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The Partnership office is open:

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Wednesday	1.00 – 4.00pm
Thursday	Closed

There will always be an up to date message on the Partnership Office telephone giving any changes.

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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 15 January.

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In Partnership January 2018

Looking outwards and growing together



Well, here we are again: Christmas is being packed away, another year over, and a new one just begun. Or rather, it will have begun by the time you read this. I had thought I'd do some sort of retrospective, as 2017 was an extremely busy year for me, and in many ways, very fulfilling, with some very happy times with family and friends, and with some personal goals achieved. However, it was also a year when I rarely recalled being at peace. There simply was no stopping. Event followed event, and if something wasn't happening, then something was being planned, or prepared for. There were some times of rest, but they were few, and seem to have been overwhelmed by all the busy-ness. Hence why I am already overdue writing all this as the new year lies in wait for me.

"For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice." TS Elliott, Four Quartets

So: no retrospective. No review of the year. There's no space and no time. Besides, if I think of what was for too long, I could lose sight of what could be. Last year was last year. So, instead, let's look forward. Next year beckons. As we step across the threshold of 2018, what are we stepping into? Dull days and the daily grind? Ongoing worries and cares that haven't gone away simply because we have hung up a new calendar? Adventure and excitement? New possibilities and challenges? A new hope? Who knows. Each day brings its own challenges, its own adventures. How we face them is important. What we say, think, and do each day is important. Because each of us is important to the God who made the universe around us, in all its wondrous beauty and awesomeness; we may be small insignificant specks in that huge universe as the world sees us, but the bible tells us that we are never insignificant in God's eyes. We are told that God loves and values each one of us, with grace and compassion and mercy. And so, God's expectation is that we love and value each other in the same way. So, as we step into 2018, in hope, remembering God's love and mercy for each of us, we need to go and be for each other what he would want us to be. We need to rejoice and celebrate the good, stand up for what is right and just, with love and compassion; we need to be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks us about the hope we have in God, and to do so with gentleness and respect. We have been told what is required of us by God: He has told us what is good, and what He requires of me and you, that we do justice, to love kindness and mercy, and to walk humbly with our God (The book of

From the Registers

Baptism

03 December 2017 Sienna Robyn Smith
17 December 2017 Finley George Nelson Gibson

Funerals

27 November 2017 Kathleen Thorpe
07 December 2017 Isobel Rutherford Humphreys

PRAYERS

Please pray for:

The **Central African Republic (CAR)** and **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** remain incredibly vulnerable due to political unrest and increasing violence. Conflict has displaced millions of people, forcing many into neighbouring countries. Humanitarian needs such as food, water and sanitation are not being fully met, with the violence making aid and relief work incredibly difficult.

Many women in DRC have encountered or are at risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and protection is required.

Please pray that those in need can be reached and supported.

Swindon Community Church meeting at Bridlewood School	07.01.18
Kingdom House Ministries meeting at Red house community Centre	14.01.18
St Andrews Anglican Blunsdon	21.01.18
United Apostolic Church meeting at Christ the servant Abbey Meads	28.01.18

Upper Thames Methodist Circuit BIBLE STUDY DAY



Led by Rev Bev Thomas

“WHO DO YOU SEE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD?”

Saturday, 3rd February 2018
from 10.00am to 4.00pm
at Highworth Methodist Church,
Vicarage Lane, Highworth. SN6 7AD

Micah, chapter 6, verse 8). So, step out into 2018 with hope, faith and anticipation of God's love and blessing, and do and be what we should be for each other.

And because I need to rest and find a little bit of peace today, I'm stopping now. Happy new year, everyone. Make it a good one.

Mark Taylor

Prayer at Epiphany

Lord of all, Creator of all,

Please shine your light into this dark world. Reveal yourself afresh we pray. Bring new sight and understanding to eyes blinded by commercialism, materialism, self-seeking and cynicism.

At the start of this New Year, Lord, soften hearts and give wisdom, so that many will search and find you, just as the wise men searched and found you.

