

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**WEDNESDAY, 1<sup>st</sup> MARCH:** Memory Cafe from 10am to 12 noon in the foyer of Westbury Grange on the first Wednesday of each month. For more information please contact Westbury Grange on 01908 210332

**FRIDAY, 3<sup>rd</sup> MARCH, 2pm at St Bedes:** Service for Women's World Day of Prayer.

**MONDAY, 13<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 8pm:** Holiday Club planning meeting at Lovat Hall.

**SATURDAY, 18<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 8.30-10.30am:** Monthly 'Ladies breakfast' at Frosts Garden Centre.

See inside for dates of URC discussion sessions, Lent lunches and courses.

**For up-to-date information on events and activities check our website regularly at [www.ctnp.org.uk](http://www.ctnp.org.uk)**

### *'Indifference'*

*When Jesus came to Birmingham  
they simply passed him by.  
They never hurt a hair of him  
they simply let him die.  
For men had grown more tender  
and they would not give him pain.  
They only just passed down the street  
and left him in the rain.*

*Still Jesus cried, 'Forgive them, for they  
know not what they do.'  
And still it rained the wintry rain  
that drenched him through and through.  
The crowds went home and left the streets  
without a soul to see.  
And Jesus crouched against a wall  
and cried for Calvary.*

Studdart Kennedy

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## CONNECTIONS

### March 2017

*Forgive us Lord for our apathy, for our lack of courage to speak out. Forgive us when we walk past and don't offer help. Forgive us when we get it wrong.  
Amen*

### LENT COURSE

#### CHURCHES TOGETHER

**Wednesday afternoons,** 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th March,  
2.30pm – 4pm at Lovat Hall (Baptist Church) in Newport Pagnell

**Friday evenings,** 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st March,  
7.30pm – 9pm at the United Reformed Church in Newport Pagnell

The purpose of the meetings is for the various CTNP congregations to meet together during Lent, to study together and learn from one another.

**Come to one Wednesday afternoon or Friday evening meeting each week.**

Last year these meetings were based around films, this year they will be based around works of art. Each week the topic will be different.



**Articles to the Editor, Robert Hayward (see note inside)**  
[rghayward@btinternet.com](mailto:rghayward@btinternet.com)  
**Copy Deadline - 20th of each month**

## LETTER FROM A MINISTER

### Making promises

Watching the news reports of Donald Trump's inauguration as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, I was reminded of George Bernard Shaw's observation that the US and the UK are "two nations divided by a common language". In contrast to the speeches and bands accompanying the American ceremony a new Prime Minister's assumption of office comprises a visit to the Palace and rather low key appearance in Downing Street for the next occupant of 'No 10'. And so the baton is quietly passed and plans are put in place for the new incumbent's Cabinet as holders of the key positions in his or her government are duly announced.

All this made me think of other new beginnings some of which are accompanied by oaths and promises and others which are all together quieter. I remember as a child preparing to become a Brownie Guide by practising the salute over and over again and worrying whether I would get the words of the promise in the right order. All these years later I can still remember the words: 'I promise that I will do my best, to do my duty to God, to serve the Queen and help other people and keep the Brownie Guide Law'. Of course the words have now changed but children are still promising to do their best. Later in life as a nurse, I committed to keep the Nursing & Midwifery Code of Conduct as I worked alongside medical colleagues who had also agreed to abide by the principles of good medical practice, as defined by the General Medical Council. You may be surprised to hear that doctors are no longer required to take a Hippocratic Oath. The taking of oaths is not as common as it used to be although witnesses in courts and MPs taking up their seats after an election are amongst those still participating in this ancient tradition.

Now as a probationer minister in the Methodist Church I am preparing for ordination as a presbyter after a number of years of training and formation. The service is a solemn and moving occasion as each ordinand is asked to declare their commitment to their ministry and acceptance of the doctrines and disciplines of the Church. At its heart this is a time for individuals to renew their commitment to the service of God. It is also a reminder that what is being agreed is a covenant and not a contract that can be made and broken if promises are not kept. So as I prepare for ordination and my next new beginning, it will be in the sure and certain knowledge that it is only by God's grace that I shall be able to fulfil the role and duties of a minister of the Church. And no there won't be a band!

*Revd Nicola Martyn-Beck*

## LENT LUNCHES



Every Friday from **3<sup>rd</sup> March to 7<sup>th</sup> April**  
at the United Reformed Church Hall  
from 12 noon to 1.15pm.

Enjoy delicious homemade soup with a variety of bread,  
rolls  
and cheeses for only £4.00.  
All profits go to Christian Aid.

For more information please contact Jennifer Mazzone  
01908 613088

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## CHANGE OF EDITOR

Just to let you know that this is my last edition as editor of Connections. I've been doing it for a while now and thought it time to let someone else have a go. I'm delighted to say that Robert Hayward who worships at the Baptist Church and is also a member of the CTNP Communications Group has volunteered to take this on. Robert has some professional design skills so watch this space... and thank you, Robert!

Thanks to those of you who have sent me news articles to include in Connections over the past years. Please continue to send information about things happening in your churches that you want to share with people from the other churches in the town, but please direct them to Robert from now on instead of to me. Robert's email address is [rghayward@btinternet.com](mailto:rghayward@btinternet.com). And of course, you can also send notices to Neville Watson ([nevillefromnp@gmail.com](mailto:nevillefromnp@gmail.com)) for the CTNP website at any time.

Beth MacKay, Editor

## FOOD BANK NEWS

Many thanks as always to those who contribute to the Foodbank. The Christmas donations were excellent and you may be interested to know that over 500 hampers were also given out as well as all the 'Christmas Goodies' making a real difference to families in MK.

