

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND A PEACEFUL
NEW YEAR**

**DECEMBER 2008/
JANUARY 2009**

THE MINISTER'S LETTER

My dear friends,

The Christmas/New Year break is traditionally a time for looking back and looking forward, and in the last few days I've been doing this with a vengeance.

Looking at some of the Pastoral Letters I've written at the end of the last ten years, there is the recurring theme of tragedy: the Twin Towers, the Moscow theatre siege, the Bali night-club, tsunami, the murder of two little girls.

I've read about the gentrification of the poorer parts of London, the increased number of homeless people at our South-London door, and the closing of much-valued hostel places for 'health and safety' reasons. (The homeless are much more safe and healthy sleeping on the streets, right?)

It wasn't all doom and gloom, though. I read of examinations passed, baptisms and weddings and parties, toddler group and holiday club - times of laughter and rejoicing. Even laughter at a funeral of a dignified old lady, who, we heard, had been arrested for lewd behaviour in her twenties. (Riding her 1,000cc motorcycle along Brighton seafront verree scantily-dressed.)

Musing on these accounts, I realise that the major incidents mentioned above didn't really touch me personally. I didn't know anyone whose life was lost or ruined by 9/11 or the Moscow or Bali or Indian Ocean tragedies. And although we met many homeless people, Cathy's life and mine were not personally touched by them to any great extent. But the joyful occasions were very much part of our experience. Our compassion for the tragic and our celebration with the joyful are and were equally important.

Do you see where I'm going?

World news is frequently important and too-often tragic. But our lives are changed just as much - for good or ill - by things which happen much closer to home.

You and I personally have it in us to bring light and truth to the world we live in. The change we bring may appear to be trivial, but who knows how far the ripples will spread?

Who knows the thoughts of the shepherds as they heard "To you this day in the City of David is born a Saviour"? Did they believe it? Who knows the motives of the Magi from the East?

On the face of it, the birth of a boy in a downtrodden nation, a picture of rejection - "NO ROOM!" is not the way to transform a planet. Yet it did, and it still does:

*Who would think that what was needed
To transform and save the earth
Might not be a plan or army
Proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
That a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day!*

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With poor shepherds and angels, with rich Magi and Anna and Simeon, you and I can and must be part of the story, if Our Lord's story is to be told here in Colindale. It may not feel to us that we are important in the world-view, but who are we to judge? Let us have faith that who we are, and what we are, and what we say and do are all important to God and to His world, at Christmas time, into the New Year, and for the years to come.

May you have a wonderful, joyful and love-filled Christmas, and a peaceful (and dare I say prosperous) New Year.

Love to you all,

Margaret, Cathy and Jim.

HARVESTING PRAYER

I would like to thank all those who participated in our Prayer Day at the start of October. I believe those who came experienced a unique and special event, an important event in the spiritual life of our church. As with most people I wasn't there for the whole day, but from talking to those who attended at different times it seems that many were moved and were glad of the space and time to share prayer with others in the church. The creativity shown by those who led prayer was great – some used pictures as a focus for prayer, others music and in another session a cross, a candle and a bible were used to highlight the stages of our spiritual journey. Some sessions were light hearted and fun, others quiet, contemplative and more serious. Some sessions were attended by a few people, others by many. However throughout the afternoon prayer and contemplation was continuous and focused. The afternoon came to a close with a time of prayer and worship which focused on our mission statement – **to know Jesus, to grow in Jesus and to show His love.** It was wonderful that so many people who were there during the day came back for the worship time.

I'd like to thank all those who led sessions and all those who attended. As this was a fairly new venture for us, I was glad that some of the church took time out to attend.

Following the success of this Prayer Day and to keep the momentum of our church prayer life going, we are planning two more prayer events. One will be in April next year to prepare for Easter, but more immediately there will be a shorter 2 hour session on Saturday 6th December from 9:30am until 11:30am. The theme for this event is inspired by Advent and is called "What are we waiting for?" Please do come along and support your church (you could then stay for a Christmas lunch on the day, served in the Community Hall!)