And for we who already know and love you, Lord, shine on us that we might reflect your light and make a difference, day by day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY



Regular activities

2nd Sunday each month	
Messy Church	14 January 4 - 5:30pm @ Shaw
Every Monday	
After School Youth Group Contact Claire Camm 07981951381	3:30 – 6:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw
Every Tuesday	
Bell Ringing	7-9pm St Mary's Bell Tower
2nd Wednesday of each month	
Mothers Union Contact Jean Brock 01793 539456	10 January 2pm @ St Mary's Stable Room
Every Thursday	
Toothill Tinies	10 -11:30am @ Toothill
Home Group	
HTS led by Sue Green Contact Sue on 01793 872056 for details	Thursday 7.30pm
TOOTHILL led by Rev Jan Partridge Contact Jan on 01793 534992 for details	3rd Monday of each month 2.30pm
WESTLEA led by Pete Gilder Contact Pete on 01793 878823 for details	Alternate Tuesdays 8pm

Travelling Together through Advent 2017 (Cont)

Our final school session on 19th December was Christmas Unwrapped for Year 1 in Shaw Ridge Primary School, this was an extremely happy and radiant session for all those who took part. The children loved listening, chatting and making their crafts of a map, angel, sheep, gift tag and star. They eagerly sealed their envelopes containing all their treasure's, so they could take them home to share with their family.



On the 20th December, I set off for Lydiard Park for our Community Carols with pegs, clip on light, recorder, and music stand at the ready. It was fabulous to see so many faces that I didn't know, enjoying the singing of Carols, and being entertained by Clive dressed up as an angel! The weather, other than a little wind blowing our music, was very kind to our fingers, and it was super to be outside. More Carol Singing followed on the 21st Dec in the much warmer venue of The Village Inn, it was another great opportunity to come together, and share amid our Community.

I hope you have all enjoyed walking, talking and sharing in our Advent journey. The Wise people were the first to worship Jesus, recognising they had found their journey's destination, as they looked upon the human face of God. May we continue travelling together with the passion of the Wise people, knowing we are called to love and serve one another with the gifts we have been given, and that Jesus, God in the flesh, is with us on all sides.

I pray that the 12 days of Christmas brought you rest, peace and immense joy.

Every Blessing
Gayle

Great writing

There was once a young man who, in his youth, professed his desire to become a great writer. When asked to define "great," he said, 'I want to write stuff that the whole world will read, stuff that people will react to on a truly emotional level, stuff that will make them scream in disbelief, cry in despair, howl in pain, and vent their anger in ways they've never dreamed of!' He now works for Microsoft, writing error messages.

Travelling Together through Advent 2017 (Cont)

worship together. We were all moved by the friendship, smiles, laughter and tears that were shared. It was uplifting to observe children, young people, and adults learning and sharing together. Our Travelling Together Nativity script was a simple rhyme, that transported us all through the journey to Bethlehem, leading us to the Light of the World. There was an emotional moment as Lila and Abigail stepped across the stage in perfect synchronicity, passionately singing their hearts out, encouraging us all to Light a candle in the darkness. It was disheartening however, that not a single person from our worshipping community (other than those who had been helping all day) was able to join us for our Travelling Together Partnership Worship at 4pm to support our outreach to the children and families of our community. All journeys have ups and downs, but I hope for 2018 we will be able to plan our travels, so we are truly together as a Community, every step of the way.

I hope many of you had the joy of attending a School Carol Service or Concert, as well as a Church one. I had the delight of attending five uniquely different ones. There is something poignant about hearing the Christmas Story shared in very different ways, with modern and ancient styles of music, new and old readings, lively dance and drama, and bright hopeful young people's voices sharing joy with their community. Like those involved in the first Christmas, we as a community, are just as busy, confused, and bewildered by life, but listening to the words of love, hope and peace, we can share the excitement, surprise and joy of the good news that God is with us. At Oliver Tomkins Carol Service, Clive used a Terry's Chocolate Orange to illustrate that God's gift is for the whole world. The gift is to be opened, and the Good news of Jesus, is to be shared with everyone.



Christingles were shared in both Brook Field Primary and Peatmoor on the morning of Friday 15th December. Sarah and Sue competently led the team that went into Brook Field, and Tudor joined me in the Reception

class at Peatmoor. The Peatmoor children were extremely enthusiastic about making their Christingles, and my table certainly enjoyed using up my open supply of raisins and sweets! Cracking the glow sticks on our Jesus Lights, and peering into the orange world to see the light of Jesus making it glow, was one of my favourite acts of Advent. It is a simple, but perfect way of sharing the message that God loves us all, and want to give us a great big hug.

