

News-sheet No. 66 - April/May 2009

Message from our Minister

A Tale of the Unexpected

In February Martine and I had a weekend break in Iceland. Was it what I expected? Not at all. I was worried about being warm enough. As it turned out I had little cause to be concerned. It was littler colder than it was at home. Apart from a pair of gloves I wore nothing warmer than what I would have been wearing at home. Reykjavik had no snow or ice on its streets, the only snow being seen on the distant mountain tops. I thought I knew a lot about the country before visiting it but my personal experience gave me a totally different understanding of the place. I am now keen to visit Greenland, a country about which we know very little, but another country whose lifestyle and culture will no doubt be very different from what is expected. Again, I will be amazed and surprised.

Life in general is about constant surprises. Life does not turn out as expected. Many of the things we think we can anticipate fail to materialise and we look back with a sense of bewilderment. I am not just referring to negative things but those constant little surprises that come our way. I have recently been watching the DVD of my Induction Service. I never watch myself on screen or hear myself on tape. As with everyone else, I find it uncomfortable to witness myself from a distance. What I found interesting, however, was to watch myself speak. I was impressed with my delivery. I have never thought I was particularly good at that, especially having struggled with years of a lack of confidence.

There I was looking very much in control and speaking authoritatively.

Life is not always as cruel as we think it is. There are many fears that we expect that simply do not lead to anything. Think back to how you perhaps had to face a difficult interview and, when it came, you did not fall to pieces, but made an impressive upon your interviewers.

Life is not cruel, but then it is not always striving to give you treats either. Life is neutral when it comes to giving us positive or negative experiences. Life is a blank page. We paint the picture of our lives with the brush strokes of our faith and of our confidence, with the colours that we determine for ourselves. If we can find that power within us, and I know that this is not easy, then we can create really meaningful lives and life will give us positive little surprises from time to time. I know that this lesson is hard. In fact, I am writing this to convince myself!

Life is constantly awaiting our creativity. If we want to be surprised at the beauty and wonder of life then we should expect it and live as if life means something to us. If we take life for granted then we can only expect meaninglessness and a sense of alienation. So, live life as if it is going to amaze us, as if we are going to receive a sense of wonderment, a conviction that we are being nurtured and cherished. Just maybe we can find that life is just one big happy surprise.

Vernon Marshall

Secretary's Report (Mike Cuerden)

On behalf of the Chapel, I would like to thank the Members who have made a wonderful donation of £1,000 in memory of a loved relative. They wish to remain anonymous, but our heartfelt gratitude goes to them.

Following a number of enquiries, the Chapel Committee has confirmed, reluctantly, that we

are unable to accommodate burials because of lack of space in the Chapel yard. Entering of ashes into the earth, with a standard York stone tablet above, is restricted to registered Members and their immediate family; it is not possible to reserve plots for this purpose. Ashes of non-members may be scattered in the chapel yard, after consultation with the Minister and Wardens.

It has now been decided to create an area on the wall of the Hall nearest the Chapel on which small memorial plaques may be placed, either after scattering of ashes or in memory of a loved one. The plaques will be of a style and size agreed by the Committee and ordered by the Chapel officers. Full details, including costs, will be made known soon.

Wardens Comments (Ian Harrison)

The sight of a Chapel member visiting our graveyard is rarer than hen's teeth. You are missing a great range of flowers in blossom at the moment and remember this is your garden. We have crocus, daffodils, heathers, primulas, cherry blossom and the camellias are in full bud. We have another fairly rare plant just emerging, although I hesitated to mention it to our trusty gardener Ian Barber. Ian has just returned from two weeks in Thailand where he managed to get himself bitten by a dog. The injections for rabies are apparently quiet painful so he has only one arm to garden with. If the injections don't work he has threatened to come back as a werewolf ! The plant in question is the "dog tooth violet" (viola canina) and my comments that it had just flowered were met with massive indifference. In spite of his disability, Ian managed to trim five bushes with one hand. Mike Casey, who was manning the barrow, was rushing to and fro with the leaves and branches like an account holder in Northern Rock. Mike and Chris have just decided to go on a Caribbean cruise, I wonder if there is any connection!

One result of our more intensive maintenance of the grounds (due to more volunteers), has been an increase in the tidying up of graves and more flowers left by relatives of the deceased. One flower to look out for later in the year, is the green orchid, which was a favourite of Mary Godwin and now is spreading through the graveyard. If anyone is interested in a visit round the grounds and are worried about getting lost or being attacked by a giant rabbit, our Warden service is at hand to look after you. You will also see the graves of the descendents of John Knox, Hans Renold, Thos. Worthington and the Samuel Greg family and many more historic connections with the life of our Chapel other the years.

Women's League (Anne Gemmell)

We are having a coach trip to Lytham St. Annes on Thursday the 7th May. This outing will include lunch. If anybody is interested in coming along, please can you have a word with either Muriel Hollis or Maggie Cupper over the next couple of weeks. We need to know numbers so we can hire the correct size of coach! The more people who go, the cheaper it becomes. We don't know the exact costings yet until we have the above information, but we will be asking for a non-returnable deposit over the next week or so. This outing is for ALL chapel members - men and women - and should be a good day out!

Family Group News (Anne Gemmell)

Many thanks to everyone who supported our cake sale last week, either by bringing cakes and/or buying them. We raised £55.40p towards our funds.

Dean Row Chapel's Book Club

The following book has been selected to read for April 2009.

Their Eyes Were Watching God

by Zora Neale Thurston

Wednesday 29 April at the home of Margaret Scott

91 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, SK7 5PE.

Tel: 0161 483 1404

All gatherings start at 8 pm. New bookworms are always welcome.

Any questions, please contact Wendy Cuerden. Tel: 0161 439 8165

Sidesmen

APRIL

5th Mr and Mrs Elias

12th Mr and Mrs Bode

19th Mr and Mrs Rodger

26th Mrs Charmer and Mrs Scott

MAY

3rd Mrs Upham and Mrs Mitchell

10th Mr and Mrs Cupper

17th Mr and Mrs Howarth

24th Mr and Mrs Briscoe

31st Mrs Hardy and Mrs Wilkie