**RAYLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH**

Eastwood Road

Rayleigh

**Minister**

Rev Nana Thomford 01702 298135.

**Coordinating Steward**

Mrs Pat Norman01268 781896

**THE NEWSLETTER**

**APRIL 2019**

**Rev Steve Watts**

Many of you will already know that our minister, Rev Steve Watts had a severe heart attack at the beginning of March, and died peacefully, with his family around him, on Monday 11th March.

This has come as a huge shock to everyone. We send our love and best wishes to his wife Val, to his children Chris, Lesley and Michael, and to their families. At the time of writing, Val is staying with her daughter, and has greatly appreciated all the prayers, cards and messages she has received from all over the country.

Steve set everyone of us a great example with his commitment to doing God’s will. He and Val firmly believed that they were being called out of retirement back into circuit ministry and Steve stuck to his desire to serve God, whatever happened.

People pay tribute to his sense of humour and his heart of gold. We had just begun to appreciate his skills as a pianist and guitarist, which enhanced our worship and will be missed.

Steve’s message in last month’s Newsletter was about how we should be actively looking for what God wants us to do and prepared to get our feet wet in his service. Let us pay tribute to Steve’s memory by looking out for opportunities to serve God as he did.

Following a family service of cremation, there will be a Service of Celebration of Steve’s life and ministry at Rayleigh Methodist Church on Wednesday 17th April at 2.30 p.m., led by Rev. Pete Moorhouse. Refreshments will be served after the service in the Nash Hall. Everyone is welcome to join us on this occasion.

**Rev Nana Thomford**, from Shoeburyness, will be our minister for the next few months. Though he will be leaving the Circuit in August, we appreciate and are grateful for his help in the meantime. As well as leading a number of our services, Nana will be charing our church AGM on Saturday 4th May, and Church Council Meeting on Tuesday 14th May. His contact details are nana.thomford@methodist.org.uk and tel. 01702 298135

Pat Norman

**1**

**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

The death of our Minister Rev. Steve Watts has caused shock and great
sadness. May Valerie and the family be comforted by the knowledge that they are surrounded by our love and prayers.

The death has also occurred of Elsie McKinnon, a member whose musical talents have been  a blessing to this church and a delight over many years.

Another of our long-time members, Jim Smith has also died and will be
much missed.

Loving sympathy goes to these families and to Keith and Marion Dann on the loss of their son-in-law Richard, husband of Gillian.

Best wishes to David Stubbington as he continues to recover from surgery.

Congratulations and best wishes to Les and Pat Oatley who will celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on April 4th. They have been part of this church family longer than most of us – amazingly they met in the Youth Club.

Val Tyler

**SERVICES FOR APRIL 2019**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ' 7 April | '10.45 | HC | Rev Margaret Deans |
| ' 14 April | '10.45 | W | Kathy McCullough |
| ' 14 April | '18.30 | RW | Rayleigh Worship Team |
| ' 19April | '10.00 | Good FridayTown Service |  |
| ' 21 April | '9.30 | Easter HC | Rev Peter Moorhouse  |
| ' 28 April | 10.45 | WF ANNIVERSARY | Rev Clifford Newman |
| ' 28 April | '16.00 | Messy Church |  Rev Newman and Rayleigh team  |

P Parade HC Holy Communion W Worship RW Reflective Worship WF Women's Fellowship

**2**

**GIFT AID**

As we approach the end of the financial year it will shortly be time for me to submit the Gift Aid Claim for Rayleigh Methodist Church. Last year the church received a total of £8,512 from Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs as a result of Gift Aid Declarations completed by members of the congregation and cash donations made to the church. This is a not inconsiderable sum and I want to ensure that we maximise our claim this year.

If you are a taxpayer regularly giving money to the church, who has not completed a Declaration, and would be interested in more information please do not hesitate to contact me.

I must remind those individuals who have completed a Declaration that they must advise me if;

* They want to cancel the Declaration
* They change their name or home address
* They no longer pay sufficient tax on their income and/or Capital gains tax  to cover the amount of Gift Aid claimed on their donations

John Mayfield

Gift Aid Secretary

**WESLEY GUILD**

Our programme for April is as follows:

 4 April Carrie Mason

 “Remus Horse Sanctuary”

11 April Social Evening

18 April No Meeting

25 April John Harrison

7:30 pm “South Africa Visited”

**Coffee morning Saturday 16th February**

The Wesley Guild's coffee morning was in aid of the Nigera Health Fund and we are very pleased to say it raised just over £355.  Thank you to all who came and supported this.  Also a big thank you to everyone who helped make this a great success.

