



Newsletter
March 2018



*After darkness, light;
after winter, spring;
after dying, life:
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Fred Pratt Green
Singing the Faith 292 verse 1*

Welcome to the March Newsletter

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Thank you for reading this newsletter and thank you to those who have contributed items.

The last date for items for the April newsletter is **Sunday 25th March**. The newsletter will be available on Sunday 1st April. This gives you an extra week to get your items in so do let me know what you would like to share. I look forward to hearing from you.

Janet Watts telephone: 717492 email:
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A Message from our Minister



Travelling companions

As a commuter, spending many hours on motorways and trains, I travelled with a lot of people. Often, I saw the same people day after day. We travelled together, but we weren't travelling companions. We were mostly alone, in our own worlds. Not very encouraging, especially when troubles came.

Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan illustrates the dangers of travelling alone in the first century: After the violent assault, fellow travellers ignore the victim, until unexpected kindness is shown from an unlikely source.

I recently asked a church group about the experience of receiving unexpected kindness. They spoke about the delight of a surprise visit in difficult times, of being treated with kind consideration when struggling, and of being supported by people who they had regarded as opponents.

For Christian people especially, travelling through life is something that is best done together. This might be in your Bible Study group, your Sunday services or Messy Church service, or the group you attend. This month, as we travel through the rest of Lent and Holy Week, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, let's encourage each other, and may God continue to help us be travelling companions.

Graham

Church Family News

Congratulations and all good wishes to Maurice Sherwood for his 80th birthday on the 18th March. May God's blessing rest upon you.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Please join me for tea, coffee and cake after the service on the 11th March to help me celebrate my 70th birthday on 14th March.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Please remember Sheila Sutherland and her family in your prayers following the death of Sheila's husband, Bob. We pray that God will give his peace and comfort, sustain them.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We pray for Janet and John May following the death of their daughter, Emma. Please also remember Emma's husband and two sons in your prayers. May God surround the whole family with his love and care.

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Please remember Connie Kilpin, who is in hospital, in your prayers.

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Church Flowers in March

We thank those who have agreed to donate the flowers this month.

4th March	Linda Pitts
11th March	Janet Watts
18th March	Frances Impey
25th March	Carole and Lance Mason

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Women's World Day of Prayer

The Women's World Day of Prayer is on Friday 2nd March. The local services will be held at

Ampthill Methodist Church, at 10.30 am

(not 11.00 am as stated last month)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Flitwick, at 7.30 pm.

Everyone, including men, will be welcome at these services.

The following is taken from the Women's World Day of Prayer website.



The interdenominational movement of the Women's World Day of Prayer invites everyone to attend one of over 5,000 services being held on Friday 2nd March with the title 'All God's Creation is Very Good!' We will join an estimated 3 million people around the world that day in a service which has been written this year by the women of Suriname in South America.

Starting in Samoa as the sun rises, and ending as the sun sets off the coast of American Samoa, the service will have been translated into more than 95 languages and 1000 dialects as we are reminded that we have responsibilities in caring for this wonderful world we live in. With its vast rainforest and wealth of resources, Suriname asks us to pray for conservation and the protection of wildlife, through an awareness of pollution, misuse and abuse, as well as for the situation in Suriname and concerns for the future.

This is not simply a day of prayer for women, but for everyone who cares about our world and those who live in it.

My journey to becoming a Local Preacher

I set out in early 2016 to become a local preacher in the Methodist church. I moved from on note to being on trial in late 2016. The concept of being on trial always seems to me to be mildly alarming.

I have been part of a monthly tutorial group ably managed by Rev Gill Baalham and Liz Little and have had much support and encouragement. The course we are following is web based and the first 4 modules are for worship leaders and local preachers. The tutorial group is a smaller group now as life tends to get in the way of keeping up with course completion.

Looking back on my aspirations in 2016, I was looking to undertake regular bible study through the daily readings on the Methodist website and praying daily using the Methodist prayer handbook and to complete my study and assignments for my portfolio.

