



**Seussical**



**You Said....**

- What a superb production – congratulations to everyone!
- Wish I could have seen it twice
- Fantastic acting & singing, wonderful costumes.
- A totally unexpected delight!
- It was such a happy show and SMASH again maintains the highest standards
- Great Show –
- Congratulations and well done to all.
- The atmosphere in the theatre was fantastic and the production was so professional
- Well done.
- That's what I call Linking the Community to Christ!
- Brilliant, fast and lively, superb performances by everyone.
- An incredibly professional production.
- It stands alongside all the other SMASH masterpieces.
- The whole company gave a completely faultless performance, with no prompting at all.
- Worthy of any professional repertory company.
- Fabulous
- Amazing.
- Movement, music, costumes and wonderful performances by the children.
- Loved it. Fantastic. Best yet.

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*Linking our Community to Christ*

# CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



This is Freddie [redacted] who was baptised on Easter Sunday. He is the son of Kirsteen and Tom, and is the new grandson for Judith and Peter [redacted],  
Congratulations



Please say hello to Zachary Alfie F [redacted]  
Well done and congratulations to Sam and Kay. Zachary weighed in at 7 pounds, 13 ounces on 23<sup>rd</sup> March

## Alicia

Some of you know that Alicia is now home with us. What joy!

She is making steady progress and though at times she is naturally very tired, she is also beginning to be her perky, bubbly self.

The feeding by tube at night is going well and she is slowly starting to eat. Her consultant is very happy with what he calls "an amazing recovery."

As we hear pieces of information they didn't tell us at the time, we realise increasingly just how critical she was.

It will be a very special Easter for us all and Katy and Hoa join us in expressing our heartfelt thanks to all the devoted staff at The Children's Hospital and to you all for your love, care and prayers,

**Chris and Derek**



A picture of the proud family on Palm Sunday for the baptism of Amelia Scarlett [redacted], daughter of Sarah (nee [redacted]) and Ross and granddaughter of Brenda and Philip. Many congratulations.

# Mike's Message

**Minister**



**Mike Crockett**

Available Saturday to Thursday

**Pastoral Coordinator**



**Chris Giles**

**Youth Worker**



**Catherine Lamb**

Available Wed to Mon

**Church Office**

0121 705 7367

**Lettings**

After a year of stressful waiting, my granddaughters' two front teeth have begun to emerge. I have the photographs, fit for an encyclopaedia of dentistry, to prove it.

I find the word "emerging" very helpful in my understanding of life. Abilities, capacities and gifts emerge, and with the necessary hard work can be nurtured into excellent skills. At this time of year nature is all about emerging after those long months hidden under the soil. In the same way we live with inherent gifts and potentialities. As the years pass these begin to emerge and it is beautiful to behold.

There is a new "in" word in Christianity called "Emerging Church." It has many interpretations but in essence means something new developing in how people live and share their faith in Jesus and how they view the Scripture. As always it comes with the good and the bad.

The word "awakening" has an even more beautiful outcome. While emerging has its main focus on physicality, awakening is the stirring of understanding and a realization of who we are and what we have. We live with an inherent dignity by reason of our very creation, a dignity that no human has given to us and no human can take from us.

Issues of justice and equality, sexual orientation, human value and dignity have been very important awakenings for me. So too the awakening of beauty as a way of seeing and interpreting that which is emerging in creation round about me.

I'd love us to be an emerging church – emerging from the religion of the sixties and seventies, when so many of us came into faith, to an expression of faith that vibrates for the vast new generation that currently passes us by.

But more than that, I would love us to be an awakening church. By this I mean growing in our understanding of who we are, awakening to the wonder of God's grace, seeing the beauty that God sees in us and embracing life in all its fullness.

We celebrate a wonderful group of folk joining up with us recently. We look forward to getting to know you better and pray we will hold out a very warm welcome into our congregation and into our hearts. Last month the District kindly sent me on a Church Growth Course. I re-learned the difference between being friendly – when we all talk to each other, and being welcoming, when we talk to those new folk who end up standing on their own. Let's go for the true welcome bit.

This is the opening prayer used by a congregation in Wednesbury.

Heavenly Father,  
You welcome us into your Kingdom and your heart's desire is to draw every human being to yourself. Grant us clear eyes to see people as you see them, sensitive feet to stand in their shoes, and warm smiles to welcome them in your name. Give us such generous hearts that our church becomes a foretaste of heaven where every soul you send us finds their loving home in the community of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.

