

December 2024

50p



Life



swcd-churches.org.uk



MAGAZINE EDITOR LIFE

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Articles for the January edition are due by **Sunday 8th December**

Firstly, please take note that the articles for the next edition of Life are due early as we don't wish to be collating on Boxing Day!

The star of the cover is a past Christmas decoration at the Parish Church in Street, and the frosty background, a view of my car windscreen! From inside.

The top picture on the back cover was taken outside the church at Mfuwe, Zambia, where our partner parish recently welcomed Bishop Michael on a visit. There is a report about our link with them on page 18.

I recently spent a day at Compton Dundon Church when Bell engineers started to remove the Bells in readiness for restoration, (see report on page 4). I was honoured to be asked to take photographs for their portfolio. I must thank Judy Skelding and Pat King for providing Tea, Coffee, and lovely cakes throughout the day. Among the pictures Tower captain Geoff Walker can be seen ringing the Ellacombe Chiming System for the last time and on the bottom of page 3 you can see the report on that. Below that, Steve King can be seen overseeing a bell reaching the kitchen floor, alongside one of the volunteers. The bells in the tower and one being loaded on to fork truck, make up the last 2 pictures.

Wishing you all, a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Roger.

Rector's Letter

Dear Friends,

'The meaning is in the Waiting'

As I write this in mid-November, I've just 'enjoyed' my first burst of Christmas music in a shop. Maybe I've been fortunate to have had to wait so long? I wonder when Christmas starts in your household. In August when the first things appear in the shops? When the Christmas supermarket adverts hit our screens? On Christmas Eve amidst the last-minute panic buying?

I must admit I find this pre-Christmas season tough, not because it's busy for your average vicar (although it is). Not because of the surfeit of mince pies, but just because it's actually Advent. Whatever our TVs, retailers or school nativity plays are telling us, Christmas isn't here yet. Instead, we're in Advent, a period of waiting, a period when we look for the now and not yet Kingdom.

I'm delighted that this Advent, as a church, we are being encouraged to read an Advent book together 'The meaning is in the Waiting' by Dr Paula Gooder. In her writing, she draws on biblical stories of sustained, often painful times of waiting; reminding us that this is part of our Christian experience.

We're not good at it, are we? Whether waiting to unwrap presents, to hear news or move onto the next thing in our life, we are an impatient people. This includes me. This Advent, can I encourage us all to make time to set aside this impatience, to make time for the waiting, to make time for God in the waiting.

The problem with Christmas starting so early is that by the day itself arrives, it can feel like something of an anti-climax; blink

twice and it's over. Advent is a wonderful opportunity in which we can prepare again for the wonder of the shepherds, the joy of the Angels and the peace of the Christ-child coming into our broken and needy world.

Happy Advent!

“Come Thou long expected Jesus,
born to set Thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in Thee”

With my love and prayers to you and yours,

Ana

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Ringling out the old...preparing for the new

The bells at St Andrew's Church were rung for the final time in their current format on Sunday, November 10th. It was a special occasion for this historic moment as Geoff Walker rang out the peal before the Remembrance Service.



We have now reached an exciting phase in the bells restoration project, as building work has begun in preparation for our new ringing gallery in the church tower.

The Ellacombe chiming system seen in the photo on the back cover will no longer be required.

We look forward to hearing the bells rung 'full circle' by bellringers in the Spring. Pat.

St Andrews Compton Dundon Bells

After several years of planning and fundraising, the bells of St Andrew's Compton Dundon were taken from the tower this week to start their journey to Nicholson's Engineering in Bridport. There they will be restored and repaired and returned in time for Easter 2025 when they will be pealed for the first time in well over 100 years.

Watching them being lowered from the tower was both exciting and emotional. Over two days pulleys, ropes, trolleys, chains and muscle carefully and expertly lowered the bells through the trap and onto the floor. Over 250 years ago the bells would have been installed in the tower, using the same methods which is marvellous to imagine. Other than electricity (for lighting and power tools) and a fork-lift truck, rather than horses/donkeys, our predecessors would have felt very much at home with the work this week.

