

September
October
2014

St John's
United Reformed Church

Record

Somerset & Mowbray Roads, New Barnet, Herts,

What's in a name...

Not the first time I have used this heading I know, but having glimpsed assembly reports I noticed reference to naming Elders by responsibility. I am clear about the job description for Eldership and therefore not fussed by titles, only by action and performance. In addition to the work of Elders many of our members regularly support the Church by pastoral visits or other activities including premises tidying, small work and cleaning, no titles required or sought. By the time you read these notes, Julian and Laura will have returned from sabbatical and holiday. I hope we are all ready to be inspired and fired up for more corporate activities at St. John's.

Tony Alderman

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Revd David Grosch-Miller

OUR NEW MODERATOR'S INSPIRING AND INSIGHTFUL MESSAGE

By Roz Douglas

In the opening session of General Assembly 2014, the Revd David Grosch-Miller was inducted as moderator of the General Assembly, to serve from 2014-2016. He will join Mr John Ellis, elder moderator of the URC General Assembly 2013-2016. The role of the

moderators is to be the national figureheads for the denomination, representing the URC both internally and within the wider world; they chair major meetings, visit churches at home and abroad, and seek to provide worship, teaching and pastoral care.

Here are some extracts from our new moderator's speech: He took as his theme the spiritual struggles of Jacob and how we now must similarly struggle to make our church strong in the 21st century.

"In our time, anxiety could easily become the defining emotion. The Synod Moderator's report speaks of the perplexity that many congregations feel as, despite their best efforts, numbers reduce and financial challenges become ever more demanding. We find it hard to understand how church going moved from being a central part of the culture of these islands to a peripheral activity for the minority. We haven't got used to our minority status and we don't much want to try. We would prefer to find a scapegoat to blame or a charismatic leader to turn the clock back. "We stand like Jacob by the crossing place and wait. We have prospered. Until recently we have had a respected place in society, we have built fine buildings and rubbed shoulders with the powerful.

But uncertainty causes us to stumble and like Jacob we know our need to rebuild relationships of trust that have been neglected. We cannot do this on our own, our own insights are insufficient for the task. There is some wrestling to be done before we can wade through the waters and enjoy the homecoming. It helps to be reminded that for Jacob the preparation for this moment is rooted in prayer. A prayer in which Jacob recognises his own smallness before God. Jacob stands empty handed before God and is the reminder that we who are the inheritors of faith live only by God's gracious faithfulness." "It is OK to be anxious but it is not OK to be paralysed by fear. We stand on the cusp of change and we cannot allow the past to hold us prisoner. It takes courage to claim the freedom

that lies in a future we cannot see. Many of us would have preferred to be the generation that was called to build, and to be around when church going was the accepted norm. But we are not and we need to get over it." (Within the URC) People feel distant from the decision making process. We find it hard to trust others to make decisions that impact upon us and want to protect our own interests. The common signs of a failing institution are to become obsessed with statistics and reports, to become risk averse, to be inward looking and for relationships of trust to breakdown at every level. The gathering of data has become all consuming; there are more reports written and ignored than ever before. If the kingdom of God was going to come through a committee report or Synod or Assembly strategy, then there have been plenty of opportunities. Before all the Assembly Committee Conveners and Staff Secretaries rise up in

protest let me clarify what I am saying. The energy for change comes from members in local churches. Revolution, as the saying goes, never starts at the top but among the people who take control of their own future. Momentum comes from those who (like Jacob) are prepared to wrestle their own demons and who don't sit back waiting for others to do it for them. This United Reformed Church of ours is a remarkable expression of the Body of Christ. We affirm that ministry is the task of the whole people of God, not the preserve of a separate or professional class. We have lost the confidence to speak of our faith and we too readily accept the criticism of others that the URC somehow missed the boat. The URC isn't perfect but when I look at the

problems of other denominations I wonder why we are so pessimistic. Get over the anxiety, live confidently and take some pride that God has used us and still uses us. We have been ahead of the game on virtually every significant change in church life for more than a century. We were among the first to ordain women. The Church of England made a fuss over the 20th anniversary of ordaining women, we have been doing it since 1917. Burt Hamilton pioneered family church in the 1960s and children have been received at communion as we broke down the barriers defined by age. M&M is our commitment to treating ministers equally. We offer a safety net to house retired ministers.

