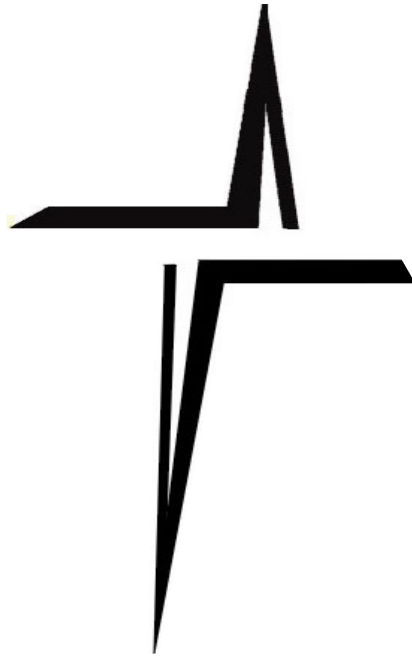


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From your Dorchester based minister...

Dear Friends,

I am writing this during Lent, but as you read it, we shall be in that period between the joy of Easter Sunday and the awesomeness of Pentecost.



But during this time I shall be on my first ever sabbatical. A sabbatical is a gift from the church and allows its ministers to take 3 months away from the usual role to concentrate on something else. And people chose to do all sorts of different things.

My sabbatical runs between 15<sup>th</sup> April and 15<sup>th</sup> July and I am looking into body, mind and spirit. My doctor tells me that mental well-being is linked to physical well-being and I wish to explore that, along with a spiritual element.

So I shall be doing a lot of walking and running, entering events that I normally can't as they are on Sunday mornings, I may even see if I can still ride a bicycle.

I have a stack of books on a variety of subjects that I haven't had the chance to read, approximately one per week, making notes on the way for future reference.

And I shall be exploring other church's mid-week worship, which I hope will allow me to find somewhere to be after my sabbatical too. During this time I shall be keeping a blog (an online diary) and the address will be available on my return so that, if you are interested, you can see what I have been doing.

I shall be remaining mostly in Dorchester so you may well see me

around, so please do say hello,  
we do not have to be strangers  
during this time.



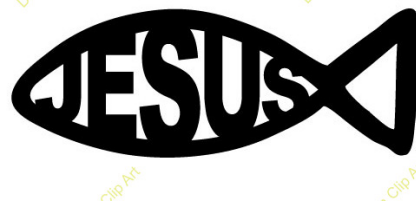
The sabbatical is rooted in Old Testament law and is found in Leviticus 25 where 'for six years you shall sow your field... prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land'. It then continues about the time of Jubilee and what should be done in the 7<sup>th</sup> year and in the 7x7<sup>th</sup> year. It makes for fascinating reading and relates back to the story of creation when even God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

And it is for these same reasons that throughout the year across the circuit and pastorate we have sabbatical weeks – every 7<sup>th</sup> week there are no business meetings to give us all a chance to catch our breath.

We all need a space and rest from time to time, and although in some ways it feels like I've only been here 5 minutes, there has been all sorts of things going on, with all sorts of people, and I thank you all for journeying with me so far. I look forward to catching up with you all in July.

With every blessing  
Steph

Ed - Steph will be on Sabbatical and therefore not contactable between Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016 inclusive. Please contact the senior steward or Janet Kennewell, if you need a minister. Rev Peter Clark will be supporting us during this time, just as Steph supported Bridport, when Peter was on sabbatical last year.



## Outreach slot

The new holders are in place in the Coffee Shop. They look neater as they combine the information previously in two holders and also have a spare section for a relevant word. At present this is about Lent. These inserts have been written by Steph - thank you.



We now have posters printed and are hoping to place them in our rooms. They are interesting quotes inviting us and others to reflect.

We had a previous planning evening with others who had ideas and we have some films in mind for showing. We see this as a darker evening activity so will not start until autumn. However we invite you to try the Tuesday film in Holy Week - 'The Way' at 6.30.

