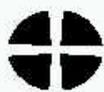


The Message

September 2005

The quarterly magazine of the Bolton Methodist Mission

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THE VICTORIA HALL

BOLTON METHODIST MISSION

Seeking to serve ... God, people, the community, the town in partnership with others

Member of Christians Together in Bolton Town Centre

Superintendent's Prologue

Time to Talk of God

It is official. Methodists are pretty good at conversation! However the findings of the Church Life Profile as outlined in the report to the Methodist Conference 2005 "Time to Talk of God" suggest that, "whereas we are comfortable with socialising and prioritise being a welcoming church, we are much less comfortable with seeking out places where we can "get real" with each other about our faith, and its implications for living".

It seems that we can talk almost about anything but avoid conversation about our faith, even within the life of the Church. The report "Time to Talk of God" is really urging us to find our voice again.

It is generally recognised that there is a growing interest in spirituality in a general way and the market place is full of publications, therapies and retreats that address spirituality but often the Christian voice has been lost.

It really is Time to Talk of God and to look for ways in which we can find a voice that reaches people who are asking questions about life and faith in their everyday lives.

In my own work within the Bolton Wanderers Football Club and through Tower FM, I am amazed at the number of people who are looking to have a conversation about some of the big questions in life. The responses from my two-minute thoughts on radio highlight to me that people are searching for meaning and direction in their lives.

Our Church is ideally placed with all its community activity to engage in conversation about God and to share what is at the heart of our common life: our faith in Christ.

The Pray without Ceasing initiative (see page 8) gives us a great opportunity to offer support to others through prayer and to encourage others by offering to pray for them.

In the report "Time to Talk of God" one Methodist, a teacher, commented "I spend an hour a week teaching in Sunday School and they haul me up to the front of the Church to pray for me. The rest of the week I'm a full-time teacher and the Church has never prayed for me. That say's it all".

In my experience people genuinely value being prayed for, if they are asked, and it shows that we really care for them.

As part of our response to Pray without Ceasing we are placing prayer request cards around the town so that we can offer prayer for the people and the businesses of our community.

All the very best as we begin a New Methodist Year. Let's find our voice!

God Bless. Phil Mason, Superintendent Minister

Sayings of Jesus of Nazareth No.6

When you look at a baby, it's just that: a body you can look at and touch. But the person who takes shape is formed by something you can't see and touch – the Spirit – and becomes a living spirit. John 3 v6

The Development moves on

Within the pages of The Message you will find various images that have been submitted as part of the outline planning permission for the development of Central Street with Victoria Hall at its heart.

The partnership between Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council and Bolton Methodist Mission has been working together with the developers, Wilson Bowden, to bring together the latest plans that offer Bolton the biggest re-development opportunity that it has had for over fourteen years.

It is recognised that, with the Victoria Hall at its heart, the scheme is unique. The developers have highlighted that the Victoria Hall will provide a “destination point” for Bolton as the Hall is the biggest venue in the town, and being upgraded will attract many new concert opportunities. They also recognise that it creates a wonderful backdrop to both the newly planned square and the residential units that are to be built around the square above the retail premises. Most importantly it has been recognised that the Victoria Hall can provide an important spiritual haven and a quiet retreat for a busy town centre.

It gives us as Church a wonderful opportunity to engage at the heart of the town and the planned performance balcony into the square, from what is presently the rear elevation of the Hall, can be used in creative ways for mission and outreach. This is a great way of the Church finding its voice again.

The next stages will be very time consuming as the detail is worked up on the plans and all the matters are carefully considered in the planning application.

Wilson Bowden, through Reid Architects, is currently working on more detailed plans for the refurbishment of Victoria Hall and the replacement facilities for the Walker Memorial building. Once these have been drafted we shall hold an open meeting for you to come and view the details and receive any comments for revision before we make final proposals.

Your prayers are requested for all those working on this project so that we catch the right vision to take forward for Bolton and our Mission.

