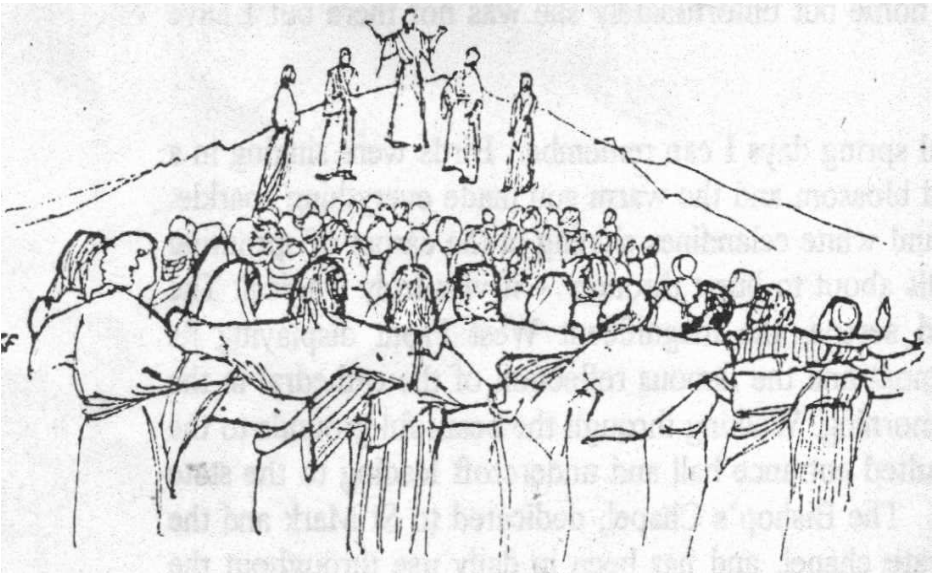


THE INDICATOR

FEBRUARY/MARCH



*Beckenham Methodist
Church*



Beckenham Methodist Church

Registered Charity No. **1138006**

Bromley Road Church

Clock House Road Church

Dear Friends, This month's Letter from the Minister begins with several sentences containing "X" as a substitute for a word and words associated with the substituted word. As you read, I wonder what you will think is the word represented by "X" in the sentences that follow? Don't peek ahead - just see what your brain tells you as you read.

It was once a source of cultural identity and pride for millions of British people. But X is fast becoming a minority pursuit. There are more members of the Caravan Club, or the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, than of all the X put together. There are many theories as to why this has happened. The public have grown cynical and disillusioned with X. We live in a more individualistic age (Why rely on X leaders to speak for you when you can do it yourself on Twitter or Facebook?). X itself has become too boring. There have also been profound changes in the way Britons spend their spare time, since the days when the X was at the heart of the community. Most people don't use X in the way they might have done in the fifties and sixties when, for example, you had a realistic chance of meeting your future husband or wife at a X dance.

So, what is the word represented by X? I would not be surprised if you thought it was the word “church”. But it isn’t that at all. The word (and associated words) is the word “politics”. It is the case that, unlike previous generations, people just do not want to belong to a political party. In fact, they don’t really want much to do with politics and politicians in the routine of their lives. Of course, people will have strong political views - even party political ‘leanings’ (where I come from virtually everybody automatically voted Labour all their life) - but it is only when there is a General Election that most people will take much interest in party politics. The name ‘The Trimdon Labour Club’ will probably not mean anything to you but it was the (politically speaking) spiritual home which spawned Tony Blair! Well, it closed in 2010 due to lack of support!!!!

What is interesting is the way political parties are beginning to respond to this unstoppable trend of disinterest in them by the public at large. The Labour Party’s annual conference is to be opened up to campaign groups and charities - who will be allowed to speak from the floor in debates at the Conference (but not to vote on policies). As you might expect, the changes have not gone down well with some Labour members. They are particularly upset that members of a planned Labour “supporters network” could get the right to vote in future leadership elections.

The Conservatives have also thrown their party open to non-members and supporters. The strategists there have come to realise that many people don’t want to sign on the dotted line to join a party but are happy to help out by delivering leaflets

for a particular candidate they want to support. David Cameron's party is also trying to get members involved in policy formation - a process that had effectively died out - and it has pioneered the use of "open primaries" to select Tory election candidates. The Lib Dems have also been opening up their party structures and meetings to non-members. Some Lib Dems argue that political parties need to broaden their support base in this way to avoid becoming unrepresentative of the public at large.

Church membership (and specifically for the purposes of this article, Methodist Church Membership) has suffered significant decline in numbers 'too' since the 1950s. For all kinds of reasons more and more people are 'uncomfortable' about becoming a Member of the Methodist Church. Notice the capital letter. Many, many fine Christians are members of a local Methodist church in the sense that they feel a very strong connection to it and they give so much of themselves to its life, but they choose not to be Members of the Methodist Church. I am not criticising that. What we might profitably do in response to the general decline in numbers is to reflect on what we might learn from the way the Political Parties are responding to their similar dilemma.