Chris Warren

## Fairtrade News



As I write this we are rapidly approaching the first week of Fairtrade Fortnight, when the spotlight is being turned once again onto the importance of supporting the fairtrade movement and the vital work it does among some of the poorest people in developing countries.

Firstly, may I say a huge 'thank you' to all who have supported us in the Church Shop during the autumn and winter. We had a big cut in our discounts and other restrictions imposed by Traidcraft from September onwards, but we are still keeping our heads above water. Sales for 2015 were inevitably down on previous years, but have stabilised and Christmas was particularly buoyant. Thank you.

Now some more good news: Traidcraft HQ reports that their

Christmas sales were finally up after 8 years in decline, including an increase in the sale of Christmas cards, despite the growth of e-cards and constant rises in the price of stamps! So their Retail business, which genuinely seemed under threat last summer, is beginning to turn the corner.

The direct result for us is that Traidcraft have increased many of our discounts by a modest amount, so we can make more profit and pass more money on to the church. The £150 minimum order remains, so I shall still only be doing orders every 2-3 weeks. Apologies if occasionally your favourite chocolate etc is temporarily out of stock!

Andy Biggs, the interim CEO of Traidcraft writes:

*'In the light of both our struggles and our successes, we've chosen the theme for the spring season very carefully ... **Let It Grow**. There is momentum building – people standing up for fairness, speaking out against injustice, making things better for the world's poorest ... but we need to **Let It Grow**.*

*We will be giving our all to help farmers, families and whole communities to grow this year and we hope you share some of our excitement and passion to see this happen.'*

Traidcraft's major message from last year was the difference between their work and the work of the big supermarkets who also source fairtrade products. Many of you will have been given a card by me explaining how much further the work of Traidcraft goes beyond just buying fair trade goods from suppliers. (Copies are still available!)

Now they can celebrate another world first: they are currently working with two communities in Myanmar (formerly Burma) to begin exporting the country's first fairtrade product – rice. Watch this space! So as you continue to buy products from the Church Shop you are contributing to this literally world-changing work.

## Getting to know you

**David Steel**

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## Health and safety incident

Recently one of our church members came into the church early in the morning and found a gentleman on the premises. He wouldn't leave, so she wisely left. A few minutes later a coffee shop volunteer arrived, again alone and found the gentleman, who this time agreed to leave. We think he must have got in through an unlocked door (we all forget to lock our doors occasionally) after the full building alarm was automatically turned off. The premises are alarmed overnight and it would be very difficult to be in the building at night and not set them off. These incidents have been reported to the Police whose advice is, that if this happens again, to leave the building immediately and phone 101. However if the person is abusive in any way, to leave the building and ring 999. This very rarely happens, but it is important that everyone knows



**A reflection taken from Haywards Heath magazine  
and used by Alex Reed for the last church meeting  
devotions**

**What are you worth?**

I wonder what went through your mind as you read the title. Did you immediately think of your bank balance - or lack of it! People are inclined to judge worth and success by material possessions, intellect, and status. What if through some misfortune all those things are lost - is the person then worth less? How do you value a human life? The courts of law try and answer this question, but if it was a member of your family, or a dearly -loved friend, who had been injured or killed; would any amount of money really compensate you? Sometimes we value ourselves, or others seem to, so little, that we find it hard to believe that we are of any use at all. But that is not how God sees us. If you read the story of David in the bible, you will notice that if it had been left to his family, he would have had no chance of being chosen as King of Israel. He wasn't thought to be sufficiently important to call to the meeting when a choice was being made. It goes on to say that man judges by outward appearances, but God sees the potential that lies at the heart of each person. (1 Samuel chapter 16)

To Him, each one is a loved and wanted child, whom He knows by name, and He never stops being concerned for us. He wants every person to know they are always valued and accepted by Him whatever they are like, and whatever they have done. He loves us just as we are, but He also loves us too much to leave us as we are, for He wants us to become the people He knows we can be with His help.

