

The Bethel Mag

The Church
that Meets at
Bethel



The magazine from the church
In the community
For the community

Spring
2022

NEWS FROM YOUR CHURCH

Well hello to you all!

It has been over a year since we last published a Bethel Mag, and it has really been quite a year in the making. We have all been through the most difficult of times and it seems that just as we are passing through maybe the last of the worst of COVID, we have now moved into an awful situation with the war in Ukraine.

War against a virus has given way to war against aggression and violence, and here so many thousands of miles away, we might feel that we are helpless in how to stop this evil. However, we can give of our resources to help fund help for the Ukrainian people and we can pray for their safety and for a quick and trustworthy solution to the horrendous situations.

When our world seems to be lurching from crisis to crisis, we can be faced with the real possibility of thinking and saying that we just can't do this any more - time to give up - but this is the opposite of how we are called to be in this world. God knew and knows that our world is spoiled, tainted by sadness and dying and death, bereavement and hurt and pain. He chooses to speak to us through His word and to give us what we need to keep on keeping on.

In the New Testament, in a letter written by Paul to the Churches in Galatia (modern day Turkey) Paul writes these words - "So let us not grow weary in doing what is good; for if we don't give up, we will, in due time, reap the harvest." Hold that thought for a moment, and go with me to the Old Testament and the book of Esther. A man called Mordecai discovers a plot against the king. The king was saved and the good, faithful deed was written in the Book of the Chronicles, but Mordecai received nothing by way of thanks or reward, even though Esther had credited him with the discovery to the king. It seemed that the king and even God had forgotten Mordecai's good deed. Maybe the king had forgotten, but God never forgets.

However, God did not reward Mordecai at that time, but He did reserve, purposely saved the reward for the right time. If God delays a reward, it's not because He's forgotten, then suddenly by accident remembers, but because He chooses to bless us in the moments when it would do us the most good.

God keeps His eyes on each and every one of us, watching us love and serve Him. The Hebrew word for 'serve' is ABAD, and it means an act of service that is an act of worship. Anything we do for God is a way of us worshipping Him, and anything we do for others is an act of our worship to God. (Here's a thought then - if we are doing good it's like we are doing good to God, and if we harm people with words or actions, it's like we are harming God!)

So Paul is actually saying to the Galatian Church, "Let's not get tired of worshipping God as we serve Him by serving others, because if we don't give up, God will, at the right time, reward us.

Now we don't do good, we don't serve God to be rewarded, but God cannot be out-given, so when we do good, expand the boundaries of His Kingdom, live the qualities of the fruits of the Spirit (Faithfulness, Self-Control, Patience, Goodness, Gentleness, Joy, Kindness, Peace and Love) God's character CANNOT not reward us. However, it's always in His time.

Hold that thought and come with me back to Esther. If the king had rewarded Mordecai there and then, that would have been it - job done, thank you given, end of story. However Haman was an evil man who hated the Jewish people and he spent his life trying to destroy them. Haman hatched a plot to kill all the Jews and the king agreed, not realising Mordecai was Jewish. Esther stepped in and told the king of Haman's real intent and Haman was punished and Mordecai saved. The king saved Mordecai because while he was mourning the fact he had agreed to Haman's wishes, he had the Book of the Chronicles read to him, and he was reminded that Mordecai had

saved his life. God was working behind the scenes to honour Mordecai and answer the prayers of protection from the Jewish people. God's timing is perfect.

Isaiah 55:8-9 says, " 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts and your ways are not my ways' says Adonai." Even when we cannot see the immediate effect of doing good, of keeping God's word, of following His ways - the time will come, at God's right time, when we see the effect, consequence of us remaining faithful to God. Let's make it very clear - salvation is NOTHING to do with the good deeds we have done, are doing or will do. Salvation cannot be bought from God or earned - it's a free gift offered to us by Jesus. When we accept Jesus' gift, it's then that all the good that we do moves from us just doing good, to us doing good as an act of worship, and that gets God involved.