I'd like to leave that question hanging in the air in the hope that some of you (many of you) will join me in thinking through this whole subject of membership, because it is going to be a critical feature of our identity and survival as a Church going forward.

Mike

Count Your Blessings 2014

Make Lent count

Instead of giving up treats this year, why not make Lent count in a different way with a Count Your Blessings calendar, for Christian Aid.

Throughout Lent, these bitesize reflections will inspire you to give thanks for the blessings in your life, and enable you to help change the lives of poor communities around the globe.

Adult and children's printed versions will be available in the New Room and the Long Vestry.

Free app

Forty daily reflections and actions, complete with inspirational photos from Christian Aid partners around the world, delivered straight to your smart phone, iPad or iPod touch. Available for free from the Apple Store or Google Play.

A special version for 16-25 year olds

is also available online or as an app—have a look at **christianaidcollective.org** to find out more.

Thank you to all those who counted their blessings last year. In total the generous offerings raised more than £300,000 for Christian Aid's work to eradicate poverty.

Joan Winifred Thompson

Joan was born in Bromley in 1935 and was baptised in accordance with the rules of the Primitive Methodist Church at Bromley Common Methodist Church.

When the time came for her to start Sunday School the nation was involved in the Second World War and her father was away in the forces, so she went to Bromley Common Baptist Church, which was closer to the family home in Princes Plain. She appreciated those early years, but chose to join her parents as Methodists when her father returned from war service. She joined in the Girls' Brigade, young people's activities, Sunday School teaching and the choir. From that time Joan took every opportunity to sing with a church choir or musical group.

On completion of basic education Joan trained as a secretary, working mainly in the Methodist Church offices at Westminster Central Hall. Before marriage her full-time work was with the Central Finance Board.

Through Wesley Guild, she met Frank and they were married at Bromley Common in 1958 and moved to New Eltham. The family increased from two to five between 1959 and 1963 with the birth of Douglas, Wendy and Sheila. Joan again taught in the Sunday School, sang in the church choir and was a pastoral visitor.

After a break while the family were young she returned part-time, first to the Home Mission department, then on the central switchboard, then in the Local Preachers' office.

She was happy to attend circuit and district meetings and synods, and on two occasions was a delegate to Conference from our District.

During 1974 the family moved to Coulsdon, where the Church gave a friendly welcome. Joan continued with many activities and became a church steward.

In 1996 Joan and Frank moved to their retirement flat in Beckenham. Joan took a full part in life at Beckenham Methodist Church. She took a course as a worship leader, which led her to assume the leadership of the Monday Afternoon Fellowship. This she did with great ability and devotion.

She entered into ecumenical activities over the years and shared worship in other churches.

In millennium year 2000 she oversaw a production of the Rob Frost musical 'Hopes and Dreams' by member churches of Churches Together in Beckenham and then, in 2012, the highly successful celebration of the 125th anniversary of the church. Joan was particularly pleased to have among the participants the President of the Methodist Conference and two former Presidents.

All her activities took place against the background of a busy and happy family life as a wife, mother and grandmother with a strong Christian faith, which was apparent in everything she undertook.

Excerpts from thanksgiving service 9th December 2013

Monday Fellowship

Do you enjoy meeting over refreshments for fellowship?

Jenny Nichols would like to invite you to tea in the Wesley Lounge sometime soon to talk about re-launching a fellowship group.

Please watch out in the weekly notices for the actual date and time.

In the meantime, please share any thoughts you have as to when; how often; any specific topics for discussion; other activities etc.

I should also be very grateful if potential drivers could join us, so we know when transport would be available.

We like to think we're a friendly church. Let's get to know each other better!

Hoping for lots of ideas

Jenny Nichols

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Some people, no matter how old they get, never lose their beauty– they merely remove it from their faces into their hearts.

Women's World Day of Prayer

11.30am on Friday 7th March

**St. Edmund's Church, Village Way, Beckenham
"Streams in the Desert"**

This year the order of service has been prepared by the
women of Egypt.

The speaker will be Margaret Evans from 'Release'

Refreshments will be available after the service.

An offering will be taken for the work of Women's World
Day of Prayer and for projects run by Christian charities
worldwide.

Please may I remind you that, although prepared by women
(many of whom do not traditionally have a say in life)
this service is open to all.

All who are able to come are welcome to this service of
hymns, prayers, readings and dramatisation

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Employ whatever God has entrusted you with, in do-
ing good, all possible good, in every possible find
and degree,

John Wesley

UPDATE

As you know our Minister Rachel, has been unwell for some time now.

We continue to wish her well and hope that she will soon be restored to health.

