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To publicise any News or Events in the next edition of In Partnership covering February, please send them to the office no later than 16 January.

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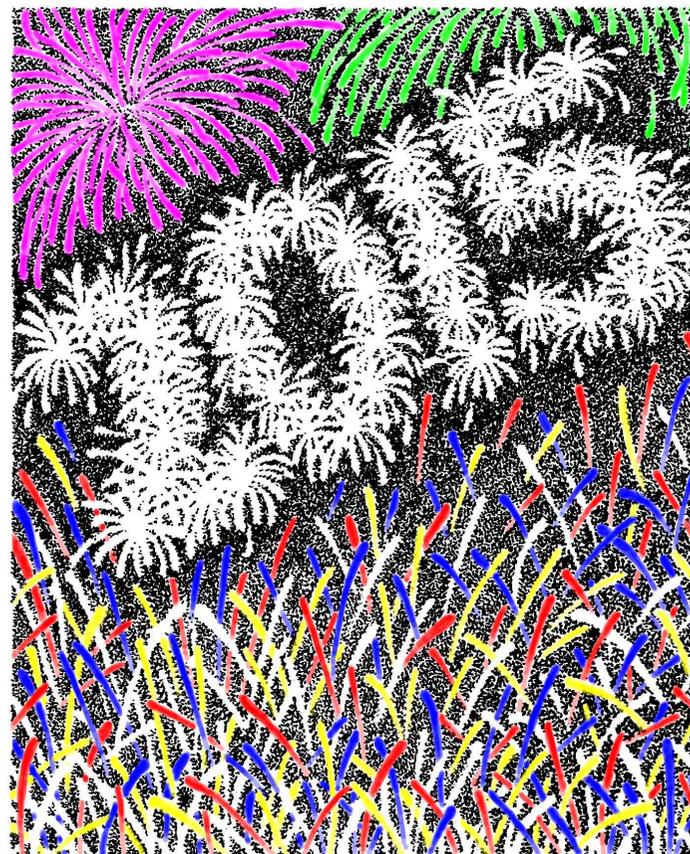
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In Partnership January 2015



Happy New Year

So that was the Christmas festival. I had a great time. Lots of family and work parties, much feasting was done. I even gave and received some nice cards and presents. We had a tree with lights on and everything. But none of that has much to do with Christmas does it? We were reminded beforehand, Christmas starts with Christ (www.christmasstartswithchrist.com). Myself I enjoy the occasional Hark the Herald but I need time and space to be able to ponder the Christ child and the awesomeness of that act of rescue for creation. I struggle to relate to Christ as a child as much as to Christ as a man, a teacher and as God in human form, those I find much easier. I don't really get the Silent Night and the Away in Manger Christmas as much as some do. In many ways it's nice that the Christmas season continues a bit after the feasting, so we get a chance to ponder these things in our heart.

However the season also involved God's new and ultimate approach for the sin infecting his creation. We humans also like to think through new starts, looking back at how things have changed and how we will be different in the new year. I can do that, analyse what's changed, I'm less good at learning the lessons...

This Christmas many things have been different for me and mine. My father in law died during the year after a distressing illness, and that's affected my family greatly. He was very much my father during the last 25 years since my father died. He was always with us at Christmas, and the last time he was in our house was last Christmas. Several family-members were not looking forward to Christmas at our house because of that. This is a common experience for many and though it casts something of a shadow over the feast this year, I see that all 3 of my fathers are now heavenly ones.

Julie and I have also both been made redundant this year, and I'm currently looking...So that's big changes for us. In many ways looking back at the year now, it's probably good that we didn't know in advance that any of this would happen. It would simply have been too distressing. As we look back though, it is clear that God has been working his purpose out in many ways, his support and guidance has been evident and his timing has been impeccable on many occasions.

So lets head into our new year unconcerned with the details of our futures, we can't handle it yet. There is much victory and joy there,

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funeral

22 December 2014 Janet Dugan

PRAYERS

Please pray for:-

Upper Thames Circuit Lay workers

Emerge and SYFC

For those in Global Poverty

THE NEW YEAR : 2015

He comes he goes, his times are set
The New Year now has shown his face,
For time is here and will not wait
For dwellers all in time and space.

We sojourn here on this fair earth,
Just for a time so quickly gone,
Our lives just like a vapour spent
As we await another dawn.

There is a day God has ordained
When we will reach a distant shore,
Eternity our new address
Where time will cease and be no more.

By Megan Carter

A Quiet but historic day

The announcement of the appointment of Revd Libby Lane as Bishop of Stockport is wonderful news for the Church of England and for our wider society.