Doing good is not always the easy option, nor is it always the quick option, nor the cheap option, but it's always the right option for those of us who dare to call ourselves Christians. When things keep going wrong, when the world continues to lurch from one bad thing to another, when we feel exhausted, too tired even to cry and we just want to give up and give in, it's then that God's word speaks to us -

Romans 5:18 "This is life, and life is not just about our destination, it's about our journey." Sometimes when we are going through difficult times, it can seem endless, and 'same tat different day' is a common feeling. Actually, although the difficulties are awful, what makes them better or worse is our attitude - some troubles make us or break us, some troubles make us weaker or stronger, some troubles put a wedge between us and God or draw us closer to Him - it's always our choice as to what happens because of the troubles.

Proverbs 24:10 in the Message Bible says, "If you fall to pieces in a crisis, there wasn't much to you in the first place." So, in times of crisis, we need to keep on keeping on. We need to carry on doing good, serving and worshipping Him, because we are NOT just humans - we are children of God. We do not face this world's troubles on our own, and you do not have to battle alone. Not only are we "surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses cheering us on from the stands as we run our race of life" (Hebrews 12), but we are also indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The same verse translated in the Message Bible says, "Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything, in the One who makes me who I am."

Keep on keeping on doing God's works, doing good in this world that is so troubled. Turning away from God means we live in a very imperfect world full of imperfect people, so there will always be something to deal with, always the chance something is coming to hit us from left field that we didn't see coming. We are experiencing evil at work not only in the war in Ukraine, but in the daily war we fight in our own lives - good against evil, light against dark, Satan against God. Our job, in the middle of the troubles is to do good, and to do it again and again, until Jesus comes for us or calls us home, and if we keep on keeping on, He has promised that in His time, we will reap the harvest.

So on the days when we feel our weakness is stronger than our strength - on the days we feel our despair is stronger than our hope - on the days we feel our distress has destroyed our peace, God's word says in Psalm 121 - "If I raise my eyes to the hills, from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth."

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church said this - "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

So especially in these troubled times, let us not grow weary in doing good. As Mother Teresa said "Do good anyway."

With love to you all, Jill x

Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud!

Written by Wayne Barratt (Jill's nephew)

Preparation to undertake a 10-mile Tough Mudder Classic requires weeks of scheduling lives around event-specific exercise plans, disciplined nutrition intake, a high-intensity/stamina-building training programme and a great deal of mental focus.

So to increase the enormity of the challenge, we decided to give all of that a swerve, and have a go at it anyway...

On the morning of Saturday August 14, Solvay Oldbury's elite 7-strong invasion force -

meticulously assembled to achieve the perfect blend of youth, experience and blind optimism - set off under the terrifying moniker of 'Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow' (no further explanation needed, once you see the team photos).



What surely must have

been the most ferocious band of warriors to storm Belvoir Castle since the English Civil War arrived in extremely high spirits. The Gone Tomorrow element of the group were particularly relaxed - probably on the basis that further physical damage to already-creaking joints would be of little consequence. Those still sporting head hair, and with more to lose should their body parts become incapacitated, seemed a little more pensive at this stage.

However, the sense of togetherness nurtured over months of slowly-building determination meant that a backward step would lead to a kangaroo court sentence of far worse consequences than 10 miles of muscle-sapping terrain, 25 obstacles offering various levels of discomfort/strain/pain/embarrassment, and 5 hours with no access to

social media.

A motivational warm- up routine, with the emphasis on fun and meeting all challenges as a team, did little to warn of the devilry that we were about to face. An opening obstacle named 'Kiss The Mud' probably conjures up a



realistic image of how this one works ... Skid-marked, Entrapment, Arctic Enema and Pitfall possibly leave a little more to the imagination; whilst Electroshock Therapy was unfortunately precisely as advertised.