Philip R Mason, Superintendent Minister



Plans for the development are with the Council for approval

I wonder why I wonder why. I wonder why I wonder. I wonder why I wonder *why* I wonder why I wonder. Richard P Feynman—physicist

Interview with David King

David King is the newly appointed Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District Chair. He is interviewed by John Parkin.

JP Where were you born and brought up?

DK In Bridlington in East Yorkshire and started my working life there in a glass house nursery.

JP What attracts you to the job of chair of the Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District?

DK It is not something I sought, it was very much the hand of God. I was asked to allow my name to be nominated for possible appointment for the first round of interviews, but out of concern for the work in Penrith circuit and other complications I resisted. But then I was asked to allow my name to be nominated for the second round of interviews. Having said the Covenant Prayer, prayed and consulted with three people, we all felt the call should be tested. I have always laid myself at the disposal of the Church. When I read the profile, it was the emphasis on mission that fired me.

JP What are you looking forward to most about the job?

DK Although I have come to Bolton from Penrith, a small market town, most of my ministry has been in urban areas. I look forward to engaging, encouraging, and sharing in the ministry of the District, Circuits and Churches. The greatest joy for me is when I see people discovering the faith, growing in the faith and applying the faith in practical ways. It is great when I can be a part of that.



Pray that David's gifts and graces will be well used in the service of God in this District.

JP And is there anything you dread about the job?

DK Having been appointed late in the Methodist scheme of things, and not yet been a part of the training and induction process, I have a steep learning curve.

JP What sorts of activities do you like taking part in most?

DK I love the countryside and being in the countryside. We spent time on Dartmoor for our holidays this year. I delight in my wife, son and daughter. I also delight in growing plants.

JP What is your favourite bible passage?

DK One of my favourite passages is Psalm 51, the great Psalm of David, that not only deals with penitence but the restoration of faith. "Create in me O Lord a clean heart, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (verse 10). In the New Testament it is the new commandments of Jesus, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this; love your neighbour as yourself.' (Mark Ch12 verses 30-31) .

JP Who is your hero?

DK On a spiritual level it is Jesus. On a human level, hero is the wrong word, but one of the people for whom I have the most regard is a supernumerary Methodist Minister whose wife suffers from acute 'Alzheimer's' disease, is blind, and in a wheelchair. Despite the stress and immense demands of this long term illness, the love of God and fruit of the spirit shine out of him. There are people who take your breath away, and he is one. A man perfect in the Spirit.





PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

DISTRICT EVENT

Friday 9th September 7.00pm

The Victoria Hall, Bolton

**Marking the beginning of Bolton & Rochdale District's
Period of Prayer.**

Music & differing styles of Prayer & Reflection

Message from Revd David King, District Chair

8pm at Time of Reflective Prayer

led by Revd Martin Wray & Revd Debbie Plummer

Please wear your MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY white band.

Full programme of the first 24 hours available

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING PRAY WITHOUT CEASING



Pray that people may find time and space to talk more often with their maker.



Outline productions is filming a second series of the BBC's House of Tiny Tearaways in October/November and seeks families who need help solving their parenting dilemmas. If you are interested contact Justine Walton at 020 7428 1560 or at justinew@outlineproductions.co.uk.

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An inspiring God

The Revd Tom Stuckey, the new Methodist President, used his inaugural address at the June 2005 Conference in Torquay to talk about "the God who inspires." Tom told the assembled 384 representatives and the public gallery at the Riviera Centre that he wanted to build on the messages of his two immediate predecessors. The Revd Dr. Neil Richardson had talked about a Christ-centred Church, while Revd Will Morrey spoke a year before about a God who listens.



Rev'd Tom Stuckey

Tom told the Conference that he wants to address two of the stated Priorities of the Methodist Church: developing confidence in evangelism; and to encouraging fresh ways of being church. "Talk about God works best when it stimulates talk with God," he said. "Evangelising and spirituality are inter-dependent. There is a single word which encapsulates 'conversation with God'. It is the word 'theology'. ... I believe we shall become a God centred Church when we genuinely engage in theology."

"Word and Spirit need each other," he said. "When the Word is without the Spirit the Church dries up. When the Spirit is without the Word the Church blows up. When Word and Spirit come together the Church grows up. If we are to re-capture vision we must give attention to theology and the work of the Holy Spirit."