The 20th and 21st November 2024 were memorable days in the history of St Andrew's Compton Dundon, and we now look forward to the return of the bells next year.

In mid-January 2025 we will be organising a trip to Nicholson's Engineering in Bridport to see the bells while they are being restored. The aim is to reach Bridport for 11.30 am and the tour will last until 1pm after which we will go to a pub for lunch before returning to Compton Dundon. Would you like to come? If so, please contact Paul Atkins at guncrafts@btinternet.com. It should be a very interesting outing.

Judy Skelding

WOMEN OF GOD CONFERENCE 2025 – YEOVIL

A number of us are planning to attend this conference at the Gateway Church in Yeovil on the 22 February.

Tickets are now on sale with the early bird discount closing on December 31st. In previous years, the conference has sold out and so please don't delay, if you want to go, but book your tickets as soon as possible.

You can find more information at...

<https://www.womenofgodconference.org.uk/general-6> or contact me It would be good to go as a group from SWCD Churches and share lifts etc., so if you do decide to book, please let me know you are coming..
Ana Lawrence.

St Andrew's Big Breakfast

On Saturday, November 16th St Andrew's Church hosted our annual Big Breakfast in Meadway Hall.

This is a much anticipated event that is enjoyed by both villagers and those from further afield.

175 delicious breakfasts were served throughout the course of the morning. There was also an opportunity to browse an array of attractive stalls around the perimeter of the hall.

A large team of helpers ensured that the shopping was done, hall was prepared, raffle baskets wrapped, breakfasts ordered, cooked and served, tea and coffee made, toast ready, washing up sorted, ... and more.

So a BIG 'thank you' to this wonderful team, and of course to everyone who came and supported the event, it was a very happy morning enjoyed by all. Pat

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Walton Nativity weekend.

We are so sorry to cancel this weekend due to a clash of dates. We hope to be able to put it on next year. Sandra.

CHRISTMAS NEWS

There is a lot going on in the coming weeks, here's how you can make sure you know what is going on:

Lifeline

Our weekly news sheet which is e-mailed to those on our e-mail list and available in paper form in our churches has details of upcoming events and activities.

Website

www.swcd-churches.org.uk, Contains a wealth of information and a full calendar of everything that's happening.

Facebook

Follow SWCD Churches to see events and updates.

Instagram

We are now on Instagram swcdchurchesba16. Why not give us a follow and find out more?

Noticeboards

Check out our church internal and external notice board for the latest news

Flyers

You will find flyers containing details of Christmas services for your church and Christmas events for families in our churches. Please pick these up and share them with friends, neighbours and family.

If you still can't find what you're looking for, please contact either the church office, your warden or a member of the clergy team.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at our Christmas services and events.

Ana Lawrence

Walton Carol Service.

We look forward to a packed church for our Carol Service on Sunday 15th December at 6.00. At this time when we get so busy rushing around, it is such a blessing to have these times of reflection and joy to remind us the meaning of the season. We would love to see you. Sandra.

Christmas Eve at Walton.

Our crib service will be at 4.30 on Christmas eve and our midnight communion will start at 11.30. We would love to see you there. Sandra.

Church decorating.

As we would love our Church to look festive for all the Christmas services so we are asking for donations of poinsettia as we did last year for the 14th December. Our decorators will be working hard on that day so we are ready for our services and the school services. Sandra.

Walton Coffee morning A small choir from Walton school will be singing for us at our Christmas coffee morning 10.30-11.30 on December 19th. All are welcome. Sandra.

My Faith Journey

I was lucky to be born into a Christian family – well, let me rephrase that, I don't count myself as lucky, but blessed.

Let me begin again – I feel so blessed that I was born into a Christian family, a family where we said bedtime prayers, we said grace before a meal, we went to church on a Sunday; we did these things not as a religious routine, not as a ritual, but because of relationship, a relationship with our heavenly Father. So, I suppose I almost inherited my belief, my faith. But there comes a time when that inherited faith of a family must be adopted as a personal faith, and I guess for me that happened when I left home & went to university.