We are the denomination that takes ecumenism seriously, ecumenism that makes a difference and which lets go as well as embraces new. Our overseas mission is a round table partnership that takes other cultures seriously. We have a partnership with Christian Aid through Commitment for Life. We have the opportunity to celebrate difference as a strength and not a weakness. It is not in our nature to sit around while the slowest catches up with us. We have always had the confidence and the courage to take the lead. We shouldn't stop now."

The complete address can be downloaded from:

<http://bit.ly/GA14dgm>

MiriamDeanFund

On Sunday September 28th we have invited Andy and Sheila Moore, who are Trustees of the Miriam Dean Fund, to speak at the morning service. As a Church we have been supporting the work with disabled children in the Bala Murugan Community.

Miriam Dean and her husband Will lived in Friern Barnet and ran a baker's shop opposite Friern hospital. During the Second World War, German prisoners of war were interned there and one Christmas Miriam collected rations of sugar and flour and made a huge cake for the men. This act of kindness resulted in friendships which continued after the war. The Deans visited post-war Germany and Miriam was distressed by the conditions she

encountered there. She began to send clothes and money to families in need. Her work took her to refugee camps and other areas of deprivation and led to links with African villages and Indian leprosy communities. Many other people got involved and her work continued after her death. Today the charity reaches out to some of the world's poorest and marginalised people. Many projects have been set up and Trustees of the Fund regularly visit these.

We look forward to hearing more about the work and there will be an opportunity to talk further with Andy and Sheila after the service at a Bring and Share lunch.



Junior Church News....

MESSY CHURCH



AT

ST. JOHN'S



**WEDS 4
KIDS
CLUB**

**10th
September
4:00pm**

The next Messy Church event takes place on Sunday 21st September at 10:30 am

Church Record

The deadline for contributions to Alison Cousins (contact details on front page) is 24th October.

The July/August edit

Congratulations to all those who have graduated this year:

Edward Bartrum

Iain Frenkiel

Cecily Mobbs

Cathy Porter

Nicole Summers



The Summer Newsletter of VAO, the charity to which we send unwanted spectacles, arrived recently. One item relates to Joseph Matome, a geography teacher in Zambia. His sight had been deteriorating since 2008, with increasing problems in marking books and on his confidence generally. Through the local rural health clinic, VAO was able to supply Joseph with suitable spectacles and thus transform his life.

So far, VAO have dispensed 63,955 pairs of spectacles in Zambia, and carried out 86,360 eye examinations there. However, only 17% of the population can access eye care locally, so there is a long way to go.

I am pleased to report that St. Johns has already sent over 4,500 pairs of spectacles to VAO, so please continue to support this effective recycling charity by putting unwanted spectacles in the box in the church porch.

Hugh Martin.

WHEN THE CLOCK STOPPED - NEVER TO GO AGAIN

A visit to Japan took David and Agnes Porter to a largely unknown city that will forever be etched on the global memory following man-made devastation

“**W**hat happened on 9 August 1945?” That could be a question in the Church quiz. It had great significance for the people of Japan and particularly Nagasaki. Once I add that latter name, you I know what I am talking about.

The second A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki at 11.02am on a bright sunny day, very similar to the one we enjoyed in the city when temperatures soared to 30-plus. This was three days after Hiroshima suffered a similar fate.

Nagasaki was not the primary target that day in August 1945. The bomb was intended for a place called Kokura, some 60 miles to the east of Nagasaki. However, the B29 bomb delivery aircraft changed to the secondary target (Nagasaki) owing to Kokura being covered in smoke and haze, the result of bombing missions the day before.

There are plenty of reminders of that fateful day. There is a museum, a peace park, ruins, remnants, a bell tower that collapsed off a cathedral - the largest in East Asia. The cathedral was reduced to rubble taking with it two priests and some 24 parishioners during morning mass. It has been rebuilt although there are scorched remains in its grounds. One statue of St Agnes survived annihilation and now is in the United Nations Building in New York.

Nagasaki was getting ready for its commemorative day three days after our visit. One is held every year. Stands were being put out in the peace park. Temporary fences had been erected.

It is a surreal experience being there in the place where there was so much devastation from one single nuclear explosion.

