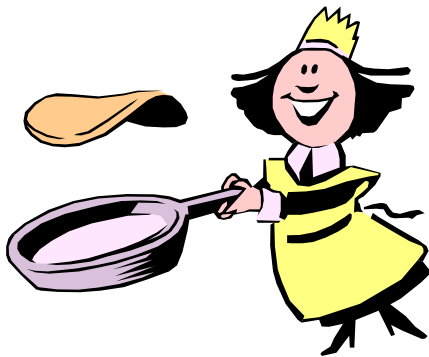


ST THOMAS
TROWBRIDGE
& ST JOHN
WEST ASHTON



February
2012
MONTHLY
MESSAGE

Including: Prayers that move God and bring change
The Flavour of Christmas, at St John's
A Message from Marco
OMF Focus
Trowbridge Day of Prayer
Dates for your Diary

"If you want to increase in the life of God,
then you must settle it in your heart
that you will not at any time
resist the Holy Spirit."

Smith Wigglesworth



PRAYERS THAT MOVE GOD AND BRING CHANGE

For years Hannah had been asking God for a baby, but without success. Suddenly something changed; she became so unhappy and desperate that she started to pray in a different way. These were not proper, respectable, religious prayers. She wept, made vows, her lips moved but no sound came out! This was extreme, intense, straight-from-the-heart praying. It looked and sounded so unlike prayer that Eli, the old priest, thought she was drunk! But Hannah explained, '*I was pouring out my soul to the Lord.*' She couldn't hold in what was inside her any longer. That was when God answered her prayer and she had a son she named Samuel, meaning '*heard by God*'. (You can read the whole story in the Bible in 1 Samuel, chapter 1).

I know people something just like that has happened to when they prayed for a child (and some it hasn't – we don't know why). And it's not just about babies; I have seen God answer all sorts of prayers, large or very small. Sometimes we can be too religious, but a new way of praying is coming. I don't know exactly what it will look like, but it will not be about set times or words. At odd times of day or night, without warning, we will find ourselves praying like Hannah – short, intense, extreme, straight-from-the-heart prayers. Anyone listening might think we're drunk (or even mad!)

A new kind of prayer is going to come over us, not because it's the right thing to do, but because we can't help ourselves. What's inside you will simply have to come out, because you can't hold it in – it matters so much you can't keep from praying. They may not be long prayers, but short, sharp bursts of grief and desperation, or joy and release, or both at once! That is the kind of prayer that moves God's heart... and His hand. It will shake up our ideas about God: that He cares about the length of our prayer, or whether we use the proper words or have the right theology. If it moves you deeply... it moves Him too.

Allan



The Flavour of Christmas

A pleasant evening was held on Friday, 9 December at St John's Parish Church, West Ashton for a Christmas concert. The Westbury Choral Society led the musical entertainment with a light and varied programme. Cerys Simpson (a superb flautist aged 16 – a student of Celia Waghorn) and Rob Fawcett (acoustic guitarist) were the soloists for the event. With audience participation and humorous readings, all added to a joyous and warming evening; even the weather was kind. Mince pies and mulled wine added an atmosphere of Christmastide. The outside of the Church was illuminated making the appearance of a film set. The event raised over £200 for Church funds; this was mainly due to kind donations of refreshments and printing costs being paid. Sylvia Preston & Jean Robertson wish to thank all those who came and sampled "The Flavour Of Christmas" concert. There are so many to thank from Westbury Choral Society; soloists; lighting specialists; those who provided mince pies and wine and many more. You ALL made the evening a very special and enjoyable event and started the festive season off on the right note.

OMF – Focus

A Message from Marco

When preparing my sermon for the 3rd Unity instalment I came across several illustrations to help me with what I felt God was placing on my heart. As you can imagine most work and preparation done never made it into the sermon because of time constraints as well as ensuring that it made all sense. (I hope it did!!) One of those illustrations has stuck by me. Simply because it is so simple but powerful. For that reason I would like to share this with you:

TWO FRIENDS

Two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey, they had an argument and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand:

"Today my best friend slapped me in the face."

They kept on walking, until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone:

"Today my best friend saved my life."

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?"

The friend replied, when someone hurts us we should write it down in sand, where the winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."

Marco

2011 - A year of turmoil.

Floods and Tsunamis

Living the missionary life is to expect the unexpected and sometimes to be left clinging to our 'rock' as all is being swept away around us. In some parts of the world where OMF works it has been a year of the unexpected and in two places everything around our members has been literally swept away by floods. The tsunami that hit Japan last March was widely reported but the very long and damaging floods that swept through central Thailand down to Bangkok from September to November hardly received a mention in our media.