What I have discovered is that it is really difficult to introduce a regular discipline when you work full time and wrestle with family life, circuit stewarding and trying to live life well with regular exercise. Since coming on trial, I have led worship 3 times per quarter which doesn't seem much but is enough. I put the dates in my diary thinking they are well spaced and then as they approach, I seem to have 1001 other things to do.

What have I learnt. I have learnt to pause, to appreciate the value of silence in worship, to slow down and speak clearly and simply about the joy of following Jesus.

I definitely know more about the Bible and what it means for us today and am much more confident to lead prayer.

I have learnt what it is to be a Methodist and that Methodism really suits me and my outlook. Having been raised a Methodist, it's sometimes hard to know how that is different from attending another

denomination. What I really enjoy about being a Methodist is our acceptance of difference, the emphasis on interpreting the Bible through reason, tradition and experience. Our ability to move on with changes in society and still find joy in the essential message of Jesus-Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul and love your neighbour as yourself.

I have also learnt that worshipping as a Methodist is different in every church in the circuit, that there is a lot of pleasure and joy to be found in all the churches, that God is present and active all over Bedfordshire, that informal and café worship is different in every church and that the songs we think are familiar are not familiar in every church.

I have become far more confident about sharing my faith at work and with non- church going friends.

I am really enjoying leading worship. I started out working with Geoff Talbot, my mentor which has provided me a good foundation. I have learnt the value of worship leaders in understanding the needs of their particular congregation and in the support that is gained from working with someone else.

My highlights have been taking part in worship on Women's World Day of prayer and at the Christian Aid service. I was especially privileged to lead worship on Remembrance Day in Flitwick.

I also worked with Angie Woodcraft, Graham Claydon-Knights and Janet Watts on Bible month last year looking at the book of James. We are doing the same again with Jonah this year. The focus on one book provides the ability for a more in depth look and understanding which you do not achieve following the lectionary every week.

I do miss worshipping at Flitwick every week. It is really easy to feel isolated and less rooted in a community when you are not there regularly.

I am teetering on the brink of getting my first portfolio in for the 31 March so it can be assessed (6 assessments, 5 service reflections and congregation reviews, 2 service reflections on services led by others, and a significant reflection on my journey so far and understanding my role and sense of calling) which is a feat in itself- I am not the best at completing /finishing.

Thank you to you all for your continued support and encouragement and for keeping me rooted in my family at Flitwick Methodist Church.

Anne Foley
Local preacher on trial



Churches Together Lent Prayer Spaces

On each of the Saturdays in Lent a quiet prayer space is available from 10.00 am to 12 noon at one of the churches in Ampthill and Flitwick. The theme for the mornings is the ‘I am’ sayings of Jesus.

Date	Church	Theme
March 3rd	Flitwick Methodist	‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’ (John 14:6)
March 10th	Sacred Heart, Flitwick	‘I am the Vine’ (John 15:1)
March 17th	Ampthill Baptist	‘I am the Light of the World’ (John 8:12, 9:5)
March 24th	St Andrews, Ampthill	‘I am the Good Shepherd’ (John 10:11,14)

Our church will be open on 3rd March. There will be prayer stations based on the theme of Jesus words ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’. Everyone is welcome to attend and spend some quiet time with God as we travel through the Lenten period. Refreshments will be available.

Prayer Leaflet
March 2018



*Make way, make way, for Christ the King
in splendour arrives;
fling wide the gates and welcome him
into your lives.*

*Graham Kendrick
Singing the Faith 204 verse 1*

Prayer Suggestions for March

3 days beginning 1st March - Women's World Day of Prayer

- Thursday Remember our Christian brothers and sisters worldwide.
- Friday Pray for the WWDP services throughout the world and the local services at Flitwick and Ampthill.
- Saturday Pray for the women of Suriname, who prepared this year's service.