There is stack of statistics in the Atomic Bomb museum about what happened: people killed, size of the bomb, what height it detonated, radiation effect, number of houses flattened. A catastrophe of this magnitude is difficult to comprehend. My lasting memory will be of individuals. Like, for instance, Professor Susumu Tsuno, president of Nagasaki medical college. He was travelling back from Tokyo days earlier and happened to pass through Hiroshima immediately after the A-bomb was dropped on that city. He got back to Nagasaki and briefed medical colleagues on the injuries sustained by victims of Hiroshima. Then he experienced an A-bomb explosion at first hand. He survived the blast but lived only 13 days suffering the effects of scarring and burns.

Dr Takashi Nagai died almost six years later but his notability is that he wrote down the effect

The clock that stopped at the precise moment the Atomic Bomb hit Nagasaki - 11.02am 9 August 1945. (Photographed at the Atomic Bomb museum, Nagasaki)



of radiation and also penned three books: 'The Bells of Nagasaki', 'The Rosary Chain', and 'Leaving These Children Behind'.

Katsuji Hoshida was 14 when the bomb dropped. He suffered terrible burns and scars known as keloids which so disfigured his face that he faced discrimination wherever he went. His thought: "the basis of peace is to understand the pain of others."

Then there were some remnants. A lunch box containing scorched rice. Fourteen-year-old Sutoko Tsutsumi stayed away from the school as she heard the sirens warning her to go to a shelter. She was at home with her grandparents. None of them survived. All her father could find when he looked for relatives was the charred lunchbox.

Many have questioned the reasons for dropping the atomic bomb. President Truman, a day after the Hiroshima atomic bomb attack said: "we have used it to

shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.”

Soviet Union leaders were briefed on the new weapon by the Americans. On 8 August 1945 - two days after the Hiroshima attack, the USSR declared war on Japan, a pointless gesture as the war was won once the first atomic bomb was dropped.

The day before visiting Nagasaki we met a church

group from Washington DC waiting in Osaka for a train to Hiroshima. Carolyn Rondthaler, from All Souls Unitarian church was one of 37 members who were on their way to the peace ceremony that takes place every year on 6th August, the anniversary of the first Atomic bomb being dropped. A sister church in Hiroshima put them up.

Museums, memorials and commemorative ceremonies are important. Lest we forget.

David Porter

Note: Nagasaki is a significant place for Christianity in Japan. Spanish missionary Francis Xavier, a Jesuit, brought Roman Catholicism to

Kagoshima, Japan, in the 16th century. But his arrival did not please Buddhist monks so he shifted his mission to Nagasaki.

Liverpool 30 years on

A city transformed was a welcome experience for David Paul's return visit.



L-R : the Royal Liver Building, Cunard Building and Port of Liverpool Building - "The Three Graces".

Rosemary and I spent a few days exploring Liverpool & surroundings on a short holiday in July. It was Rosemary's first visit, but I had been there once before to see the International Garden Festival in 1984. At that time Liverpool didn't enjoy a very good public image, many of the old industries & docks had closed, with the consequent

rise in unemployment. In places the city looked rundown & neglected, although government money was beginning to be pumped

into various projects & the Garden Festival was intended to encourage tourism to the area & help bring new life to the Merseyside region. Going back again this July was for me a pleasant surprise as the city has been transformed! On the Mersey waterfront the once neglected Albert Dock complex is now a bustling haven for boats & barges, with

the old dock buildings converted into shops, restaurants & exhibitions about maritime history & the Beatles story. Further along the waterfront are the iconic Royal Liver, Cunard & Port of Liverpool buildings locally known as 'The Three Graces'. A striking new Museum of Liverpool has now been opened to tell the story of this great city. Liverpool was the European capital of culture in 2008 and as part of the celebrations a major new shopping precinct was opened that year. In Victorian times prosperity from its maritime trade enabled the building of many grand public buildings such as St. Georges Hall & the Walker Art Gallery, both worth visiting! At either end of Hope Street stand two cathedrals, first the massive Anglican Cathedral, one of the largest in the world, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. At the other end stands the Catholic

Metropolitan Cathedral designed in the 1960's by Sir Frederic Gibberd in the shape of a bell tent & popularly known as 'Paddy's Wigwam'. A short train ride from the city took us to Port Sunlight on the Wirral. Built by William

Hesketh Lever in the 1880's as a village to house the employees working at his nearby factory producing Sunlight Soap, the village is delightful, as the guidebook says 'Unique & attractive homes, public buildings &

memorials grace lawns & open spaces, an oasis of peace within a busy area'. Our visit to Liverpool & its surroundings seemed too short for us as there is a lot to enjoy there, if you have never been to that area it's worth a visit.