Tom pointed out that Christianity is growing in many coun-

Main reports

- **The Pilgrimage of Faith.** Following a sensitive and helpful debate responding to the report on human sexuality, Conference decided to ask the working party to continue pursue the issues the report identified.
- **What Sort of Bishops?** A report was received that commits the Church to make a final decision in 2007 after a consultation throughout the Church.
- **Methodist-Anglican Covenant.** Conference received the first report from the Joint Implementation Commission on the Covenant signed in 2003. The report contains many practical examples of ways, in every part of both churches, where there is lively and positive working together.
- **Domestic Abuse.** Conference adopted a report calling for more action to deal with domestic abuse. The Conference heard that each week two women in England and Wales are killed by a current or former partner.
- **Pray Without Ceasing** was launched at conference to begin on 1st September 2005, having been inspired by a challenge from the young people of t h e c h u r c h .
www.praywithoutceasing.org

tries, and that in Britain there is still a thirst for spirituality. Methodists should therefore find ways to recapture its foundation as a missionary movement, and to remember, "mission is seeing what God is doing in the world, and joining in." The involvement of the churches in the Make Poverty History campaign is a reminder of Methodism's heritage of concern for the marginalized. Tom finished by saying that Methodism "stands on the threshold of a new discovery of itself. Come Holy Spirit. Disturb our complacency. Drive away our fears."

The new Vice President of Conference 2005/6, John Bell, addressed delegates and guests at the Sunday morning worship service, welcoming a diverse as-



Pray for our Anglican co-believers in all of their work and mission.

sembly of people and inviting them to reflect on faith, ministry and church from their own perspectives. He spoke of those who had profoundly influenced and challenged him on his own faith journey, encouraging those present to do the same.

Speaking on the diversity that comes with faith, John commented that “Perhaps, the broader our base, the stronger we may become.” This diversity of faith is carried into the ministry of the church in all its variety. John challenged ordained ministers to have the courage to follow their hopes for the Methodist Church in the 21st Century, and spoke of the need to recognise the value of lay ministry; “Yes, we may engage in the work of the gathered church, but we have enormous opportunity to exercise our Christian ministry where we work or otherwise commit and spend our time (whether in parenting, in retirement, in community service, in many other situations). What a wonderful opportunity we have! And yet, so neglected in the ecclesiastical pecking order.”



John Bell

John believes that being part of the Church involves four key challenges for each and every member; upholding the faithful through pastoral support, finding fresh ways of being and doing church, working in partnership with those of other denominations and learning from the confidence and success of our partner churches in other continents.

From Methodist Church Press releases

Bolton Interfaith Council Statement

The Bolton Interfaith Council utterly condemns the recent acts of terror committed against the people of London and against our nation. Our thoughts, prayers and sympathies go out towards those who have been injured and to the families and friends of those who have been so indiscriminately killed. These are dreadful events have shocked us all, but they will not deter us in our search for a harmonious society.

Bolton is a multicultural and a multi-faith community. The different Faiths and cultures live in harmony and we have excellent relationships with one another. The Bolton Interfaith Council, along with the Local Authority and the many Faith and community groups, constantly works to promote good relationships. These recent atrocities will only have the effect of making us renew our commitment to this vision of social cohesion.

We condemn these acts of terror and we hope and pray that they will not lead to a scapegoating of particular community members or to deterioration in our good relations. We commit ourselves to doing everything we can to make sure that this does not happen, and we call upon everyone in our community to do the same.

Terror will not divide us. Our vision of a community of peace, justice, and respect for difference will not be diminished by the actions of terrorists.

Bolton Interfaith Council



Pray for community leaders in Bolton, that they may continue to show humanity and compassion in their leadership

Christian Aid

During the last 12 months we have raised £2,000 for Christian Aid. The major part of this sum is the result of the House to House collection in May and we are grateful to all who contributed, particularly those who volunteered to collect. Some prefer to do this individually at a time which suites them, others to be part of a team. The net result is an increase of over £100 this year compared with the previous year and gave a gratifying total of £1,480.82; with donations added, the result of the Week was £1,786.32. The heaviest donation was over £6 in copper! Over fifty envelopes contained notes and we banked over £600 worth of £1 and £2 coins.

