

NEWSLETTER

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Message from our Chaplain

Gordon Brown, the British Prime Minister, has recently written that a major cause of the global financial crisis was a lack of proper regulation and supervision. Giving the financial sector a large measure of freedom, he wrote, eroded the sense of caution and concern for the common good. Bankers did their own thing, taking ever greater risks and eventually, as we know, the bubble burst.

This preference for light-touch regulation is itself a reflection of the importance given to the rights of the individual in our society and political system today. In a nutshell, individualism would be useful if we all lived on our own on desert islands. But we do not. True, it is a barrier against tyranny, but there are dangers too. Individualism favours the belief that we are free to live as we choose. It can eat away at our sense of common values and undermine a belief that we have a responsibility for our neighbours.

Christian moral theology, on the other hand, starts from the premise that “it is not good for man to live alone” (Gen 2:18) and that “we are the body of Christ” (1 Cor 12:27). It emphasises virtues like faithfulness, honesty and kindness, holding that these are essential to living a good life. We can also add others, such as gentleness, generosity, patience and care. These virtues are seen in the way we relate to other people and to God. They also illustrate how he relates to us. As we approach Pentecost, we may recall these are all gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To promote these Christian virtues in the face of individualism, it is necessary to find common ground in which all can grow. This may mean giving up some of our cherished freedoms so that the body as a whole can flourish. Even Christians need to be reminded of this occasionally, even (or especially!) in the Church, where we are called to be a people, responsible for one another, and not a collection of separate individuals.

In this post-Easter season we focus on all that is life-giving and life-enhancing – those virtues that encourage us to find and cherish common ground.

Peter Potter

Calendar of Services for May 2009



- May 3** **Fourth Sunday of Easter**
10.00 All Age Eucharist
(Admission of Children to Communion)
Acts 4: 5 - 12
1 John 3: 16 - 24
John 10: 11 - 18
- May 7** **19.30 Thun Service**
May 10 **Fifth Sunday of Easter**
8.30 Holy Communion (said)
10.00 Informal Eucharist
(led by Wohlen Housegroup)
Acts 8: 26 - 40
1 John 4: 7 - 21
John 15: 1 - 8
- May 17** **Sixth Sunday of Easter**
10.00 Eucharist
Acts 10: 44 - 48
1 John 5: 1 - 6
John 15: 9 - 17
- May 21** **Ascension Day**
10.00 Holy Communion
Acts 1: 1 - 11
Luke 24: 44 - 53
19.30 Thun Service
- May 24** **Sunday after Ascension**
8.30 Holy Communion (said)
10.00 Eucharist
Acts 1: 15 - 17, 21 - 26
1 John 5: 9 - 12
John 17: 6 - 19
- May 31** **Pentecost**
10.00 Sung Eucharist with prayers for healing
Acts 2: 1 - 21
Romans 8: 22 - 27
John 15: 26 - 27, 16: 4b - 15

Please note that not all the appointed readings will necessarily be used.

Come, Holy Spirit

PRAYERS FOR HEALING

We will continue the revived custom of having prayers for healing at our Sunday worship, which will take place about once a quarter. The last Sunday of this month is the Feast of Pentecost, when the Apostles were sent out in the power of the Holy Spirit. Healing is an integral part of the Good News they went out to proclaim

The form of service that we used in February was warmly received and we will use it again. The prayers for healing will take place as part of the prayers of intercession. There will be an open invitation for anyone to come forward and receive prayer, for we are all in need of healing in some form or other. You may also wish to come and ask for prayers on behalf of someone else.

† † † † † † † † † † † † † † † †

Neuchâtel Services

Sunday 10 May – 17.00

Sunday 31 May – 17.00

† † † † † † † † † † † † † † † †

Quotes

The Spirit who convicts us is also the Spirit who consoles. - C H Spurgeon

God is an ever-present Spirit guiding all that happens to a wise and holy end. - David Hume

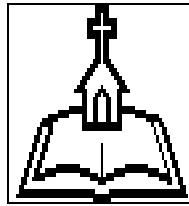
Humility is the beginning of true intelligence - John Calvin

A Christian is never in a state of completion but always in a process of becoming. - Martin Luther

Rotas for May 2009

READERS

- 3 Communion Group
- 10 Wohlen Housegroup
- 17 A Funkhouser+C Hodler
- 24 A Varghese+Y Chittazhathu
- 31 B Morgan+E Pfyffer



INTERCESSIONS

- 3 Communion Group
- 10 S Brawand
- 17 S Faillettaz
- 24 S Higson
- 31 T Carrick

SIDESPERSONS

- 3 S Faillettaz
- 10 W Astor
- 17 S Higson
- 24 J Wenger
- 31 B Morgan

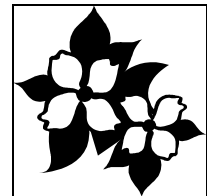


COFFEE & TEA

- 3 Köniz Group
- 10 J Wong+M Mead
- 17 H & A Kamarys
- 24 M Wittwer+J Wehrli
- 31 A & Y Bomonti

FLOWERS

- 3 R Schelker 10 E Eigner
- 17 Y Chittazhathu
- 24 Y Bomonti
- 31 Y Chittazhathu



If you would like to donate flowers for a special reason during the coming month, please contact Yojena Chittazhathu at ☎031 859 64 12 or the church office.