David Paul

St John's Fellowship

United Reformed Church

Iona & Mull



Tobermory

Our speaker at our August Fellowship meeting was Frank Bayford. He has spoken to us on several previous occasions and as usual was most interesting. Mull is a beautiful island of moorland, forest and peaks. He recommended visiting it in May or June when the weather is usually very pleasant with long evenings and wonderful sunsets. The only down side is the abundance of midges - so go prepared with the best repellent! Mull is the largest of the Inner Hebrides although it is quite a small island. It measures 24 miles north to south and 27 miles east to west. It has a very indented coastline so the perimeter is about 300 miles. It is reached by ferry from Oban. On arrival at Craignure the mountain of Ben More and Duart Castle can be seen. The

castle is a 13th century stronghold and is the home of the Chief of Clan Maclean. Fitzroy

Maclean was the Chief Scout and it houses a Scout exhibition. The main road through the island is single track with passing places and is very bumpy! Tobermory (known to children as Balamory) is the main centre and fishing port.

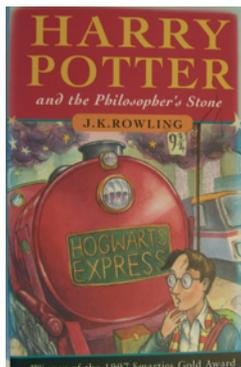
Divers search for the remains of the Spanish galleon Florida blown up in the bay in 1588. Dervaig is one of the prettiest villages and houses Britain's smallest theatre. There is also a distillery producing a very fine malt whisky.

St Columba established his abbey in AD563 on the tiny island of Iona. The reconstructed cathedral dates from around 1500. Nearby the carved crosses of St. Martin and St. John stand on the road to St. Oran's cemetery, the oldest Christian cemetery in Scotland. Staffa is a small uninhabited island the same shape as Iona but smaller. It is famous for its caves and basaltic formations. Fingals Cave inspired Mendelssohn to write the Hebrides Overture.

Ann Bannerman

Visiting speaker spots a valuable volume on the Fellowship stall...

Following his talk on Mull, speaker Frank Bayford pointed out to Patricia that a paperback copy of J K Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* displayed on the bookstall might prove to be a first edition. He was correct, and we thank him for alerting us to this opportunity to benefit from its value to a collector. Now for some vital statistics, that may perhaps result in many folk moving casually, but purposefully, towards the bookshelves of their children and grand children. The book was first published by Bloomsbury as a run of 500 hardback copies on 6 June 1997, followed immediately by



the first printing of the 223-page first soft cover children's edition. Our copy is first edition, 38th impression (number line 40 39 38); Joanne Rowling is named on the copyright page (late editions identify her as J K Rowling); and a young wizard is featured on the back cover and spine (a grey-bearded wizard appears on later editions). Apart from some fading caused by sunlight on the spine and at the top and side of the front cover illustration (that I had previously believed to be an attractive and clever feature of the artist's work), this copy is in very good condition with only

very minor damage and looks unread. There are no inscriptions, pen or pencil marks, or wear on page edges, but a minor liquid stain on a small area of page edge and some minor shelf damage may detract. A 38th impression copy in inferior condition is currently

available for £25 and a 36th impression copy 'in nice condition, clean and tightly bound' is advertised at £275. I believe that the value of our copy should lie somewhere between these two figures. It may be that someone recalls donating this book to the bookstall and wishes to be associated with its sale - if that is the case, please step forward and speak to Patricia; as also anyone who has a good vendor's rating on e-bay, or who has or can provide contact with an expert or dealer in the field of collectable books.

