

11th Solihull Methodist Brownies 50th Anniversary 1962 –2012



After some detective work to identify as many past Leaders and Brownies as possible, we invited them all to attend our golden celebration on 21st February, together with some VIPs and current parents. We were lucky enough to be supported by many local companies, whose donations meant the hall was beautifully decked out, a superb buffet was on offer and fantastic prizes were available.

Guests first browsed the displays of old uniforms, badges, photos, books and scrapbooks and reminisced with past colleagues.

We took our seats for a performance by our Brownies of an extract from Annie. They belted out 'Hard Knock Life' and 'Tomorrow' magnificently!

Margery Benson kindly spoke about how various things have changed within the Pack since she was Brown Owl in the 80's and 90's – but also that some traditions have remained. The Brownies listened carefully and thought of lots of questions for Margery and the other ex-Owls.

We heard about the Golden Time Capsule that the Brownies have made, and how they have been raising money by doing Golden Good Turns.

Finally we sang Happy Birthday and cut the wonderful themed cake (made by Caila's grandma, Janette Telfer), called out the prize winners and gave out Hostess badges to our deserving Brownies. Everyone had a wonderful time and we raised nearly £100 for the Girlguiding World Thinking Day Fund.



In this Issue

Church Family News
Touchwood Chaplaincy
Scouts' Night Hike Win
Bald Statements Alpha
Religious Education Passion
Christian Aid week
Out and about with Paul Jones
Lent groups

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



A new granddaughter
for John and Roz [redacted] -- Grace Frances,
daughter of Jenna and Dave



Wedding

A belated message from Maggie and Derek Woolley. We are very pleased to announce that the wedding of our younger son **Richard Woolley to Rebecca Jennings** took place in a very wet and windy Argyl and Bute last November. A very happy occasion despite the weather!



Baptism
Samuel Matthew F [redacted], son of Kate
and David was baptised on
Sunday 18th March

Little **Alicia Luong** is still going through a tough time. A reminder that this is Chris and Derek Giles' granddaughter. Please keep Alicia, Katie and all the family in your prayers.

Sad news

Sue Hatton's mother, Alice Booth has passed away. She had fallen and broken her hip and never really recovered. Our thoughts and prayers go to all the Hattons as they mourn their loss and particularly to Howard who must be feeling so lonely. We are sorry to report that **Karen Handford's father – Colin Lund** – passed away last month aged 83. Please remember Karen, John and Katrina in your prayers.



Congratulations to **George and Joan Burr** who celebrated their **70th wedding anniversary** on Friday 17th February

Joan Parman would like to thank all friends for their support when Harry died and especially to those who attended his funeral. £700 was collected at the service and will be forwarded to Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Mike's Message

Our Lent house group series, "Discovering a Vital Spirituality" concluded with a 'Vital Sharing' – a sharing in Life with each other, but also a sharing of Life with others.

This Life, we discovered, was to be found in God who is for us all a profound mystery, beyond our grasp or understanding. Meister Eckhart, (c. 1260 – c. 1327 a German theologian, philosopher and mystic) used to pray, "O God, rid me of god". In other words remove from me those limited and dogmatic perceptions, those idols I've created and perceive God to be.

Our age is one in which God has become so consumerized, so packaged, so small, so manipulated for our own ends, that what we worship and prayerfully engage at times, is really an idol, a construction of our own minds having very little to do with who God really is.

All this goes for the Bible as well. God is not trapped and defined in the Bible. No book can contain all who God is. It's absurd to think that it can. The Bible contains the wonderful record of human experience of God, but God is always beyond it – in it, but beyond it.

In the end I hope this has led us to the understanding that in our worship and prayerful engagement God may be grasped, yet always remains a mystery beyond our grasp. A

Vital Spirituality will always keep this balance – the same that Isaiah sought to express 1500 years ago: *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* (Is 55:8-9)

Our Easter Cross stands empty for us this year. In place of the traditional Lent symbols, it seemed to me right that we should allow the bare and forsaken cross to stand alone, uncluttered and silent. Out of that silence the cross will have something to say to all who give time to pause for a moment in front of it, to remember it is made from our Christmas Tree, and that it's last great word remains, *"Father, forgive them,"*

The Alpha Course is to be recommended. It's a sensible process for discussing the Christian Faith in an open and non judgemental environment. Also, you might wish to become part of a House Group – there is a depth of caring and a joy of fellowship that could be yours.