SERVER

- 3 M Wildhaber
- 10 J Hutchison 17 L Robb
- 24 A Thomas 31 M Wildhaber



CHALICE ASSISTANTS

- 3 H Davie+R.Freiburghaus
- 10 K.Chittazhathu+P Perrett
- 17 B Morgan+S Zysset
- 24 D Goepfert+D Low 31 E.Hutchison+P Perrett



DUTY COUNCIL MEMBER

- 3 J Wenger
- 10 P Perrett
- 17 B Morgan
- 24 T Carrick
- 31 E Hutchison

AUDIO

- 3 H Wenger
- 10 Hj Gusset
- 17 E Wildhaber
- 24 H Wenger
- 31 A Tomczak

What to do with Lots of Money

Jesus rightly reminded his listeners that they could not “serve both God and Mammon” (Matt 6:24). But that did not stop him from talking about money, and using it to illustrate his parables. The widow's mite was not quite the same as a five-rappen piece (indeed, it was two mites, and was “all she had to live on”, according to Mark 12:43), but was scarcely “riches”. The denarius paid to the workers in the vineyard, the same whether they had worked for an hour or all day long, was the standard day's wage in those times.

In one parable, though, Jesus talks of large sums of money – though not quite as large as those we have read about in our newspapers recently. The version we remember best is in Matt 25:14-30. A rich man leaves his slaves in charge of his money. Lots of it. A talent was equivalent to about eight year's pay for a labourer (though if you were a slave, you didn't get any pay!), so one slave is put in charge of this amount, a second receives twice as much, and a third has to look after almost a lifetime's earnings. Two of them are good administrators, and double their master's capital. The third goes and hides the money in the ground, because the master is “a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed.” When the rich man returns, this third slave is “cast into outer darkness” for making nothing of the small fortune entrusted to him – he could at least have put the money on deposit with the local bankers.

“And that is what the Kingdom of Heaven is like,” says Jesus, introducing the story, straight after the parable of the wise and the foolish bridesmaids. Just like the bridesmaids who forgot their oil for their lamps, the slave who hides his sackful of silver excludes himself from the Kingdom.

We all know that the story is not really about money, but about our skills and our abilities – the word 'talent' has almost totally lost its original meaning as a quantity of coinage. But what we often forget is that we all have talents. We may talk of someone as “a talented writer” - or cook, or teacher, or scientist. But a bus driver, a cashier in Migros, a farmer, these people too have talents. And our talents are not restricted to our jobs.

We can have a talent for explaining things to our friends, for seeing what needs doing and getting on with it in the background, for encouraging others to do things we cannot do ourself. Even being

able to count to more than two is a talent. In short, we all have talents, and we all need to use them, if we can.

Realizing what our talents are and using them is only part of the story, though. The slaves administering the five and the two talents of silver were just as aware as the third slave that the capital they were using had come as a loan, and that the return on this capital belonged to their master, and not to them. We too should remember that our talents are not just to benefit us – perhaps not even to benefit us – but to be used in God's service.

This does not mean we can earn ourselves a place in Heaven by using “our” talents in God's service. We are only doing what God wants us to do – like the shepherd and the servant ploughing in Luke 17:7-10. If we do anything less, it shows that we have not fully appreciated what God has given us, and why.

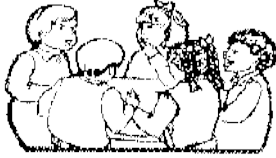
For God wants us all, with our varied talents, to work together for the coming of the Kingdom. We should take time to look at ourselves and ask what our true talents are, and how we can use them best. We can only do what our talents allow – even if we want to do more. And like Job, we should not complain about the talents we do not have (“The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” (1:20)). God knows our strengths and our weaknesses, and we can take strength from the seventeenth-century poet John Milton, who saw his eyesight as his “one talent”, and who, when he went blind found comfort in the thought that

.... God doth not need

*Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.*

For waiting, too, is a talent.

Hector Davie



JUNIOR CHURCH

If you would like more information about the Junior Church, please contact Donna Goepfert at 031 931 27 42 or Kelly Sovilla at 031 921 55 92, or refer to our website www.anglican.ch/berne.

Dear **Mums, Dads** and **Grandparents** are your children going to the **Crèche** or to the **Parents and Tots** group then I need your help.

The **Crèche** is organizing a **Spring Clean** on **Saturday 9 May at 10.00**

We are in need of **Volunteers** to sort out toys, clean up, replace old toys etc. etc. and last but not least to have a cup of tea together and a little chat, I hope to see many of you!