How much better and more confident we feel when we receive encouragement and praise, rather than constant criticism and disparagement. We are not all expected to have the same abilities and characteristics, because each one is a unique person, and not someone else's shadow or clone. We should rejoice in our differences, and be willing to learn from one another, and accept the contribution, big or small, each one can make for the good of all. 'There are varieties of gifts, but all are given by God's Holy Spirit. All are important.' (1 Corinthians chap 12)



God sent us Jesus to show us that there is no limit to His love - 'Greater love has no-one than to give his life for his friend.' - the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus gave his life that we might know how great is God's love for all people for all time.

## **AGM**

**Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm** in the church

Agendas and minutes of last year's AGM will be available 3 weeks before in the church foyer.

If you would like to nominate a member to become a steward or you are interested yourself, please pick up a nomination form in the foyer. These need to be returned to Wendy Hilton, Malcolm Lewis or Janet Kennewell by 7 April. The stewards are also looking for a volunteer to take the minutes at the steward's meeting (not church meetings). They will not be a steward with all the roles and responsibilities, but need to be familiar with computers.

## Some research into funeral poverty

**Dorchester Poverty Action Group (DPAG) undertook to investigate funeral costs in this area.**



This project was prompted by information from Quaker Social Action who have set up a large funeral poverty project in London. Most of the Dorchester funeral directors and the CAB cooperated fully and they knew that the results were to be taken to Oliver Letwin, MP, before parliament ended. (2015)

### **Summary of DPAG's findings**

In terms of the total number of people unable to pay for a funeral for which they are responsible, funeral debt is not a big problem locally - yet for each of those people it may be a huge worry, not only because of the debt itself but also the feeling of failing their deceased relative.

### **Actual Costs**

There are minor differences between funeral directors in the cost of both a 'basic funeral' and an 'average funeral':

- **Average cost is between £3,000 and £4,000.**
- **Basic cost is between £1,025 and £1,500, plus disbursement costs of about £700.**
- **All but one company requires a deposit at initial booking of the funeral**, made up of the disbursement cost of £700 plus a percentage of total cost.

**Funeral costs have doubled in the last 10 years**, out of proportion to other costs.

### **Other findings**

- All companies assist relatives to apply for what financial help they may be entitled to.
- Some companies, but not all, do rarely refuse to accept a

funeral if it is clear that there may be insufficient money to cover it.

- All do pursue bad debts but these are rare and every effort is made to enable gradual repayment.
- All enable a child's funeral to take place at minimal cost, though most families want to embellish these sad events and so do incur significant cost. There is no assistance to help a family pay for a headstone or memorial, even for a child, so further cost may be incurred after the funeral.
- Each company considers that it takes great care to be transparent about costs, clear about what constitutes extra costs and to go through details of how to obtain relevant benefits where applicable, but that is not the view always of their customers.
- There is a wealth of helpful leaflets but at a time of bereavement, these may not be read.
- Each funeral director has a website and one of these publishes the price list.
- There are common factors that predict that a funeral debt is likely to occur.
- There is a common myth that the State will pay for a funeral if the family cannot.
- The under-50s are unlikely to have made any preparation to cover their own funeral costs.

Sometimes the burden of paying for a funeral falls unjustly on one family member, even if that person has no financial resources.

### **The outcome**

**The report was given to Oliver Letwin, MP** at the end of January and he agreed to look into those factors which could be altered by national guidance, namely:

- that the cost of the cheapest basic funeral should be publicised and made clear to everyone who has to arrange a funeral; and that the cost of a headstone for a deceased child might be included in the funeral benefit payment.

**Quaker Social Action has developed a 'Pledge Pack' for Funeral Directors** to sign up to. They will supply these for Dorchester and DPAG will revisit the companies who took part to show it to them and see if they too will sign up to it.