Lastly, please be reminded that there is a lovely quiet and safe room in our Hall where you can meet with a me or one of our pastoral carers for a quiet, confidential chat.

Mike

Minister



Mike Crockett

Available Saturday to Thursday

Pastoral Coordinator



Chris Giles

Youth Worker



Catherine Ralph

Available Wed to Mon

Community Development



Paul Jones

Church Office

0121 705 7367

Lettings



AFRICAN EVENING

Saturday 14th April

7.30 pm in the Church Hall.

The African Evening is in support of the Church Project: Remnants

Contact Stella Staight on [redacted] or [redacted]

GREEN TIP FOR APRIL

FOOD LABELLING – USE WITH CARE

“What did that curry taste like”, said Sue.

“Fine”, I said. “Why?”

“Best before date on the jar said October 2010”, she noted.

Food labelling came to the shops in 1980 and was a good idea. How did a shopper know how fresh the milk or eggs on display were? But, as with all bureaucratic systems, it is difficult to draw simple lines appropriate in all circumstances. Apparently, we could save an awful lot of food, money, fertiliser and energy if we employed a dash of common sense.

Many foods show either a ‘best before’ or ‘use by’ date. ‘Best before’ indicates quality, ‘use before’ safety.

A packet of biscuits for example will slowly lose its peak condition after its ‘best before’ date has passed but it

will not be unsafe to eat. Anything in an unopened tin or jar will be ok for years.

What does need care is the ‘use by’ date. These are shown on perishable foods such as milk, ready prepared meals and so on because there is a risk that harmful bacteria can be present and could multiply after purchase to harmful levels. However ‘use by’ dates include safety margins. Furthermore, food will not deteriorate if kept in a freezer and if served in a cooked meal any bacteria will be killed off anyway, so no latitude can be allowed.

My Mother didn’t have labelling for the first 72 years of her life and her mother had none!

They used their noses, eyes and taste. Mother lived to be 95 and Gran to 86.

Richard Balmer

Touchwood Chaplaincy Work Experience

My name is Gloria, and at the moment I am coming towards the end of three years of study at The Queen’s Foundation, Edgbaston, Birmingham, working towards my ordination as Deacon into the Church of England in July this year. As part of this final year I was required to do an ‘attachment’ to something which is outside normal church duties. In view of statements like “this is a time of no religion” I was keen to go into a situation which is often called the ‘new religion’ of retail therapy and to see how chaplaincy worked there.

During my time with the chaplaincy team, I was told that they had a motto which was ‘WE CARE’, and it certainly became very obvious that they do indeed care about the people they visit week on week in all sorts of shops, outlets and offices both with Touchwood Shopping Centre and the town of Solihull.

I shop quite often in Solihull, but by going round with the chaplains, it really brought home to me that each and every one of those people working in the shops are first of all human beings with their own stories; they had worries just like everyone else, they had joys and sorrows in their lives, and there were times when they were grateful to be able to share these stories into a safe pair of hands. For others who did not want or need to share, hopefully the sight of a cheery wave from the

chaplain and a smile that says ‘thank you for the work you are doing’, goes some way towards brightening what could be a long and tiring day. I believe that every moment spent with people in a relaxed and informal basis means that it is easier to get alongside them, and when it is needed you are there to share in all of life’s good and bad times.

As our world becomes more and more secularized, it seems to make sense that as a church, we need to be evermore mindful that we need to have a presence in it. If we have no presence, we have no conversation, and without conversation the church becomes inward looking and cuts itself off from the world.

For me, I see the work of retail chaplaincy as being counter-cultural; they are prepared to go out from their church environment, acknowledging their vulnerability, and without actually seeing any benefits from it in terms of people coming to church. They are very aware that they may well have helped individuals in their daily lives but that is not translated into what we would recognise as mission. These are special people doing a special job; only a few are called to this work, but maybe the Holy Spirit is speaking to you right now about this. As they all go out in Jesus’ power and not their own, please uphold them in prayer.