Slogging up and down inclines with naturally tricky surfaces prevented any boredom from taking hold in between the 'highs' of the physical assault on mind and body. Any residual fears of what was coming next were allayed by constant support and encouragement from within our band of merry men (mainly expressed via uncontrolled laughter should anyone find themselves in particularly creative difficulties).

After around 3.5 hours of invigorating pursuits, and with the finish line in sight, we approached the final obstacle to hear what appeared to be shrieks of uncontrolled fear, pain and anger. Our football-supporting contingent viewed this as a typical Saturday afternoon out, and as a team we launched into 20m or so of mud, hay bale hurdles and zaps from electrically-charged, hanging strips of hell fire to fall/lurch/crawl to safety and the anticipation of a cleansing jet of cold water and an even colder beer - Job done!

Two things to note -

(i) hopes that our two Tough Mudder veterans had been exaggerating (even a little) about just how testing this course is, proved to be completely unfounded. If anything, they may have 'accidentally' omitted just one or two details

(ii) reports from our two Tough Mudder veterans on the sense of achievement to be experienced in completing this course, and the overwhelming feeling of being part of a quite unique team, were also a little understated.

Lending a helping hand

Written by Emily Dunn

On Sunday the 13th March, West Midlands Ambulance service sent a specially selected band of 50 staff from both accident and emergency and patient transport sectors to welcome, transport and care for 21 Ukrainian children who needed cancer treatment.

Putin had bombed their hospital at home leaving them scared, injured, and without the treatment they desperately needed. Ambulance services from all over the country took part in the operation with our very own James Dunn being part of the special selection from WMAS recruited to bring one of these children and their parents to somewhere safe. And we know he would have taken Jesus's presence along with him.



Cornerstone



We go to the Bethel on Wednesdays
To meet friends and have a chat
You could not find a better way
To spend your day than that

We have a lovely three course meal
Which Lynda cooks with pride
The volunteers work very hard
To make sure we're satisfied

And when it's time to go back home
We're brought safely to the door
I'm sure if you went anywhere else
They could not give you more

By Win Parker



Style lovers were delighted when Bethel Treasures Heaven Scent was once again able to welcome customers at the shop, based at 192 High Street in Quarry Bank.

This is the first shop to be opened by Bethel. Bethel Treasures originally opened in October 2020 to positive feedback before lockdown called a halt to trading, but the staff were delighted to be able to renew contact in May 2021 with customers and callers at the shop.

The vintage themed shop boasts a mixture of lovely pre-owned and new items, the collection includes clothes, accessories, children's and household items as well an extensive range of bric-a-brac at affordable prices.

Projects coordinator Val Woodhouse said 'We were really excited to reopen and plan to be a valuable contributor to the High Street community. The Bethel Treasures Heaven Scent team worked hard to get everything ready; the shop always looks amazing. We have generous donors and a high standard of fabulous stock so I am sure shopping here will be a positive and enjoyable experience.'



A shoppers car park is located to the rear of the shop which makes visiting the shop convenient for customers whether they travel by car, bus or on foot. Future plans include themed events and 'personal shopper' help for regular customers.

The shop is usually open Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays 10am-2pm and Wednesdays and Fridays 10am-4pm.

Information on the latest specials, offers and themed events can be found on our website <http://www.bethelchapel.net/Treasures.htm> or on the [Bethel Treasures Facebook page](#)

Donations for the shop can be taken to Bethel (not the shop) during office hours - please ring 01384 892137 to let us know you are coming.

Buying or donating to Bethel Treasures Heaven Scent is good for the environment and contributes towards the community work of Bethel Chapel.





Many of you will already know that our very own Catherine Green works for 'Youth for Christ' There are several of us at the Bethel who support her in this work and here's a flavour of what they're up to at them moment.

They've just had their 75th anniversary at Birmingham Town Hall (the place were it all started in 1947). An evening of celebration, reflection and a look at where they are going in the future.

Their next project is '**Pray Through May**', a national initiative praying for young people with a different theme for each day of the month. If you want to take part in this initiative or to access any of the booklets you can find details on yfc.co.uk/praythroughmay/.