Margaret Flintham

**3**

**WHY EASTER WILL NEVER GO AWAY**

How do you make sense of the Resurrection?  Dead men don’t rise, so why believe that this particular dead man did rise?

At the end of St Luke’s Gospel we read that: “they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement” (Luke 24.4).  This is highly significant.  The Gospels do not show us a group of disciples who were in a receptive frame of mind.  After the crucifixion, they were in hiding, frightened and scattered.  Then suddenly, they came out of hiding and were totally different; excited, joyful.   By Pentecost they were confident, with one firm message: “You crucified Jesus, but God raised him up!”

How did they know this?  Because of direct personal experience.  Some of them had visited the tomb of Jesus: it was empty.  Others claimed to have seen and touched the risen Lord.  Were they hallucinating?  People can hallucinate in groups – when taking drugs, for example. But, of course each one will see a different hallucination.  But the disciples all saw the same thing.  Or rather, the same person.  Jesus.

Were they lying?  Jesus had died a humiliating death as a criminal. Perhaps they wanted to rescue His good name. So did they pretend they had seen Him?

This theory has a big problem.  Their preaching led them into trouble with the authorities. They were beaten and imprisoned and some of them killed.  People will die for ideas and causes which they believe in passionately.  But not for things they have made up.  We might suffer for our convictions, we will not suffer for our inventions.

What about the ‘swoon’ theory?  That Jesus didn’t die on the cross, despite terrible wounds. He recovered in the tomb, and then escaped.  The disciples nursed Him back to health.  But Roman soldiers knew when a man was dead; and there was the guard on the tomb.  Also, the events which followed simply don’t fit. If the disciples had been hiding

Jesus, they would have kept very low-key, and out of the way, so that the authorities did not come after Him again. ***Continued on page 5***

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Besides, to preach that God had raised Jesus from the dead – which is exactly what they did preach – would have been a lie.  Beatings and threat of death would soon have loosened their tongues. Inventions crumble under pressure; convictions hold fast.

Another reason for believing in the Resurrection is this:   Jesus’ continuing impact.  Thousands and soon millions of people in every generation since have shared an inescapable sense of being ‘accompanied’ through life.  Though unseen, they identify this presence as the Risen Lord.

Sometimes this experience of meeting Jesus is gentle and fitful. Sometimes it is dramatic and life-changing.  This reminds us that the resurrection of Jesus is not just an interesting historical puzzle.  It is a vital, present day reality. It brings wonderful comfort, assuring us of the central Christian truths: death is dead; Jesus is alive; God is love.

This central notion was captured, most movingly, by the great Albert Schweitzer:  ‘He came to those men who knew Him not.  He speaks to us the same word:  “Follow thou me”, and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time.  He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the suffering which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who He is.’ Have a joyful – and a challenging – Easter.

**LADIES CLUB**

Our programme for the following weeks is as follows:

3 April - Easter service

April 24 - Time to talk

May 1 - Name Five

May 8 - Peter Lazell - Wet behind the ears

May 15 - Christian Aid Fundraiser

May 22- Battlesbridge

May 29 - Half term

Elizabeth Ellis

**5**

**THE MYSTERY OF LENT**

I've often wondered what Lent meant.

Is it time to be giving up stuff

Because we've got quite enough?

Denying ourselves sacrificially -

Though officially I'd say not eating chocolate

And offering yourself for crucifixion are hardly comparable.

Yes I know it is time for preparation,

Maybe consecration, looking forward with expectation

to celebration, jubilation and elation.

But some of us struggle to pray every day.

It's when faith gets stretched

And the pain just gets etched

On our faces.

It's when Good Friday's ongoing, resurrection's not showing, the embers of hope barely glowing.

I've often wondered what Lent meant.

Forty days in the desert. Or going out with dessert.

It seems a bit token, when our lives are all broken, to seek healing from the Master with a sticking plaster.

I'd give up sugar, but barely watch the apprentice.

Yes I know it's a time of going deep,

Waking your soul from sleep, getting closer to Jesus,

Rather than refraining from cheeses.

But terror-fied families flee to our shores

And politicians play games and keep the scores,

It's hard to step away. And take stock. And pause.

It's when Good Friday's ongoing, resurrection's not showing, the embers of hope barely glowing.

We laugh when our pancakes hit the ceiling

But all the time our world needs healing.

Shrove Tuesday comes (have you ever been shriven?)

We think,” Maybe there's someone I should have forgiven …

I've often wondered what Lent meant.

Is it all ashes and dust, self-denial or bust?

Breaking my *Bargain Hunt* addiction's a must.

But food banks abound austerity bites,

The enemy's trying to turn out the lights

**6**

He knows how it ends – but still he fights.

Yes, I know that we're tired and our nerves are frayed.