For more information on the Town Centre chaplaincy or to explore the possibility of joining the team contact Beryl Moppett t [REDACTED]



The winning team with the "Boot" trophy

Scouts' Night Hike Success

11th Solihull Scouts showed that they had the strength in depth to retain the Solihull Scout County Night Hike on a mild March Saturday night/Sunday morning in the fields, canals and streets around Knowle and Dorridge.

Completing the 9 mile course in a express-train-like two hours and thirty-nine minutes, the team were back at the hike base in time for a full night's sleep, or -more commonly – chatter with fellow Scouts as they returned some time later.

The sought-after "Boot" trophy is making its home at 11th, despite only one member of last year's team, Ellie I [redacted] able to win for the 2nd year. The other team members – Sarah-Jayne [redacted], Jess [redacted], Eva [redacted], Fraser I [redacted] – all stepped up and worked their way around the checkpoints at breakneck speed, and, keeping their heads when it looked as though their nearest rivals from 1st Shirley (Buckholt) would mount a successful challenge.

They managed to open out a 5 minute winning margin as they crossed the finishing line.

11th Solihull fielded three teams, with the A team winning, and the other teams with younger members completing the task in a very close middle field. The C team led by Cerian Richmond-Jones came home in 9th place (3 hours and 49 minutes) , and the B team led by Ben Hague finished in a creditable 25th place (4 hours and 27 minutes).

This year's event was the biggest ever, with 54 teams, 20 in the 13-mile explorer competition and 34 scouts' teams.

The event was successfully organised by Paul Webb and the 1st Shirley Buckholt Scout Group, and was this year responsible for bringing 350 scouts, explorers and leaders together to compete and polish-up their navigational skills.

BALD STATEMENTS

Wed 17th April – Sun 6th May

Christ Church, Warwick Road

**Exploring themes of loss, change,
and bereavement**

Following a period of significant ill-health the sculptor, Jean Parker produced eight terracotta heads during the course of a seven-day silent retreat, and presented a powerful and unique visual exploration of the grieving process. Worked into larger alabaster sculptures, Jean's reflections relate not only to loss of health, but also to significant loss of any kind. The sculptures are displayed in the church as a focus for personal or group reflection.

All are welcome, free entrance.

On Saturday 5th May Jean herself will be making a presentation about the sculptures and their origins.



Up to date information can be found at: www.christchurchsolihull.wordpress.com or contact Mark Fisher on [redacted] for precise opening times for personal quiet.

Alpha

A new Alpha course starts on Tuesday 17th April

Do you have questions and doubts about faith – this is the place for you to discuss them. The evening always starts with a meal and then the discussion starts!!

The Alpha course is a 10 week course and covers the following topics

1. Who is Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus die?
3. How can we have faith?
4. Why and how do I pray?
5. Why and how I should read the Bible?
6. How does God guide us?
7. How can I resist evil?
8. Who is the Holy Spirit?
9. Why and how I should tell others?
10. What about the church?

If you would like to come along please ring Ann Polson.

Ann would also like help with the preparation of food and washing up so please contact Ann if you can help in any way.



Religious Education Passion

At the evening service on March 18th Dr Marius Felderhof spoke with enthusiasm and insight into how the syllabus for religious education is being developed and taught in Birmingham schools.

Marius noted that religious education is a novel idea for many countries, certainly it was not statutory in Canada where he grew up. Most countries expected religious education to come from the church but Britain made it a responsibility of schools in the 1944 Education Act.

From the late '50s workers from Pakistan and Bangladesh had moved to Birmingham, decided to stay and have their children educated here. Until then RE had simply been Christian in direction but thereafter Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other faiths needed to be accommodated. This caused a fundamental reappraisal of the role of RE. Why teach it at all? What did it contribute?