Their Youtube channel. Intro Outro has launched a new element called 'Underground'. This is a rap freestyle series that aims to communicate Jesus. Rap is a hugely popular music genre amongst young people and they feature interviews and music from Christian hip hop artists. You can listen to 'Still Shadey', a Christian hip hop artist sharing his faith on youtube.com/IntroOutro.

Other projects include 'The Good News Bible—Family edition' which attempts to get families to interact with each other in the way they study the Bible and RE-QUEST which is a website providing resources for RE teachers.

If you are interested in finding out more about the work that Catherine does, or if you would like to find out how you could support her then give her a ring on **0121 502 9620** or email her at Catherine.green@yfc.co.uk

QUIET THOUGHTS OF DAD

With shuffling gait and shoulders bowed
The old man climbed the road
A care worn look, but manner proud
Bent by an invisible load

Clothing hides the body that bears
The scars of combat sore
Sustained in four long dreary years
Throughout that bloody war

He turns the corner, lifts his eyes
Acknowledging his mate
A faithful wife, who neath nature's skies
Waits patiently at the gate

I blink, a tear rolls down my cheek
But I am not really sad
The person whom of which I speak
This hero is my dad

By Des Stokes



BETHEL from the comfort of your own home!

During the lockdowns we used Zoom to be able to bring church to your homes. However we realised that this was no longer suitable as we prepared to reopen church. To ensure we fulfilled our vision of

"Turning the lost into the found and the faithless into the faithful"

we recognised that we were required to offer both an online and face to face option of church.

Following many hours testing what was possible using zoom we came to the conclusion that this platform no longer suited our needs and that we required a different way to provide the new 'hybrid' style church that was required.

We installed more technology within church ensuring that this was compatible with our current 'sound set up' which we believed would give us many possibilities to provide the platform we required for our Sunday services as well as funerals, weddings, Little Lambs productions and our own kids Nativity of course.

The new technology includes two cameras with multiple settings, the ability to broadcast live on YouTube, the ability to broadcast our projector display (enabling people at home to see the words for worship) and the ability to record the whole service for anyone wishing to watch at a later time or date.

If you attend or want to attend our Sunday services, do not worry about being on camera as the way we record and broadcast only captures those who are on stage or are contributing to the service from the front so it wouldn't record you blowing (or picking) your nose if you had the need to.

Please subscribe free of charge to our Bethel Chapel YouTube channel by searching for [Bethel Chapel Stourbridge on YouTube](#), or by simply clicking on the link on our website or online newsletter

To join us on  YouTube for any of our services, please click on the following links:

[Sunday 20 March 2022 – Morning Service – 10.30am](#)

[Sunday 20 March 2022 – Evening Service – 6.00pm](#)



A Place at the Table

Written Pat Hazlehurst

As I get older in my life and my faith I find I have fewer answers and far more questions. But I know that with God it doesn't matter. I find I'm less sure about doctrines and creeds and exactly how to understand the stories in the bible and, in deed, stories that others tell. But I know that with God it doesn't matter.

I do know one thing that does matter. I will never look into the eyes of someone God doesn't love. He loves every single one of us. It doesn't matter who we are or where we are, what we've done or haven't done. He loves us all even when we don't know him or we turn our backs on him. He loves us all. Love is what God is all about. And love is what we must be all about. All are welcome at his table.

When I heard the worship song, **A Place at the Table**, I knew it's message was the right one, and I knew I must share it . Yes it's challenging and maybe overwhelming. But then God's message is. To follow Jesus is.

For everyone born, a place at the table
*for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*

*For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*



*For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*



*For just and unjust, a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*

*For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*



*For gay and for straight, a place at the table,
a covenant shared, a welcoming space,
a rainbow of race and gender and colour,
for gay and for straight, the chalice of grace,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*

By Shirley Erena Murray

All are welcome, - women or men, young or old, just or unjust , gay or straight. I believe that our Bethel table welcomes all.