Once again we used the Christian Aid Advent calendar and were delighted by the response which raise £115. A quiz night raised £110 which was split with Methodist Home Missions. Whilst this is not everybody's "cup of tea", it is greatly enjoyed by those who attend what is a fun evening.

This year we are particularly grateful to our youngsters. The coffee morning after church raised £87 from the sale of coffee, obviously, but also crafts and cakes made by our young folk. Add to that the £38 raised from the Lenten "Count your Blessings" and we sent over £100 to Christian Aid. A richly deserved well done, and we know the "Count your Blessings" made quite an impact on our youngsters. We have to say that they are much more aware of developing world issues than we were at their age. Demonstrating this very clearly by their purchase and wearing of the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**

Thank you for night,
Thank you for day,
Thank you for the golden
sand,
That lies on the bay.

Thank you for stories,
That tell us about you,
Thank you for wildlife,
And nature too.

Thank you for the moon,
The stars and the sun,
The things that you created,
Things that you begun.

Thank you for humans,
Good or bad,
Thank you for feelings,
Like happy and sad.

Thank you for Jesus,
For He is to me,
The greatest creation,
That there ever could be.

Amen.

By Bethany Mason

"God makes himself known to us through social and cultural forms: a burning bush, a text of Scripture, people's thoughts, language, through art or other kinds of experience.

The early church scholars had a sophisticated view about how to read the Bible. They knew that some parts of it are poetry, some analogy, some are there for guidance rather than as hard and fast rules."

Rev Prof Martyn Percy, Principal of Ripon College and the only living character in Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code" in which he was quoted as saying that "the Bible did not arrive by fax from Heaven", speaking in an interview to The War Cry.

Continued from previous page

bracelets which we obtained from Christian Aid and sold for a total of £100. Last year we were very close to £2,000 at £1,993.69, so it is pleasing to pass that benchmark and raise £2,181.32 this year. Our thanks to everybody who made this possible.

Psalm 151

Lord, I have opened my eyes to you
I had known of you, but had I really seen you?
I have allowed my ears to hear you,
words of hope, guidance and truth
words I can't imagine without you.
Lord, you have touched my life, my heart and soul
in a way I could have never imagined.
You give me strength to face each day,
no matter what life holds.
For me I know I'm never alone,
even when I feel lonely
and feel like everyone is against
me, I know your not.
Take my life
and lead me down the path you
have created for me,
I ask you to help me in the way
of my life.



Lauren Gallagher, Vicky Shaw and Cherelle Lindley

'What I'm really interested in is whether God could have made the world in a different way; that is, whether the necessity of logical simplicity leaves any freedom at all.' *Albert Einstein who, during his annus mirabilis 100 years ago this year, developed, amongst other things, the special theory of relativity.*



Children can “blog on” to the Methodist Church

The 1st of September will see the launch of a website, www.methodistchildren.org.uk, dedicated to the children up to twelve in the Methodist Church. The site gives children a chance to have their say about what is important to them, both in terms of church life and wider social issues.

There will be regular polls, finding out their opinions about issues such as what the government could change in schools and message boards so that they can discuss their experiences and beliefs with one another. Children can send in their pictures for display in the gallery, read an animated story-book, or explore ‘the Methodist Story’ online. The website will also address issues such as staying safe on the Internet.

The site also features an area dedicated to children’s workers, providing links to resources, a message board and information about training courses and events.



How Knowsley Street might look after the development.

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY Edinburgh Rally

Some words and images from the 2nd July 2005

When people say that we are just dreamers, that nothing we can do can make a difference; when they tell us that it will take 100 years before we can halve poverty, 100 years before the world can provide schooling for all, 100 years to eradicate avoidable infant mortality; and when they tell us the poor will always be with us, let us say to them the words of Isaiah: 'though you were wearied by the length of your way, you did not say it was hopeless—you found new life in your strength.'