**Church leaders** may be in a position to advise families soon after a death that there is a 'basic cost' for a funeral and

Ed:- Following on from our Death Café some more information



## **Fairtrade Eco-Friendly coffins**

In a recent newsletter from Traidcraft there was an article about Fairtrade eco-friendly coffins. These hand crafted coffins come from Bangladesh, where they are made from eco-friendly materials and offer fair and consistent employment for local people. Oasis Transformation Limited (OTL) is a Fair Trade company located in the north-west of Bangladesh and employs about 70 local people to create beautiful hand-crafted coffins and ash-urns from sustainable raw materials – bamboo, seagrass and willow.

Salma and her family live in a small village. Her husband is an agricultural day labourer without regular or reliable income. Her only daughter died due to a fever which she could not afford to treat and 2 of her 4 sons have a disability. Salma herself was a leprosy patient who was successfully treated at the nearby Leprosy Mission Hospital.

Before she joined Oasis she worked as house maid where her wages were low. Her husband couldn't support the family either due to the irregular income as a labourer paid on a daily basis. They did not have a proper home either, and lived in a very basic bamboo hut with a thin plastic polythene roof. Their hut was often blown away by storms during the monsoon season.

She joined Oasis Coffins in 2009 as a tailor, with responsibility for stitching coffin linings. She had learnt tailoring during her treatment

with the Leprosy Mission. She started to save some money each month and was then able to take a small loan from a local NGO, through which she bought a small piece of land. She has now paid off the loan and has been able to build her own home! She is now planning to take a fresh loan to buy land for her husband to cultivate.

With increased stability in her family, two of her sons have been able to go to school. She has also learnt a range of other skills in



## **Taking steps to switch off your digital life smoothly**

Most of us make provision for what happens to our car or house when we die but what about the fate of our Facebook page, iTunes music collection, or photos in an online database. We are now living our lives online through social media and spending ever-increasing amounts of money on digital assets, such as music, and e-books. However some assets such as an iTunes account and e-books on Kindle cannot be legally passed on, as you only buy the rights to use the file during your lifetime.

However without access to a social media profile, family may not be able to remove comments about someone who has died. Without access to e-mails or online utility accounts, bills could mount up. There is currently no standard procedure across the internet for what happens when an account user dies. Legal advice says we should keep a detailed record of our online life and specify in our wills what should happen to each account. However it is advisable not to leave details of passwords in your will because it becomes part of the public record, when it goes to probate. A number of technology companies are offering services to help people manage their online legacy. One example is SecureSafe which offers “data inheritance” storage for digital data and passwords. Facebook and Instagram allow immediate family

## Festival of Crosses

Ed:-This article was written by Jenny Mair, as part of 2015 Festival of Crosses and displayed beside the cross in the photo. The article ((written by her uncle about his father, Jenny's grandfather) was kept for this Easter so more people would have the opportunity to read it.

After visiting last year's Festival of Crosses (2014), I told my Dad all about it during my regular monthly phone call to Brunei. It prompted him to send me an article that my uncle had written about my Chinese grandfather's role in the Anglican congregation in Kuala Belait (a district of Brunei) before and during World War II. The article included a photo of a wooden cross that belonged to my grandfather which I remember always seeing in my grandparents' living room.

Although I had a vague knowledge of what had happened in Brunei during WWII, I had never heard the story that my uncle re-told in his article. I found its portrayal of my grandfather's faith so moving that I wanted to share it and I have reprinted the relevant section of the article below. (My grandfather was the headmaster of the Kuala Belait English School which was set up by the Brunei Government, the British Petroleum Co. and the Anglican Mission in 1931. He was also a Lay Reader in St James' Church which was the first church building in Kuala Belait, built and consecrated in 1939.)

The Japanese invaded SE Asia in December, 1941 and reached Seria on 16<sup>th</sup> December. They took over the

This wooden cross, now in my possession, was with my father during the war years and it is believed that it was used for the worship services then.



government and placed restrictions on the teaching of English.