Little Lambs Nativity 2021

Over the last 2 years our Little Lambs celebrations have been very different events, so, after much deliberation and risk assessing, it was wonderful to be able to go ahead with our Nativity Play with our morning children last year.



As you can imagine, lots and lots of practising and planning goes on behind the scenes to ensure that the performance runs smoothly – beginning as early as mid-November! We avidly followed the Government announcements in the Autumn, wondering if a church full of people would be allowed at Christmas, but at that time it was impossible to predict. In November we decided to bite the bullet and go for it, beginning to teach the children the Christmas story, allocating parts and practising songs, all the time praying that the parents would be able to see the performance in person.

Each year Gary Leonard is kind enough to video our performance, as long as all parents' consent to this, and our back up plan was that if parents could not gather in church, we would go ahead with the performance and film it for them instead. As the performance date grew closer, the Government guidelines were still not specific, and parents were asking daily whether they would be able to attend – they were all eager to see their children shine! Two weeks before, the children were getting so excited! They all knew their songs and lines and were even trying on their costumes. Each time they practised in church we hoped that on the day there would be an audience

for them to perform to!

The week before, it was looking promising that at least one family member could attend in person, our numbers would then be kept to around 30. Thankfully, at the beginning of the week of our Nativity, our prayers were answered, and as long as strict measures were put in place, 2 family members could attend for each child. What a relief!! We spent a long time ensuring that the measures in place would keep everyone safe – opening windows, face masks being worn, use of hand sanitiser and lots of crosses on seats to ensure everyone social distanced.

The parents were quite happy to adhere to all the measures – they were just ecstatic that they could be there in person! As the children walked into church that morning, with their costumes on and Away in a Manger playing on the piano, all the stresses leading up to the performance melted away – they were amazing!!



Joel as Joseph in our Nativity Play

HO, HO, HO!

Christmas Saturday with Santa and Carols with Santa and his Reindeer - what could possibly go wrong?



In true Bethel style, the 2021 Christmas fundraiser was a day of drama and apprehension, tears and laughter with the event nearly not happening at all!!

With Covid still looming, the decision was made to host a scaled down version of our usual Christmas fayre – a smaller outdoor event focused mainly for the children, “Christmas Saturday with Santa”, with some games, a few stalls, hot food and drinks and of course, Santa and his Reindeers.

It was all going so well, lots of wonderful donations, amazing volunteers, and grand draw sales were through the roof, it was set to be the perfect day. Until the day... The first group of volunteers arrived at Bethel at 6.30am on November the 27th to a blizzard of epic proportions!!! What to do now? With snow falling so heavily and the winds howling the great debate began...**Go ahead OR be defeated by the elements.**

Eventually a decision was made to at least put up the gazebos and cook the pork and check again in an hour. Well, an hour passed and several flying gazebos later DISASTER number 2, the reindeer were snowed in and not able to come! We had promised Santa and his real Reindeer so should we go on without them?

NO, Yes, Yes, No, Yes, Yes, YES, NO, NO, NO, YES, No, Yes, Yes, No, No, Yes, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO.....

Do you know what, we have put in all this work, let's just go for it! One hour till gates opened and guess GOD was on our side as the snowstorm suddenly passed. So, it was all hands-on deck,

snow was shovelled, paths were gritted, and safety signs were put up. Tables were put out stalls set up and the volunteers found extra layers ready to brave the arctic cold.

To mis-quote "Field of Dreams" if you open the gates they will come - and come they did.

It turned out to be a hugely successful day with a steady stream of people, smiling behind their masks, keeping warm with a hot pork sandwich and mulled wine, enjoying the atmosphere, and supporting our church with the children (and some adults) delighted and excited to meet the real Santa who managed to get there through the terrible weather conditions.

All in all, we wanted the perfect day, and we got the perfect day, Christmas Saturday with Santa raised an amazing £15,056.71.

We couldn't have asked for a better outcome than seeing God at work changing the weather, bringing people together and keeping everyone safe as well as providing the opportunity for a second community event.