After much thought it became clear that RE introduced children to the 'wholeness' of life. It gave a 'total' view of education. It was not enough to fill a child with knowledge or develop his or her skills to get a job and become a cog in a workplace, but to excite every child with wonder at being in this world; to bring them to appreciate a sense of beauty; to understand that they were one link in a worldwide community. It was not enough for a child to merely learn, but to feel and, where needed, act.

Birmingham, like every local authority, has a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Birmingham's SACRE is well supported by the Council and all the faith groups. It has around 50 members, all volunteers. They drew up a list of 24 'dispositions' describing the qualities, vision and motivations they would like all children to develop and provided resource material. They showed how different faiths sought to teach the dispositions through

- Literature, drama, parables, narratives, myths etc.
- Poetry and the groaning of the spirit
- Music
- Art
- Sculpture and built environment

In essence, then, RE aims to help children grow up to 'live well'.

At the end Marius introduced one cautionary note. Whereas until the 2010 Academies Act SACRE had the duty:

- To advise the LEA on matters connected with religious worship in schools without a religious foundation;
 - To advise the LEA on Religious Education taught in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus;
 - To require the LEA to review its Agreed Syllabus,
- Michael Gove refused to bind the new 'Free' schools into following the SACRE syllabus. Some Academies have chosen to, but not all. Marius fears this will open the door to sectarianism, the worst thing Britain needs with its multi faith society. We were all urged to put the strong case for inclusion of the SACRE syllabus whenever an opportunity arose.

Dr Marius Felderhof



24 Dispositions

- Being Imaginative and Explorative
- Appreciating Beauty
- Expressing joy
- Being Thankful
- Caring for others, animals and the environment
- Sharing and being generous
- Being regardful of suffering
- Being merciful and forgiving
- Being fair and just
- Living by rules
- Being accountable and living with integrity
- Being temperate, exercising self discipline and cultivating serene contentment
- Cultivating inclusion, identity and belonging
- Being modest and listening to others
- Creating unity and harmony
- Participating and willing to lead
- Remembering roots
- Being loyal and steadfast
- Being hopeful and visionary
- Being courageous and confident
- Being curious and valuing knowledge
- Being open, honest and truthful
- Being reflective and self critical
- Being silent and attentive to and cultivating a sense for the sacred and transcendence

For further information go to the website:
www.faithmakesadifference.org.uk

75TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

This summer marks the 75th anniversary of the opening of our church in Blossomfield Road.

This will be celebrated throughout the summer with a number of events .

Please make a note of the dates in your diaries. More details of each event will be published nearer the time

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

'Kindly Keep It Covered'

Thursday 26th April to Saturday 28th April
7.30 pm

The Drama Group at Castle Bromwich Methodist Church are presenting a 2 act play, a farce by Dave Freeman

The ticket prices are £4 Adults, £3 Children and Senior Citizens and can be ordered in advance on [redacted] or Bought on the door

University of Sheffield Gospel Choir Concert

Saturday 5th May

No need to book, just turn up at 7:30 pm at Acocks Green Methodist Church 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.

BOYS' BRIGADE "GROW A JOB" CAMPAIGN

Birmingham Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association is a Christian organisation working in churches of all denominations across Birmingham and Solihull. It believes it can create a recycling business and give work to some and real 'on the job' training to a number of other 18-25 year olds who can then go on to convince employers they are worth a job. Both will help young people succeed in their Christian lives and in their community.

The Association will accept any type of clothing or household textiles, shoes, handbags, belts, books, CD's, DVD's, kitchen utensils, unwanted gifts and smaller pieces of furniture.

Call them on [redacted] or [redacted] to arrange a collection at your convenience at any time including evenings and weekends.

And, please tell your family and friends and see if they can help too.



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(Opposite Knowle Parish Church)

Christian Aid Week : May 13-19

Christian Aid Week will soon be upon us!

May we invite EVERYONE who reads this to consider helping make CAW 2012 a truly memorable event.

For one thing, **the Coffee Morning and Ploughman's Lunch** with which we shall launch it **on Saturday May 12th** will be the 20th annual one to be held in our Church Hall. We are delighted that the Mayor will be joining us, and there will be a 'musical input.' And in the evening of **Sunday May 13th** the **Commissioning Service** will be held at our church. But the key thing is all that the door-to-door collectors do during the Week. **Will YOU be one?**

As an introduction to the Week, let us hear the story of a community in Sierra Leone that has seen remarkable change....