When I was 18, I lived with my family in Hastings, a lovely coastal town; so it seemed natural that I would move to another seaside town – I studied Environmental Biology in Wales at Aberystwyth, and again I was lucky (no, not lucky, but blessed), because I know that God was there, firstly finding me a room - the University Halls were oversubscribed, and there literally was 'no room in the inn' for me when I arrived – I later learned that my parents were battling in prayer & I was found a room sharing with a lovely girl who was the perfect room-mate for me. I discovered the Christian Union, and a fantastic church, and my faith grew.

I can't pretend that it's all been plain sailing, I know that my life has wandered sometimes away from where God would have wanted me; but isn't that part of God's amazing love for us – He doesn't want to control us like a puppet master, instead He gives

us free will; and when we make mistakes, He waits patiently for us to find our way back, and then welcomes us home with an all-forgiving embrace.

Zooming forward to the present time, many of you will have seen me up at the front of the Mission Church, either involved with leading the worship, or indeed leading a service – these are things that I never thought I would be capable of doing. As a child I was painfully shy, and would indeed still call myself a shy person, but God had a plan for me, and when God calls you, He also equips you. I don't always find it easy, being up the front, and I know that I'm only able to serve in this way because God has enabled me. Letting God take the lead can sometimes take me out of my comfort zone, but remembering that God is there beside me, is both comforting and strengthening.

I don't know what God has in store for me next, or where my faith journey will take me, but I am confident that God is with me - Deuteronomy 31:8 "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Sarah Woodward

Christmas Special

Connections@theMission

2-30pm - 4pm

Thursday 19th December

Mission Church Street

There will be a Christmas Message, a cuppa, cake and conversation. All are welcome to come along.



FOUR CHRISTMAS QUESTIONS

As we enter the Christmas season, here are a few questions that I'm sure we will all be asked in the coming days and weeks. In the hairdressers, on the bus or somewhere else? How about using these suggested replies this year as we seek to 'Follow the Star' and be a church family who 'worship God, love our communities and grow in faith'?

Are you ready for Christmas?

No, not really, because at the moment I'm still in Advent. Christians like me mark this time of year as one of waiting, both for the coming of Jesus at Christmas and for His coming again. Yes, I'm making some Christmas preparations but I'm also trying to focus on the real reason for the season. Our church has recommended a really good book by Paula Gooder on the season of Advent and I'd love to lend you a copy if you would be interested?

Got any Christmas plans this year?

Yes, I certainly have! Alongside the fun, binge TV watching and family stuff (delete as applicable or insert your own) I'm going to be going to our church to celebrate Christmas with Carol services, Crib services and services for Christmas Eve / Christmas Day itself. Why not join me, I'd love to bring you along if you would enjoy that - they're a friendly bunch!

Christmas is all about the children, isn't it?

You're right, Christmas is about the birth of a child, Jesus, but it's much more than that! It's a special time of celebration for everyone, but if you've got children in your life, why not bring them along to our Crib Services on Christmas Eve or other events specially for children. I've got a flyer here that I'd love to share with you which lists all the family focused events our churches are offering, although children are always welcome to all of our services.

And finally.....

Have you got family or friends coming for Christmas this year?

Yes, and I'm going to invite them to come along to church with me.

Ana Lawrence

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It is beginning to look a lot like a mystery!

No, this is not a murder mystery, I think?

But this is the title of the benefice panto this year. There is a mystery of sorts, although I can't say too much as this might give away the plot.

The panto will take place on Sunday 12th of January at 6.00pm at the Mission church. With such a talented cast, the cost reflects this...it is free. So please put the date into your diary and then think about who you can ask to bring along.

If you want to know more, let me know.

David Hatrey

Bishop's letter

– 'Jesus, the Light of the World'

'All is calm, all is bright' may not be the words that many of us would use to describe our experience of either the run up to Christmas or the feast itself. Presents to buy and wrap, food to order and cook, events and church services to be part of. And that's before we've negotiated the big day itself. I saw one website recently that claimed that Christmas is considered as one of the six most stressful life events, along with divorce, moving house and changing jobs!