The news was greeted with joy and thanksgiving across the nation. Here in the Diocese of Bristol, the vast majority of Christians and those in wider society will join together in wishing Libby well and assuring her of our prayers as she prepares to take up her role.

The See of Stockport is not unknown to me. Having been brought up in Cheshire I did a student job in Stockport as a young man and when I first explored my calling Ordination, it was too the Bishop of Stockport I was sent for the early part of the discernment process. At one time there was a chance, as a young footballer, that Stockport County might have been an opportunity for me. Sadly not!

For me, Libby's consecration, which I hope to be at, will mark years of personal hoping. Praying and advocating for those women who have a calling to serve Christ and His Church as bishops, to have opportunity to fulfil their vocation.

This news has truly gladdened my heart. God bless you, Libby and bless those whom you serve.

Bishop Mike

Heart Attitudes – cultivating life on the inside

By Graham Beynon, IVP, £8.99

What we know and what we do are crucial, but so too is who we are. God wants to shape our hearts. The gospel is God's means of transforming our hearts. It produces love, godly fear, joy, peace, humility, confidence, thankfulness, contentment and hope. With gospel surgery, we can 'cultivate life on the inside'

and God wants to help us find that. He can see the big picture and we don't need to. Next year we'll look back and be able to see how far we've come in 2015. Looking at it from this side seems...scary.

So I'm not making too many resolutions, just going to try and trust God. He's better at resolutions than me, and much better at learning lessons. Remember New Year starts with Christ

Chris Scarisbrick

EMERGE YOUTH PROJECT NEW YEAR UPDATE

We had a very successful end to 2014 with a very well attended Christmas Show. Approx 90-100 people came along to watch and take part in our annual showcase and celebration evening. 25 young people from across the whole project took part in different ways, behind the scenes and performing in "The Grinch who stole Christmas" or "Christmas Carol"; singing, dancing or playing music. £280.00 was taken on the night and added to our sponsored event in November, we were able to give a cheque for £600.00 to Tearfund for their "No Child Taken" anti-child trafficking campaign.

At the start of the New Year I would like to ask you to think about how you might be able to support this youth outreach in our partnership. In order to continue the project we urgently need some more adult volunteers to support our team of 4. We have halved in numbers since we began 8 years ago, and it is rapidly becoming unviable to run all our sessions safely and successfully.

There are 3 groups which we run - morning, afternoon and evening on different days. If you enjoy being with young people and would like to work in a happy, committed prayerful team please speak to your Church Leader in the first instance.

Wishing you all God's blessings for the year ahead.

Claire Camm

Regular activities

2nd Sunday each month

Messy Church 11 January
4-5:30pm @ Shaw

Every Monday

After School Youth Group 3:30 – 6:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw
Contact Claire Camm 07981951381

Every Tuesday

Coffee Stop 1:30 – 3:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw
Bell Ringing 7-9pm St Mary's Bell Tower
Remix Youth Group 6:30 – 8:45pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw
Contact Claire Camm 07981951381

4th Tuesday each month

Lunch Bunch 27 January
Noon @Toothill

2nd Wednesday of each month

Mothers Union 14 January
Contact Doreen Henderson 07434377587
2pm @ St Mary's Stable Room

Every Thursday

Toothill Tinies 10-11:30am @ Toothill

3rd Friday each month

Gen2Gen 16 January
Contact Claire Camm 07981951381
4:00 – 6:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw

The good neighbour looks beyond the external accidents and discerns those inner qualities that make all men human and therefore brothers. - *Martin Luther King*



Upper Thames Methodist Circuit

**“GETTING TO KNOW HIM”
FINDING GOD THROUGH
THE PSALMS**

Rev. Dr Knüt Heim

leads a day of fellowship study and reflection in
which we get to know God better through His Word.

SATURDAY 24th JANUARY 2015

10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

HIGHWORTH METHODIST CHURCH

Bring your own packed lunch. Hot drinks provided.

For further details contact: Bob Mawer
Circuit Administrator
upperthamescircuit@gmail.com 01793 764544

25 January The Conversion of St Paul

January is a month of the beginning of great things! As well as the naming of the Son of God, we celebrate the conversion of the greatest ever apostle of the Christian faith. Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as 'Saul' at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then on his way to Damascus Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him, literally, in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed.

Saul changed overnight. He took a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church, and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote many epistles to the young churches he founded - and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: he was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned, and finally martyred. Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in AD 64, and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

Invitation to Let's Loop Swindon Launch and Awareness Event

Let's Loop Swindon is a community project designed to improve both awareness and the provision of hearing loops in the town.