This will be an ideal opportunity to take a break from the hectic preparations of Christmas and focus on prayer. *My prayer* is that you will find the time to come along, even if it is only for five minutes. I'm sure you will find it a worthwhile and peaceful experience.

Paul Wardrop-Day

Talking about Church Membership.

What is a Church Member?

The URC has a tradition, which The Hyde shares, that we encourage baptised Christians who love the Lord Jesus Christ to become full Members of the local church. This happens when the minister and Elders recommend to Church Meeting that the friend(s) are invited into Membership.

Just because you have attended The Hyde for a number of weeks or years does not mean that you are automatically a Member, but we are delighted when someone approaches an Elder or the minister and seeks information on membership.

What is Church Meeting?

We meet to worship and to discern God's will for the local church. I often say that 'Church Meeting is my boss'; in fact it is in the power of Church Meeting to invite someone to become the minister or indeed to invite him or her to resign. Anything and everything can be discussed in Church Meeting. Anyone who is interested can attend, but only full members can vote.

How do I become a Member?

If you are interested in Membership, speak to an Elder or the minister. You may be invited to attend a course of instruction (sometimes called Confirmation Classes in another tradition) or have a discussion on the particular traditions of the URC if you already have membership in another denomination.

What about "confirmation", then?

If one or more people are interested in Membership, the Elders arrange for a course of Membership discussions which cover the main aspects of the Faith, and information on the Reformed Tradition, in which the URC stands. *We will be very happy to set up such a course in the new year, if there is sufficient interest.*

If you would like to enquire further, please make contact with Revd Jim, who will be delighted to speak with you.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

WORLD VISION



Give it a try!
2.00 p.m. until
3.15 - ish

4th December
Meal out @ The Moon
(Meet at 11.45 PROMPT)
18th December
Christmas Party
15th January
Bring your favourite
Christmas card!
No meeting on **1st January!!!**

I would like to say a very big THANK YOU to all those who have so generously contributed to this year's appeal for school uniforms and meals. We will again be able to bring happiness into the lives of those who have nothing.

If you have not yet contributed but would like to, then please see me. Again, Thank You for your kindness.

Sheila Mortimore.

Tell it like it is!

A young woman brings home her fiancé to meet her parents. After dinner, her mother tells her father to find out about the young man. The father invites the fiancé to his study. "So what are your plans?" the father asks the young man.

"I am a Bible scholar," he replies.

"A Bible scholar. Hmmm," the father says.

"Admirable, but what will you do to provide a nice house for my daughter to live in, as she's accustomed to?"

"I will study," the young man replies, "and God will provide for us."

"And how will you buy her a beautiful engagement ring, such as she deserves?" asks the father. "I will concentrate on my studies," the young man replies, "God will provide for us."

"And children?" asks the father. "How will you support children?" "Don't worry, sir, God will provide," replies the fiancé.

The conversation proceeds like this, and each time the father questions, the young idealist insists that God will provide.

Later, the mother asks, "How did it go, Honey?"

The father answers, "He has no job and no plans, but the good news is he thinks I'm God."

'GOD WILL PROVIDE'

Message from the Editor

Well, during this last month we have had snow, rain, fog, winds and a bit of sunshine.

Some are predicting a White Christmas. Maybe we will get it, maybe we won't. Whatever weather we get I do hope it does not prevent people from travelling to family or friends for their Christmas celebrations.

For some it will also be a time to take a break and have a rest, after all the hectic preparations. Whatever you may be doing over the Christmas and New Year period, may you all have a happy, health and great time.

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Please keep the articles coming in for me to produce The Messenger and for those who have done so over the past year, *thank you*. May I have all material for the February issue of The Messenger by no later than Sunday, 25th January 2009.