*"One morning when I was at the school quarters, two high-ranking Japanese soldiers came to the door. They bowed and said, "Ohayo". I bowed in return, not knowing what they had said. I offered them seats and drinks. Realising that I did not understand Japanese, one of them pulled out a pen and some paper. He wrote something and passed it to me. I could make out almost 30% of what he had written. I wrote back in Chinese. They seemed to understand me quite well, too. From the notes, I figured out that they had occupied Brunei and that the school should remain closed as no English should be taught. We communicated in this manner for some time and then they finished their drinks and left quite happily.*

*I continued conducting church services in my landlord's house every Sunday. A few months later, a few Japanese came to the house and warned the landlord against worshipping there. They took away my piano and the Church organ. Despite this, I managed to celebrate Christmas every year with Service and light refreshments. GOD is great!"*

I understand from my father that the church building was not used as a church during the war years. According to other sources, the Japanese used it as a store. It was destroyed by allied aerial bombing just before the landing of allied Australian troops in Kuala Belait in June 1945.

My father continued conducting services whenever he could and he told us an anecdote that could only be considered a miracle.

The Japanese suspected that my father was conducting services in English (for which, if caught, he could have been executed). My father hid the prayer books (Book of Common Prayer) and hymn books in the chicken coop. One Sunday, soon after the meeting and before he had time to hide the box containing the books, Japanese soldiers arrived to search the house as they had done in the past. With no time to take the box to the chicken coop, all my father could do was to remove a tablecloth and throw it over the box. The Japanese searched the place but did not look into the box and left. My father was sure he would be discovered and couldn't quite

United Church Dorchester's World Mission project for this year is about refugees. This information is taken from a United Nations document about refugees

## **United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) report 18 June 2015.**

Wars, conflict and persecution have forced more people than at any other time since records began to flee their homes and seek refuge and safety elsewhere, according to a new report from the UN refugee agency.

UNHCR's annual Global Trends Report: World at War, released on June 18, said that worldwide displacement was at the highest level ever recorded. It said the number of people forcibly displaced at the end of 2014 had risen to a staggering 59.5 million compared to 51.2 million a year earlier and 37.5 million a decade ago.

The increase represents the biggest leap ever seen in a

single year. Moreover, the report said the situation was likely to worsen still further.

Globally, **one in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum.** If this were the population of a country, it would be the world's 24th biggest.



"We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything seen before," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres

The Global Trends report detailed that in 2014 alone 13.9 million people became newly displaced – four times the number of the previous year. Worldwide there were 19.5 million refugees (up from 16.7 million in 2013), 38.2 million were displaced inside their own countries (up from 33.3 million in 2013), and 1.8 million people were awaiting the outcome of claims for asylum (against 1.2 million in 2013). Most alarmingly, however, it showed that **over half the world's refugees are children.**

The UNHCR report detailed how in region after region, the number of refugees and internally displaced people is on the rise. In the past five years, at least 15 conflicts have erupted or reignited: eight in Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, northeastern Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and this year in Burundi); three in the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, and Yemen); one in

## News

**Rev Alan Wickens**, one of our previous URC ministers, was inducted as minister of Egham and Windsor URC this Easter.

## Our Spiritual Journey - A Practical Asset

On Sunday 7th February, Steph encouraged us to spend time with God. You may recall the colourful hula hoop that might define a special space. Towards the end of the sermon Steph told us 'we can encounter God anywhere, especially when we take time to be in prayer, to listen - then our lives are changed, transformed'.

For some, this would be known as a Quiet Time, a daily meeting with God.

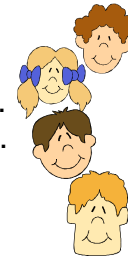
For me my 'Quiet Times' contribute more to my spiritual journey than any other Christian activity. Firstly, because there are more of them, and secondly as I am more likely to engage by with God on a personal, deeper level.

But I need help, for me to sit quietly on my own and talk to God, I find some structure helpful. So Pat & I use 'Encounter with God' by Scripture Union to assist us in our Quiet Times. There are many Bible reading guides for example by Scripture Union or the Bible Society.