If you can come just give me a call. **THANKS**

Maxine Wildhaber (crèche coordinator) Mobile: 076 - 349 40 42

NURSERY ROTA FOR MAY

- 03 Yvonne Bomonti & Jerusha Viggiswarapu
- 10 Lynn Robb & Belinda Arestequi
- 17 Jana Kutesko & Maxine Wildhaber
- 24 Somayeh Fattahi & Jessica Hoag
- 31 Chloé Hodler & Catherine Augustine

Laughlines

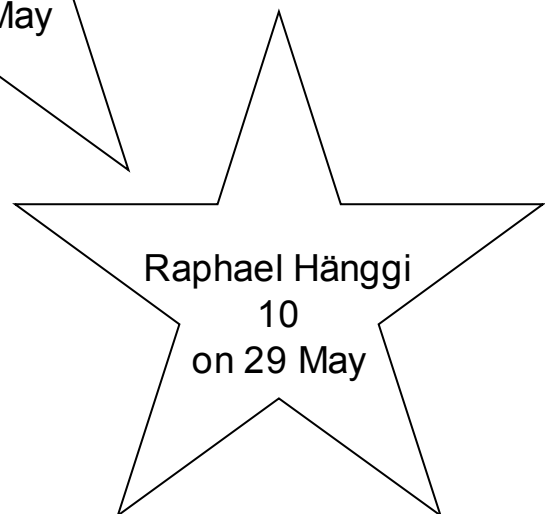
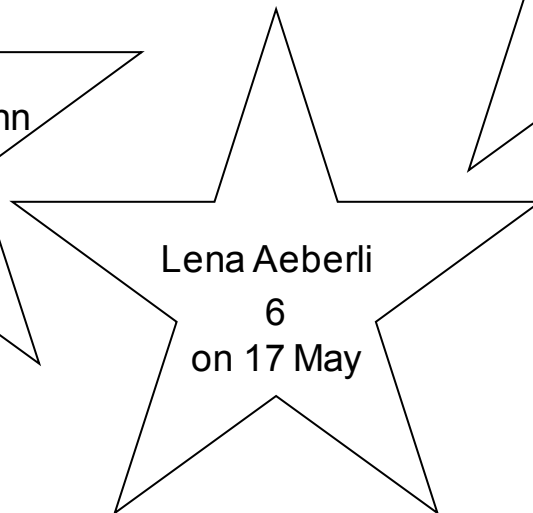
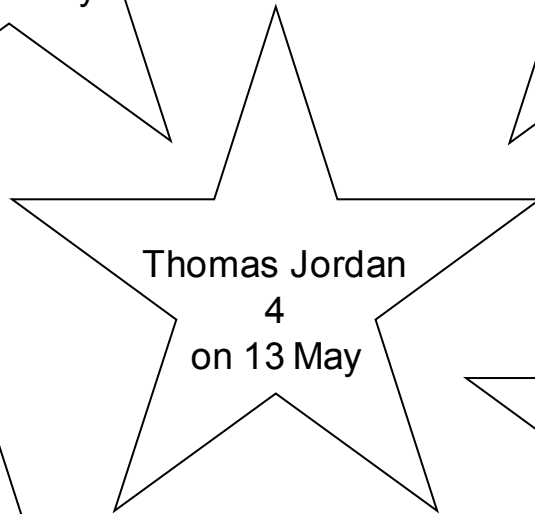
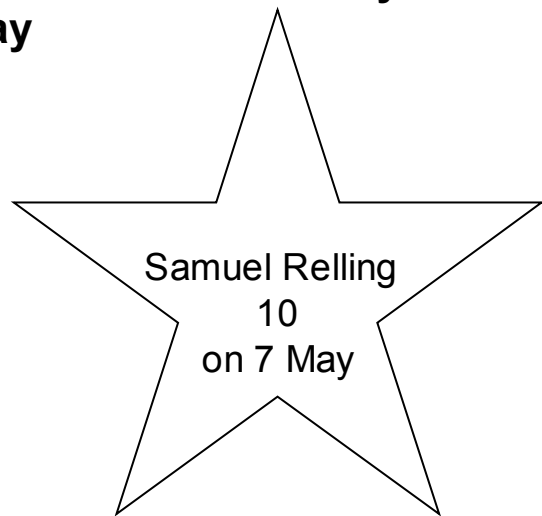
Kids in Church

A little boy was in a relative's wedding. As he was coming down the aisle, he would take two steps, stop and turn to the crowd. While facing the crowd, he would put his hands up like claws and ROAR.

So it went step, step, ROAR, step, step, ROAR, all the way down the aisle. As you can imagine, the crowd was near tears from laughing so hard by the time he reached the pulpit.

When the minister asked what he was doing, the child proudly said, "I was being the Ring Bear."

**Congratulations
to our Junior Church Children with Birthdays
in May**



For Your Diary May 2009

Regular weekly events

Mondays	09.30-10.00	Morning Prayer
Wednesdays	09.15-11.15	Parents and Tots
Fridays	09.30	Patchwork
	19.00-21.00	Youth Group
Saturdays	09.30-11.30	Choir Practice

Other Events

Saturday	2	09.30-15.00	Children & Communion Course
Tuesday	5	19.30	Church Council
Friday	8	11.00-19.30	Willibrord Society excursion to Rheinfelden
Friday 8 – Sunday	10		Archdeaconry Choir Festival in Zürich
Saturday	9	09.00-12.00	Crèche Tidy Up & Sort Out
Sunday	10	10.00	Youth Class
Sunday	17		COPY DATE
Sunday	17	10.00	Youth Class
Thursday	28	09.00-11.00	Magazine Collating
Saturday	30	10.00-17.00	Church Family Bike Ride



Laughlines

The little girl was anxiously watching the sunny sky for signs of rain. "Mum, didn't the weatherman on TV last night say there would be rain?" "Yes, dear," Mum replied. "Well," the little girl sighed with relief. "Thank goodness God didn't hear him."