## Church Project 2011-2012 : Remnants

Buttons and Bows

Remnants would be grateful for any decorative buttons or ribbons, materials, craft ideas, wallpaper or storage crates.

## Journey of Understanding

This is an invitation to visit Saltley and learn about the particular challenges of living in a multi-cultural society.

This morning session will include the opportunity to discuss various issues and to take a short guided tour of the area.

Dates available at present are:

Monday 21st May; Tuesday 22nd May and Saturday 16th June.

**Ceilidh**, Saturday, 9th June

Tickets will be available on the Sundays 20th and 27th May, and 3rd June.

Please contact Stella Staight, ( ) ;  
or  
( ) for  
any information bookings or  
donations of materials.

## Acocks Green Methodist Church

is hosting a **free** concert by the University of Sheffield Gospel Choir on Sat 5th May at 7.30 till about 9 pm. We'll be selling refreshments and inviting donations to be shared between Christian Aid and the Birmingham Children's Hospital where a child from our congregation received life saving treatment recently. No need to book, just turn up with as many friends of all ages as possible to join the celebration of life and have a really good evening, with a great variety of music, some unaccompanied, some with instruments.

This choir gave a very successful concert last year at our church and we hope for an even bigger audience this year as we aim to help 2 charities.

## CIRCUIT DATES

**Saturday 12 May, 9.30am – 1.00pm**, Cotteridge Church Centre. Safeguarding Module A Foundation Course. Contact local Safeguarding Officer

**Saturday 19 May, 10.00am – 4.00pm**, Selly Oak Methodist Church. World Church Fayre.

**Sunday 20 May, 6.30pm**, Circuit Easter Offering Dedication Service, Solihull Methodist Church

**Sunday 17 June**, JMA Walk at Elmdon Park

**Sunday 8 July**, Family Fun Day at Earlswood Methodist Church

## 75<sup>th</sup> Celebrations

Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> June	Irish Ceilidh 7.30 pm
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> June	Songs of Praise 6.30pm
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	Pushchair Club Celebrations
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> June	Reg's Celebration Ramble 9.30am Messy Church Celebration 4.00pm
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Tea and Reminiscences 2.00pm
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> June	Church Anniversary Service 10.30 am
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> September	Church Outing to Earlswood 2.30pm
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> , Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Smash – Jesus Christ Superstar

# NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following NEW MEMBERS into our Church Family. Great news indeed!



Max and Rachel Taylor



Norma Hoffman and Brendan Arnold



Jeremy and Linda Peai



Sandy Green



Ivan Crowdell



Do you want to exchange your daughter for a French one?

Our French family would welcome an 11/12 year old girl for one or two weeks this summer in Provence, with a view to an exchange. (Not necessarily permanent!)

Anyone interested please contact the Hortons on [redacted]

It was with regret that we received Paul Jones' resignation which takes effect from 1 May. Paul was with us for just a short while but made some good friends and enjoyed his time with us. He appreciated the support he received and hopes to still be available to help with our Taize Communion and Healing service. Our prayers are with Paul and Wendy as he makes his way into the future.



### Need a decorator

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[www.decoratingservicesollihull.co.uk](http://www.decoratingservicesollihull.co.uk)

# CONTACT FUNDRAISERS



The Easter meeting for Contact Ladies on Weds 4th April commenced with Mike taking Communion in Church. Everyone then made their way to the Hall for refreshments accompanied by hot cross buns. This was followed by a very interesting evening with Lynne Wood, a fund raiser for Marie Curie Big Build and our own Molly Bird.

Molly is a long service volunteer at Warren Pearl now Marie Curie, and is usually to be found in Reception on Mondays. After Lynne explained the shortcomings of the old building she proceeded to give full full details of how the new build was progressing with pictures on screen, informing us of all the many facilities that patients will have compared with the old one.

It is going to be an amazing place, and we are invited to visit when completed.

On behalf of Contact, Frances presented Lynne with a donation of **£1000**.

Most of this money was raised at the Contact Fashion Show last October, in conjunction with House of Fraser. The rest came from sales of home made marmalade and a contribution from Contact members' funds.



Visiting us from Hoechst, our twin congregation in Germany on April 1 were Sabine and Rainer Janzen. They brought with them special "thank you" gifts for Janet and Ian Sinclair, who had initiated and coordinated the twinning for the past thirty years.

