



CONTACT

News & Views from
Tavistock United Reformed Church
& Salvation Army, Russell Street.



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Church Website: www.tavistockurc.org

APRIL 2008

SUNDAY 6th	10:00am	Worship & Holy Communion - Rev Rog
EASTER 3	6:00pm	Salvation Army Meeting - Ms Anne Luxton
Saturday 12th	12noon	Wedding of Paul Flanagan & Dorothy Dixon.
SUNDAY 13th	10:00am	Worship - Rev Rog
EASTER 4		Elders' meeting
	6:00pm	Salvation Army Meeting - Col Joan
SUNDAY 20th	10:00am	Worship led by Mrs Barbara Baker (Sherwell UM)
EASTER 5	6:00pm	Salvation Army Meeting - Mr Garth Sanders
Monday 21st - Friday 25th inclusive - Roger		at URC Ministers' Spring School - Brunel Manor.
SUNDAY 27th	10:00am	Worship led by Mr Graham Jones (Plymouth)
EASTER 6	6:00pm	Salvation Army Meeting - Col Joan.





**TAVISTOCK URC: MEMBERS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SUNDAY MARCH 9TH 2008**

MINISTER'S REPORT

Everyone's contribution to the life of this fellowship is valued and needed and I thank God for each of you and for all that you do - your prayers, witness, time, practical efforts and financial support.

A person was looking for the perfect church to join but was unable to find it. He eventually realised that if he joined the perfect church, well, it would no longer be perfect. This fellowship like all others is far from perfect but it is a great pleasure to minister in a church family which is as happy & loving as this one is. It is significant that the few who drop in on a Sunday morning to see what we're like often stay with us despite our failings. We could do with a lot more people dropping in!!



I regret that I am not a full-time minister and have a time consuming wider ministry that inevitably restricts what I can do in Tavistock. I find this very frustrating at times especially where midweek meetings are concerned.

Our midweek meetings constantly challenge us to reach out to people in our community. We do this through the meals we offer & through the Lower Deck Café. However despite completing courses designed to help us witness & evangelise many still feel inadequate or embarrassed when it comes to sharing their faith with friends or relatives who do not attend church. How is the fellowship to grow if those who come and value it do not say anything to anyone about it? This is a serious problem with which we all need to wrestle and ask God to help us - and then to just do it!!

The city of Samaria was under siege and there was a great famine in the city.

We pick up the story in **2 Kings 7: 3-9**

'This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves!'

Good news, the news that impending death has given way to the prospect of life, is too important to keep from dying men & women.

As the 4 lepers approached the camp, maybe God magnified their stumbling footsteps so that they seemed like the approach of a great army and so terrified the Arameans that they fled in fear. Whether that is quite how it happened or not, it is surely true to say that as you and I take our first hesitant steps toward sharing our faith, **God will already be at work in the hearts of those we approach.** The God who did the impossible and fed a starving city still does the impossible turning hard hearts to himself in our day.

Finally some words from **1 Peter 4:8-11**.....

Father God, we thank you for the Good News that whoever believes in you will live. That you turn no one away. That all are welcome in this place. Help us to share this news with those we care about. In Jesus' name. Amen.



“SERVING GOD AND SHARING THE GOOD NEWS”



I must begin my report this year by thanking everyone for their patience and encouragement over the past twelve months and more. This has been a difficult time for me, because of personal circumstances, and so it has not been possible to do the work of Church Secretary as well as I would have wished. However, over this period I have been made very aware of the love and concern shown by the Church family, and I have also been aware that people have been working quietly and unasked, to help me through this time. We are all individuals with our own preferences and prejudices, but what unites us as the Church family is far more important than what divides us. I am reminded of some words which came up in our Church Day this year, and

later in our Lent Course: "belonging comes before believing". We have here a community where people from a variety of backgrounds can feel they belong, and in that security they can explore what it means to believe.

Spiritual Growth :

At a time when even many Christians regard weekly Church attendance as an option rather than a duty, most of our members and friends make a point of sharing in worship Sunday by Sunday. This is a time for us to renew our commitment to Christ and to each other. Through the services led by our minister, we continue to be confirmed and encouraged in our faith. We also rely very much on others to lead our worship, on the third and fifth Sundays. Thanks go to our outgoing pulpit secretary for finding people - she now takes a well-earned rest from this position.