In the midst of such chaos, our churches offer an opportunity to find peace during this busy time – of stillness, quiet and the opportunity to stand back from all the pressures that the season contains. This year, the Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas is Follow the Star: Calm and Bright. The theme draws on some of the lyrics of the famous carol, Silent Night:

"Silent Night! Holy Night!

All is calm, all is bright..."

To be calm and bright is to be invited into the still centre of the Christmas story. It's to contemplate Mary holding the new-born Jesus, the Light of the World. It's to open ourselves to the joy of the angels as they tell the shepherds "Do not be afraid - Fear not!" It's to encounter the wonder of the wise men as they discover that the gift of this child is for the whole world.

May your Christmas 2024 be 'Calm and Bright'!

Bishop Michael Beasley

Bishop of Bath and Wells

SHORT TERM MISSION IN SOUTH AMERICA

Hi, I'm Imogen, I worship at the Mission Church, and I am going on a mission with an agency called Latin Link to South America.

Latin Link is a Christian charity that support communities by sending out teams to aid in projects and spread the word of God. I will be heading to Columbia and Ecuador for 2 months each where I will be living within a community, supporting their projects and serving the local church. I am very excited to live within the heart of a community, to experience new cultures and share the love of Christ in a completely different environment. Some examples of projects undertaken by previous groups are reconstruction of church buildings, teaching English classes or helping to run children's camps. I am so looking forward to putting my faith in God, giving what I can offer and learning over in Columbia and Ecuador.

While I am away early March to early July 2025, I would really appreciate your support through prayer. We will be sending weekly updates to the website <https://latinlink.org>.

If you would like to support me and the charity Latin Link financially please have a word with me or visit the charity website. All donations go to the projects we are aiding in these countries and providing the materials they might require.

Imogen Lowndes Northcott
Mission Church

Eco Church Silver Awards

I begin with good news, Walton and our two Street churches have been granted Silver Eco Church Awards, Compton Dundon are about to apply. Thank you to the members of the Eco Church group and all those who have contributed to the effort involved in getting us there. Much of what is involved is woven into the things we do day be day and, regardless of whether we go on to work for Gold or not, we need to continue to show ourselves in keeping with what we have achieved so far. Which brings me to the thorny issue of church heating.

Church Heating

In addition to the carbon crisis faced by the world, and so ourselves, we face a financial challenge in our churches which means we need to examine our expenditure including that on energy. If we are to continue to keep our churches open and thriving, as well as increasing funding, we do need to cut costs. Saving expenditure on energy frees funding for other activities.

Current situation

Longer term plans for Walton and Compton Dundon aim for more efficient heating. The Mission Church is used regularly throughout the week and the heating adjusted to suit that use. For many years now it has been the understanding that the heating at the Parish Church in Street is required to be on sufficiently to maintain an even temperature which results in higher energy costs, almost £4000 last year. The reason for this is that the Church has underfloor heating and it was believed that lower temperatures had previously caused the floor to warp, remedial work was carried out a number of years ago, since then there appears to have been no attempt to discover whether this was sufficient to solve the problem.

Seeking a Solution

A meeting was held with Mark Lidster, the Diocesan Church Buildings Adviser, to discuss the way forward. The initial plan was to turn the heating in the Parish Church off completely for a few weeks, monitor the temperature and see if there were any adverse effects. If the floor was affected solutions to that problem

would be sought. On further reflection it was decided to put the heating on occasionally for services and events and off at other times. The frost protection setting means that the heating would always come on if the temperature dropped below 5°C. The floor will be monitored; maximum/minimum thermometers have been installed inside and outside the building, readings will be recorded daily for several weeks to inform future decisions.