*Gordon Brown speaking
at a Christian Aid Rally
on 2nd July 2005*



Miriam and I weren't able to complete the tandem ride to Edinburgh. We made it to Edinburgh by train though and had a fascinating weekend - I even met Billy Bragg on Sunday afternoon! It was quite an experience and one that we won't forget, one way or another!

Steve and Miriam Harrold



Queues everywhere: several for the march, like streams joining a river - almost impossible to find the start. People of every age; a vast variety of slogans, dress, banners, balloons - fantastically inventive. Great good humour all round.

Margaret Pollitt



The sheer number of people was amazing. It was a whole sea of people surrounding the city all day. The silence that was asked for at 3pm: not a sound to be heard. It was good to be with so many who wanted to see a change to how things are and really make a difference.

Phil Mason



The proposed Square to the rear of Victoria Hall.

Heaven's Grocery Store

I was walking down life's high-
way a long, long time ago
When one day I saw a sign that
read,
"Heaven's Grocery Store".
As I got a little closer the door
came open wide
And when I came to myself I
was standing right inside

I saw a host of **angels**
They were standing everywhere
One handed me a basket and
said
"My child shop with care"
Everything a Christian needed
was in that grocery store
And all you cannot carry
Come back the next day for
more

First, I got some **patience**
love was in the same row
Further down was **under-
standing**
You need that everywhere you
go
I got a box or two of **wisdom**,
a bag or two of **faith**
I just couldn't miss the **Holy**
Ghost
For it was all over the place

I stopped to get some
strength and **courage**
To help me run this race
By then my basket was getting
full
But I remembered I needed

some **grace**
I didn't forget **salvation**
Which like the others was free
So I tried to get enough of that
To save both you and me

Then I started up to the
counter
To pay my grocery bill
For I thought I had everything
To do the **Master's** will
As I went up the aisle, I saw
prayer
And I just had to put that in
For I knew when I stepped out-
side
I would run into **Mr Sin**.

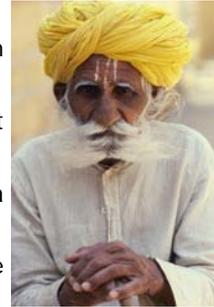
Peace and **joy** were plentiful
They were the last upon the
shelf
song and **praise** were hanging
near
So I just helped myself

Then I said to the angel
"Now how much do I owe?"
He smiled and said
"Just take them everywhere
you go"
Again, I smiled and said
"How much do I really owe?"
He smiled again and said
"**My child, Jesus paid your**
bill
A long long time ago.

Anon.

Old folks' Beatitude

Blessed are they who understand my faltering step and palsied hand.
Blessed are they who know my ears today must strain to catch the things they say.
Blessed are they who seem to know that my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.
Blessed are they who look away when coffee is spilled at the table today.
Blessed are they who with cheery smile stop to chat for a while.
Blessed are they who never say "you told that story twice today."
Blessed are they who know the way to bring back memories of yesterdays.
Blessed are they who know that I am at a loss to find more strength to bear my cross.
Blessed are they who ease the days on my journey home in loving ways.
If you can lend a needed hand, or someone's sorrow share,
If you can show by word and deed, if you sympathise and care,
Please do it for now—for if you wait, another day could be too late.



Seibert Blackman

A Grandad and his granddaughter were sitting talking when she asked, "Did God make you, Grandad?" "Yes, God made me," the Grandad answered. A few minutes later, the little girl asked him, "Did God make me too?" "Yes, He did," the old man answered. For a few minutes, the little girl seemed to be studying her Grandad, as well as her own reflection in the mirror, while her granddad wondered what was running through her mind. At last she spoke up. "You know, Grandad," she said, "God's doing a lot better job lately."