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt. Young George was most interested. "My dad looked back once," he said, "while he was driving, and he turned into a lamp-post!"

Odds & Ends

Future Dates

6 June	1000-1400 Book and Food Sale (with Table Sale in the church grounds and Usborne Bookstall)
27 June	Pastoral Group Afternoon Tea
29 August	1000-1400 Book and Food Sale
4-6 September	Church Weekend Away in Aeschi
27-28 November	Christmas Bazaar

(Dates in May are on the 'For Your Diary' pages)

COPY DATE !!!
for the June issue 17 May
COLLATING DATE
28 May 2009

English Church Services and Housegroup in Thun

The Thun church group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 19.30 for a Eucharist service with Bible study. Everyone is welcome to join us! Services are held at the "Pavilion" of the Reformierte Kirchgemeindehaus in Bubenbergrasse, Thun. For more information please contact Sharon Bachmann ☎033 336 93 78.



* * * * *

Laughlines

The farmer told the minister that he had 'got religion'.
"Good, and about time, too" said the minister. "Are you going to stop sinning now?"
"Yes indeed," said the farmer. "I am through with sin."
"And are you going to pay up all your debts?" pressed the minister.
"Now wait a minute," said the farmer. "You aren't talking religion, you are talking business."

News from Neuchâtel

Regular Services: 2nd and last Sunday of each month at 5 pm
Chapelle des Charmettes, Rue Varnoz 1, Neuchâtel
2nd Sunday: Family Communion Service
Last Sunday: Communion service (During the sermon and liturgy, children leave to follow their own programme in Junior Church.)
Minister in charge: **The Rev. Roy Farrar** Tel: 032 730 51 83
Chemin du Chasselas 11
2012 AUVERNIER www.neuchatelchurch.ch

Holy Week was quite an active one for our little church. We started with a bang on Palm Sunday when two carloads of us went to Vevey to join the celebration at the All Saints service which we enjoyed very much. Hosannah was the name of the game.

Vevey was glorious in all its spring blossom, the blue sky reflected in the lake. We managed to find our way back to "our" restaurant where we had an excellent meal and spent a happy couple of hours in each other's company. A gentle walk along the promenade ended the day's activities.



On Maundy Thursday it was another meal, this time at 7pm in the Charmettes chapel. The table was laid in the church and looked very festive indeed as we sat down to share our food and remember Jesus and his friends celebrating the Passover meal together. The various courses were interspersed with hymns,

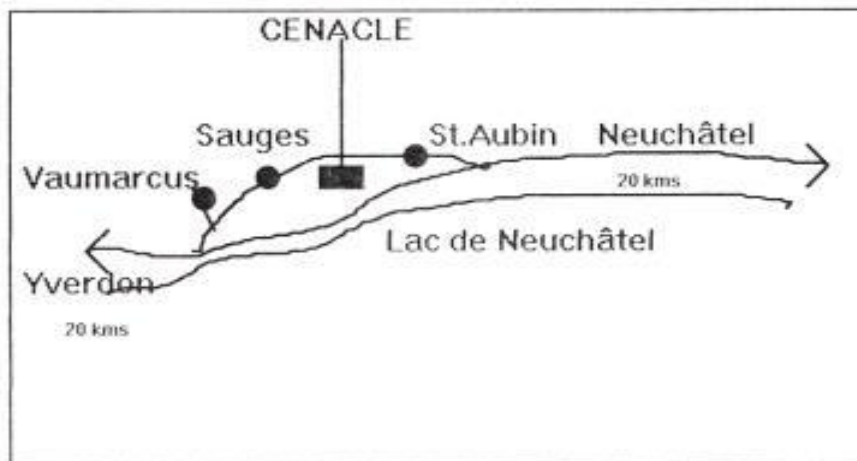
readings and prayers and culminated, quite naturally, with the sharing of the bread and wine, commemorating Jesus' institution of the sacrament of Communion.

On Good Friday we again met at the chapel when Roy and Mieke led us in a quiet meditation at the foot of the cross.

And, of course, we all met again in great joy on Easter evening to celebrate our Risen Lord.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE – IMPORTANT!!

An away morning has been planned for Sunday 17 May 2009 where we shall discuss our church's potential and the direction we should take in the coming months. We shall meet at Le Cénacle community in Sauges at 9.30am. Some of you will remember spending a day there some years ago.



*Communauté du Cénacle,
Rue de la Fontanette 5
2024 St-Aubin-Sauges*

Under Roy's guidance, we shall spend the morning analysing our possibilities, sharing our dreams, ideas and suggestions, and seeking how best we can serve God in the Neuchâtel area. What we achieve will be in proportion to what each member can contribute, so this concerns everyone for whom Neuchâtel Church is important. The session will end with the mid-day meal.

RESERVE 14 JUNE NOW!!!!!!

Our faithful Emma Packer has been preparing for confirmation and the bishop will be conducting the service at All Saints, Vevey on 14 June at 11am. So we shall all be going to Vevey on that occasion to celebrate with Emma and her family. More details in the June magazine.

Book Sale News

The next book sale will be on 6 June, at the usual times (1000-1400).