Words and action to make Jesus known

– begin with five friends

HOPE's dream is a growing church, showing Jesus' love and telling the Jesus story at the heart of every village, town and city. Churches across the spectrum of denominations are working together with HOPE towards 2018 and a massive year of mission in words and action to make Jesus known.

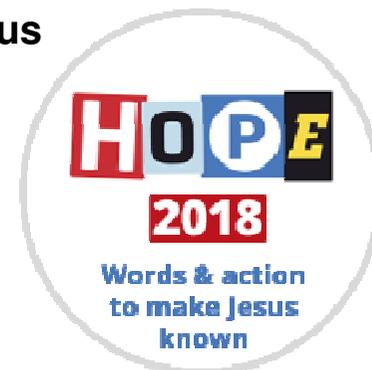
The Talking Jesus research (talkingjesus.org), which HOPE commissioned together with the Church of England and the Evangelical Alliance, shows that one in five of the people we talk to about Jesus is open to know more. So, HOPE is encouraging every Christian to pray specifically for five friends or family members, and to prepare by having something to SAY, something to GIVE and an INVITATION to offer.

Roy Crowne, HOPE's executive director, says, 'We need to be intentional in making Jesus known; intentional about talking to friends, family and others about Jesus; intentional about inviting them to church events, and intentional about providing opportunities for people to hear the gospel and respond.'

HOPE has devised a rhythm of mission through the church year to keep the mission momentum going. 'Often, it's not about doing more, but it's about our focus,' says Roy. 'We need to focus on the people in our village, town or city who don't yet know Jesus. So, when we have an Easter or Christmas service, we invite guests – perhaps using the *Hope at Easter* magazine. And we include ways for them to take the next step on their journey to find out more. That could be an invitation to a Christianity Explored or Alpha course, tickets to the next guest event at your church, or a simple card pointing to the Christian Enquiry Agency website at christianity.org.uk.'

HOPE's prayer is that every church will do at least one more thing to make Jesus known in 2018. There's a free calendar that churches can use to plan events as part of HOPE 2018 - for details about these ideas and more, sign up at hopetogether.org.uk to receive regular updates from HOPE or visit the HOPE shop hopetogether.org.uk/shop.

HOPE 2018 is a national initiative aimed at helping the churches grow.



PARTNERSHIP WORSHIP AT TOOTHILL CHURCH



Midweek Worship Every Wednesday 11.30am

Alternating between Holy Communion
and a short reflective act of worship

Please join us every week

Part of West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership

Travelling Together through Advent 2017 (Cont)



Following the arrival of snow on Sunday 10th December we were a little worried that our final school visit on the 11th may be cancelled, but a little later than originally planned Tregoze Year 5/6 steadfastly journeyed through the snow to St Mary's, and we enjoyed a very special morning with them.

We welcomed every class from Tregoze Primary School, the whole of Key Stage 2 from Oliver Tomkins, and Year 5 from Shaw Ridge Primary School to the Star Trail. All year groups were a joy to spend time with, and in each session new discoveries were made about the Christmas story. We met a wonderful Dad who was originally from Bethlehem, he showed the children how to put on a traditional headdress. All the schools are looking forward to returning next year!

On 12th December we welcomed the children of Hazlewood Academy Nursery, Foundation Stage, and Year 1 to Toothill Church to make a Christingle or take part in a Ugandan Christmas. The Foundation and Reception children were fabulously behaved throughout both sessions, and they sung us some lovely songs from their Nativity Play. The Year 1 children enjoyed their Ugandan Christmas session so much that we gave them additional weaving to take back to school, and extra plastic bags to make another football. Their teacher had taken pictures of all the stations, and was going to follow up the children's learning in school as they all wanted to do more of the activities.