During his address to the congregation, Rainer extended an invitation to members of Solihull to visit Hoechst in late May 2013. This will be a wonderful opportunity for those who enjoy exchange visits to experience some wonderful Christian hospitality.

Please contact David and Judy Lingard ( ) who have recently taken over the co-ordination of the exchange program should you wish to know a bit more about the trip.



# OUR EASTER CELEBRATIONS



Scouts and Brownies welcoming Jesus on Palm Sunday

## Tenebrae Service Maundy Thursday

Friends from Acocks Green, Dorridge and Christ Church joined us for this powerful and moving service.

The readings, which were lovingly and meaningfully read by the Sinclairs, told the story of the events leading up to Christ's crucifixion. This was interwoven with the seven candles dramatically being extinguished one by one. In the middle of this, singing softly "When I survey", the Prof had the wisdom and imagination to leave the last verse unaccompanied to massive effect. There then followed a superb unaccompanied duet from Marjorie and Judith, and it finished with a silent communion. An unforgettable service.

## Good Friday Open Church

Clearly the word is spreading!!

In just 4 hours we welcomed 24 people who came for whatever personal reason for a period of quietness and reflection. Over half of these people were not of our regular Church Family. This was a significant outreach, giving people the opportunity to find us and to be with their God.

Well done Bryan for making it happen.



## The Good Friday Walk of Witness

Around 400 Christians of all denominations walked from St Alphege to Mell Square on Good Friday. After an introductory prayer they sang their first hymn – "My song is love unknown" with palm crosses held high. The cross was raised and headed the silent procession to Mell Square. The peace and calm pervaded the High Street and shoppers stood and watched as the procession made their way forward.

This was a simple but effective service of readings, hymns and prayers, by Christians professing their faith, and being joined by shoppers who shared these devotions.

What an amazing opportunity to link our community with Christ.



The Banks family with the Cross on Easter Sunday.

Daniel and Rachel helped collect the flowers in baskets as people went up for communion, while Helen and Jon and Sue Balmer made the beautiful arrangement of flowers to adorn the Cross.

# GREEN TIP FOR MAY



Share a Car/Walk to Church Sunday **20<sup>th</sup> May** PRIZES! PRIZES!  
The church has planned its 3<sup>rd</sup> Share a Car/Walk to Church Sunday to coincide with the national 'Living Streets' campaign this year. Living Streets will be encouraging staff to **walk to work** the week before the 20<sup>th</sup> May and children to **walk to school** to week after.  
To make it a little different this year the Greener Church group will give **3 prizes** of **£20, £10 and £5** for the children finding the most **innovative** or **unusual** way to get to church! In a tie break, **fancy dress** will be taken into account!  
For those who need to come by car, look out for a map in the church hall in the previous 2 weeks! The group would like those who are happy to share a car or would like a lift to pinpoint their address, making it easier for people to link up. As usual small rewards will be on offer for all who make an effort. Anything we can do to use our cars **less** truly helps our World.  
**Richard Balmer**

## *The Wedding of Catherine and Chris On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012*

The first inkling that something special was afoot was the packed car park. And then we wrestled with the packed overspill at the leisure centre. Sure enough there was hardly a spare seat to be had in Church. How exciting to have a packed church for the second time in 3 days! Yes, it was the wedding of our Catherine Ralph and her Chris Lamb. The bride was in white with burgundy embroidery and what a brilliant match with the lilies and red roses. Helen Cameron officiated, and her theme of course was "the greatest of these is love". We were all there because of their love for each other and because today they wished to share that love and their faith in each other publicly. The Church was full because Catherine and Chris clearly wanted us all to be there, but also because in our excitement we could not stay away. Peter Farndon played some superb hymns for us to raise the roof; Harriet Pauly sang the Faure Pie Jesu; and then the couple left to Jeremy playing that superb toccata and fugue. Afterwards, while Jeremy and Smash played and sang all sorts of show music, we were all able to circulate



and enjoy cake and a soft drink with them. What a wonderful occasion. Remember this couple in your prayers, that they never lose their love of God and never lose their love and commitment to each other.

**Lawrie Rumens**



# GOD IS A GENIUS!!

“God is a genius” said Martin Hone, our April special speaker. “He must be if he was able to save me!”

That introduction began a 75 minute testimony of God’s grace through the life of this quite remarkable man.