I would like to make a special appeal for books for teenagers and children. In good condition please, not drawn in or with ripped pages. Language can be English or German. Hardback or paperback.

Otherwise we accept English language paperbacks in good condition, preferably in the week preceding the sale. Help also very welcome on the Friday afternoon (the 5th) to sort out books. No English hardbacks or non English language books.

In addition there will be Usbourne Children books there, British food and a table sale.

If you would like a table to sell your own items (bric à brac, clothes, plants, etc) then please contact Jana in the office. If you can even bring a table as well, let her know. Commission to the Church 20%. Take away what you do not sell.

There will be a restaurant as well, so if you can make a cake please let the office know. Help welcome on the Saturday in the restaurant.

A reminder: due to damage to books with the bookcases being moved out, we have had to cover up the bookcases with sheets. Please do not move the bookcases out except with a member of the book team.

Sue Higson



Council Meeting Report

Council met on Tuesday 7 April. This was the last meeting of the current council, so the focus was on the handover: the arrangements for the AGM, the approval of the audited accounts, the approval of changes to the electoral roll and the organisation of the next council meeting – the first of the new council – on 5 May.

The Delta church have very generously donated some of their sound equipment to us, including the loudspeakers and the amplifier. We will buy three radio microphones (one as a clip-on) to use with this, in addition to the microphones we already have. Council were also very pleased to hear about the donation of a CD recorder, which will be used in future instead of the cassette recorder, to record sermons etc.

Council is following up the questions raised about “patterns of worship” – see last month’s report. A small group has met and will meet again soon. This topic will be top on the agenda of the council’s away day planned for 13 June.

The other important topic for that meeting is “Christian learning”. A number of housegroups have ceased to meet in the last few months. Is a centralised approach, as offered by the Lent course, more appropriate?

If you have thoughts or comments on either of the above topics, or any other issue that council should perhaps discuss, please tell a council member.

Good news: we have provisionally appointed a 50% Youth Worker starting on 1 August. But various child protection procedures have to be completed before the appointment can be announced. We hope these will be completed within the next few weeks.

As always, many other topics were discussed including the welcome news that a Pastoral Care group had a useful meeting and are planning an afternoon tea in June for those who visit and those who are visited. The planning for the weekend away is going well and council approved the brochure, which should be available by the time you read this. The “new” tree will be replaced if it does not sprout. An updated list of communion assistants (the people who usually distribute the wine during communion on Sundays) was agreed – this will be sent to the Archdeacon for approval. And lots more.

If you would like more information about this meeting or about council in general please contact a council member – list at the back of this magazine.

Tricia Carrick

CHURCH WEEKEND AWAY – 4-6 September, 2009



***Jugend- und Ferienhaus Aeschi
(above Spiez, overlooking Lake Thun)***

A great place for a Weekend Away with these features:

- Easily accessible by car (30-40 minutes from Berne) or by public transport (train to Spiez, bus to Aeschi)
- Three buildings available with comfortable sleeping accommodation (1 to 4 beds/room with basin plus 2 dormitories), a professional kitchen, large dining room and additional rooms for other activities
- Suitable for families with or without children, couples and singles, old and young
- Beautiful views, good for walking, hiking, etc.

There will be study sessions for adults and youth 13 and older. We also hope there will be a study programme for children aged 7-12, and childcare for those 6 years old and under.

Registration brochures are now available in the church hall.

We are looking for

- Two persons (at least one 18 or older) for childcare for children up to 6 years during the three study sessions. Please call the Church Office if interested (031 352 8567). Cost for accommodation and meals will be covered. Must have experience in childcare.
- Volunteer(s) to lead the children's study programme.

Note the date and come for Fun, Faith and Fellowship

For more information,
visit www.jugendhaus-aeschi.ch or www.aeschi-tourismus.ch
or contact Esther Hutchison (031 351 73 47)
or Jennifer Hockley (031 832 10 62).

Pastoral Group up and running

The pastoral care workshop on 23 March was aimed at establishing what takes place at present, what gaps there might be in the provision of care and at deciding how best to go forward. The newly-established pastoral care group (Donna Goepfert, Jennifer Hockley, Joanna Davie and Shareene Potter) are keen to hear from any of you who were unable to attend the meeting if you know of someone in need of care (visiting, prayer, etc) or if you have encountered difficulties when involved in caring. Please feel free to phone Shareene on 031 351 0343 or speak to any of the group members.

The key to the success of a care network (as it is in many other contexts) is communication. So please do let us know if you hear of anyone (young or less so!) who is in need. If no-one tells us, we cannot be of help. We are not attempting to take over in the field of caring but do want to assist if there is a need.

Another get-together is planned for 27 June, when we shall be having an "afternoon tea". This is for both people who visit and people who are being visited (and any others who would like to share a pleasant afternoon together). Please put the date in your diaries.

Shareene Potter

Quotes

A family is a mobile strung together with invisible threads - delicate, easily broken at first, growing stronger through the years, in danger of being worn thin at times, but strengthened again with special care.... continuity! - Edith Schaeffer

God never put anyone in a place too small to grow in. - *Henrietta Mears*

No one can persuade another to change. Each of us guards a gate of change that can only be opened from the inside. - *Marilyn Ferguson*

FAQ

Why is the LORD printed like that in some Bible passages?