Yet, there is hope as the price has been paid.

Our laziness, lukewarmness and half-hearted zeal

Have been nailed to a cross, and exchanged.

Quite a deal..

Maybe as well as looking inside,

It's time to look out when we just want to hide

Small acts of kindness could well turn the tide.

Much good at fasting,

But I can make a cup of tea.

I don't often rise when it's still dark,

But I can visit the elderly.

I'm not everything I should be -

I won't be giving up cake,

But I might bake a few

To give away – for Jesus' sake.

***Russ Bravo***

**THANKS
My family and I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and flowers.  We all appreciate your support and it has been a comfort to know how much Jim was loved.
A big thankyou to Clifford for stepping in at the last moment and to everyone who was part of Jim's Remembrance Service and also a big thankyou to those who very kindly helped with the refreshments after.
Val Smith**

**COME ALONG TO EASTER BRUNCH!**

**Our Easter Sunday Morning Service will be held at 9.30 a.m. It will be a service of Holy Communion, led by Rev Pete Moorhouse. This will be an All Age Service and will be followed by Easter Brunch. We hope that as many people as possible will be able to come. While there is no charge for the brunch, please take a ticket from the welcome area, to help with catering.**

**7**

**CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY**

Jesus’s death on the cross, and His resurrection on Easter morning are both part of the redemption story.  Paul links them in this way: ‘He was delivered for our offences [the Cross] and raised again [the Resurrection] for our justification’ (Romans 4:25).  Charles Wesley does likewise in his glorious Easter anthem.

Christ the Lord is risen today!
Sons of men and angels say.
Raise your songs and triumph high
Sing, ye heavens, thou earth reply.

Charles wrote the hymn in 1739, a year after his Pentecost Sunday evangelical conversion, and the year in which he began his open-air preaching.  Like all his hymns that followed in the next four decades, this hymn is full of New Testament references and allusions.  A great stone was rolled into the opening of the grave where Jesus was laid, and as Matthew records, the Jewish authorities ‘made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a guard’ (27:66).  But all to no purpose!  Christ, the Lord of Life, could not be imprisoned by death!

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal
Christ hath burst the gates of hell.
Death in vain forbids Him rise
Christ hath opened Paradise!

The NT teaches that Christ’s resurrection was the Father’s seal of approval on His obedient life and atoning death.  His resurrection was the proof that He was indeed Jesus Christ the Lord, as Paul argues in Romans 1:4. ‘Declared to be the Son of God …by the resurrection from the dead.’ Charles Wesley works these great salvation truths into his verses. ‘Love’s redeeming work is done.’  ‘Once He died our souls to save.’  ‘Lives again our glorious King.’  ‘Where, O death, is now thy sting?’ ‘Second life we all receive.’  In our Heavenly Adam live.’  As our Lord promised His disciples long ago – and still promises us; ‘Because I live, you will also live’ (John 14:19).

The Resurrection of Christ, viewed as a historical fact, is only part of the NT teaching.  His conquest of death He now shares with all His people. Christians are the people of the Resurrection!  We are now ‘made alive with Christ;’  ‘raised up with Him,’ and already seated ‘in heavenly places’ (Ephesians 1:4-6).  And Charles Wesley takes up this great theme of how believers share in their Lord’s resurrection power.

Risen with Him we upward move
Still we seek the things above …

Soar we now where Christ hath led
Following our exalted Head.
Made like Him, like Him we rise
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

Christ has conquered hell!  Death has lost its sting!  The grave is spoiled!  What a Saviour! What a gospel!  What a glorious hope!

**8**

**Do YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?**

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and trust in God.

Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words so that you can be silent so you can listen!

*Pope Francis 2015*

**EASTER FLOWERS**

We are intending to decorate the church for Easter Sunday and would appreciate donations towards the cost of flowers. There will be retiring collections after Morning Service on 7th and 14th April for donations or if you wish give them directly to me.

Many thanks. Margaret Babbage

**THANKS**

Our thanks to you all for the cards, prayers and messages of condolence on the death of Richard, our son-in-law.

Marion and Keith (Dann)

**You are invited to take**

 **COFFEE or TEA with HOT CROSS BUNS**

**With**

**Rayleigh Combined Churches Refugee Group (RCCRG)**

**on**

**Wednesday, 10 April, 10:30 am to 12 Noon**

**At Christ Church, Caley Hall, Crown Hill, Rayleigh**

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**POSTAGE STAMPS for THE LEPROSY MISSION**

Thank you to all those who donate to this charity via my box in the Welcome Area. Several of you have asked me how the stamps are processed and turned into funds for TLM.

You will be pleased to hear that I now have some information I can pass on.