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MONEY MATTERS

**INFORMATION ON THE
OFFERINGS FOR NOVEMBER
WILL BE GIVEN IN THE NEXT
ISSUE OF THE MESSENGER**

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**THE COMMUNION OFFERINGS
FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
WILL BE MADE ON BEHALF OF
"FOR DEMENTIA"**

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THE CHURCH OUTREACH PROJECT

This year, 2008/2009 our Project is for **H.A.B.I.T.** for which you are asked to keep filling your 'Pots'. Also needed are bibs, vests and two piece suits for newborn to 9 months old to fill suitcases for Susan and Roger to take with them when they go to South Africa. So, keep saving and if you fancy buying inexpensive items of the above clothing, they would be very grateful.

Vivien Crispe



THUMBS UP FOR THE LORD!

.....another way of praying

The thumb points up to God,
Give thanks to Him,
The first finger:
Pray for all creation,
His first-fruits.
The middle finger:
For all His people,
The ring finger:
For the people we love,
The little finger: for ourselves.

FLOWER LIST

**DECEMBER 2008/
JANUARY 2009**

DATE DONATED BY ARRANGED BY

DECEMBER 2008

7 th	- Mr. C. Thompson	Susan Day
14 th	- Mr.&Mrs. Mortimore	Sheila Mortimore
21 st	- Mrs.& Mrs. Theuri & Mr. C. Brown	Pam Maycock
24 th)	- Christmas Eve	Vivien Crispe
25 th)	- CHRISTMAS DAY	
28 th	- Mrs. M. Vizor - (nee Brownsell)	Vivien Crispe

JANUARY 2009

4 th	- Mrs. M. Johnson	Pam Maycock
11 th	- Mr.Mrs.C.Thompson	Susan Day
18 th	- Church	Sheila Mortimore
25 th	- Mr & Mrs Eddisford	Christina Eddisford

FEBRUARY 2009

1st February – Miss V. Crispe – Vivien Crispe

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ANITA OTTAVIANI

On 19th November, Pam and Ted Maycock and I had the pleasure of attending a service of re-licensing of Lay Readers in the Anglican Church.

Many of you will know Anita Ottaviani who has become very involved in Holloway Prison as a Prison Visitor and also working alongside the Anglican Prison Chaplain. Anita received a call from God that she should be more involved in the spiritual life of the prisoners and so she commenced a course of training in the Anglican Church to become a lay Reader. The best way to describe a Lay Reader is to equate it to the position of accredited Lay Preach in the U.R.C.

It was a good service, with 240 Lay Readers Licensed and about 1,500 in the congregation. What was extra special was that the service included Holy Communion, to which Christians of all denominations were welcome.

Please pray for Anita as she serves the needs of the prisoners both secular and spiritual and ask God to use her to His glory in all that she seeks to do in His name.

Chris Mortimore.

SOME REMINDERS

- 6th December – Prayer Time and Christmas Lunch
- 7th December - Candlelight Carol Service
- 14th December - Service of Lessons and Carols
- 20th December - Mulled Wine at the Manse Christmas Sing Along
- 24th December - Christmas Eve Communion
- 25th December - Christmas Celebration Service
- 31st December - New Year’s Eve Communion

CAROL SINGING AT WHITCHURCH LODGE

ON SATURDAY 20TH DECEMBER AT 2.00 P.M. WE HAVE BEEN INVITED TO SING CAROLS AT WHITCHURCH LODGE, WHITCHURCH LANE, EDGWARE.

WHITCHURCH LODGE IS THE CARE HOME FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE WHERE ALICE HOWIE LIVED. (ALICE WAS A FORMER WORSHIPPER AT THE HYDE)

TRANSPORT CAN BE ARRANGED FOR ANYONE WISHING TO COME ALONG AND SING, TO BRING CHRISTMAS HAPPINESS TO THE RESIDENTS IN THE HOME.

THE NEXT COFFEE MORNING AND LUNCHES WILL BE HELD ON

**SATURDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY 2009
From 11 a.m. with Lunches being served
From 12 noon to 1 p.m.**

THERE WILL BE NO MORNING COFFEE AND LUNCHES IN JANUARY 2009.