In Exodus 6:2-3, God reveals his name to Moses for the first time. That name is YHWH (or JHWH to German-speaking scholars, who also pronounce the W in the German way). The Hebrew alphabet does not have separate small and capital letters. Generally speaking only the consonants are written and people fill in the vowels for themselves as they read.

Elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g. Genesis 32:29, when Jacob wrestles with him), God is reluctant to reveal his name. For that reason the Jews came to regard the name too holy to pronounce, and still do to this day. Whenever they see the letters YHWH in the Bible they say ADONAI, which means "Lord". The translators of the King James Version followed this custom, using capital letters when the Hebrew text had YHWH and "Lord" when other Hebrew words were used (or Greek in the New Testament). Many modern Bible translations have followed suit.

Incidentally, if you add the vowels of *Adonai* to the consonants of JHVH, you sort of end up with *Jehova*, a word coined by people who did not understand this Hebrew custom. It does not exist as a Hebrew word and is actually quite meaningless. Something to try out on the JWs next time they come calling....

Peter Potter

This Month's Hymn

Nobody knows when or by whom the Whitsun hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* was written (though there are plenty of people who make guesses!), but we know that in its original Latin form it is over a thousand years old. The tune to which we usually sing it is just as old – or even older, reminding us of our links with worshipping Christians of earlier ages. It is a beautiful request for the Holy Spirit to anoint us and cleanse us, to give us light, sight, joy and peace.

The version on the back cover is the one used at ordination and consecration services after the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. It was written by John Cosin, who later became Bishop of Durham. He wanted it to be sung every morning at nine in memory of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Cosin was not the first, or indeed the only translator of this hymn. There are over fifty other translations into English. But even if the language of this traditional version is rather dated, it is well worth reading carefully for what it tells us about God the Holy Spirit.

HD

The Charity and Missions Team monthly focus for May 2009:

FAMILY LIFE MISSION POLAND

– A LONG TERM FRIENDSHIP WITH ST URSULA’S CHURCH

Piotr and Mariola Wołochowicz write from Warsaw:

Family Life Mission (FLM) grew out of the teaching, counselling and writing ministry of Walter and Ingrid Trobisch. Working first as Christian missionaries in French speaking Cameroon, West Africa, and then ministering internationally while based in Austria, their idea was: “We conceive of this work as Mission, because we believe that the renewal of the family is possible only through the One who said: I am the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6).”

Since Walter's death in 1979, FLM has been established in many different countries on three different continents (Africa, Europe and North America), each country seeking to continue this work of bringing healing and wholeness to the family.

The Polish branch of FLM – called in Polish “Fundacja Misja Służby Rodzinie” – was established in 1992 and from that time we have been directors. Peter graduated as an electrical engineer and Mariola in German language, but from then on we left our jobs and have been devoted to full time ministry, living from God’s grace. In Poland this is still a pioneering ministry, because in post-communist Poland the idea of Marriage Counselling remains something new.

This is a long-standing friendship with St Ursula's Church – it started in 1990 when my wife and I were taking part in the “Jesus Hope For Europe” Congress in Bern. We were so kindly hosted in the lovely home of Chloë and Beat Hodler in Muri! From that time on we became friends, and it was a privilege for us to be able to come personally and share several times at St Ursula’s about our Mission. St Ursula’s Charity and Missions Team has given faithful financial support to FLM-Poland from the beginning and we really cannot overestimate the significance of that (it helped us to survive in some critical moments). Thanks!

In Poland we see our ministry in two directions:

- helping born-again Christians in solving practical marriage problems and to grow in their relationship with Jesus;
- helping other people in solving such problems and to come to know Jesus.

Our final goal is not only to improve families relationships but also to help them to live in closer relationships with God. Our typical activities and fields of

activity are: personal counselling, writing articles and books (also pioneering in that way), teaching and seminars for groups about marriage, sexuality, child-upbringing, supporting reconciliation between generations (in the vision from Malachi 3:24: “turning hearts of fathers to the children and hearts of the children to the fathers”), developing the understanding and practice of fatherhood and motherhood (similar to e.g. the vision of the US movement ‘Hearts at Home’), developing understanding what it means to be a man (like e.g. Promise Keepers), understanding our body - Natural Family Planning, premarital purity, individual prayers, intercession, praising Lord as a fellowship, influence on our society (e.g. our family-living book for schools).

Our FLM team in Poland has grown and is becoming stronger. At almost every invitation to give a talk or lead a seminar we are normally no longer alone but are accompanied by one or more helpers who help with the organisational side, give witness or take responsibility for the book table, etc. The teams have definitely become much more two-generational. This cooperation makes an impression and encourages others to begin a real reconciliation between generations. Repeatedly at our large meetings (e.g. recently student meetings at Lublin 2-4 April, and high-school meetings in Warsaw 6-8 April 2009), we have been able to help young people to be reconciled with their parents and through this foster a new picture of the Father God and of themselves.

It is also encouraging and worth mentioning that we were invited to Lublin by a young man who had heard us at our meeting in Lublin in 2003, which was attended by over 1000. He is the fruit of this conference and is very keen for us to teach the other leaders of the student community intensively on the theme of ‘Relationships’. This is our strong anointing and their weak point. We are delighted that God has multiplied that seed which we sowed years ago!