Book review

Haberer, Jack, 2001, Living the Presence of the Spirit, Geneva Press, Louisville, Kentucky ISBN 0-664-50180-X

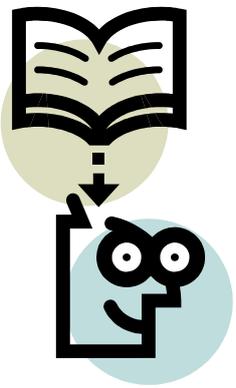
An inspiring and approachable book with short chapters focused on biblical figures who give different insights on the work of the Spirit, for example: Adam and Eve and how the destructive sets in (which is related to a current example from the author's ministry); the place of faith in the story of Abraham and Sarah; the freedom and single-mindedness of David; Elijah's experience of God at a new level in silence; Daniel finding God in the difficult places; Ezekiel and Jeremiah working towards the heart of flesh and the personal experience of God; and the final step when the veil of the Temple is torn.

I can probably give you the best picture of clarity and vividness of the language if I quote a passage from the second chapter of the book:

"Accordingly, there comes a time for every man and woman to decide. Who is your God? If you would like to change gods from the wrong one to the Right One, a simple prayer can say it. Perhaps you'd like to say such a prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and separated from God. I believe that you died for my sins, so please forgive me for living separate from you. I now invite you to take control of my life, and I welcome the Holy Spirit into my life. I want to trust you as Saviour and follow you as Lord, in the fellowship of your church. Amen.

Do you know what happens when such a decision is whispered as a prayer? All heaven breaks loose. Every sin you have ever committed - every act that ratified Adam and Eve's rejection of God - is immediately forgiven. You stand before the Holy One as if you had never sinned. Your relationship with God is no longer merely that of created to Creator but as



a daughter or son to a loving heavenly father. Ownership of your heart and soul is taken by God from the serpent's cohorts. A process of transforming your bad habits into good is set in motion. Healing of damaged emotions is initiated. Most of all, the presence of God, Holy Spirit, takes up residence within you, never to leave."

Reviewed by Jeremy Plummer

Have you read a good book recently? Would you like to tell everyone about it? Book reviews welcomed by the Editor, John Parkin, parkinj@gmail.com.



Aerial impression of proposed square to the rear of Victoria Hall

Deacon's Epilogue—Pathway to Paignton

As many of you already know, Palace Avenue, Paignton had special significance on 26th June, 2005 for eight people who had been tested and trained, and were now submitting themselves to be ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands as deacons in the world wide Methodist Church. What an amazing day we all had; the weather was glorious and the day's events progressed smoothly in a seemingly effortless fashion, which generally means in life that a lot of people worked very hard to make it appear this way. However, I'm running away with myself and need to retrace some important steps along the road to this big day.

For me, after three years of training and two years of in-job probationary studies, the final stages of preparation began in earnest as I left ministerial, pastoral and chaplaincy concerns physically behind in Bolton and the eight of us assembled for the four day Ordinands' Retreat in 'The Community for Reconciliation', Barnes Close, Bromsgrove, Birmingham commencing on the 16th June. The theme of the retreat was "I will not die an unlived life....." and many of us felt it could have been custom made for us as it drew us back to the concept of living a fully abundant life as defined by Jesus himself in the Gospels. I say it drew us back because unfortunately one of the potential pitfalls of ministerial life is that we can easily loose ourselves in all the bustle and busyness. Clearly we neglect our own spiritual welfare at our peril. We were beseeched by our leader, David Bosworth, to try and come to a place of stillness through prayer and reflection, and let God do the rest as we prepare for ordination.

We were encouraged in the first evening's worship to let go of all the concerns in our respective appointments, just for the meantime, as we would pick them up again during the final morning's worship and commissioning service. The retreat proved to be a glorious time of 'coming back to ourselves;' a time for sharing, a time for silence, a time for



tears, a time of great joy, a time of breathtakingly beautiful music, a time of praying through the ordination service, a time of worship and encounters with God, and a time of accepting the next phase in my personal journey. It did finally feel time to move forward physically, mentally and spiritually towards the next exciting step of faith and confirmation of God's will for my life. To Paignton then, let's go!