Wednesday 25th February 2015

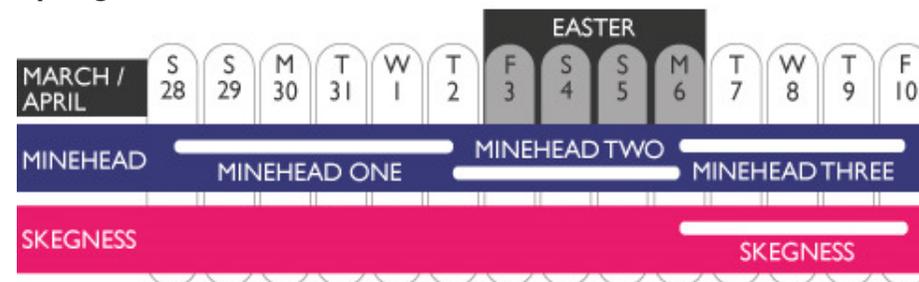
National Trust Heelis Building, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2NA

To book a place please contact Tim Mason, LLS, c/o 23 Britten Road, Swindon, SN2 2HQ or email the relevant details to tim.mason@1100rotaryclub.org
RSVP by 28th January 2015

Spring Harvest 2015

Spring Harvest is an enormous gathering of Christians of all ages, denominations and backgrounds taking place at two resorts. There's a full programme of activities, including Bible teaching, worship celebrations, seminars, workshops, sports, recreation, debates and late-night entertainment. For children, we run programmes for under-fives, 5-7s and 8-11s, and there are youth programmes for 11-14s and 15-18s.

Spring Harvest 2015 dates are



2015 continues with the 5 day/6 day Spring Harvest format. The 5 day event will be packed with quality content from start to finish and has the benefit of a lower price. For those who prefer 6 days, an offering of an event of this length at Minehead one. New for 2015 – the additional day will have a full programme including Spaces, seminars, Bible teaching and evening celebrations. So you can choose the option that works best for your diary and your budget

For more information and prices go to www.springharvest.org

Sleep tight

We spend 36 per cent more of our time snuggled up in bed in the winter months than we do in the summer months. And four out of ten of us also hole up in our living rooms more in the winter months. And a full quarter of us keep our homes warmer than the recommended guideline of 70F (21C). The research was carried out by Honeywell, a heating system company.

Bishop's Letter equivalent, from The Very Revd Dr David Hoyle, Dean of Bristol.

Epiphany

Just by the Roman Forum there is a marble arch, nearly two thousand years old. It is the built to celebrate the victory that Titus won in the first Jewish War. Covered in carving, at the top there is Titus himself, flying in to heaven on the back of an eagle. It is what they call an 'apotheosis'; no longer Titus the man, but Titus becoming a god.

That's what Romans believed – that men and women could actually become gods. It

probably sounds a bit odd, dreaming of riding to heaven on the wings of an eagle, but the desire to be a bit more than human is actually a pretty basic temptation. Behind it is the idea that I could do better than this, if I try, I could make something of myself. It is the *New Year* temptation, all those resolutions we make to be svelte and shiny and improved.

New Year resolutions are designed to make us better. Whether it is taking something on, like running on the downs every morning, or giving something up, like sherry for breakfast we aim to be better than we are. No harm in that, providing we are alert to the temptation that effort always brings. Standing before the mirror after a run on the downs there's a ghastly tendency to think 'Haven't I done well', a tendency to start admiring myself.

That was the Roman disease. It was, and is, the temptation to aim at being more than human, the temptation to take charge of ourselves. You may think that pride is only for people who are *really* pleased with themselves, a sin for high achievers. It's nothing of the sort. Pride is just another name for the sin that thinks that *I* am the great work in progress and (with a bit more running and a little less sherry) I might finally get it right.

In January we arrive at Epiphany. It is the moment when kings come to meet a baby. It is the moment power bows down to frailty. Epiphany is a lesson about pride and effort. The Kings did not kneel at the crib to admire a superhuman. This first glimpse of the God amongst us, is a glimpse of frailty and dependence. That is how God takes human form.

Christ turned the ambition of Titus on its head. Here was a god who came to us and lived as one of us. Christ was, in fact, the one person who has lived a life in which he neither imposed himself nor apologised

StrengthsNet

Many of you will have heard of the Strengths Finder tool produced by Gallup. StrengthsNet uses this tool for coaching, mentoring and team development works particularly though not exclusively in a Christian sphere .

If you want to find out more you are invited to their re-launch on

Saturday 10th January

12 noon till 3pm to include a light lunch

Freshbrook Church, Worsley Road, Freshbrook SN5 8NU

RSVP by 06 January

annec@rter.biz 07534 900745

swindon themarriagecourse

The Church Community of West Swindon, including the Churches of the West Swindon and the Lydiards and Gateway invite you to join the thousands of couples who do the Marriage Course every year.