With the reindeer unable to come to our Saturday with Santa, we managed to rebook them for a special outdoor Carol Service on Christmas Eve with a second visit from Santa who managed to bring 2 very special reindeer with him, Honey and her six month old son Max. This time the weather was very kind to us, and we managed to host a wonderful worship filled afternoon serving hot drinks and cakes to lots of chapel regulars and many local families too.

All that is left to say is a huge "thank you" to everyone who was involved in the organisation, the set up or help on the days and to everyone who came to one or both events.

God bless you all!!!





Saturday One Way Club



Matthew 19:14 says “Jesus said ‘let the little children come to me and do not hinder them because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these’ ”

At One Way Youth Club, we truly believe this and we strive to encourage children to believe in themselves and their own abilities so they can aspire to be the best they can be.

Each session the children have opportunities to share any exciting news, birthdays or any worries or concerns that they have and to ask for prayers for their families and friends. We hope that through the kindness, love and understanding that we have for the children, we will show them the love of Jesus and help them to see how special they are in God’s eyes. A unique child of God.



Since starting the new monthly Saturday One Way Club back in September, we have had an amazing group of

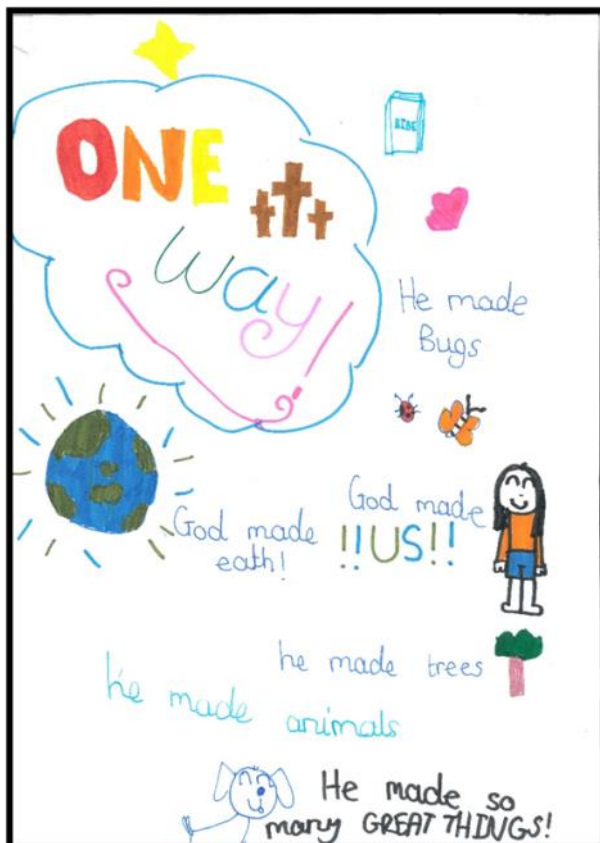
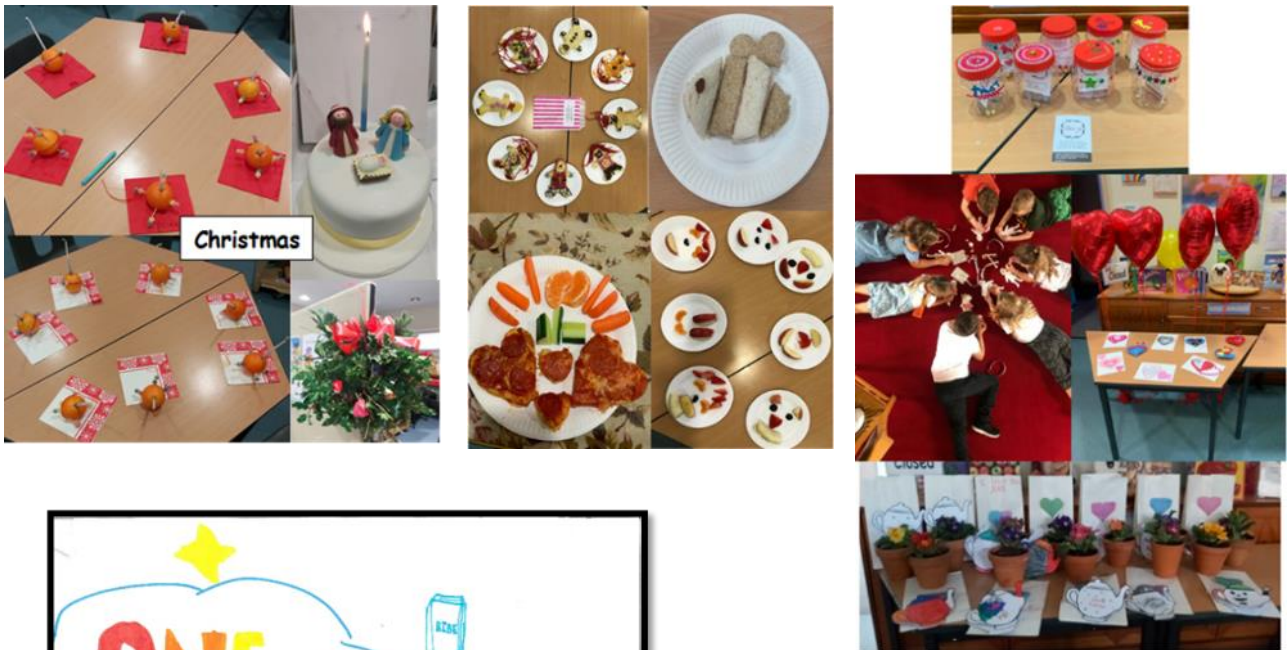
children join us who love to take part in the fun activities and games that we usually plan around a chosen theme.