For many it was also a journey down memory lane as Martin shared the story of his early childhood, the separation from his Dad who went off to war, and the poverty the family endured. Yet through it all, Martin was held by his dream to become a racing driver.

At this early age he began his stage career, singing in various productions, telling jokes to packed audiences, and picking up business skills from his first job in the carpet trade at the age of 13.

It was a good turnout with just on sixty folk present, including a significant number of visitors from other congregations and the local neighbourhood. Many in the congregation were able to identify with his stories, the personalities he worked with, raced against and challenged.

Having endured the stress of a two year court case which ended with a light fine, Martin, then aged 38, visited a meditation centre where God made himself known to him and he began a follower of Jesus.

A born organiser, Martin was involved in various major events, from the Birmingham Grand Prix to the Billy Graham Crusade at Villa Park. Subsequently his faith has led him to many parts of the world where he was able to participate in helping communities and individuals in their difficult circumstances.

Martin ended with four images. The first, the daffodil bulb that the gardener knew would be resurrected as a yellow flower at Easter. Second, the cross, the Jesus logo, that has spread all over the world.

Then there was the image of communion – food and drink, which the Church had complicated beyond the original simplicity of remembering as often as we break bread and drink together.

Lastly, the Our Father, the prayer Jesus gave on the mountain side in Galilee.

**Mike Crockett**



## Urban Cycles

The latest Saltley Community Outreach

Part of Saltley's work at Urban Cycles is to improve the well being of local people through regular participation in cycling based activities. Key to the delivery of this objective is the supply of affordable bikes. Their team of mechanics are masters at recycling bikes but they are hugely dependent on donations of used bikes (particularly children's). Andi Smith is able to collect at times and locations which best suit the donors. Can you spare an old bike – condition not important?

# What's on this month?

# MAY

Tuesday	1st	9.30 am	Tuesday Holy Communion
Wednesday	2nd	8.00 pm	CONTACT: AGM and Contact Choir
Sunday	6th	09.00 AM	Holy Communion: Rev Mike Crockett
		10.30 am	Morning Worship: Rev Jayne Webb
		6.30 pm	The Quiet Space for Prayer and Meditation
Tuesday	8th	8.00 pm	Tuesday Holy Communion
Sunday	13th	10.30am	Morning Worship & Holy Communion: Rev Mike Crockett
		6.30pm	Evening Service: Rev Mike Crockett
Tuesday	15th	9.30am	Tuesday Holy Communion
Saturday	19th	10.00 - 4.0	World Church Fayre at Selly Oak Methodist Church
Sunday	20th	10.30am	Morning Worship: Rev Mike Crockett
		6.30pm	Circuit Service: Easter Offering Service at Solihull
Tuesday	22nd	9.30am	Tuesday Holy Communion
Sunday	27 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Worship: Rev Helen Cameron
		6.30pm	Evening Worship
			Taize, Healing and Communion
Tuesday	29th	9.30am	Tuesday Holy Communion

Come and be inspired at our special  
**Pentecost Celebration**  
 with our own  
**Rev. Helen Cameron**  
 Sunday May 27<sup>th</sup>  
 at 10.30am  
 We believe in the Church as our home.  
 Not as a place to hide away,  
 but somewhere to be inspired to go out confidently –  
**Filled with the Spirit**

**The Messenger Team**  
 Sue Balmer, Mike Crockett, Bryan Fitter,  
 Jeff Horton, Bill Penny and  
 Lawrie Rumens.  
 Material for publication to  
 messenger@solihull-methodist.org.uk  
 Please try to keep articles to 250 words.  
 We reserve the right to edit articles if  
 necessary.  
 Please send photographs separately as  
 jpeg files.  
**NB. Last date for June Messenger items**  
**is**  
**8<sup>th</sup> May**



## William H. Painter

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# Christian Aid Week

Part of a Reflection in the current Christian Aid Prayer Diary:

## **Winners and Losers**

This summer sees the world's greatest sporting event coming to London. Almost every country in the world will be represented. Of the athletes who come from wealthy countries, many will have been able to focus on their preparation through sponsorship or the generosity of others. But for others, preparing for the Games has been a struggle against the odds. When we see the teams parading at the opening ceremony, do we ever stop to consider that many of them represent countries where poverty is an overwhelming reality? Christian Aid partners often work in these countries.

What do we think of when we hear the words 'poor people'? Images, perhaps, of starving children with swollen bellies? Of famine, refugee tents and doctors fighting to save lives? This is not the complete picture, however, and the fact is there are now more poor people living in middle-income countries than there are in low-income countries. An Oxford study of 2011 found that 72% of the world's poor live in middle-income countries.