I take the stamps home and trim them as required, being careful not to damage the perforations. Hence the request is to leave a ¼ to ½ an inch border around the stamp. Any damage renders them worthless.

I take the stamps to one of the collectors at Holy Trinity who checks them and sorts them into UK and foreign.

They are then collected by the local coordinator, Jim Laker, from South Woodham Ferrers, who in turn takes them to a depot in Peterborough.

Eventually they are sold to collectors or auctioned along with other collectables, ie coins, postcards and medals.

Jim brings untrimmed and unsorted stamps back from the depot to be dealt with.

The amount raised in 2017, the last year we have figures for, was £55, 600.

Apparently between1983 and 2015 a total of £1.4 million was raised by TLM. Please do read the TLM magazine which I have left with the box.

Thank you once again for your contributions, Janet Warner.

**WOMENS FELLOWSHIP**

Our programme for April 2019 is as follows:

1 April Beetle Drive
8 April   Members' Afternoon
15 April     Easter Preparation
22 April   No Meeting - EASTER MONDAY
28 April Anniversary Service led by Rev. Clifford Newman
29 April 2.15 p.m.  Anniversary

 - Speaker Rev. Brenda Gutberlet - all welcome

 Val Tyler

**10**

**THE TALE OF THE CRACKED POT**

A water bearer had two cracked pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack In It, while the other was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. Fora full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and half pots full of water to his house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which It was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

 After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and want to apologise to you. , have been able to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes-water to leak out all the way back' to your house. BecauSeof my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get fuJI value from your efforts" the pot said.

The bearer said to the pot "Did you 'notice-that there were , flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known-aboutOYQur-flaw-andplanted-flower seeds on-your side of the path, and every day while we walk back you've watered them" . ' "For two years' have been able to plck these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.

Moral: Each of us has our unique flaws. Wtire all cracked pots. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them. Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape. Remember'to appreciate all the different peepleln your life

**Anon**

**Coffee Morning**

**for**

**RETHINK**

**(Lorraine Mann)**

**on**

**Saturday 13 APRIL 2019**

**10.00 to 12.00 noon**

***It will include the following stalls, cakes cards, books, bric-a-brac,***

**and much more**

**11**

* + 1. **RAYLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH**
1. **PRAYER GROUP MEETING DATES**
2. **2019**
3.

 *April: 10th & 24th.*

1. *May: 8th & 22nd. June: 5th & 19th.*
2. *July 3rd & 17th. NO MEETING IN AUGUST.*
3. *September: 11th & 25th. October: 9th & 23rd.*
4. *November: 6th & 20th. December: 4th.*
5. ALL MEETINGS ARE IN THE WELCOME AREA, COMMENCING AT 9.30AM, FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES.

1. ***FROM THE EDITORS WE NEED YOUR ARTICLES for the MAY 2019 EDITION***
2. *The deadline for the submission of articles for this edition of the Newsletter is Sunday* ***14 APRIL 2019*** *( in Welcome Area) or*
3. *Wednesday* ***17 APRIL*** *b y post or email.*
4. ***johnward816@gmail.com***
5. **Bible Study** at Clifford and Linda's house at 10am Bible Study 26th April subject matter - Love reading 1 John 4 v 7 - 16.

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**SERVICES**

**Sunday Services**  10:45 am and (6:30 pm 2nd and 4th Sunday)

**Junior Church**  10:45 am

**Mid-Week Communion**

With the exception of August it is held on the third Tuesday of each month in the WESLEY ROOM at 10:30 am.

**REGULAR WEEKLY MEETINGS**

**Monday**

1:15pm Sunbeams Parent and Toddler Group

2:30 pm Women's Fellowship

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

1:45pm – 3:15pm Ladies Club

4:15 pm-5:30 pm Rainbows

5:45 pm -7:15 pm Brownie Guides

7:00 pm-8.45pm Guides

**Thursday**

10:00 am Care and Share

5.15 pm- 6.15pm Beavers

6:30 pm - 7:45 pm Cubs

8:00 pm – 9:30pm Scouts

8:00 pm Wesley Guild (Sept to May only)

**Friday**

4:30 pm-5:45 pm Rainbows

5:30 pm-7:00 pm Brownie Guides

7:15 pm -9:00 pm Guides

7:15 pm -9:00 pm Guides Senior Section (fortnightly)

**Preschool**

Mon 9:15 am to 11:45 am

Tues Weds Thurs Friday 9:15-11:45 am and 12:30-3:00 pm

*Editors John and Sue Ward* 9 *Sheridan Close Rayleigh SS6 8YR Telephone 01268* 742847 **(johnward816@gmail.com)**

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