy to talk to us at all times. In one way this was extremely interesting - the downside was that we had less opportunity to talk to each other.

Most of the building dates from the nineteenth century although the public rooms have been modernised. The lounge area faces south with picture windows looking over the hills, and there were several bird feeders just outside. These provided a fascinating never-ending display of birds, large and small, and to me, at least, this was a total delight .

The topic for the weekend was festivals. Glastonbury, we wondered, or something else of that sort. In fact we looked at the biblical evidence for the Christian festivals. The organisers, Gwen, Margaret and David had worked hard to provide the appropriate references and we divided into groups for discussion.

This, I think was where my group managed to depart from the intended path. Somehow it came to us that the description of the birth of Jesus in a manger, with shepherds, Angels and wise men was a myth, not a true story of an actual happening. So, if that is so, what is the significance of the myth? What is the basis of Christianity? With only twenty minutes before coffee it was not possible to find answers to these questions. Maybe there are no answers. Anyway the discussion was interesting

The highlight of the weekend was the Saturday evening entertainment where Union Chapel once again demonstrated its amazing ability to rise to a challenge. We managed to provide a series of impromptu sketches full of wit and imagination. One of these acted out the incident which happened in the afternoon, when one of our members took a bit of a tumble in the hills. Fortunately all injuries were dealt with promptly and professionally by our resident medical team, and no serious damage was incurred.

One of the really good features at Scargill House was the delicious food. Another was the delightful walled garden. All in all it was a very good weekend. Many thanks to the people who organised it and to the people at Scargill House who made us so welcome.

Margaret Edmonds

~ Snippets of Hebrew: Sabbath ~

One might think that when learning Hebrew, it might result in a bit of a dead end. It might seem that the only real benefit of learning Hebrew is to be able to read the Old Testament in the original language. But Hebrew is a good introductory language to some

other ancient languages used in ancient times in the Middle East. One can learn Aramaic very easily, and Arabic is a sister language of Hebrew. Conveniently, Ugaritic has an almost identical vocabulary, and learning Phoenician, Moabite, Edomite and Syriac are also made relatively easy. An understanding of Hebrew can help with about 12 languages in total.

To return to Aramaic, which is the language Jesus spoke. Some sayings in our English NT can reveal more of their meaning when translated back in to Aramaic. This can reveal some very interesting clues about what Jesus actually meant, as well as what may have been in the minds of the translators.

One particularly interesting saying from Jesus occurred after healing a man on the Sabbath. When the Pharisees complained about healing on the Sabbath, he defended himself by saying that “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath.”

One gets a clue as to the possible gist of what Jesus might be trying to convey from the first half of the saying, “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.....”, but what about the conclusion, “Therefore the son of man is lord of the Sabbath”?

When one sees the word “therefore,” one should ask what it is there for. At first, this saying doesn’t make complete sense. How does the phrase “therefore the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath” logically follow from “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath”.

It turns out that the word for man and the word for son of man, in Aramaic, is the same: Barnash. So if you insert this Aramaic word back into the original phrase, it produces the following:

The Sabbath was made for Barnash, and not Barnash for the Sabbath, therefore Barnash is lord of the Sabbath”. This makes complete sense. Now we know what the “therefore” is there for!

It appears that the translators in their enthusiasm to call Jesus by a more impressive title lost the sense of this saying of Jesus, in their endeavour to elevate him. Perhaps to be kind to the translators, they were attempting to convey the exalted status of Jesus as more than just a man, especially in the light of his healing power. One

wonders whether Aramaic was their first language, or whether Greek was their first language. Either way, the plain meaning of the saying got a little lost in translation!

I can quite appreciate why some people say all translation is interpretation.

Geoff Walker

~ Did You See That? ~

On the 31st July 'The Observer' ran an interview with Andy Burnham, Labour MP for Leigh and Shadow Home Secretary. Mr Burnham was seeking nomination as the Labour Party candidate for the coming election of Mayor of Greater Manchester. (He has since been successful in gaining the nomination.) Trying to drum up support he was campaigning in Stockport when who should he come across but our own Beryl Dykes. The Observer article opens with the following paragraphs:

'Beryl Dykes is doing a bit of shopping in Stockport when she spots Andy Burnham and shouts at him across the pavement. "Why did you not get in instead of that daft twit?"