There have been opportunities for us to develop our spiritual growth as a community. Several people regularly attend the Tuesday evening film night, and the Wednesday afternoon Bible study with the Salvation Army. Our minister seems to have a never-ending supply of varied material for these sessions. Our Church day, and our Lent Course have led our thinking in a new direction, and though both have been challenging, they have presented us with questions, which we - and the whole Church - have to think about if Christian witness is to continue in our nation. These study sessions are opportunities for us to deepen our understanding of the faith and to deepen our friendship with each other.

We are grateful to those who open their homes and give their time and talents to the various fund-raising activities. In particular, thanks are due to our Social and Fund-Raising Coordinator and to the "Raising the Roof" group, who are always looking for novel ways to part us from our money to - literally - keep a roof over our heads. Although fund-raising is a necessary part of Church life, it is important to keep our perspective; many of the events are opportunities for people to work together and to get to know each other better. And of course these are times when we can simply enjoy each other's company.

Ecumenical Relationships:

The Salvation Army continues to share our premises, and it is good to see individual members of both churches sharing in a variety of activities. We also continue to support the work of Tavistock Area Christians Together. We are also grateful for the support given to us by individual members of other churches in Tavistock on many occasions.



Outreach:



The Lower Deck Café continues to fulfil a need in the community as a place where people can come and stay as long as they like, and find a listening ear. Many people now use it as a meeting place. Another successful Christmas Lunch took place this year, and in addition there was a well - attended Harvest Lunch. We are constantly seeking and praying for opportunities to continue our outreach to the community .

Continued

Continued

We continue to support, practically and financially, the work of Operation Sunshine, which gives help to the very poor, mainly in southern Africa. We receive regular feedback about the ways in which our gifts are used. In addition, we continue to contribute financially to Silveira House in Zimbabwe, via the URC 'Commitment to Life' initiative, and to UNICEF. At Christmas we again sent shoeboxes to needy families via Link Romania. We are committed to buying fairly traded goods as a Church, and, I hope, as individual members.

COMMITMENT
FOR LIFE



Our Church Family

Membership:

As in previous years, we have lost members through death or through a change in personal circumstances. It is good to know that some of our members keep in touch on an individual basis, and it is always good to welcome back former members. We continue to welcome new people to join us in worship, and some have entered into full membership. In January of this year, membership stood at thirty- three and attendance at Sunday worship, while very variable, averages out at a good percentage of the total membership.

Conclusion

We sometimes surprise other people - and ourselves - with the amount that we achieve, with a small and mainly elderly membership. We are able to achieve so much because of the leadership and example given by our minister, and because of the willingness of our members to give their time and their talents to the life of the church. In presenting this report I have deliberately avoided naming individuals not only because it would lengthen this report considerably, but also because it is impossible to list all the ways in which members contribute. Nonetheless, I do thank everyone for all that they are doing for our Church Community .

Revd Mrs Phyllis Ball - Church Secretary



A UNITY, RENEWAL AND HEALING EVENT FOR TAVISTOCK

This event, organised by Tavistock Methodist Church, will be led by **DENNIS WRIGLEY** from Manchester. Dennis is a national Christian leader and 27 years ago founded the Maranatha Community. Maranatha comprises over 10,000 Christians drawn from all the main churches who pray and work for unity, renewal and healing and are deeply involved in a wide range of social issues working in Parliament, the EU and United Nations. There are Maranatha groups in various parts of the country - including an active group in Plymouth - as well as overseas.

FRIDAY 25TH APRIL - 7:00pm Informal 2 course supper at the Town Hall.

Dennis will speak on "Forgiveness : God's answer to a nation in need."

Tickets: £ 10 Telephone:615940 (Linda Medland)or see Judy Morton.

SATURDAY 26TH APRIL - @ Tavistock Methodist Church.

10am - 1pm The Maranatha vision for unity, renewal & healing.

7pm Healing Broken Hearts & Broken Lives

This is a special opportunity for Christians to come together to learn and experience more of God in our personal & community life . For more information, please see the various leaflets at the back of the Church or telephone Ruth Newman on 616859..

REPORT TO THE CHURCH AGM re the HIRE OF THE CHURCH PREMISES

2007 was another successful year for the church premises! Hirers left but new hirers came and the premises are still in use every day of the week! The hire charges increased in September - the first increase for two years. The income is vital to pay the bills and maintenance costs of the Church - alleviating pressure from a small congregation! 2007 raised £15,060.

A list of regular hirers is on the noticeboards of the Vestry and Hall, and a calendar is kept upstairs which lists the additional occasional uses. Members are reminded that there is no reason to interrupt any hirers' use of the premises - and they should alter their plans to get to the kitchen or arrange flowers etc rather than walk through. Hirers may say they don't mind - but they do really!!