Having reached my three score and ten years, I am aware that I need more than ever to spent time with Almighty God so as to prepare for when we meet face to face.

## Family News

We give thanks for the lives of Jack Major and Joyce Ray. Joyce regularly attended Wednesday market day service. Jack has been preaching the love of the Lord all his life; from the jungles of Malaya where he served his first communion; to his bible classes in Weymouth where at least one of his students became a minister; to his commissioning service as a local preacher in 2000. Throughout his life he has preached "Jesus needs you". We remember them and their families in our prayers.



Janice and Bill Young are celebrating the birth of Lola a new sister for Charlie.

## Volunteers wanted

### Flower co-ordinator

This involves the following

- \* Organise annual rota of providers
- \* Organise annual rota of arrangers
- \* Ensure cash gets from providers to arrangers
- \* Keep kitchenette tidy
- \* Re-order supplies of oasis

For further details see Alison Pople



### South Street window

Volunteers needed. The church window on South Street is for many the only acknowledgement that we are a church. This is a very important outreach to the local community of our faith. If you would like to help plan and implement the window on a monthly basis or to know more, please see Wendy Hilton

### Women's World Day of Prayer

Committee member needed which includes 3 committee meetings and 3 mornings and 1 optional evening each year. Please see Alison Pople for further details

### Sound desk

Volunteers needed. For more information see Roger Gale

### Christian Aid Week 15th — 21st May

#### **THE MAGAZINE TEAM**

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sion or leave in post box in  
Charles Street entrance  
Thank you**

**Rev Steph Jenner**

7 Capitol Close  
Dorchester  
Tel. 262421

## MINISTERS

**Rev Peter Clark**

Bridport  
01308 425978

## SERVICES

Holy Communion (2nd Sunday in the month)	Sunday	9.00am
Morning Worship (Junior Church, Crèche, Coffee)	Sunday	10.30am
Evening Worship	Sunday	6.30pm
Shoppers Service	Wednesday	10.30 - 10.45am

## NUMBER FIFTY ONE

Church shop	Mon to Sat	10 - 12.30pm
Coffee Shop / Hall	Tues to Sat	10 - 12.30pm
Quiet Room	"	"

## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

**Worship Groups:** Church Choir, Instrumental Group, Informal Singing Group, Brass Ensemble, Drama Group, Dance group

**Bible Study/Discussion Groups:** Fellowship Groups.

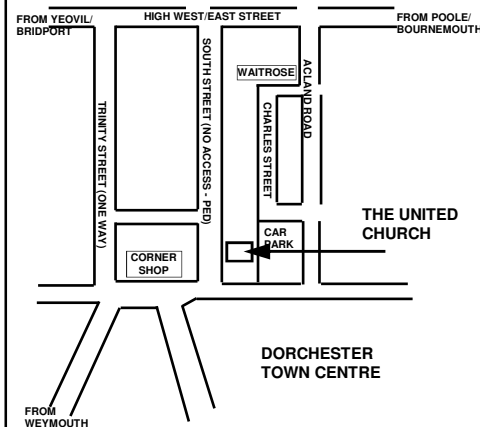
**Prayer Groups:** Prayer Chain, Prayer & Meditation Meetings.

**Children's/ Youth Groups:** Junior Church and Crèche, Antics youth group, Storytots

**Social Groups:** Thursday Night Out, Picnic People, Solos, Knit and Natter, Coffee Mornings, Art Group, Badminton Club, Country Dancing, Book Circle, Solos, Men's Group

**Christian Activity Groups:** Overseas and Home Missions, Methodist Homes for the Aged, Christian Aid, Bible Society, NCH Action for Children, Dorchester Poverty Action Group, Churches Together in Dorchester

### How To Find Us



For more information about the Church or any of its activities please contact either Minister or the Senior Steward, Wendy Hilton (tel no removed version).

Your Pastoral Visitor:

**United Church  
Dorchester,  
South Street**

**Methodist and United Reform**

**Reg Ch No 1137996**