The Marriage Course is a 7-week course for any couple who wants to invest in their relationship, whether you have been together 1 or 61 years and whether you have a strong relationship or are struggling.

Sessions cover:

- Building Strong Foundations
- The Art of Communication
- Resolving Conflict
- The Power of Forgiveness
- The Impact of Family-Past and Present
- Good Sex
- Love in Action

Where: The De Vere Hotel, West Swindon

When: Starts Monday 19 January 2015 7.30pm

Runs for 7 weeks on Monday evenings

Queries to 01793 526130

Cost: £25 per couple

In the news.....

In the papers a few days ago an interesting piece caught my eye; new research shows that churches are among the few places in the UK that successfully bring together people from different ethnic backgrounds and from different financial circumstances. So churches are achieving in areas that society's leaders would like to do better; tackling food poverty through food banks and creating social cohesion by just being church.

In a world where people worry about greater isolation and polarisation it's good to know our churches are getting something right. I'm proud to be part of a Partnership of churches that values diversity. I'm glad to be not just a member of a church in a 'nice' part of Swindon but in a partnership that affirms our different church backgrounds and traditions and aims to support the different types of communities that make up West Swindon. When looking for a church to belong to many people subconsciously look for a church with people who are 'like me', it might be better to look for somewhere that has a good mix of people, young and old, ethnically English and newcomer, financially comfortable and less so.

In our partnership I see something of the church in Ephesus where everyone is a fellow citizen within God's people. Let us recognise our differences, listen to and learn from one another and celebrate that in Christ we are everyone a new creation.

Mary Poole

Schools Work – Prayer Space

Oliver Tomkins school on Wednesday 03 December 2014

The children and staff, all really engaged in all activities and staff were very supportive. The Prayer Space worked brilliantly and the children engaged in all areas.

The children loved the play dough thankfulness and they were queuing to use the 'sand' saying sorry area! The tree looked absolutely great covered in the pictures of who they wanted to pray for.

They loved the tent, some children spontaneously took off their shoes to go in which was just beautiful to behold, they then sat and retold the Nativity story with the figures, which was simply gorgeous to listen to.

Ruth and Norris were great as they already knew lots of staff.

Gayle Bryon

for himself. He never sought to be more or less than human. Again and again he resisted the invitation to take charge, impose himself, or do it better. The devil in the wilderness, Pilate in the forum, the crowd at the foot of the cross, and even his own disciples all tempted him to do something more. He would not. He never sought to take charge, he never tried to escape. Christ knew the great good news that it is God, and not our own effort, that will redeem us. Christ was the great good news that it is in being properly human that we can come close to God.

Good luck with your New Year resolutions. I have some myself, but let us make it our chief resolution to praise God and not ourselves.

The Very Revd Dr David Hoyle
Dean of Bristol

06 January Epiphany

On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men?

No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia.

It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian. Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given.

Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming.

Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.



Church Services in the Partnership

St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze

Date	Time	Form
04 January	10:00am	Morning Service
11 January	10:00am	Holy Communion
18 January	10:00am	Family Service with Junior Church
25 January	10:00am	Holy communion followed by Baptisms

Holy Trinity Shaw

Date	Time	Form
04 January	10:30am	Holy Communion
11 January	10:30am	Morning Service & Covenant
	4:00pm	Messy Church
18 January	10:30am	Morning Service & God .com / SS
25 January	10:30am	All Age Service
25 January	4:30pm	Partnership Prayer and Praise

Toothill

Date	Time	Form
04 January	10:30am	All Age Service
11 January	10:30am	Holy Communion
18 January	10:30am	Morning Service
25 January	10:30am	Morning Service

Westlea

Date	Time	Form
04 January	10:00am	Morning Service
11 January	10:00am	Family Service
18 January	10:00am	Holy Communion
25 January	10:00am	Swap

Partnership Prayer and Praise 25 January 2015

4.30pm

Holy Trinity Church, Shaw, SN5 5PY
The theme will be

“Together in Covenant”

All Welcome

Please come along to meet the
Methodist Superintendent for Upper Thames Circuit

Revd Keith Osborne

Lent Course

***How to read the Bible
and
How to read the Bible better***

Whether new to the bible or experienced we are going to learn
together how to read, understand and to put scripture into context

Starting

Tuesday 24 February
and each Tuesday for 6 weeks

**7pm – 9pm
at**

Toothill Church

Further details please contact

Clive Deverell Email: clive.deverell@btinternet.com Tel: 01793 877111
Andy Bissex Email: Andy.Bissex@biblesociety.org.uk