It's a fair question, one that Andy Burnham admits that he's spent a long time thinking about, though he's too diplomatic to point out that he's still in the daft twit's cabinet; is, in fact, the daft twit's shadow Home Secretary. "Honestly! You must have been able to do a better job than him," she says. And then: "I thought you would have gone for it again this time." Burnham smiles. "I think that ship has probably sailed."

It's a tense time. He has exactly one week left to reach the 11,574 people in the Greater Manchester area eligible to vote, one of whom, it turns out is Beryl Dykes. She's been a member of the party her whole life, she tells him proudly.'

(Many thanks to the eagle-eyed Observer reader who drew my attention to this report. Ed.)

~ Thomas Helwys ~

Back in March I went to an interesting event commemorating Thomas Helwys (c.1575-c.1616), one of the founders of the Baptist movement in Britain. The event was held at a Baptist church in Retford, North Nottinghamshire, one of whose members, Adrian Gray, has been promoting the extensive non-conformist heritage of the area, where the borders of South Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and North Nottinghamshire all meet. The Pilgrim Fathers came from the same area, as did many other influential Puritans who shaped the Congregational and Baptist traditions. It was also in this area, a century later, where the Wesleys were born, although they did not originally set out to create a new non-conformist church!

Retford Baptist Church is a very old Baptist congregation, one of the oldest in the country, although its brand new building and modern name, The Well, might not suggest that at first glance. It is clearly a thriving church with a strong sense of its mission, and I suspect they would despair or disapprove of Union Chapel's approach to faith and theology. I wasn't bargaining for a taste of their worship style at the event, as it had been described as a sort of half-day conference, with some interesting speakers talking about Helwys and the Baptist legacy of religious freedom. We heard from Tony Peck, General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation, and politician Baroness Elizabeth Berridge, Chair of the All Party Group on International Religious Freedom (and former Executive Director of the Conservative Christian Fellowship). Both were excellent speakers who talked about Helwys' legacy and how proud Baptists should be for their historic commitment to religious liberty. There was a short film about Helwys, played by an actor, which was rather good.

Not much is known about Helwys' early life; he was born at Broxtowe Hall near Retford, into a landowning family of Norman descent. He was well-connected; his uncle Geoffrey was a sheriff of London, and his cousin Gervase a lieutenant of the Tower of

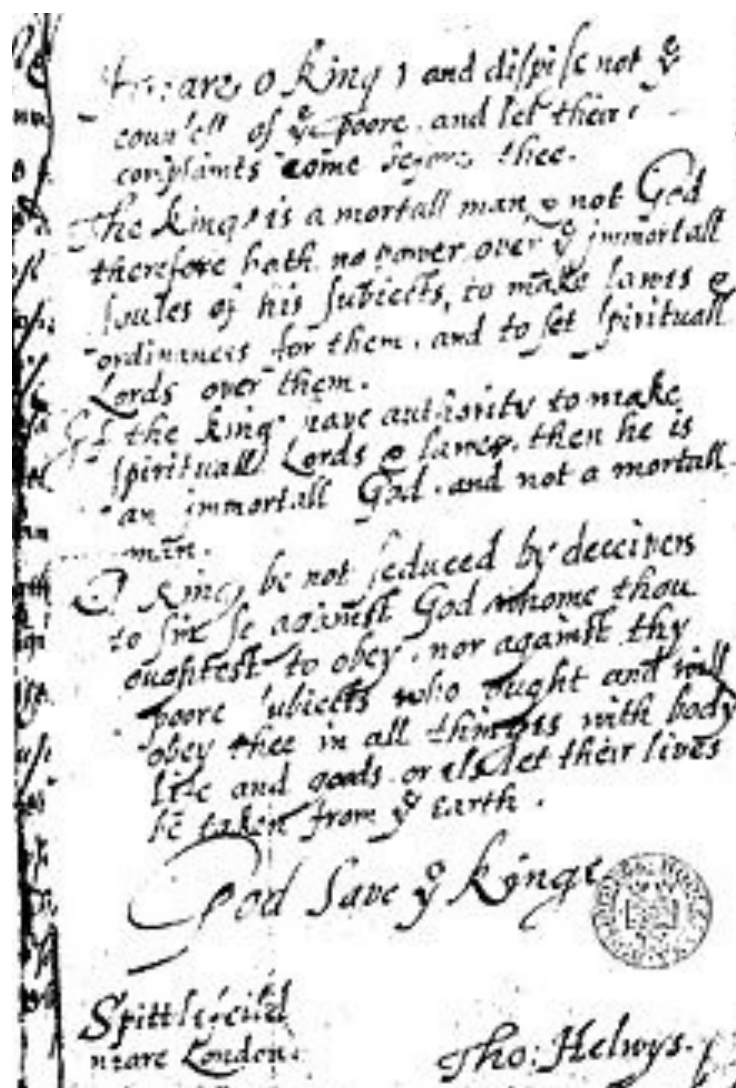
London. He married Joan Ashmore, who was from another local landowning family, and they had seven children. They became involved in the local Separatist movement, Puritans who had given up on reforming the Church of England from within, and who believed that there should be no national church, that it should be separate from the state, and that each group of believers should be independent, and “separate” from the world.