Nigel Picken

Winter Shelter News

While not wanting to wish the summer away, my thoughts are turning to the winter and plans for the forthcoming season of the Winter Shelter. This year it will run from mid October through to the end of March, and St. John's has been asked to host Saturday nights from 25th October - 10 January, a total of 12 nights. We will work with St. Peter's again, and for the first time St. Peters will host one of our Saturday nights in November, as our halls are already booked for that evening. I am sure St. Peters will enjoy the opportunity to welcome the guests into their halls and community, and we are grateful that they can provide the accommodation for that evening. I do hope that

those who volunteered last year will feel like getting involved again this coming winter and of course we would be delighted to welcome new recruits, so do ask your friends if you think they would enjoy being involved. I shall be gathering lists of volunteers very shortly as October will arrive all too soon.

Thank you to everyone for your support in all sorts of ways.

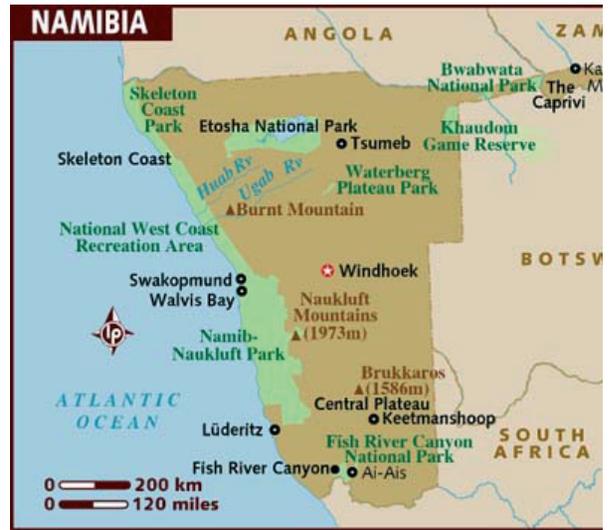
Lesley Calder

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Phone: 0208 440 5073

Namibia

The 57 members of the Hatters Explorer Scout Group went off to northern Namibia to visit the San people in Tsintsabis as part of the Orange Grove project, which began three years ago. Included in the group this time were Joel and Gideon Elsdon. Joel shares some of his experiences of the trip.



On Wednesday 21st July, we started our journey to Namibia - everyone was excited. The journey, however, took most of the day- changing at Johannesburg before travelling onto Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia. After staying a day at Windhoek, we settled down nearby in the region of Tsintabis near Tsumeb which is north of Windhoek. On route, we bought the trees and pipes required for the irrigation system and also our tents. It was dark when we arrived but the villagers had prepared a meal for us. The people from the village cooked and prepared our food for the duration of this part of our stay .



One more photograph before heading off to Southgate Tube Station.

The following morning, Saturday, the work started with initially clearing a plot of land - this took several days. During the weekend the local scout group from Tsumeb came out to meet up with us. We worked together and in the evening sang camp fire songs - their singing was much better than ours! On Sunday the group had to go back home as they had school the next day. During the clearing of the field, we came across a cobra. Although at first we thought it was a



rock! People from the village were with us at the time and killed the snake. The snake was then gutted, skinned and cooked.

The fourth day during our stay at the village a number of the group started getting ill. Gideon was one of the first, and after lying under a tree with a few others to keep out of the sun, he and the others noticed that they had received a large number of insect bites. As it was unclear exactly what had caused these bites they were taken along to the local clinic. Fortunately, the bites were not a cause for concern. However, as they all had been suffering with dehydration as a result of their illness they were sent to the hospital at Tsumeb. The first day ten of the group were taken to hospital. In total,



26 of the group ended up in hospital. Luckily, I was not ill, but unfortunately,

it meant that there was more work for the rest of us to do. After clearing the fields, we started digging the holes for the trees - 500 of them. This was followed by more digging - digging now for the trenches that would serve as part of the irrigation network for the trees. We planted mango and papaya trees. As it was not quite the right time of the year to plant the orange trees, money was left to ensure the village was able to buy these at the correct time. Money was also set aside to employ someone from the village to maintain the land. The people from village will be able to use some of the land in between the trees for growing their own vegetables. In return, they will help to look after the nearby trees.