June 26th was mercifully cooler than it had been in previous days. The service of reception into Full Connexion took place during the morning at the main arena in Torquay and was attended by all the new presbyters (ministers) and deacons. We were formally presented to the congregation as we stood on the platform, and many of you have heard the story that I beamed at everyone whilst the rest were solemn. This was because Judy Jarvis caught my eye and smiled at me. Her smile is very infectious so I naturally responded back. We had been encouraged beforehand not to smile as it was such a serious occasion, however, this is not always easy to do.

The Ordination service itself was one of those occasions to be

Puzzle Page—Sudoku

Fill in the blanks with the numbers 1 to 9, with the numbers appearing once only in each row, column and square.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | | | | | 7 | | | 2 |
| | | | 2 | | 6 | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 5 | | | | | 4 | |
| 5 | 8 | 3 | | | | | 9 | 7 |
| | | | | 4 | | 1 | 5 | |
| 7 | | | | 8 | | 6 | | 3 |
| | 3 | 9 | | | 5 | | 6 | 1 |
| 2 | 5 | | 6 | | 4 | | | |
| 6 | | 8 | | | | | 3 | |

Answer to the June 2005 puzzle: Felix, Sarah, Uriah, David, Thomas, Solomon, Festus, Lot, Joshua, Luke, Moses, Paul, Elijah, Martha, Jairus, Jonathan. Spelling:

26 Fruit of the Spirit.

Continued from Page 21

remembered for the rest of one's life. Rev Ian White presided and managed to win over the hearts of even the most determinedly unreceptive family agnostic with his inclusive and friendly language. Rev. Brian Beck preached a very helpful sermon that demonstrated a good understanding of the nature of diaconal ministry. The laying on of hands was very moving, both to experience and to observe happening to my dear friends. So was the subsequent Holy Communion sacrament, especially when seeing doubting family members come forward to receive God's earthly demonstration of His Grace.

People asked me if I felt different and for a few minutes this was a really difficult question for me to answer, as I didn't think I did feel any difference. Then it gradually dawned upon me that I felt a bit tingly all over and when I described this sensation to people that have been similarly ordained they have just gently smiled at me. This is the end of the abridged version of the story, and although there's so much I've left out, a flavour has been given here. Thank you, dear people of Victoria Hall for accompanying, supporting and loving me thus far, I just know the best is yet to come for all of us wherever God places us and whatever task is in store.

Shalom and every blessing.

Janet Smith

Family news



Raymond and Sheila Darby would like to announce the engagement of their eldest daughter Caroline to Mr Gary Brooks of Manchester.

Diary Dates and Events

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 2nd Sep | Wagon Train to Alderley Edge |
| 6th Sep | Youth Council Meeting |
| 7th Sep | Stewards' Meeting |
| 9th & 10th Sep | Prayer without ceasing event |
| 19th Sep | Pastoral Visitors' meeting |
| 21st Sep | Mission Committee |
| 23rd Sep | Harvest Social at Rivington Barn |
| 26th Sep | Church Council |
| 27th Sep | Mission Resources |
| 9th Oct | Singalong after evening service |
| 15th/16th Oct | Church Anniversary weekend with Rev'd Frank Topping |
| 17th Oct | Events Committee meeting |
| 18th Oct | Worship Consultation meeting |

Ministry team

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| Superintendent: | Rev'd. Philip R. Mason | 01204 493 271 |
| Deacon: | Janet Smith | 01204 841 619 |
| Minister: | Rev'd. Dr. Brian Tomkins | 01204 667 296 |
| Supernumerary: | Rev'd. Bryan Ashberry | 01204 520 376 |
| Lay worker: | Mrs Dilys Tomkins | 01204 667 296 |
| Director of music: | Mr Jeremy Plummer | 01204 602 743 |
| Congolese Minister: | Pastor Hubert N Kayonda | 01204 370 733 |
| Local Preachers & Worship Leaders: Geoff & Brenda Cooper, Nikki Bradley, John Cambray, Sylvia Fairhurst, Phil Glanvill, Tricia Harper | | |
| Victoria Hall office: 01204 522 569 (9:00 am to 3:15 pm) | | |
| E-mail: victoria.hall1@virgin.net | | |
| www.boltonmethodistmission.co.uk (full colour version of The Message available) | | |

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