Week beginning 4th March - Fairtrade Fortnight

- Sunday Pray for the farmers not at present receiving fair prices for their produce.
- Monday Pray for those who work to improve the fairness of prices farmers are paid.
- Tuesday Thank God for those receiving better prices for their goods because of the work of the Fairtrade Foundation.
- Wednesday Pray for those in poorer countries, that their produce can be sold to those who pay fair prices.
- Thursday As a church we support Fairtrade. Help us to spread the word to others.
- Friday Help us to seek out Fairtrade goods and support the shops that sell Fairtrade goods wherever we can.
- Saturday Thank God that we can purchase so many different goods which have a Fairtrade mark.

Week beginning 11th March - Mothers

- Sunday Thank God for your own mother on this Mothering Sunday.
- Monday Pray for new mothers.
- Tuesday Pray for single mothers.
- Wednesday Pray for expectant mothers, especially in countries where there is inadequate medical care.
- Thursday Pray for mothers and their babies and toddlers who come to Baby Comes Too.

- Friday Pray for mothers who are not able to look after their children and whose children are being fostered.
- Saturday Pray for mothers and families being helped by Action for Children.

Week beginning 18th March - Spring

- Sunday As spring begins this week praise God that he has brought us through the season of winter.
- Monday Thank God for the warmer weather of Spring.
- Tuesday Thank God for spring flowers which remind us of God’s creativity and care for each one of us.
- Wednesday It’s spring today! Thank God for the hope the new season brings.
- Thursday As we see more and more signs of spring may we be grateful to God for the variety of the natural world.
- Friday Pray for farmers and market gardeners, whose busy time of the year is beginning.
- Saturday Pray that God will help us to prepare ourselves for Holy Week.

Week beginning 25th March - Holy Week

- Sunday Praise God for Jesus as we follow Jesus into Jerusalem on this Palm Sunday.
- Monday Jesus wept over Jerusalem; pray for Jerusalem today.
- Tuesday As Jesus cleansed the Temple may he cleanse us too.
- Wednesday Jesus served others by washing his disciples’ feet. May we be willing to serve others too.
- Thursday Jesus told his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane to pray they would not fall into temptation. Let us pray this same prayer.
- Friday Thank God that Jesus was willing to die on the cross for us.
- Saturday As we await the joy of Easter Sunday may we contemplate all that Jesus went through for us.



Services in March

Please remember in your prayers those leading our worship this month, especially during the week prior to the service.

4th March	10.30 am	Rev. Eric Royden
	6.00 pm	Richard Crane
11th March	10.30 am	Rev. Graham Claydon-Knights
		Parade Service/All Age
	6.00 pm	Brian Addington
18th March	10.30 am	David Mead
	6.00 pm	Keith Lilley
25th March	10.30 am	Janet Watts Café Church
	6.00 pm	Rev. Peter Byass

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### **Monday 19th March 3.30 pm – 5.30 pm**

Refreshments, craft, stories, fun, singing, and a cooked tea.

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Please contact Graham on 01525 713468 for more information.

Donations welcome to cover costs.

**Future Dates: 30th April, 21st May**

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## Christian Aid News

You may remember that last year I congratulated and thanked some of you for 25 years of Christian Aid house to house collection. At the time, we did not realise that that would be the last house to house collection in Flitwick and Ampthill. We had some concerns last year about the fact that Central Bedfordshire now displays No Cold Calling signs as you enter each town or village and it has been confirmed by Christian Aid that this notice now also applies to charities.

I can hear some of you breathing a sigh of relief! However many years we have been carrying out this act of witness, it is not an easy job. But it does mean that the £1596.58 collected by Flitwick Methodist members and friends will not materialise and likewise, the grand total of £4565.40 collected in the Flitwick and Ampthill area will not be raised.

The Ampthill and District Christian Aid Group has some ideas to consider for Christian Aid fund raising and I will share those with you next month. But two definite dates for your diary are another **BIG BREKKIE** here at Flitwick Methodist on Saturday May 12th and a Christian Aid Week service on Sunday May 13th.