Our Travelling Together Nativity Workshop Day began with a time of worship, where we were able to reflect on the world events of 2017, and were then inspired by a short video that reminded us that the greatest message the world will ever hear is contained in one simple descending scale. 'Joy to the World the Lord has come', a basic scale, turned into a powerful melody by a few perfectly timed pauses. With the words and image ringing in our thoughts we tucked into an energizing breakfast ready for the day of fun ahead. We were blessed with an amazing group of 26 children ranging from 4 years - 16 years who eagerly participated in every activity, and worked together with great love. A full day of activity, beautifully broken up with pauses to write pray, cook, craft, sing and



Travelling Together through Advent 2017 (Cont)

Ugandan Decorations - the children learnt that in Uganda it would be their responsibility to clean the home and garden. The pupils learnt how to make homemade decorations such as made flower garlands or beaded decorations for a Christmas tree, using primarily red and green colours.



Ugandan Gifts - the children looked at a Ugandan Nativity scene to discover that the Wise people in this scene would give the Christ Child a drum, a spear, and bark cloth symbolising his Kingship. The pupils learnt that Ugandan families do not have money to buy lots of gifts but will share what they have with friends and neighbours. The children then could try weaving a mat or making a football.

This was an amazingly fun session to run, but also a fabulous way to think about what is truly important about Christmas.



On Sunday 3rd December we commenced our Star Trail as part of St Marys Nativity Festival, and over the next week we welcomed over 800 hundred children to the Church. At each Star Trail session, the children and their teachers were welcomed to the Church, and then they rotated round three activities.

'**Under the star**' was a story telling session where children had to work out the meaning of some clues to learn about how the Wise people journeyed and discovered Jesus. Some of the children were chosen to dress up, they got to smell frankincense and myrrh, and the whole group travelled into the stable to discover Jesus. The children had time to ponder and wonder about the journey, the gifts, and what might be important to them on their own journey.



'**Starlight**' was a craft session which took place in the Stable Room. The children and their adults were invited to make a beautiful bead a star to give to a special person.

Our '**Star Trail**' gave the children the opportunity to look carefully at a few of the Nativities and answer questions about them. The children also voted for their favourite Nativity.



God's New Year's honours list

We are all familiar with the Queen's New Year's honours list, celebrating those who have made a significant contribution to public life. In 2017 famous names included Andy Murray, Mo Farah, Ken Dodd, Patricia Routledge, Angela Rippon and Victoria Beckham. However, what would *God's* New Year's honours list look like? In 1 Sam. 2:30 God says, '*Those who honour me I will honour*'. In this New Year, how can we honour God in our lives?

Honouring God means giving Him reverence, submission, and obedience; the complete surrender of our entire lives to His glory and loving service: '*in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.*' (Romans 12:1). So, we might honour God this year in five key areas:

My Time: how can I use my time to glorify God (Colossians 4:5)?

My Gifts: how am I using my God-given gifts and abilities in His service (Matthew 25:14-30)?

My Body: in what ways do I honour God in my body (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)?

My Treasure: who is in charge of my finances (Matthew 6:24)?

My Heart: how do I honour God not just outwardly, but from my heart: '*These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me*' (Isaiah 29:13)?

Here's a challenge for 2018: When we wake up each day, let's ask God: '*How can I honour you today? Please help me to honour you with the time, gifts, body, finance, and heart that you have given me.*' Jesus Christ gave His life for us, and promises to give us the Holy Spirit to help us to serve Him. '*When the worship is over, let the service begin.*'



...he's great at organising; but just not so good at delegating!

Walking the Way

**Saturday 27 January. URC Swindon and Wiltshire Area Gathering
Toothill Church, 10am – 4pm.**

The day will be led by David Lawrence, who works for the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, and will be helping us to focus on the URC programme, Walking the Way, and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus today. For further information contact Revd Gerald England, Synod Pastoral Adviser for Swindon & Wiltshire.
geraldengland@btinternet.com or [Tel: 01793 723862](tel:01793723862)

Walking the Way is the umbrella term for the United Reformed Church's exciting focus on lifelong Christian discipleship and mission. When you engage in Walking the Way, we hope that your own understanding of what being a Christian disciple is deepens.

The URC website is being populated with growing resources and will be developed to be interactive to enable users to find what they want. Read more: Visit: www.urch.org.uk/our-work/walking-the-way.html.