Tenneh Keimbay's life turned around when Christian Aid partner the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone (MCSL) started to work in her town, distributing tools and teaching farmers simple food production techniques. She talks enthusiastically about the difference this has made:

Now the children eat two meals all year round, whereas before it was just one meal a day. They are growing well; they don't cry around me because of hunger any more. They are happy to go to school because something is in their stomach.'

'The benefits of regular food speak for themselves. But the effects of the food production group have been more wide-ranging than this. Tenneh speaks of the huge difference working in a group has made to her. Acting together, the farmers can share their skills and work more efficiently. As she tells us, the bottom line is that 'the group work provides more food.' Now that they are no longer limited by hunger, the people of Gbap (pronounced Bap) have come together and successfully lobbied for a new school and an agricultural work centre for the community. The people of Gbap have taken their future into their own hands. (You will be able to hear more about this at our Commissioning Service).

During Christian Aid Week, 15,000 churches across Britain and Ireland will organise house-to-house collections and events to raise funds to enable organisations like MCSL to carry out their work transforming communities such as Gbap. Christian Aid currently works with 507 partners in 47 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, helping people to make change happen.

We have so much.

Will you help those who have so little?

The power of standing together



Tenneh Keimbay stands with others in the food production group set up by Christian Aid partner the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone (MCSL). By working together, the farmers have become a powerful force for change

What's on this month?

APRIL

Sunday	1st	9.00am 10.30 am	Holy Communion: Rev Mike Crockett PALM SUNDAY , Baptism and Parade: Rev Mike Crockett
Tuesday	3rd	9.30 am	Tuesday Holy Communion
Wednesday	4 th	7.30 pm 8.00 pm	CONTACT: Easter Communion, Marie Curie Hospice by Lynne Woods and Molly Bird
Thursday	5th	8.15 pm	Maundy Tenebrae Service
Friday	6th	11.00 am 12 noon – 4 pm	GOOD FRIDAY Walk of Witness (10.30 from SMC) Church open for prayer and reflection
Sunday	8 th	10.30 am 6.30 pm	EASTER DAY Worship, Baptism & Holy Communion: Rev Mike Crockett Evening Service: Rev Mike Crockett
Tuesday	10th	9.30 am 12.30 pm	Tuesday Holy Communion Wedding of Catherine Ralph and Christopher Lamb
Sunday	15th	10.30am 6.30 pm	Morning Worship: Mrs Fiona Beadle Evening Worship: Rev Mike Crockett and Mr Martin Hone
Tuesday	17th	9.30 am	Tuesday Holy Communion
Wed	18th	8.00 pm	CONTACT - An evening with Carol Caldicott
Sunday	22nd	10.30 am 6.30 pm	Morning worship: Rev Mike Crockett Circuit Service at Selly Oak
Monday	23 rd	7.30 pm	Church Council
Tuesday	24th	9.30 am	Tuesday Holy Communion
Sunday	29th	10.30 am 12.30 pm 1.30 pm 6.30 pm	Morning worship: Rev Tony Malcolm Church Lunch Church Annual General Meeting Evening Worship: Rev Mike Crockett

The Messenger Team

Sue Balmer, Mike Crockett, Bryan Fitter,
Jeff Horton, Bill Penny and
Lawrie Rumens.

Material for publication to

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 May Messenger items
is
8th April**



William H. Painter

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Stephen C. Painter, Philip L. Painter, John F. Painter

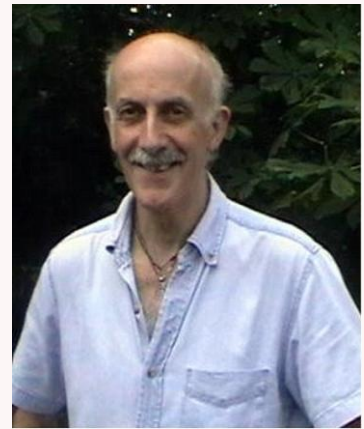
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Out and About in Solihull with Paul Jones



I have been with Solihull Methodist Church since October and thought it appropriate to update everyone with the way my role is developing.