Another date that doesn't fall in Christian Aid Week is an opportunity on August 31st to provide Flitwick Market refreshments. Could you make a cake?

Please pray for the work of Christian Aid and think about whether you might help by holding a small event like a coffee morning, cake sale, soup lunch or maybe by doing a sponsored walk, knit etc. Please speak to me if you have any fund raising ideas.

*Ann Blair*



*The Upper Room*

At Ampthill Methodist Church on alternate Thursdays

Dates in March – 1st and 15th

Coffee or tea and cakes from 10.00am

Light Lunches from 11.30 am – 1.00 pm

Proceeds after expenses for local charities.

All are welcome



*Ampthill Ladies Group*

Meetings on alternate Thursdays at 7.30 pm

8th March – Alan Goodger

Wild life photography in a town garden

22nd March – Michael Carr

Karibuni Trust

All Ladies Welcome



*Circuit Prayer Meetings*

You will be welcome at the Circuit Prayer Meetings.

Monday 12th March at 4.15 pm  
at the Putnoe Manse, 12 Hartop Close Bedford MK41 8HE  
contact Rev. Wendy Evans-Wood

Monday 26th March at 10.30 am at Willington.



## Clophill News

Tea and Chat Every Wednesday 10.00 am to 12 noon

### **Messy Church**

Saturday 17th March 4 pm – 6 pm

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## Friday Market 'Tea' Charities

Teas and coffees are available on Fridays in the Village Hall from 9 am to 12 noon, supporting these charities.

|            |                                     |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2nd March  | Carers in Bedfordshire              |
| 9th March  | Flitwick Flowers                    |
| 16th March | SVP – Saint Vincent de Paul Society |
| 23rd March | Flitwick Lower School PTA           |

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**You are invited to attend a  
Free Church Service in the  
Lady Chapel on  
Wednesday  
7th March 2018 at 11.00am**



THE CATHEDRAL AND  
ABBEY CHURCH OF  
SAINT ALBAN

**Preacher: The Reverend Ian Green,  
Minister, Amersham Free Church.**

**The service will be followed by a fellowship lunch in  
the Abbots Kitchen and all are welcome.**

Free Church Ecumenical Chaplain: Reverend Simon Carver,  
Email: [simoncarver@btinternet.com](mailto:simoncarver@btinternet.com)

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## *News from Paraguay*

### 26th January 2018

A good if rather long trip over here. No trouble in getting to Heathrow in plenty of time for the flight. I had to get my boarding passes from a little machine and then just hand the bags in. I had a little wait for my plane, so I acquired a pile of reading material during that time. First as I had a few coins to get rid of I bought a couple of papers as they were about the only things being sold at a normal price. I went down to the gate and they had various papers for free so I picked up a couple more and then noticed that at the next gates which was for an American Airline flight they were giving away magazines - so I picked up a few of them as well. So that gave me some reading material for the flights.

The flight down to Brazil was very good and I watched a couple of films as I went along.

Then quickly through to wait for the connecting flight, which also left pretty much on time and was another good one. It was cloudy in Brazil but got sunnier on the way to Paraguay and it was a sunny 30 when I landed at 8.30 am. Straight through customs and picked up my bags getting out of the airport with being stopped - so was out by 9.15 am.

I took a taxi to my hotel but could not check in until after lunch so I left all my bags and spent the rest of the morning wandering around the shopping centres before having some lunch and going back to the hotel for a rest in my room. It was a very smart hotel - welcome having spent so long of planes - but I will soon be off back to the countryside.

### 29th January 2018

I am back home now to see what has been going on.

Looking round the house a lot less had gone than I had been told. My motorbike had gone along with the TV and guitar amp, and a few of

my ornaments - but oddly only the pewter figures which I can only imagine they thought were silver. However it was evident that everything had been looked at and all the drawers opened and explored. It was annoying that the place felt damp and musty and was dirtier than I have ever seen it.