Inspiration in your inbox

Every morning at 6am the United Reformed Church sends out a daily devotion – a reading, reflection and prayer – to more than 1,700 people. With hundreds more following online and through the dedicated Facebook page, the devotions emphasise the importance of biblical reflection and prayer as a practice of discipleship, and, from 1 December will appear with the Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today branding.

To find out more here <http://www.urch.org.uk/latest-news/2491-inspiration-in-your-inbox.html>

If you haven't already, you can sign-up to receive the Walking the Way Daily Devotions, or find them on Facebook.

If you would like to volunteer to make tea and coffee and biscuits at the start of the day and possibly make tea, coffee, biscuits, soup and rolls available for the lunch period please contact David Hoar.

Diet

If you make a New Year's resolution to eat a healthy diet, and you keep it, you won't actually live longer, but it will seem longer.

Travelling Together through Advent 2017 (Cont)



On the 30th November we were privileged to have Dai Woolridge and the team from the Bible Society to launch 'The Greatest Journey' in Oliver Tomkins and Brook Field Primary School. The children and teachers in Oliver Tomkins were seasonally attired in either a 'Tea towel or Tinsel' which created a joyous atmosphere for Dai's scintillating storytelling, in his lush and lilting Welsh accent. Dai charmed the children and adults alike with his irresistible intonation and rhythmic performance of the story. The Year 5 children in their meet a poet session asked Dai some exceptional questions about his writing, and he gave them lots to help them with their own creations. In the afternoon the KS1 children of Brook Field were extremely excitable and enthusiastic throughout the story telling, and their Year 2 children posed Dai some great questions. The evening session, of poetry and music, led by Dai and Kath was extremely moving and thought provoking. A special day for everyone, and we hope we may be able to continue our journey with the Bible Society into new adventures with our schools.

In Oliver Tomkins our travels took us all the way to Uganda, in our assembly we took an imaginary plane ride, followed by jeep ride until we arrived in Katikamu (the village in which the school is that we are supporting as a Partnership). Year 1 and 2 spent an hour enjoying a rotation of activities to learn that worshipping, giving, and sharing are the key elements of a Ugandan Christmas.



Each Year 1/2 class spent time experiencing a variety of Ugandan Christmas related activities, including:
Ugandan Christmas Meal - the children learnt that Christmas dinner may be prepared, cooked and eaten outside, and that the children themselves may choose the chicken to be eaten. The pupils played the 'Kakopi Game', a playground game from Uganda all about cooking chicken!
Ugandan Christmas Songs - the children got to look at Ugandan patterns and choose a scarf to wear, and then they learnt to sing and dance a Uganda song around the crib scene.



Travelling Together through Advent 2017

We may not have gone on a long expedition in terms of distance like the Wise People from the East, but we certainly needed plenty of volunteers full of enthusiasm and energy, to support our Advent journey with our schools and community.



Our travels began in Westlea school on 24th November for a whole's day adventure sharing 'Tales from the Jesse Tree'. During our assembly the children were encouraged to look and listen

carefully for the clues in the stories that point the way to Jesus. A different story was shared with each of the 10 classes, the stories were told simply using inventive story telling techniques. The Reception children enjoyed the story of Jesse, the Year 1/2 Class were spell bound by the story of Moses and ably used their imagination to float Moses down the river, Year 2 beautifully sculpted the 23rd Psalm, Year 3/4 listened carefully for the colours to fashion Joseph a coat, and Year 5/6 expressed deep theological thoughts with their wondering about Abraham and Isaac. A couple of children from each group were chosen to paint the ten Jesse Tree symbols, all the children took amazing care with their artwork, many commenting how much they enjoyed spending time being creative. The symbols looked amazing when they were finished, and were to form the central part of a school display, along with the reflective work that was created throughout the day. All the staff and children were wonderful in their engagement with the Jesse Tree stories and activities, we had superb day learning together.

In Brook Field, Mary and Joseph arrived in school on 27th November looking for somewhere to stay, and they travelled round each class hoping to find some shelter. Their Advent assembly was entitled the 'Tale of two Dads' and linked the story of David and Joseph. The children were very excited to discover the 'Once in Royal David's city' connection, and to find out that King David was Jesus's many times great grandfather through his family tree.