CHRIST IS BORN

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever.
Hebrews 13:8*

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CANDLELIGHT CAROL SERVICE SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER AT 3 P.M.

JANUARY DIARY

JANUARY 2009

Wed. 7th - 1.15 p.m. - Lunchtime Service
Friday 9th - 9.30 a.m. - Toddler Group
Wed. 14th - 9.45 a.m. - Housegroup
 1.15 p.m. - Lunchtime Service
 7.15 p.m. - Housegroup
Thurs. 15th - 2.00 p.m. - Hyde De Hi
 7.30 p.m. - Elders Meeting
Friday 16th - 9.30 a.m. - Toddler Group
Sat. 17th - 9.00 a.m. - Church Breakfast
Wed. 21st - 1.15 p.m. - Lunchtime Service
 7.30 p.m. - Churches Together
 Lecture
Friday 23rd - 9.30 a.m. - Toddler Group
Sat. 24th - 2.00 p.m. - Church Meeting
Sun. 25th - 6.30 p.m. - Churches Together
 Songs of Praise
Wed. 28th - 9.45 a.m. - Housegroup
 1.15 p.m. - Lunchtime Service
 7.15 p.m. - Housegroup
Friday 30th - 9.30 a.m. - Toddler Group
Sat. 31st - 3.00 p.m. - Sarah Wardrop-
 Day's Dedication

FEBRUARY 2009

Sunday 1st Feb. - 10.00 a.m. - Elders Led
 Service.

HOUSE GROUPS

Our House Groups restart on Wednesday 14th January. If you are interested in joining one of the groups, please speak to Jim Gould or myself.

Chris Mortimore

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As in previous years arrangements have been made for the gifts from the Candlelight Carol Service to be taken to the Manor House Hostel in Bushey. Please give generously as you have done in past years.

There are **no children** in the Hostel so most of the gifts needed are things like Tissues, Socks, Tights, Hankies, Writing Paper, Smellies (Talc, Soap, Shower Gel, etc.) Aftershave, Games or any jewellery which you no longer want or use.

Please mark the gift or parcel for a lady or man as this will make it easier for the staff at the hostel when delivering the gifts.

Thank you again for your continuing generosity to the Hostel residents. These gifts are very well received and much appreciated.

Vivien Crispe.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS DURING DECEMBER AND JANUARY

Birthdays for December

William, Philip, Bayo,
Jennifer, Ray, Natalie,
Rose, Emmanuel (jnr),
Jane, Cliff, Mercy,
Felicitas and Titus.

Birthdays for January

Verona, Abiola, Andrew,
Marose, Eileen, Ray
and Ope

CONGRATULATIONS
HAPPY BIRTHDAY

REFLECTIONS

CHRISTMAS

**Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy infant, so tender and mild:
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

Within the great joy of the festive season we can also find that all is calm. The peace of God came down at Christmas, settling troubled hearts and quieting restless minds.

In the same way that God's beautiful gift came to Bethlehem, silently and holy, so Christ comes into our lives today, shining His light into our darkness and removing our sins and fears from us. In the dark of night, Jesus, the light of the world, was born in a stable. But not all the darkness of the world can in any way dim the light that surrounded His birth, and shines in our lives.

This beautiful hymn gently reminds us of the Light that shines in the darkness, the music that sounds in the silence, the salvation that comes to those who recognise Him as the Saviour of the world and the love of God which came down at Christmas to bring grace and redemption to all who believe in Him.

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What is Christmas?
Is it just a day at the end of the year,
A season of joy, merrymaking, and cheer?
Is it people and presents and glittering trees?

Oh no, it is more than any of these,
For under the tinsel and hidden from sight
Is the promise and meaning of that
First Christmas night when the shepherds
Stood in wondered awe and felt
Transformed by what they saw,
So let us not in our search for pleasure
Forego our right to this priceless treasure,
For Christmas is still a God-given day,
And let us remember to keep it that way.

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**Creator and loving God  
We meet you in the Christ-child, Jesus,  
Born out of love  
Born for love.**

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