Such views were clearly dangerous, as they ran counter to the state’s position that everyone should belong to a state church, within which there should be uniformity of belief. Opponents of this, whether they believed the church should be Roman Catholic, or more firmly Protestant, or that there should be no national church at all, were punished by imprisonment, fines, or even death. To escape persecution, Helwys and a group of other Separatists fled to Amsterdam in around 1607. He left his wife and children behind, thinking they would be safe from the authorities, but Joan was herself subsequently imprisoned at York. It is not known what eventually happened to her or their children. At Amsterdam Helwys and John Smyth, another “local lad” from Nottinghamshire, first formulated a confession of faith that included believers’ baptism, in 1611. Either the same or the following year, Helwys returned to England, where he set up the first Baptist church on English soil, in Spitalfields in London. He also published works rejecting Calvinistic teaching on salvation, his disagreements with Mennonites (whom he had encountered in Holland), and most famously “*A Short Declaration on the Mystery of Iniquity*”, which attacked Roman Catholicism, the Church of England and various other forms of Protestantism, **but despite this**, called nonetheless for religious liberty:

Let them be heretics, Jews or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure

Nobody else was saying this at the time. At the beginning of the book Helwys appeals to the king, James I (VI of Scotland), reminding him that he is a mortal man, not God, so should not claim

any authority over the spiritual life of his subjects. The picture below shows this handwritten page.



Alas, Helwys came to a sticky end. James I was not impressed by the *God Save Ye King* at the end of the letter, and Helwys was put into prison, and died around 1616 – the exact date is not known. Religious toleration eventually came in 1689, but this only extended to Protestant dissenters (not Roman Catholics), and only those who subscribed to the Trinity. Even then, dissenters were still barred from the professions, and the English universities did not admit non-conformists until the 19th century.

To return to the event in March, I thoroughly enjoyed all the talks and the information about Helwys. It was very thought-provoking, and there is much for today's Baptists to reflect on. Baroness

Berridge, whom I expected to take against (Tory peer? Conservative Christian Fellowship?) made an interesting suggestion that, post-toleration, Baptist commitment to religious liberty was overtaken by concerns with internal doctrinal purity, and was quite forgotten through the excitement of the Evangelical Revival of the 18th century. Tony Peck highlighted the distinction of Helwys as a non-Calvinistic theologian, at a time when pretty much all burgeoning branches of Protestantism were dominated by Calvinism, and made an impressive case for Baptists to be credited with the invention of religious liberty. All speakers discussed the disturbing lack of religious liberty in many parts of today's world, which brought the main theme of the day very much up to date. I was relieved that nobody tried to bring up that favourite topic of many of today's Evangelicals, that Christians in Britain today are somehow oppressed.

The only downside to the event was the inclusion in the event of three "worship songs", involvement in which no religious liberty was given! I was taken aback to be expected to take part in a service, as I did not think the assumption would be made that everyone interested in religious history would be happy to participate in an act of worship. Two members of The Well's worship team led us in singing "When I survey", "Amazing Grace" and a third modern piece, obviously well known to people there, called something like "10,000 reasons". Now I quite like When I Survey, and who cannot like Amazing Grace? However, the way these were sung made them unrecognisable – the tune lost in a slosh of pseudo-soft rock; a dreamy, insipid rhythm and tempo; a sort of ecstatically eyes-shut tone, a sickly kind of fervour. It managed to put all three hymns into one indistinguishable blur. This is clearly The Well's way of worship, but I have to say it almost took the shine of an otherwise fascinating day! I also thought it was ironic, in an event celebrating religious diversity, that everyone was expected to go along with it. Still, if one has respect for religious liberty, then I have to say each to their own – it appertains not to my power to punish!