This year we said goodbye to 4 of our regular hirers - FOOTsteps dancing (who amalgamated their two classes in Tavistock and Princetown to one in Yelverton); BodyWise Yoga (whose leader moved to Truro) our own Playbox - with thanks to Lisa Dashper for all her hard work setting it up - but unfortunately a new leader was not forthcoming and the Latin Dance exercise class finished through lack of numbers.

However we welcomed 7 new hirers - the Millennium Bridge Club; Tavistock Children's Centre/Barnardo's who run a "drop in" for babies and toddlers; Baby Signers; Lingoweenies (foreign languages for pre schoolers); Dynamic Yoga; Ruth Harris - Pilates; and the Tavy District U3A singing group.

The computer courses which started in June finished abruptly in October, when the tutor left to start her own business at Kingdon House but we were fortunate that High Moorland Community Association started a new series of 6 week courses in November.

Other regular hirers are:

Hullabaloo Music; Tai Chi/Wutan Kung Fu; over 50's yoga; Pilates; Tavistock Flower Club; Duplicate Bridge Club; Slimming World; Thursday Friends; Shotokan Karate; Make A Difference Café Project; 4 seasons craft workshop and the Salvation Army.

Occasional users have been:

Tavistock Fulfilling Lives (10 week course); West Devon Business Information Point (2 evening course and a day conference); South Devon NHS Carers' Consortium (8 week courses in April and October); West Devon Licensing Sub Committee; Flower Club Summer Show; Alcoholics Anonymous; Tavistock Peace Action Group; 1 funeral wake; a 70th birthday party (an exception to our rules!); TACT prayers & breakfasts and Cards for Good Causes.

The Church uses the premises too!

Sunday worship; film night; midweek fellowship; Lower Deck Café; Lunches for: Gift Day, Synod Property Committee, Plymouth & Cornwall District Farewell Dinner, Community, Harvest, Advent & the big one - Christmas!! There was an Auction, Goose Fair, a Sankey evening and concerts by the Mens Forum Gospel Choir of Okehampton, Brunel Harmony Chorus, Saltash Augmented Choir, and Devon Youth Sinfonietta.

Cleaning & Maintenance:

The departure of Garth & Liz Sanders meant no cleaners!. A volunteer rota was set up for the Church and Mrs Sabrina Burd is responsible for cleaning the Lower Deck. Thank you to EVERYONE who helps maintain the premises - including those who buy cleaning provisions - your efforts and purchases are much appreciated!

Suzanne Cornish - Administrator.



At the election/ re-election of serving Elders, we are pleased to announce that Revd Mrs Phyllis Ball was re-elected to serve for another 3 year term - although she will be giving up the post of Church Secretary at the next AGM.

Also we are delighted to welcome Mrs Janet Dashper on to the Eldership. Elders are ordained and Janet will be ordained at the Communion service on Sunday April 6th. Please pray for her and all the Elders.

The Eldership now comprises Mrs Phyllis Ball, Mrs Sabrina Burd, Mrs Janet Dashper, Mr Clifford Doidge, Mrs Pip McIntyre & Mrs Pearl Pearson.

FUND RAISING UPDATE:

Donation from Duplicate Bridge Club - £155 ; Donations in memory of Mrs Mary Jane - £200 Church Gift Day & Lunch - £1885. Tamar Valley Male Voice Choir -£512.76p .

CONCERTS IN APRIL an opportunity to hear two more spectacular male voice choirs from each side of the Tamar!! Admission to each concert is FREE but a collection for the Roof Fund will be taken.

Please support both these concerts if you can & invite your family, friends and neighbours too!!



SATURDAY APRIL 12th
BURRATON MALE VOICE CHOIR
7:30pm in the Church

FRIDAY APRIL 18th
OKEHAMPTON MEN'S FORUM
GOSPEL CHOIR
7:30pm in the Church

Judy Morton is off on another charity trek for

ACTION AID . Not to Peru - but this time to Africa! The trip is in September

but as part of her fundraising Judy will be holding a **COFFEE MORNING** on **SATURDAY APRIL 26th** from 10:30am. at 7 Church Lea, Whitchurch .