In our discussions it was pointed out that we have become used to warmer homes and arriving at church in heated cars; those walking or cycling may arrive feeling warm. We have come to expect a warm building. In the past going to church in the cooler months meant dressing in appropriate clothing and not taking coats (or hats) off when we arrived. Perhaps our churches are too warm, many churches and cathedrals have turned their heating down or off to save money as well as to reduce their carbon footprint. We may need to get used to our churches being cooler, even one or two degrees could make some difference to costs whilst not being detrimental to health if we wear appropriate clothing and keep our coats on for services.

Although the Parish Church is open daily and visited by students and other visitors, services and meetings when numbers of people are present for longer periods represent a smaller part of the week. We could turn the heating off completely. Alternatively, we could have it on, as other churches in the Benefice do, to warm the building for services and other set occasions. The rest of the time the heating could be off, with active frost protection; this would use less energy and reduce costs. We need to be aware that when the time comes to negotiate new energy contracts they are likely to be on a higher tariff as energy prices have risen since our previous contracts were agreed. Any long term decisions will be informed by the information gained from turning the heating off and discussion.

Susan Ripley (Street), Eco Church Group

ZAMBIA OPPORTUNITY IN 2025

As a benefice, we are developing a partnership with the parish of Mfuwe, in Eastern Zambia. The Diocese of Bath and Wells, who have a long-term link with the Anglican Dioceses in Zambia, are now offering a travel bursary for church members who might want to go and visit our brothers and sisters there next year. Read on for details

Thanks to the generosity of the late Miss Coppen, the Diocese of Bath and Wells has a legacy specifically for the benefit of the Zambia Link.

The World Mission and Global Justice Governance Group, with the Diocesan Board of Finance approval, has decided to use part of this legacy to support travel to Zambia. This is available for parishes, benefices, and schools wishing to start or strengthen Zambia links. Curates and family groups may also apply. A limited number of bursaries are available for 2025, with normally one per parish, benefice, or school.

The deadline for applications is 31 December 2024, with notifications by 31 January 2025. For more information, please email Martin Canning m scanning@btinternet.com

Kevin Lawrence

Children's Hospice South West

Thank you to all of you who have left used postage stamps in the foyer of the Mission Church throughout this year. I have passed them on to Charlton Farm, Wraxall to be sold.

I understand that Eddie Farrell, the Co-founder & Chief Executive, of the Children's Hospice SW, is planning to retire in the new year.

In the early 1990s Eddie & his wife Jill, who had children with life limited illnesses, felt the need to provide families in the South West with a hospice which would give love, care and support to the whole family, without having to travel huge distances outside the SW.

I first started fundraising then and with your help we held coffee mornings, raffles, set up standing orders, did a sponsored walk & held dances to which money raised went to help their dream come true.

Three children's hospices now provide care & support to more than 500 families every year.

Little Bridge House, Fremington, near Barnstaple was opened in 1995. After a huge demand for CHSW care Charlton Farm, Wraxall, near Bristol was opened in 2007 and then Little Harbour, St Austell opened in 2011.

Eddie wishes to thank everyone who have helped sponsor these projects in whatever small way, and will remain eternally grateful to everyone. Many thanks for your continued support.

Carolyn Dulborough

Operation Christmas Child.

We took 63 shoeboxes along to a drop off place this year and the boxes were prayed over as they were packed and prayed for as they left the Mission Church by the prayer group. What a wonderful start on their journey and we ask that they bless each child who receives them and shows our love to them from a distance. Thank you all who packed a box in person or on line or donated towards the transport. Yet another of our benefices mission and care for others. Sandra (Walton)

Calculating the Common Fund

You may have read about, or heard people speaking about, the Common Fund, previously known as the Parish Share. This is the amount of money that the Diocese asks each parish to contribute to central Diocesan funds. From various conversations I have had, and I know others have described to me, I thought it would be worth spending a bit of time explaining how the amount each parish is asked to pay is calculated, which is now based on a new methodology.

Over the last few months the Diocese has conducted extensive consultations with parishes about this and I believe the new method, whilst not perfect, (after all no one likes paying what sometimes feels like a church tax) is much fairer and more transparent than it previously was. For those of you who want all the detail I suggest you go to the Diocesan website and download the documents available there which gives all the details.