Those of our group that were in hospital started to come out after three days. We left the village just after a week to travel to Etosha National Park. On the way, we collected the last few

members of the group who were still in hospital. Although, we did some work around the park - mainly tidying one of the entrances and clearing up rubbish at the centre, we were also taken out on a number of trips into the national park. This was an amazing experience. So many different animals to see. In fact, near the centre was a watering hole where we could sit and watch the animals. At the end of our trip we were taken to Skeleton Coast National Park, where we went to a seal colony. It was now back to Windhoek for our last night. The following day was to prove to be another experience for myself as I had to reveal to one of



our leaders that I had lost my passport! To say he was not happy would be an understatement. However, with one of Namibian Scout Leaders I was taken first to a Police Station to fill in forms - this was the first time I have been in a building where I was the only white person. Next it was onto the British Embassy for - yes more form filling. Well, I got back in time for checking in for our flight, but it took awhile to convince passport control to let me through. We finally returned to Southgate, a little bit tired, but having had a wonderful trip with so many amazing experiences. The tents we used, were donated to the Namibian Scout Group. We hope for success to for the plantation. Gideon and I would like to thank those at St. John's who supported us in our fundraising for this trip.



Calendar

September

September		
Sunday 7th	11:00pm	Worship with Holy Communion led by Julian Templeton
Tuesday 9th	8:00pm	Elders Meeting
Wednesday 10th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
Thursday 11th	12:00pm	Prayer at Noon - Vestry
Sunday 14th	11:00am	Worship led by Helen Snider and Andrew Summers
	3:30pm	Causeway
	8:00pm	Soul Food
Tuesday 16th	3:30pm	Pastoral Team Meeting
Wednesday 17th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
	8:00pm	Fellowship - Two short talks: First one on Middle Row & Second on Katebrygge. Both by Richard Selby
Thursday 18th	12:00pm	Prayer at Noon - Vestry
Saturday 20th	10:00am	Elders Meeting
Sunday 21st	10:30am	Messy Church
	11:00am	Worship led by Julian Templeton
	12:30pm	Church Meeting
Tuesday 23rd	8:00pm	Justice & Peace Group
	8:30pm	Men's Group
Wednesday 24th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
Thursday 24th	12:00pm	Prayer at Noon - Vestry
Sunday 28th	11:00am	Worship led by Alison Bond. Two of the Trustees from the Miriam Dean Fund, Andy and Shelia Moore, are coming to speak in the service.
	12:30pm	Bring and Share Lunch with an opportunity for further discussion about Miriam Dean Fund.
Monday 29th	8:00pm	Chipping Barnet Foodbank AGM at St.John's.
Tuesday 30th	8:30pm	Prayer and Discussion Group at 37 Greenhill Park

Calendar

October

October

Wednesday 1st	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
Thursday 2nd	12:00pm	Prayer at Noon - Vestry
Sunday 5th	11:00am	Harvest Festival - Led by Julian Templeton
Wednesday 8th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
Sunday 12th	11:00am	Worship led by Andrew and Valerie Mills
	8:00pm	Soul Food
Tuesday 14th	8:00pm	Elders Meeting
Wednesday 15th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
	8:00pm	Fellowship : Elvis Presley - His Life and Music by Mike Noranha
Sunday 19th	10:30am	Messy Church
	11:00am	Worship led by Julian Templeton
Wednesday 22nd	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
Wednesday 23rd	12:00pm	Prayer at Noon - Vestry
Friday 24th		Copy deadline for next edition of Church Record
Sat 25th/Sun 26th		Winter Shelter
Sunday 25th	11:00am	Worship led by Meg Hardie and Paul Elsdon
	3:00pm	Causeway
Tuesday 28th	8:00pm	Prayer and Discussion Group at 37 Greenhill Park
	8:00pm	Justice and Peace Group
Thursday 30th	12:00pm	Prayer at Noon - Vestry
	8:00pm	Men's Group - Curry Evening

November

Saturday 1st		Working Party TBC
Sat 1st/Sun 2nd		Winter Shelter
Sunday 2nd	11:00am	Worship with Holy Communion led by Julian Templeton
Wednesday 5th	4:00pm	Weds 4 Kids Club
Thursday 6th	12:00pm	Prayer at Noon - Vestry
Saturday 8th		Working Party TBC
Sat 8th/Sun 9th		Winter Shelter
Sunday 9th	10:45am	Rememberance Sunday, Worship by Revd Roger Orme