Our Mini branch in Gdansk has also grown: Grzegorz, who listened to us two years ago and with whom we talked last May at our camp on the Hel Peninsula, is growing in faith and is our hope. Also his former girlfriend, Daria, the young orphan girl whom we have mentioned before in our Prayer Letter telling how we left our book in her room and 3½ years later came to know her personally – she is also growing in her relationship to God and to us.

We are also proud of our younger generation: our young boarder Justyna, our freshly married couple Marta and Michal and our son Daniel - who are taking over the founding of “Open Doors Poland”, the Polish branch of this organisation which supports persecuted Christians around the world. They will remain actively engaged with the Family Life Mission but each one of them will contribute to informing Polish people about such Christian persecutions, so that they will help in supporting those persecuted both in prayer and otherwise. Over many years Poland has had to be supported by Western Europe and now we must learn to give from the little we have, to our

needy brothers and sisters who live far from us.

The main undertakings of our FLM ministry during the last 6 months were:

- regular meetings for a group of girls (age 18-25), who have come to Warsaw from very poor villages and are trying to adapt to life here
- organizing a meeting about the persecution of Christians
- a special women's meeting about being a Christian woman
- 3-day meetings for students in different places in the Gdansk-Gdynia region
- in Gdynia for marriages - what does it mean to be a Christian family?
- two meetings for fellowship in Radom
- promoting the editions of new books by Ingrid Trobisch in Poland
- individual counselling (many times)
- writing new books, especially one for parents: *How can we effectively influence our children to become believers?*

Family Life Mission Poland prayer requests for May:

for the leaders team of FLM-Poland, that we can go further as a team and increase leadership in order to reach out further for God's Kingdom in Poland

give praise for the response of the younger generation to help take on responsibilities for the work of FLM and that they can continue to mature, be strengthened and in the future go further than we went

for our writing – that we (Mariola and Piotr) can finish the books which we have already begun writing so that the messages we have within us may spread out and speak to Poland

for the health of Mariola and Piotr, their family and some co-workers - as they are suffering badly from the effects of Lyme disease (borreliosis)

for the fulfilling of the need for a place for meetings and for the office (because of financial limitations all the time from the beginning in 1992 we have had the FLM office and the ministry in our own private flat)

Mariola and Piotr Wołochowicz, Warsaw



Quotes

God does not bestow his Spirit on his people in order to set aside the use of his Word, but rather to render it fruitful. - John Calvin

Life can become once more a grand adventure if we will surrender it to God.... he brings one adventure to an end, only to open another to us.

...with him we must be ready for anything. - Paul Tournier

A Word for the Month - Paradise

How do you picture Paradise? A garden for “those who believe and do deeds of righteousness”? With springs of pure water, and a tree bearing abundant fruit at every season? How about the rivers of pure milk and fine wine, and the chaste maidens?

Ah, you've guessed it. This is not the Paradise of the Bible, it is the Paradise of the Koran, alluded to or described in 25 of its 114 chapters. (Strictly speaking, the Koran refers to Paradise as a corner of this garden reserved for “the most pious”.) The Koran lingers on the physical details of Paradise, a place rich in physical comforts and material delights, a place in strong contrast to the rigours of the Arabian desert. Even the Old Testament prophets look forward to a future time when the parched country will overflow with “rich food and well-matured wine”. Is this what we Christians believe too?

Let's leave aside for a moment the question of whether Heaven and Paradise are the same place. The New Testament uses the Greek word *paradisos* three times, and the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, uses it some ten times. The word may have come into Greek from ancient Persian, and literally means a place with walls around – we would probably call it a park. This is the sense in which it is used in Ecclesiastes 2:5: “I made gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees.”

But the Greek Old Testament also uses the word to describe what God planted in Eden (Gen. 2:8) – a place where the man and the woman he had created would be at home, and out of which they were cast after their disobedience. Around Jesus' time, this garden became a symbol for future blessedness, as at the end of Ecclesiasticus 25 – a book which just made it into the Greek Bible, or the Psalms of Solomon 14:2 (which didn't make it!) (Another Old Testament reference is in the Song of Songs (4:12).)

Jesus shared this view that even after death, there was a place reserved for those whom God had blessed. He promised to the repentant thief on the Cross that “today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43) This very comforting promise has led to some very uncomfoting disputes.

For one of our Creeds declares that between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Jesus “descended into Hell”. Not a good place, you might think, for the thief to be! But on closer inspection, this is not what the Creed says: the place to which Jesus went was not a place of punishment, but the abode of the dead who had not known him, the “souls in prison”, in the words of 1 Peter 3:19. They too could share the joys of Paradise.

And the Reformers, appalled at the excesses of the popular mediæval beliefs about purgatory, were unwilling to acknowledge a state of waiting between this live and life in heaven. Or if there was such a state, Jesus would not be there, but in heaven. And if the thief could go straight to heaven, did this

mean that some people might escape the Last Judgement?

Jesus warned his followers not to speculate about these things. It was more important to “be ready”, like the wise bridesmaids. In the same way, we should not speculate where “the third heaven” of 1 Cor. 12:2 (which is presumably the same as the “Paradise” of 1 Cor. 12:4) is, or how it differs from the second or the fourth heaven!