You will know that my initial period was spent getting to know the people and the various activities they participate in, in our very active community. The next challenge was to discover the community our Church seeks to serve. This meant making contacts and networking with local institutions and charities that we could work alongside.

Major focus this year has been on communicating the scriptures in local schools, using the 'Open the Book' resource that has proved so successful at Water Orton.

This involves a Bible story to the children in a 10 minute play, using a very colourful and well structured book. This is both informative and fun for the children and participants. I have been able to put together a core team and am now inviting folk to join this exciting venture.

We also have a few items in the pipeline, particularly in the field of family and parenting endeavours. I have been looking at the viability of a "Fathers who aren't in Heaven" group monthly Saturday morning breakfast for an hour and would be glad to hear of anyone who would be interested.

We are busy setting up a Mums singing group out of the Pushchair Clubs, all with the help of Joyce Fitter, as well as looking at some professionally run Marriage Enrichment and Parenting courses.

I have scheduled a talk by my next door neighbour Martin Hone, former night club owner and motor racing enthusiast sharing his journey to faith at our evening service on April 15th at 6.30 pm. Bring your friends along too.

Given my love for music, I have it in the back of my mind to develop a contemporary music group and am on the look-out for young folk who would like to join a group.

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your kindness and support.

Paul Jones

B **WORD IN ACTION**
The Bible - sharing it and living it | bible society.org.uk | Spring 2012

BIBLE SOCIETY

Amigos por siempre

Cancer kids find hope
Bible strengthens families in Nicaragua

2 OLYMPIC WORKOUT Blending sport and Spirit
5 THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE Winning Westminster
12 OUTCASTS NO MORE Global message of hope

Don't forget to pick up a copy of the Spring issue of the Bible Society Magazine.

See Ian Sinclair

Lent House Groups.

This year has seen a significant development in the Lent House Groups as we have combined with Christ Church United Reform Church and two of the groups that are meeting have Christian of both churches in their membership.

There are sixteen groups meeting throughout the week with 113 people taking part, an increase from last year.

Our topic for this year is 'Discovering a Vital Spirituality' with material written by Mike Crockett.

The five sessions ask us to consider

- Encountering a Vital God,
- Experiencing a Vital Faith.
- Practising a Vital Prayer Life,
- Living in a Vital Community
- Sharing Vitality with others.

All challenging topics which so far have prompted a great deal of discussion and self examination.

During Sundays in Lent sermons in both churches have taken the weekly theme and given groups a starting point for their discussions.

Special thanks must go to Lawrie Rumens for summarising the sermons and if you would like to catch up on what other groups discussed, both these items appear weekly in the Prattle.

Bryan Fitter



Solihull Methodist Church
Feel at home

Easter services

Sunday 1st April - Palm Sunday Family Service

10.30am Worship theme: "Enthusiasm and Cold Water"
6.30pm The Quiet Space for prayer and meditation

Thursday 5th April - Maundy Thursday

8.15pm Tenebrae and Holy Communion

Friday 6th April - Good Friday

11.00am Walk of Witness, starting at St Alphege
Church open 12 noon - 4pm for prayer and reflection

Sunday 8th April - Easter Sunday

10.30am Family Holy Communion
Worship Theme: "Yes indeed; you can start living again!"
6.30pm "Living beyond the Cross" including Holy Communion



Many who attend the Easter Sunday morning service bring a flower, which is incorporated into a cross which is then put outside on the steps of the church porch for the following week. You are welcome to join us in this symbol of Christ's turning what looked like defeat into glorious victory.

Corner of
Blossomfield Road
and Station Approach
B91 1LG

Church Office: 0121 705 7367

www.solihull-methodist.org.uk

Easter Offering

The 2012 Easter Offering theme is
Entertaining Angels – Transforming Encounters in Mission.

As in previous years it has been developed in conjunction with the Methodist Women in Britain.

The envelopes will be in the pews on Easter Sunday and the following Sunday.

Please give generously.