In the mean time our Superintendent Minister and the Local Preachers, have been a great support to both our congregations.

We thank them all for all they done for us in the last few months.

The reduction in Circuit Staff does mean though that there are changes to our normal routine as it relates to Holy Communion Services.

In the next plan, our communion services will be as follows.

Bromley Road.

March 23rd (4th Sunday)

April 20th (3rd Sunday Easter)

May 4th (1st Sunday)

Clock House Road

March 9th (2nd Sunday)

April 20th (3rd Sunday 8am Easter)

May 18th (3rd Sunday)

MENS FELLOWSHIP

The Men's Fellowship met on the Saturday 11th January to hear a most inspiring story by a young lady called Jonnie and her husband Carwyn who with the help of The Haitian Ministry of Health and the Konbit Sante became involved in setting up a hospital in the north of the country.

In 2012 they opened up one of the main maternity facilities which has 22 beds, 2 natural delivery units, a surgical department and consulting rooms which provide a range of services including ultrasound.

They also provide Paediatric care, disability care and community health care.

As well as a rehabilitation centre of 20 beds for patients with complete or partial paralysis. There is a vocational training room where patients can learn skills like sewing and jewellery making. There is a well equipped gymnasium and sports centre funded by the UN.

All this has come about since the terrible earth quake and cholera epidemic in 2011..

We were thrilled to hear how God called these two people and with the help of various charities were able to establish this wonderful work in the north of Haiti.



Church Flower Rota

February 2nd Kate Sawyer Family
9th Wendy Richman
16th Ena Hamblyn
23rd Valerie Wilson

March 2nd Margaret Hazlewood
9th Mary Cook
16th Christine Handel
23rd Irene Antwi
30th Richard Phizacklea

Folding & Stapling Party

There is an urgent need for helpers to assist with the Folding & Stapling of the Indicator on a Thursday morning. Anyone who can spare an hour or so will be very welcome. Coffee/Tea & biscuits are supplied.



News from the Church Family

Joan Thompson

Frank and the family are most grateful to all who helped to make the thanksgiving service for Joan on the 9th December such a memorable occasion.

The amount sent to the Bible Society from the collection and gifts was £448.

It was good to see Ruth Marchant back with us after her operation.

We were sorry to hear that Muriel Hoggarth had a fall but is now on the mend.

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Articles for the Indicator must be with David Dingley or Jenny Nichols by Sunday 16th March at the latest for distribution on Sunday 30th March.

Volunteers are requested to join the Folding and Stapling party at 10.00am on Thursday 27th March in the Wesley Lounge

Why go to Church

If you are spiritually alive, you are going to love this!
If you are spiritually dead you won't want to read it!
If you are spiritually curious, there is still hope!

A church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday." I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote. "and in all that time I've heard something like 203,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So I think I am wasting my time and the preachers are wasting their time by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the 'Letters to the Editor' column much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher.

"I've been married for 30 years now. In all that time my wife has cooked me some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals.

But what I do know.

They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals I would be physically dead today.

Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment I would be spiritually dead today.

When you are DOWN to nothing... God is UP to something.
Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, receive the impossible!

Thank God for our physical and spiritual nourishment .

Just some of the activities on offer at Beckenham Methodist Church

If your New Year's resolution was to get a bit more exercise why not look into what's available at Bromley Road. On Monday evenings from about 8.30 pm a church group meets for badminton and would welcome more players. Contact Carole Stewart on 8325 8861 or Ian Woodrow on 8650 0647.

On Tuesday mornings The Fitness League meets from 10.30 – 11.30 am followed by coffee usually in TCs. Cathy Doyle is the teacher and there are leaflets available on the notice boards in the lobby.

On Monday and Friday after school the Beckenham Ballet Academy runs classes for children but on Thursday evenings 8.00-9.00pm Linda of BBA teaches Body Conditioning for adults. It's described as a total body workout suitable for adults from 18-50+ and is a fun and sociable class. They start with a warm-up incorporating the whole body and then move on to more dynamic moves and stretches, with a little aerobic interval to get the heart rate up. Then they finish with a cool down stretching out all the muscle groups. If interested call Linda on 075 9515 8428.
Sounds good!

Then there are several Yoga Classes and Pilates at both sites and Dance Classes at Bromley Road on Tuesday evenings so no excuse for lack of exercise

Thank you from Deptford Methodist Mission

Dear friends at Beckenham Methodist Church

I'm writing on behalf of all at Deptford Methodist Mission Disabled People's Contact to thank you for your very generous donation towards our work. We are so grateful for the donation of toys and gifts that you send each year, and are humbled each time by the generosity of your church members towards the work that we do.