Hazlewood Academy welcomed Mary and Joseph on 29th November and the children loved looking out for the angel, innkeeper, shepherds, sheep, wise men and camel who visited the school in the next few weeks. In Shaw Ridge the 'Tale of two Dad's was adapted for their Christmas Assembly to include the amazing Angel Display they had made for St Marys Nativity Festival.



Emerge youth Project - 'LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS'

We had a wonderful end to term on 16th December with our annual Christmas show. All our young people took part in music, drama, readings and making items to sell at the show, as well as helping on stalls. The theme of 'Light in the darkness' was explored through the story of 'Narnia' which we have focussed on this term, with a wonderful Aslan ; the same lad was 'Scar' in our 'Lion King' performance so it was nice for him to play a 'goodie' this time!

Narnia's central theme of light/goodness overcoming darkness/evil was followed in our Bible reading of John 1:1-4 where we hear of Jesus the Light of the World -

'In the beginning was the Word
And the Word was with God
And the word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things were made;
without him nothing was made that has been made.
In him was life and that life was the light of men.
The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it'.

Our carols, beautifully played by Val for us, repeated this central message and I found it very moving to sing with this little community of 50 parents, family and friends of the project.

The young people followed with a short presentation on 'Toilet Twinning' - our chosen charity this term, which has impacted them greatly. We were aiming to raise enough money to fund 3 toilets at £60 each but our result far exceeded this - as we achieved double this amount thanks to the generosity of those who supported the show! Six toilets will now be provided thanks to the efforts of our wonderful young people, bringing hope, light and joy to people living under the shadow of poverty, disease and death.

Praise God for his wonderful light.

God's blessings of light and peace to you all in this new year.

Claire

Church Services in the Partnership St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze

Date	Time	Form
07 January	10:00am	Family Communion
14 January	10:00am	Communion
21 January	10:00am	Family Service with Junior Church
28 January	10:30am	Partnership Covenant at HTS

Holy Trinity Shaw

Date	Time	Form
07 January	10:30am	Communion & God.com/SS
14 January	10:30am	All Age Morning Service
14 January	4:00pm	Messy Church
21 January	10:30am	Morning Service & God.com/SS
21 January	7:00pm	Encounter
28 January	10:30am	Partnership Covenant
28 January	4:00pm	Partnership Bible Study
8.45am Morning Prayer on Fridays during term time.		

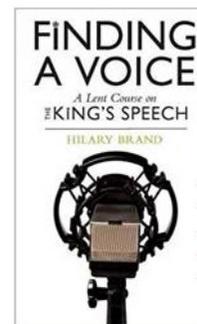
Westlea

Date	Time	Form
07 January	10:00am	Morning Service
14 January	10:00am	Family Service
21 January	10:00am	Communion
28 January	10:00am	Partnership Covenant at HTS

Toothill

Date	Time	Form
Weds 03 Jan	11:30am	Midweek Worship
07 January	10:30am	All Age Service
Weds 10 Jan	11:30am	Midweek Communion
14 January	10:30am	Morning Service
Weds 17 Jan	11:30am	Midweek Worship
21 January	10:30am	URC Communion
Weds 24 Jan	11:30am	Midweek Communion
28 January	10:30am	Partnership Covenant at HTS
Weds 31 Jan	11:30am	Midweek Worship

Partnership Lent Study



The Partnership Lent Study will follow the Lent course "Finding a Voice" based on the film "The King's Speech". The study guide is written by Hilary Brand. It is not necessary to purchase the book but if you do its ISBN is 975-0-232-52893-0. There is no need to have seen the film in advance. (But if you have you will know how it all ends!)

The course will run over 5 sessions on Tuesday evenings in Lent from 7.30 to 9 pm preceded by tea and coffee. The sessions will incorporate excerpts from the film, bible study and questions.

The session details are as follows.

- 20 Feb - The stuff of nightmares and the power of friendship
- 27 Feb - Chasing the dream or fulfilling the calling
- 6 Mar - Pressing forward and breaking through
- 13 Mar - Poisonous words and profane responses
- 20 Mar - Eloquence for evil and stammering for good

For more information please contact Pete Gilder (petegilder@gmail.com or 878823)