We give thanks that no OMF members were caught up directly in either of these events although a few had narrow escapes. There has, however, been a considerable impact on their ministry. Such disasters generate huge needs and many were involved in meeting the immediate needs of rescue, food, shelter etc. There are also deeper long term needs that arise from such disasters, not only in the rebuilding of houses and infrastructure, but also in helping those traumatised by all that has happened. We have heard many stories of how churches, local Christians and missionaries have shown the love of Christ to those around them in order to bring healing and hope back into their lives.

4 Years in Japan

On 26th February we welcome Chris Pain from OMF to our morning service. Chris and his wife Kesia have been in Japan since 2006 and for the first two years they were at the language school based in Sapporo on the northern island of Hokkaido. On finishing their language training they began their ministry during 2010, still based in Hokkaido. In this place they have been well away from the tsunami damage but will nevertheless have a perspective on it from a Japanese view point.

OMF in UK reorganises

OMF has also had its own internal turmoil within the UK organisation. Faced with the 'tsunami' of the banking crisis that resulted in falling

revenues for many charities they brought forward reorganisation plans

that were being prepared for future implementation.. The network of regional offices, directors and staff has been swept away and centralised at the HQ in Borough Green in Kent. This means that the regional office in Bristol has now closed but it does not mean there is no longer a local presence. In its place a network of local 'mobilisers' has been established that will promote OMF in churches, colleges, conferences etc. and help those interested in exploring their call to overseas mission. Our local mobiliser is Andy Stevens who is based in the Bournemouth area and we will doubtless have a visit from him in due course

St Thomas' link missionaries

Our link missionaries, Martin & Alison Clarkson-Webb, are still working at the International HQ in Singapore. They did return to UK for a short period of home leave in October/November and we had hoped they would be able to visit St Thomas' during that time but in the end it was not possible. They returned to Singapore in early December. Martin has a large IT project now underway and Alison is considering which one of several vacant opportunities is the one for her. You can see their latest news on the OMF display in the church. They expect to move into a flat in a district not too far from the IHQ offices in the next few weeks

A Reminder

Lastly do not forget to look at the OMF display during our "focus" months. There is quite a lot of interesting literature to take away and even more on the website at www.omf.org.uk

Martin & Margaret Wakelin

Daily Prayer Stations

Please note that the time of the Monday Prayer Station at WEBIC office in United Church has changed to 10-11am.



TROWBRIDGE Day of Prayer for Christian Action in the Trowbridge Area Saturday, 11th February 2012

Churches working together
to make a difference
in our community

Who Cares?

There will be a PRAYER STATION
outside Sainsbury's and Knees
throughout the day for anyone to post a prayer.

Activities at HOLY TRINITY (the Church on the roundabout):

From 9am - 5pm there will be prayer throughout the day focusing on 8 aspects of town community life - Media and Arts, Local Business, The Council, Voluntary Organisations, Health, Recreation, Education and Emergency Services; all supported by displays on each topic.

From 5 - 6.30pm Youth Spot with creative activities

From 7 - 9pm Evening Service for all
with speaker: Rev. Lyndon Bowring
(Executive Chair of CARE)



**Launch Party—4th February
Bethesda Baptist Church
3-6pm (including tea)**

**Come along and find out about this exciting new friendship agency for adults with a learning disability and how your church can be involved.
Entry is by FREE TICKET
available by phoning 07909 221488**

MENUNITED

The next prayer evening will be held on Wednesday 8th February 7.pm at Bethesda Baptist Church, when we shall be praying for our Nation, County, Town & family needs. Do hope may be able to join us for this monthly important event. refreshments available on arrival. We conclude at about 8.45.pm.



**2012 Awareness Trip to Romania
Thursday 17th May – Monday 21st May 2012**

See the work carried out by our project partners and their teams. Meet the children and families living in extreme poverty in the different areas in Iasi and the surrounding villages. Help give out food parcels, clothes and spend time with the children, in addition to some hands on work. If you book now, the cost of the trip is £395 – however, the flight costs do increase on a daily basis – so don't delay and contact us on 01225 718920 if you are interested.
Many thanks Val Huxley

The Monday Prayer Station at
WEBIC Ebenezer Salvation Centre office
Geoffrey Crucifix room, United Church,
Is now
10-11am