We dance, sing and play and always finish with Lord’s Prayer. It is so wonderful to see our young ones engaged in what is on offer, playing



together, helping each other, and filling the room with joy and laughter.

Here are some of the crafts that the children have made at the club, having put in so much care and effort to create such wonderful pieces.



2 beautiful pictures drawn by 2 members of One Way

HOPE BAGOT

Lying at rest below the Clees
Caressed by Summer's gentle breeze
It's here that I feel most at ease
In lovely HOPE BAGOT

The little church with Norman tower
The graveyard bedecked with many a
flower
A place to sit for a quiet hour
It's here in HOPE BAGOT



Standing for almost a thousand years
Steadfast throughout happiness and tears
A sanctuary to dispel your fears
It's here in HOPE BAGOT



Whilst nature's seasons thus unfold
A solid rock on which to hold
Somewhere to peacefully grow old
It must be HOPE BAGOT

Long may I come and visit still
This Shangri-La below the hill
And listen to the silence still
In lovely HOPE BAGOT

Then finally, as old age grows
When all we crave is sweet repose
I may end up right here, who knows
In peaceful HOPE BAGOT

By Des Stokes

Do It Anyway

People are often unreasonable,
illogical and self-centred;
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind,
people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful,
you will win some false friends and true enemies;
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank,
people may cheat you;
Be honest anyway.

What you spend years building,
someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness,
they may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today,
people will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have,
and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.

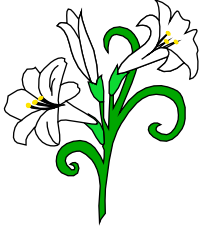
You see, in the final analysis,
it is between you and God;
It was never between you and them anyway.

Mother Teresa



Easter at Bethel

Hill Street, Wollescote



You are welcome to join with us for:

Palm Sunday, 10th April

The Road to Calvary

Services at

10.30am and 6.00pm

Good Friday, 15th April

Thoughts at the Cross

*(Hymns, excerpts from Stainer's Crucifixion,
Bible Readings and Communion)*

2.00pm

Easter Sunday, 16th April

Easter Morning Celebration Service

10.30am

Evening Celebration

6.00pm