Owen Roberts

~ Harvest 2016 ~

We are going to celebrate harvest on the first Sunday on October 2nd this year and it will be a slightly more traditional service than some we have had in the recent past. However, since although we shall certainly give thanks for the fruits of the earth and those who produce them, we are not ourselves involved on that major scale. Instead, we want to give thanks for the gifts and abilities that we have in our more urban lives by bringing some of the fruits of our labour to show and share with one another

So, if you draw or paint, knit or sew, bake or preserve, grow and harvest, write or compose or have any other skills or abilities that can be presented in concrete form please will you bring something on that morning so that we can all enjoy seeing them. Needless to say you can take them home with you afterwards. *(Although if your skill is in the cake/biscuit making area you will need a heart of stone to walk past those of us who wish to sample your work. Ed.)*

In addition, or alternatively, gifts for the Food Bank will be very welcome

We are going to fill shoe boxes in Second Session, so any last gifts will be very welcome. *(Please see Carol Walker's article in this magazine.)* Our special harvest offering will be to cover the cost of transport for them and/or any additional items needed to fill a box.

Gwen Mattock

~ Fallowfield & Withington Food Bank ~

There never seems to be a dull moment as each week we face many demands and new challenges.

Since I last wrote we have had the Summer Tesco Collection which resulted in 3 tonnes of food. This is an amazing total for a Summer Collection and we are one of the top collectors in the UK!

Many thanks to everyone who helped in many different ways we share the load and we reap the benefits.

We were successful in becoming Charity of the year for both our Sainsbury's stores, Fallowfield & Birchfield's. Our first collection netted 79 kilos of food and we know from the store that the goods were valued at £1049. Once again a huge success.

As I write we have just finished a mammoth 12-hour stint collecting funds at Piccadilly Station. Once we have a total we will let you know.

Looking ahead we will be collecting at Sainsbury's Fallowfield on Saturday 10th September and the Christmas Tesco Collection dates have been announced as 1st, 2nd & 3rd of December we will be collecting from 2pm-10.0pm on Friday 2nd December 8am-10.00pm on Saturday 3rd December and then on Sunday 4th December sorting, and dating the food at Withington Methodist Church at 12.30 where lunch will be provided..

All who contribute to the work of the Food Bank in anyway are valued and appreciated. We have a very dedicated group of volunteers who attend the weekly sessions and those who support our various fundraising events. We are always happy to see new faces so please do think about helping wherever you possibly can.

In the last few months we have succeeded in obtaining employment for 2 of our volunteers with the Co Op retail group.

Recently I was sent a very interesting publication written for groups who support refugees and asylum seekers a number of items struck a cord and are reproduced here.

"I was hungry

and you formed a working group and discussed my hunger.

I was imprisoned

and you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release.

I was naked

and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick

and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless

*and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.
I was lonely
and you left me alone to pray for me.
You seem so holy, so close to God.
But I'm still very hungry and lonely and cold."*

The following prayer was written by Rev Phil Jump

God of all humanity

*When your people were enslaved and displaced, You led them to a
land that they could call home; When your people were in exile;
Your promise was that one day,
They would live in streets of play and laughter. When your disciples
were afraid and uncertain, You spoke of a Fathers House
With mansions and places prepared.*

*We pray today for all those who have no place to call home,
Hearing the heart-cry of your word
For those who are without refuge.
Where shelter is ours to offer*

*Grant us the will and resolve to reflect the generosity of our Creator.
Where others stand in the way of those who need safe haven
May our cry for justice never falter.
May the idols of self-interest and economic gain
Never deflect us from the ways of your Kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Colin Marchbank Smith

~ Link to Hope and Us ~

It's time to talk shoeboxes again!

Last year was our first effort to pack shoeboxes for Link to Hope, and we made a valiant effort, packing 16 or 17 boxes, if I remember rightly. It gave people a lot of pleasure working together, but there is always room for improvement. So, what did we learn from that experience?

Firstly, we can fit an awful lot into a shoebox! However, we need to be careful when buying such things as colouring books, to be sure they'll actually fit in a box. Also, extremely bulky items such as very thick hats can tend to limit how much of everything else can go into a box.