Judy writes : "This charity challenge is entitled "**The Footsteps of the Maasai**" and will take me across the Great African Rift Valley through wild country, along

a route where Maasai villages and majestic volcanoes rise out of acacia and savannah bush. The Maasai of Kenya and North Tanzania demonstrate a nomadic way of life that has endured for hundreds of years, now they struggle to retain that lifestyle. The international charity ActionAid has been working in partnership



with them and I hope to have the opportunity (local politics permitting) to visit education and water projects currently being undertaken with the Maasai in Kenya. These project visits provide at first-hand the opportunity to see how the money donated can make such a difference in people's lives. We then cross into Tanzania for the 5-day trek (the hard part) and the challenges that this African adventure promises to provide are very different from those I encountered in Peru. Whilst there is no altitude walking this time, the total distance walked each day is longer, up

to 25Km, which together with the heat (30C+), the dust and the rocky terrain will make for interesting days, while camping out in the bush with the accompaniment of animal noises (far off I hope!) will make for interesting nights. The rewards will be immense and I look forward to telling you all about it on my return, I can't wait to go!

If you feel able to support me in my challenge, either by attending a fund-raising event e.g. the coffee morning, by sponsoring me, holding a fund-raiser yourself or maybe even joining me on the trek I would be delighted. I should like to add that 100% of any donation will benefit ActionAid as I am funding all my costs of going on the trip."

actionaid



As the days are getting longer, the film nights will be getting shorter and there will be only 3 more film nights before a break until the Autumn. The next films will be on **TUESDAYS APRIL 1st, 8th & 15th** at 7:30pm in the Church . ALL WELCOME ! Tea/Coffee available.

Roger will be away at Minsters' Spring School the next week and a **NEW** study course will begin the week after that - on **TUESDAY APRIL 29th at 7:30pm in the Church.**

90% of those living in the UK have no connection to the church. Church culture and Society have rarely been further apart - yet there is a great spiritual hunger!

How can churches equip themselves to reach out to those in their work and home communities?
AGAPE have recently produced a new resource which aims to help do just that!

MIND THE GAP /connecting people with the message is a set of DVD-based workshops to help church leaders and their congregations think through their approach to evangelism among the unchurched. It's not a personal evangelism course, nor a blueprint on how to do it. Rather, it's lots of good, tried and tested ideas on how to build in good practice and some creativity - some to copy - some to reject -and some to act as inspiration for new ideas. Each workshop contains about 30 minutes of video content, but the real value is in the discussion group time that is interspersed throughout each session. Questions in the supporting material help participants get to grips with what this might mean for their own church.

The six sessions are:

- 1) **The Big Picture** - making outreach a natural part of church life
- 2) **But I'm just an ordinary Christian !** - helping every Christian to play their part.
- 3) **Great Expectations** - putting on cringe-free events for seekers
- 4) **Will anyone turn up?** - inviting the right people to the right event in the right way.
- 5) **I don't have all the answers!** - discussing faith one-to-one and in small groups.
- 6) **Who will we ask?** - reaching your whole community.



Over 30 people came to the Church Day when Revd Paul Snell used "Mind the Gap" as his theme.

This is not the same - but will complement - and hopefully add to -what was discussed then!
Being a church with a small membership, it is important for our survival that we learn how to communicate and share our faith.

Jesus' command to his disciples (and that includes us!!)was to **"GO and TELL!"** - but we all know that it is easier said than done!! So why not come along ?



**CHURCH
SPRING
CLEANING**

THANK YOU to those who volunteered to come and help clean on Easter Monday and Tuesday : Pearl, Muriel, Rev Phyllis, Dorothy, Mike & Sue, Judy, Ann, Anne, Peter & Pam, Pip, Di, Jenny, Clifford & Rev Rog. It was good to prove the saying that "many hands make light work"! In addition to dusting, polishing and vacuuming - the kitchens are sparkling - the white paintwork whitened - the windows washed-and the carpets in the church, vestry and Meeting Room "rug doctored" ! **WELL DONE EVERYONE!**



*Training for Learning and
Serving*

Taster Day

Saturday 10th MAY 2008, 10:30 - 3:30
at SYNOD OFFICES

- *Learn more about TLS courses*
- *Hear from former TLS students*
- *Try out TLS materials*
- *Book with Dinah Firmin on 01823 275470*
- *by 25th April*
- *(as we will send you materials in advance)*

**FREE
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Preparing for

Vision4Life

Saturday 28th JUNE at TROWBRIDGE United Church
Saturday 5th JULY at Southernhay U R C, EXETER
both: 10:00 - 3:30

"Wherever two or three are gathered..."

Events for all who use the Bible in church, including:

- **Preachers - Worship Teams**
- **Bible study leaders (or potential ones)**
- **People who lead devotions in fellowship groups**

Explore ways to let the Bible speak to you and to others

FREE – bring a lunch

Book with Dinah Firmin at Synod Offices
doftrainingpa@urcsouthwest.org.uk 01823 275470