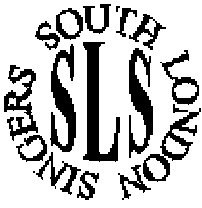
Our Christmas Celebrations went very well, with around 85 people eating our Christmas Lunch on 17th December, and a further 40 attending Christmas Day at the mission which we host for people who would otherwise be spending Christmas alone. Your gifts were brilliant to share with the guests on Christmas Day, each of whom took home a gift bag with different goodies in it to open at home, something that wouldn't have been possible without your amazing donations!

It makes a huge difference to the work that we do to know that we are supported by other churches and it feels like a wonderful example of the connectedness that is an intrinsic part of Methodism that we, in Deptford, receive the support that we do from all over London and other parts of the UK.

Thank you once again for your kind donations

With all best wishes, Melissa Williams

The complete letter can be seen on the notice board in the New Room at BR and the Long Vestry at CHR



South London Singers

The South London Singers would like to thank all those who supported their Carols for Charity Concert held on the 14th December at Bromley Road. Everyone seemed to enjoy the evening and the splendid sum of £415.85 was collected in the buckets for Macmillan Cancer Support. A cheque was recently presented to their representative, Hannah Webb, who expressed their delight. Photos appear on the SLS website.

And now for something completely different, as they say. The next concert will be at Bromley Road on Saturday March 29th and will feature several “Italian Masterworks”. Four of the best known Italian composers will be featured from Palestrina and Monteverdi to Vivaldi and Perlogesi. Palestrina’s *Missa Brevis* (a short mass – one of 93 that he wrote!). Monteverdi’s glorious cantata *Beatus Vir*, a short anthem by Vivaldi and a four-part arrangement of Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* normally sung by two ladies’ voices. Accompaniment will be provided by David Thorne at the organ and a professional string quartet. A soprano and a mezzo soprano soloist will also feature and tickets remain at £10 – splendid value for such an evening’s entertainment. If you know the SLS I’m sure you’ll want to be there but if you haven’t been before come along and hear some beautiful music in the familiar and comfortable setting of Bromley Road.

The SLS are also keen to recruit new members, so if you know anyone who might be interested do put them in touch with David Jackson, Mary Cook or Carol Jefferies who will also have tickets as well as those on sale in TCs.

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People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when darkness sets in their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

Sunday Services

Bromley Road

Clock House Road

2nd February

Revd M Cassidy 10.30am Mrs V Wilson
Holy Communion

9th February

Mr J Morley 10.30am Revd K Jobson
Holy Communion

16th February

Ms A Driscoll 10.30am Mr D Dingley

23rd February

Revd A Dart 10.30am Combined Service at BR

2nd March

Mr D Dingley 10.30am Dr J England

9th March

Mrs M Smith 10.30am Revd M Cassidy
Holy Communion

16th March

Mr C Sandy 10.30am Ms A Driscoll

23rd March

Revd M Cassidy 10.30am Mrs M Bull
Holy Communion

30th March

Dr J England 10.30am Revd D Stanworth

Diary Dates

(P) More Information Inside

February

Sat 8th 11.00am Men's Fellowship CHR

March

**Sat/Sun 1st 10.30am Circuit Away
Weekend**

**Wed 5th 8.00pm Ash Wednesday
Service BMC**

**Thurs 6th 8.00pm Maundy Service
Holy Communion BMC**

**Fri 7th 11.30am Women's World Day
of Prayer at St Edmunds**

**Sun 23rd 12.15pm Worship Consultation
at BR**

**Sun 20th 10.30am Mothering Sunday
Parade Service BR**

April

**Sun 6th 12.15pm Church Annual
General Meeting BR**

USEFUL CONTACTS

Minister in Charge: Rev Rachel Parkes 8658 6484

Stewards: Christine Handel (Senior) 8658 1381

Irene Antwi 8778 2124, Comfort Lawson 3539 4944

Sheila Priestman 8460 1091, Barry Stewart 8325 8861

Church Council Secretary: Sheila Priestman 8460 1091

Church Treasurer: Mark Cheesman 8249 5522

Junior Church Co-ordinator: Mary Cook 8656 2815

Flower Secretaries: BR - Margaret Hazlewood 7733 6116

CHR - Irene Antwi 8778 2124

Property Co-ordinator: David Jackson 8656 2815

Property Stewards: Colin Wilson 8464 3768

David Jackson 8656 2815

Barry Stewart 8325 8861

Roy Charles 8402 5562

Graham McLeod 8325 5243

Rob Love 8658 9771

Room Booking Officers: BR - David Jackson 8656 2815

CHR - Graham McLeod 8325 5243

Brownies: Carole Dewar 8650 9027

Guides: Karen Millican 8650 6248

Beavers: Mandy Sarhane 8650 4822

Cubs: Steve Shirley 8650 0330

Scouts: Gordon Wilson 8650 1035

Web Site: <http://www.beckenhammethodistchurch.co.uk>

Email Address: (Being established)