Secondly, we can choose to pack a shoebox for a family or for the elderly. The reason for the former is to give pleasure to as many family members as possible. The reason for the latter is because nowadays many elderly parents are left at home in the countryside areas, often inevitably alone and penniless, because their grown-up children have gone off to the towns to find work to fund their families. Elderly people boxes need to be suitable for both sexes.

Thirdly, we need to avoid buying confusing presents. Pretty soaps masquerading as slices of cake are really lovely BUT might just end up inside a poor unsuspecting hungry mouth!

Fourthly, reading glasses apparently are well received. I read a comment from an optician that magnifying glasses would work well, in case the reading glasses are the wrong strength, so that's a possibility too.

Fifthly, calculators need to be solar powered only, as the usual battery-operated sort are useless once the batteries die.

Finally, wind-up torches are a great help, as people have no light at night. How awful if you have a crying baby! The cheapest we found last year were bought online. Ikea has good (bright red) ones in their children's section, but they are chunkier.

We already have a selection of shoeboxes at the chapel. It would be good to start bringing items anytime from now on, and leave them in the locked room at the rear of the chapel, there's usually someone with a key. Please label your carrier bag "shoeboxes."

This year we are combining our support of this charity with our Harvest Service on 2nd October, and will be packing shoeboxes in

the second session. We can donate things from the shoebox list below, as our harvest gifts, if we want.

The collection at the Harvest Service will be used to replace the £2 coins we're asked to stick on the boxes, to buy any missing items from part-filled boxes and, if anything is left, to send as a donation to the Link to Hope Charity for them to use towards the projects they fund.

The charity also collects foreign coins, and encourages people bringing any back from holidays to give them to the organiser (that's me) who will deliver the coins in a special bag along with the shoeboxes.

Here's a bit of information from their website...sorry if you've read this before!

The kindergarten in Iasi, Romania and the Emmaus Club in Dancu Moldova are both projects aimed to target marginalised and poor children who struggle with normal schooling or because of their background or ethnic origin are marginalised and drop out. The kindergarten teaches children from Dallas Shanty Town between 4-7 years and the Emmaus Club targets children with special needs who need extra help to keep them in schools. They work with families and their children, some of whom live in Dallas Shanty town, going to meet with them regularly to extend help and advice to those that others would ignore. The team also helps with medical and dental bills, official paperwork, repairing of homes, helping with fuel in the winter etc. Projects in Moldova include the Inn of Love, a 'meals on wheels' service for the very poorest and elderly in Dancu to provide food and friendship. In addition the building of a Soup Kitchen in the village of Cosnita to feed between 50 -100 of the poorest residents. They also support adult education and training with their Farm of Hope project for ex-orphanage young men and a school for gypsy children in the Ukraine

Back to Union Chapel....we'll be delivering our shoeboxes to the nearest collection point before November 4th.

So, here's their list of items to go in shoeboxes.....happy searching!

FAMILY SHOEBOX - Ideas for filling your Shoebox

Personal grooming items - Toothbrushes and toothpaste, Shampoo/shower gel (max 300ml), Safety razors, Plasters, Bar of soap and flannel, Nail clippers/scissors, Brush/comb

Treats - Sweets, Chocolate, Hair accessories,

Fun stuff - Crayons and felt tips, Colouring books, Travel-sized games, such as dominoes, draughts and playing cards, Small toys, such as yoyo's, skipping ropes, bouncy balls, puzzles, balloons, Teddies/dolls/soft toys (which have CE labels).

N.B Handmade knitted toys are very welcome but are not to be put inside the Shoeboxes - please take them along to your Area Collector/Group Organiser when you take your Shoeboxes.

School items - Solar powered calculators, Pens and pencils, Pencil rubbers and sharpeners.

Family gifts - Plasters, Small sewing kits, Screwdriver, tape measure, New socks/tights, Gloves/hats/scarves, Headscarves, Wind up Torch or Radio, Craft/Sewing Kit, Candles & Holders, Screwdrivers/Tape Measures.