In summary, however, for each parish, there are three elements to the figure calculated for their Common Fund assessment for 2025:

Part A Direct Ministry Cost. This reflects the costs of the stipendiary (paid) clergy working in the benefice, excluding curates. It's different from the amount of my stipend, as it also covers the costs of clergy housing, pensions, training etc.

Part B Diocesan wide costs. This is an amount, calculated on the number of adult members of our worshipping community, which covers the central Diocesan costs including those for education, safeguarding, training building support etc.

Part C Mutuality and generosity. This is a percentage of A and B above, which is used to support parishes in the poorest areas of our Diocese and those very rural areas which have a low population density (what is being called 'rural scarcity'). Levels of poverty are based on independent national government figures for each parish (the indices of multiple deprivation).

The Common Fund is no longer calculated based on electoral roll numbers, parish population or other measures. One other thing that is new is that each benefice is given a total figure for all of its' parishes and invited to consider how they, as a church family, might want to share the costs. This is something that our PCCs will be discussing over the coming months.

There is no doubt that the Common Fund represents a significant financial challenge for us, as for all parishes across the Diocese. I'm sure all of us would rather that we paid less, but that does rather beg the question; who then should pay more?

Please speak to your Treasurer or your warden if you want any further information. Ana Lawrence

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Table top sales.

Another successful week for us at the WI Frost fair and Compton Dundon's big breakfast in addition to our table in the church. A big thank you to Jackie and Philip Daniells, Sue and Maggie for all your wonderful crafts and edible gifts. It is a constant battle but the support we receive at these events and our regular coffee morning boosts our funds in ways we don't imagine. Thank you all so much for your ongoing support. Sandra.

DIOCESAN SYNOD UPDATE

The Diocesan Synod is the 'Parliament' for the Diocese of Bath and Wells (of which SWCD Churches is part) and both I, as a representative of the laity, and Rachel Pengelly as a clergy representative are elected members.

The Synod recently met, and I thought it would be helpful to share a brief summary of some of the things discussed and agreed:

We met in the week that saw the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury over historic safeguarding failings in the church and, inevitably, this dominated both the Bishop's address and some of the discussions. We were encouraged, in the light of the widely reported issues, to be a people that strove to make church distinctly different, a place that was both safe and known to be safe for all who chose to come. We were also reminded that safeguarding is an issue for us all and should be part of our cultural 'DNA' rather than the responsibility of just the parish safeguarding officers or the vicar.

Bishop Michael went on to talk about the Diocesan vision and some of the strategy that underpins it including a challenge to be a growing church that transforms communities. The specific encouragement was to seek to grow our congregations by at least one adult and one child per year. All this should be underpinned by prayer.

We were asked to approve the Diocesan budget for 2025 which, as has been already reported in previous editions of Life, highlights a considerable ongoing challenge for us all. The full budget will be available on the diocesan website for those who wish to read it but in summary we approved a deficit budget,

with annual expenditure exceeding income by over £2million. There were a number of factors at play but principally the Common Fund parish contributions, which represents the vast majority of Diocesan income, was not being fully paid by all parishes, leading to an income shortfall. To cover this, the diocese is selling land and surplus clergy housing, but this is not a long-term solution. We will all be invited to consultations during 2025 as to how we can address this deficit in the longer term.

Finally, we looked at an action plan to meet the Diocesan target to achieve net carbon emissions by 2030. There was much work being done, with significant external funding being raised by the Diocesan staff to achieve this.

If you would like any more information, please do have a word with either Rachel or myself

the Diocesan Synod meets three times a year and we will try and keep you up to date with what is discussed and agreed

Kevin Lawrence Mission Church

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Congratulations

To Edwin Reeve, Churchwarden of Street Churches
who celebrates his 80th Birthday this month.

also

Elaine Howard (Parish Church Street)

Who was recently Confirmed. (more details next month)

GIFT FOR THE DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE HUMANITARIAN APPEAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

During November we took a collection in our churches in response to the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East. This was sent, via Tearfund, to support the response.