There are so many variables to 'poverty', so many factors - some we can do something about, others not. As well as helping partners working on the ground after disasters, the bulk of Christian Aid's work is supporting partners working on long-term projects helping people to help themselves. Christian Aid also tries to identify and address related problems: a current one is the campaign to stop so many organisations world-wide avoiding paying taxes, which could raise huge funds to help poor people.

*A reminder of the Christian Aid Week events:*

**Saturday May 12th at 10am: The Mayor will open our 20th annual COFFEE MORNING in our Church Hall.**

**From 11.30am: Mauricio's Musical Interlude.**

**From 12noon: Ploughman's Lunches**

**Sunday May 13th at 6.30pm: COMMISSIONING SERVICE in our Church**

**Sunday May 13th - Saturday May 19th: CHRISTIAN AID WEEK**

**Door-to-door delivery of envelopes and return visits to collect them continues throughout the week.**

**If you've never taken part but would like to, (perhaps with another collector to work with?), please contact Marjorie Evans on [REDACTED] HELP! PLEASE!**

**COFFEE MORNING &**  
**PLOWMANS LUNCH**  
**SATURDAY MAY 12th**  
**10am – 2pm**  
**SOLIHULL METHODIST**  
**CHURCH** by SOLIHULL TRAIN STATION  
BOOKS - CAKES - CAR WASH - GAMES - JAMS - PLANTS - QUIZZES -  
REFRESHMENTS - SWEETS - TOYS - TRADCRAFT - WHITE ELEPHANT  
**LUNCHEES from 12 noon**  
SPECIAL 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS including  
MUSICAL INTERLUDE with  
**FILIPINO & LATIN-AMERICAN FOLK-SINGING**  
CHRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP NEEDY PEOPLE WORLD-WIDE  
**EVERYONE VERY WELCOME!**



**CHRISTIAN AID WEEK**  
**COMMISSIONING SERVICE**  
**SUNDAY MAY 13<sup>th</sup> : 6.30pm**  
**SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH**  
**ALL WELCOME!**

# AFRICAN EVENING




“This is sort of meal that we would have in Africa on a special occasion” Mike told us as we filled our plates on April 14th. And special it was lovingly prepared by Jo, Rita and Morag with Stella and her Christine. So we tucked in to chicken tangine with cous cous, creamed spinach with eggs, Potatoes with onions and beans, chilli pineapple, and curried bananas. This latter excited certain menfolk looking rather like banana custard but with a very different flavour. How well these flavours went together and the hall was full of the chatter of friends old and new. When eventually after seconds (thirds for some!) it was cleared away we came to the African entertainment. How could we nod off after the meal when Georgia came on stage to show us some Egyptian belly dancing? The half a dozen dances she showed us were quite similar with forward and side steps but lots of quiver and ripple.

She was seriously good but none of us was prepared for what can next when volunteers were called to learn to do this – in public! It’s not as easy as it looks. If it is difficult getting it all moving like that (and it is), then it is even more so getting it all to stop moving again! This was fun aplenty. We made fools of ourselves and exercised muscles we had not used for years and had a great time.



If anyone would like recipes for any of the African food we enjoyed, see Jo Crockett.



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Nottingham's Gifted & Talented Development Centre

**John Leftley**  
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John

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Solihull Methodist Church Family,  
C/O 15 Merecote Road,  
Solihull,  
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21/02/12

To the Church Family at Solihull Methodist church,

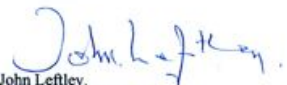
Again I am writing to thank you for your kind support of the children at NOTDEC in Uganda, thank you for your cheque for £223-30 being the profit you made from the sale of your calendars.

Colleagues have recently returned from a visit to NOTDEC where they joined them for two weeks during the long school holidays, the children enjoyed receiving a Christmas present from their sponsors with much excitement. The outcome of end of academic year exams has been good for most of the children, getting the required marks to enable them to move up to the next year in their schools, this is very encouraging.

I hope you enjoy seeing our new DVD, if any one is interested in sponsoring a child please do contact my colleague Janet Johnston phone 01926 336136 for information.

Again thank you for your generosity.

Yours sincerely

  
 John Leftley,  
Trustee of NOTDEC UK.



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