ELDERLY SHOEBOX - Ideas for filling your Shoeboxes

(the contents must be suitable for both sexes to receive i.e. gender neutral as much as possible)

Personal grooming items - Shampoo/shower gel (max 300ml), Tissues, Handkerchiefs, Small Mirror, , Bars of soap and flannel, Nail clippers/scissors, brush, comb

Fun stuff - Small games, Pens/Paper. Wind up torch/radio, craft sewing kits, playing cards, dominoes etc

Other items - Scarves/Gloves/Hat, Candles & Holders, Sweets/Chocolates, Reading Glasses, Sensory Items - eg wind chime, lavender bags, a beany item, oil burner etc

Customs regulations

Customs regulations mean there are certain items which cannot be included in your Shoeboxes. So please take care not to include any

of these things as Link to Hope could be fined or your boxes impounded.

NO medicines or medical products

NO money

NO tinned food

NO perfume

NO coffee, tea or alcohol

NO out of date items

NO books or literature

Last but by no means least, I want to thank you all for helping with this project.



Carole Walker

~ News of the Family ~

Congratulations to **Jonathan Roberts** on his success in the recent A-Level examinations. Jonathan will be going to the University of Liverpool in September to study Biology & History. Could this be related to his choice of title for his second session talk on 11th September 'Local Ecology at the time of the Domesday Book'.

We send our best wishes to **Irene Roberts** who after a period in the MRI to treat a low iron count is now in Buccleugh Lodge recuperating.

Our thoughts and good wishes are with **Hilda Linton** as she settles into her new home.

~ Minutes of the Church Meeting of Union Chapel Fallowfield (Baptist) held on Sunday 17th July 2016 at 11.20am.~

Minutes of the Church Meeting held on 17th July 2016:

Present: Gwyneth Heritage Roberts, Ian Geere, Eileen Land, Ted Land, Steve Roberts, Jonathan Roberts, Margaret Garner, David Garner, Sarah Geere, Carole Walker, Geoff Walker, Irene Roberts, Leonie Earnshaw, Michael Welford, Enid Welford, Margaret Edmonds, Nicola Hamilton, Alan Redhouse Rose Bell, Beryl Dykes, Sue Paulden, Phil Paulden

Apologies: Andy Howes, Gwen Mattock, Lorna Richardson, Colin Marchbank-Smith; Margaret Redhouse with the children

The Minutes of the May 2016 meeting (in current magazine) were approved.

Matters Arising: Same-Sex Marriage – the letter to the BU has been sent .

Any Other Business: None

1 Resignation of the Minister: The Meeting was formally notified of the resignation of Ian Geere as Minister, which had been announced to the Church last week. The news has been greeted with general sorrow. The feeling of the Meeting was that we need a Moderator help us decide on the way forward. Gwyneth HR was asked as Secretary to contact the NWBA in this regard.

2. Election to the Diaconate: Lorna R was unanimously elected to the Diaconate.

3. Linton House: Gwyneth HR updated the Meeting on the current state of the legal process with the University, and reiterated that the advice we have received from professionals is that the building is no longer viable as student housing. Michael W believes that the building is still usable and it is wrong not to look at alternative occupiers. There was support at the Meeting for investigating whether other charities may be interested in using Linton House, but any new tenant would have to take full responsibility for management. The Deacons were authorised to seek proposals from others for use of the current building.

4. Church Weekend 2016: The Church Weekend had been enjoyed by those who attended it but the lack of en-suite facilities and the number of stairs at Scargill House had caused problems. It is not currently a place to include on our list of regular venues but

would be worth another look in a few years' time if they have upgraded the facilities.

5. Change of Trusteeship for the Victoria Rd Manse – the NWBA are the current trustees and they are transferring their trustee function to the Baptist Union Corporation, subject to agreement from the churches affected. The BU Corporation are already the trustees of the main Church buildings. We haven't had sufficient notice to make a formal decision on this at this meeting, so it will come to the Church Meeting in September.

6. Harvest: It was decided to move the date for the Harvest service to 2nd October. People should bring things which they have produced, including craft items and other fruits of labours as well as food. Gwen M will take the lead on forming a group to lead the service.

7. Involving Others: Michael W felt strongly that we should find a way of working with other people who are associated with the Church but are not part of the Sunday congregation to find solutions to our problems and when organising events and festivals. Nobody was unhappy with this in principle but there was a feeling that approaches to people outside the congregation should be made in a considered way, so that misunderstandings do not arise. This was referred back to the Deacons to be taken into account in the process of planning for the future.

The Meeting closed with the singing of Shalom at 12.18pm

Date of Next Meeting: Sunday 18th September 2016