On the way home I stopped off to pick up Evangelina who was very excited to see me and very pleased with all her little presents.

Today I went into Piribebuy and had a big shop to fill the cupboards up. Then I spent the remainder of the morning sorting out a new TV and motorbike.

### 31st January 2018

Quick pop into Paraguari today - I went to find a DVD player. My DVD player was not stolen but they took the remote so it will not work properly.

I did not stay for lunch as the sky went very black. However I did not need to cook as on the way home Evangelina spotted me and was not about to let me go without first stopping off to play with her for a couple of hours - so I was fed there.

She was very pleased with her clothes and some appear a little big but that will give her something to grow into. She had the flip flops on but quickly took them off so she could run around barefoot. Indeed she was not very happy about me going home and has got a thing about looking up at any plane she hears just in case I am on it!!

### 4th February 2018

All is pretty much back to normal. The house is all aired and everything back where it belongs. The next problem will be clearing all the weeds that grew during the summer rain while I was away!

Yesterday was San Blas, which as well as being the National Saint is always the last big party before summer ends and everyone goes back to school. So I was well fed on fresh pork.

Firstly I went to down the road to have lunch with Evangelina and got very well fed in my couple of hours down there. Afterwards I went opposite and they insisted I had lunch so I had to get through another big plate of barbecued park. Now for lunch today it looks like pork as everywhere I went I was given some to bring home.

I have been over to Caacupe twice this week to do reports about the robbery so all is in the hands of the police so will see if anything ever reappears.

In the meantime things have been replaced. I had to get a new motorbike straight away as I do need transport. At the same time I got a new TV, the same as the one that has gone.

Later today I will go down to see Ramona taking the old laptop with me and once I have shown her how to do the bits she has not learnt over the years doing her work over here she will be able to get her college projects done on it.

### 7th February 2018

I must tell you about this morning in a cafe in Piriebuy. I was sitting here with a coke after doing a bit of hopping when someone else came in to order something. They took a seat and to my amazement the girl bought over to them first sugar, then milk and a jar of Nescafe - and then bought over a cup of hot water so they could make their own drink!!

I finally took my laptop over to Ramona yesterday and she was delighted, as were her little sisters who realised it had games! She knows the internet has loads of bugs but having no way to connect to the internet that is not really a problem. It is just what she needs for getting all the bits of work she has to do for college typed up. I wonder if she realises how long typing will take her.....

The ornaments that vanished were another strange thing about the robbery. The only ones that have gone are my collection of pewter figures that were on the bookcase in the lounge above the records. I can only imagine they thought they were silver and therefore worth

something. However taking those they left the two music systems and the guitar which were also in the lounge. I've changed the door locks and showed the old locks which although apparently forced had no marks on at all to the police. They agreed that something did not look quite right.

Now that I have been back a couple of weeks and everything is back to how it should be - apart from the weeds which it is currently far too hot to clear and every day is hot and sunny.

10th February 2018

You remember that one of the many presents I had for Christmas was a jigsaw of the London tube map. Well I got that done and it did not take long. Also being clever I did it without looking at the picture, just remembering where all the stations were. Also that bat for zapping flies - I can report that it works very well - thank you.

Currently the electric is off so I have to keep an eye on the battery on the laptop. It is the first time it has gone off since I he been back. If it comes back on this afternoon I intend to have a go at making a Shepherd's Pie as I have got all the ingredients.

I have had a few afternoons with Evangelina and yesterday she was having a great time splashing about in the river. Also she now knows how to use a phone and often in the morning I get a little hello on Whats App.

One other thing, this book of mine. As I said I would I have now started writing it again. This time on the computer rather than in note books which is much better and am making sure I have an hour or so every day for doing that. However today that does rather depend on the electric coming back on.

It was lovely meeting up and chatting to everyone whilst I was visiting Mum and Dad and hopefully I will be able to make a trip home sometime next year.

Best Wishes to everyone.  
Simon