Not surprisingly, while always making use of all donations, the Foodbank does not always receive the types of food it needs in the right proportions to provide balanced nutritious food bags. For example, currently it has a surplus of dried pasta and teabags but is short of:

- Small jars of coffee
- Spreads
- Tinned rice pudding / custard
- Sugar
- Tinned meat
- Long life juice
- Long life whole milk

So if you are looking to donate or are a regular giver, then if you could target the above items that would be extra-helpful! Please remember that all donations need to be in date, in good condition and liquids need to be the long-life variety. So nothing that requires chilling or homemade produce - sorry!

For more information on the Foodbank please see the website: [Milton Keynes Foodbank](#) and thanks again for helping the neediest families in MK.

*The Foodbank are always happy to give presentations on their work - contact details are on the website or just let me know what you would like.*

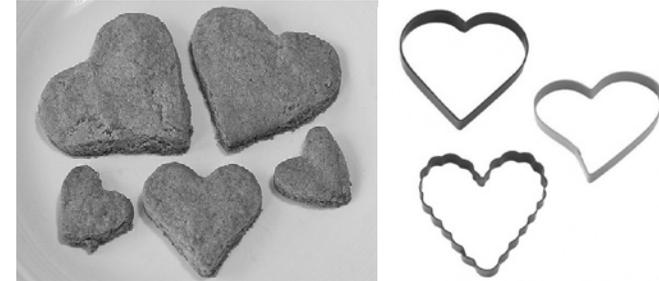
*Geoff Morris 01908 617050.*

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## WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Women's World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women who come together to observe a common day of prayer held on the first Friday in March each year. **This year's service in Newport Pagnell will take place on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 2pm at St Bede's** and has been prepared by the women of the Philippines. Everyone is welcome – not just women.

## EASTER SATURDAY BISCUIT CHALLENGE – 15<sup>th</sup> April Calling all bakers!



It's that time of year when we ask for volunteers from every church to bake some heart shaped biscuits which we can put in small clear bags and give out to townspeople on the morning of Easter Saturday. People are so surprised and pleased by their gift from the 'Churches of Newport Pagnell' so it's a 'mission' activity worthy of repetition while our bakers remain willing and productive. Just use your favourite biscuit recipe and cut into heart shapes, no bigger than a digestive.

This year there's a modest change, replacing the accompanying 'Love Won' message with a HOPE postcard. We are producing 1000 of these with an inspiring picture on one side carrying the word HOPE, and we will be inviting all congregation members to handwrite Bible verses that inspire hope on the reverse. The postcard is for propping up at home so the message can be re-read from time to time.

We will be packaging up the biscuits on Saturday 15th April from 9.30am in the Methodist church foyer and welcome offers of help with that. We will also be calling for volunteers to assist with the distribution of both the bags of biscuits and the personalised HOPE postcards around the town from 10am – 12.00 noon that Saturday. Read more about it in your church newsletters nearer the time. We look forward to receiving lots of help again this year!

With thanks in anticipation from the CTNP Mission group: Jill Walker, Beth MacKay, Klaus Reidel & Hazel Reynolds

## **Christian Aid Week 14-20 May**

Christian Aid Week was launched in 1957 to support the work the churches of Britain and Ireland were doing with refugees in Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War. Today millions of people across the world are fleeing their homes because of war, conflict and disaster, making dangerous journeys in search of safety.

Nejebbar and her family have fled horrors in Afghanistan, where her husband, a teacher, was threatened with death. She thinks that when the alternative is fear and terror, when the alternative is bombs, bullets, and war, almost anything is better. It is better to travel for months in rain and snow, to risk your life and the lives of your children in a plastic dinghy, and to leave everything you know behind. In Greece all they have is a tent. There is no school for their children and they have no idea of what will happen to them now. All her family want is a peaceful life and their children to have an education.

Christian Aid has been there for refugees like Nejebbar and for 60 years thousands of volunteers have raised vital money in Christian Aid Week for those most in need. This Christian Aid week the churches in Newport Pagnell will continue to walk with refugees by holding the house-to-house collections, but we urgently need more people to help with this.

**We are not going to turn our backs on refugees now. Will you help relieve their suffering by taking part in our fund raising? Please speak to Pat Parker tel: 01908 610837 or your own church representative.**

### **Series of Talks and Discussions: What Next? Looking at living and dying well. 6-7pm, Newport Pagnell United Reformed Church, MK16 0FH All welcome.**

**Sunday 26th February**- Living to die and Dying to live. Looking at things we need to let go in order to move forward and grow. Ruth Iley.

**Sunday 5th March:** Discussion around previous week's theme.

**Sunday 12th March:** Life and death, crucifixion and resurrection in the Bible. Focusing on the Biblical themes of life, death and resurrection. Lawrence Moore.

**Sunday 19th March:** Discussion around the previous week's theme.

**Sunday 26th March:** Dying well- end of life thinking. Thinking and talking about death- for those dying and those left behind. Steve Barnes.

**Sunday 2nd April:** Discussion around the previous week's theme and follow on series ideas.

Each session will begin with a shared meal at 5pm- just let us know you are coming.

For more information speak to Jenny Mills: call 07703485017 or email: [revdjmill@btinternet.com](mailto:revdjmill@btinternet.com)

### **GOOD FRIDAY – 14th April**

(Note for diaries)

Come and join people from all the churches for our traditional walk of witness starting at Market Hill at 11.45am followed by a united service at the Parish Church at noon.