Tearfund have sent the following message of thanks, explaining some of the ways in which the money is being spent:

A little bit of info on what we are doing. Among other places and projects, we are responding in Gaza at the moment through a member of the Integral Alliance which is a global group of Christian relief and development agencies. Tearfund was instrumental in its founding (and recently celebrated 20 years of its existence). The Integral Alliance's main focus is collaboration and coordination in disaster response. Over the years we have both supported the work of other members and benefited from their funding of our responses. The very challenging situation in the Middle East is front of mind for most of these organisations, and we are now working with Alliance member International Health Partners (IHP) to support their work in Gaza.

The health care crisis in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon has been mounting. A massive reduction in health service availability; acute shortages of essential medicines; attacks on healthcare infrastructure; crowded, unhygienic living conditions with critically limited access to basic resources like clean water; continued exposure to traumatic events; and escalating food insecurity – are all contributing to a healthcare catastrophe. Since the start of the conflict, IHP has reached over 600,000 patients with 18 shipments. We are now partnering with them in this and supporting them in bringing vital medical supplies to those who need it most. This will ensure a wide range of medications and supplies- from primary healthcare like antibiotics and antifungals, to more specialised products including mental health products and wound dressings for complex injuries - can reach people who need assistance urgently.

Thank you so much for supporting this most urgent response work. Please pray with us that people who are most in need will receive help in time

Kevin Lawrence

Believe

It lifts us from our sorrow,
It fills us with aspiration
To create our own innovation,
Takes us up to our mountain view
Dreams of a better tomorrow
To show us what we can do.
To lose it makes us bereft
Of having nothing left,
So we need to nourish the spark

No matter how ferocious the dark,
Of better days ahead
That are now dreams in our head
Into our future reality instead.
The fuel to give us this drive
Is something we all have inside,
Just believe and set it free
For HOPE will make a better thee.

James Main
(Mission Church)

December 2012

45p



LIFE



www.streetandwalton.co.uk

Editor's Lookback. On reading through this 16 page magazine I discovered that 9 year old Isaac Day was the artist of this front cover. Note that the website address has changed now

Today, practice kindness

'MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO [SHOW] ... KINDNESS.'
2 Peter 1:5-7 NIV

Have you noticed that the busier you get the less you seem to show kindness to others? That's because kindness is 'the fruit of the Spirit,' not a product of the flesh (Galatians 5:22). Kindness doesn't happen in a vacuum, or as the result of a good Sunday morning sermon. You have to practice it. You have to do what Peter says: 'Make every effort to [show] ... kindness.'

Before William McKinley became President of the United States he was riding to his congressional office one morning on a tram. A sick woman got on and unable to find a seat clutched an overhead strap next to one of McKinley's political colleagues. Pathetically this colleague hid behind his newspaper to avoid offering her his seat. Immediately McKinley rose, gave her his seat and took her place in the aisle. Years later when he was President this same colleague was recommended for the position of ambassador but McKinley refused. He said, 'If his kindness is of the quality he showed that morning on the tram, I fear what he might do representing us in a foreign land.' The disappointed congressman never did learn why McKinley chose someone else for the job.

What good are tireless efforts fuelled by personal ambition or a desire to serve that's rooted in a need to control? Face it; without kindness what good are all our titles, traditions, testimonies and theology? If you don't know the answer here it is: 'If I had the gift of prophecy and knew all about ... the future, knew everything about everything, but didn't love others, what good would it do?' (1 Corinthians 13:2 TLB). So today, make up your mind to practice kindness.

From the daily readings in 'The Word for Today'. This booklet of devotional readings is published every three months and is available free of charge through the generosity of supporters, from: UCB Operations Centre, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JF. Tel: 0845 60 40 401. Email: ucb@ucb.co.uk

UCB is short for United Christian Broadcasters, who also produce Christian radio and TV programmes available on DAB digital radio, TV and online. Details at ucbmedia.co.uk