Even though we cannot speculate about the where or the when, we can still picture Paradise, though. The third New Testament use is the promise in Revelation 2:7: “To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.” Here we return to the Garden of Eden, the place God made for us, the place where we are truly at home. Later, in chapters 21 and 22, the writer of Revelation pictures the tree of life in the midst of a heavenly city.

Garden or city, it does not matter, for Paradise is where God is, where “all manner of things are well.” The delights of Paradise are not, as one reading of the Koran might suggest (or indeed any reading of the *Watchtower!*), material, but spiritual. The core of Jesus' promise to the thief is not “you will be in Paradise”, but “you will be with me in Paradise.” May we all come to share this company.

Hector Davie

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...I know he's a great fan of 'Strictly Come Dancing' - but I wish he wouldn't refer to it in every sermon he preaches.

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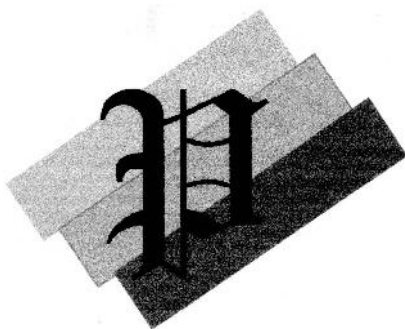
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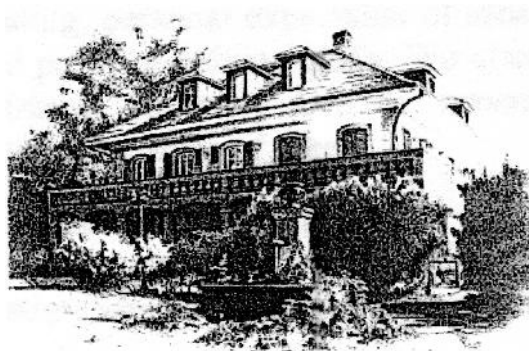
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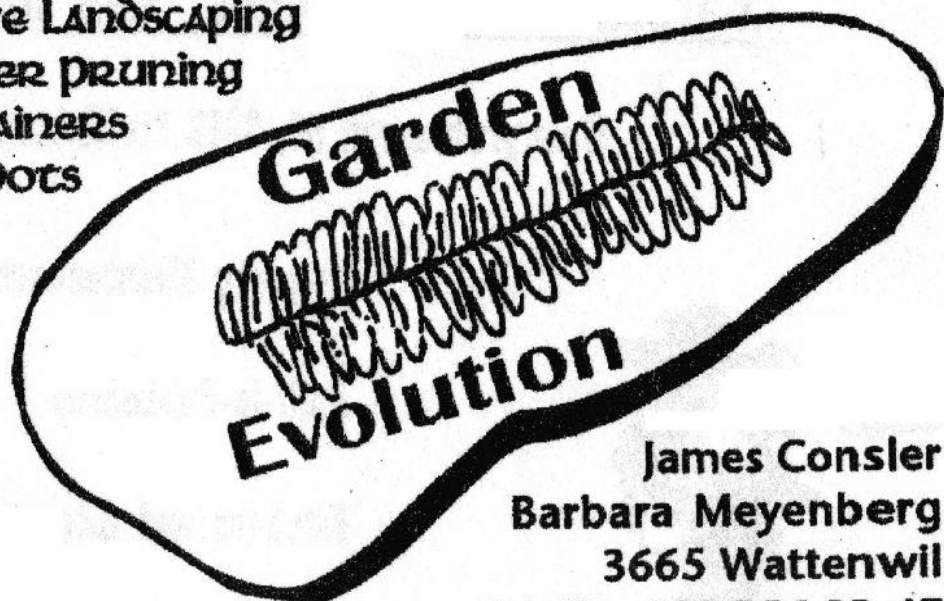
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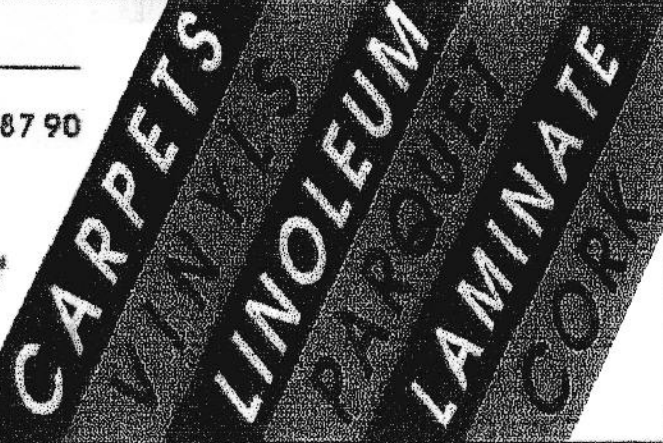
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Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire

Veni, Creator Spiritus (translated by John Cosin (1594-1672))

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
and lighten with celestial fire;
thou the anointing Spirit art,
who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above
is comfort, life, and fire of love;
enable with perpetual light
the dullness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
with the abundance of thy grace:
keep far our foes, give peace at home;
where thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
and thee, of both, to be but One,
that through the ages all along
this may be our endless song:

*Praise to thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*