Late last year the British Union Conference ran a competition calling for the submission of photos ‘from every region and style of church across the UK and Ireland’. According to the competition organiser, Pastor Victor Hulbert (BUC Communication director), winning entries would ‘represent the Church on our website, demonstrating to the wider community that this is a place of worship that they will want to visit’. The photos were to include ‘some aspect of the building’ and ‘must include people’.

Well, now that the competition has closed and the judging has been done, Messenger has the privilege of displaying the winning submissions on its cover. Congratulations to those churches who walked away with the top four places.
Various prominent public figures have recently expressed their concern that British Christians are being persecuted. Among them is Lord Carey, a former archbishop of Canterbury, who feels that churchgoers are becoming increasingly timid about sharing their faith in the workplace. According to him, "Many Christians I meet say there is pressure on them to be silent about their faith."

Christians need to ‘grow up’
Strangely enough, there is another retired Church of England cleric who takes a very different view of things. In August last year, former archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Williams, told an audience at the Edinburgh International Book Festival that Christians who complain about persecution in this country should ‘grow up’!

As I see it, he was not trying to be offensive. He was simply making an important point, namely this: 'When you have any contact with real persecuted minorities you learn to use the word “persecuted” very chastely...Persecution is not being made to feel mildly uncomfortable."

How do you feel about this issue? Do you share Lord Carey’s view? Or do you see merit in Lord Williams’ position?

You can decide
I will leave you to decide whether you think we are being “misunderstood”, “derided”, “provoked” or “persecuted” in Britain today. But first, join me on a quick trip back into the world of Christ’s day.

"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents, and a wife against her husband. A man’s enemies will be the members of his own family. Everyone will put brothers to death for me, fathers will put to death their sons, and sons will put to death their fathers; women will put to death their relatives, and relatives will put to death women. You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end I will save..."

Various prominent public figures have recently expressed their concern that British Christians are being persecuted.

They ply us with questions...but scoff openly at our answers. The crowds are eager to listen, but not under these circumstances."

Yes, Master, we had the same problem in the market square this morning. Some of Caliphas’ ‘henchmen heckled John so badly that a Roman patrol disbanded the meeting. They claimed that we were being disorderly!" James is clearly upset.

Christ listens quietly
Matthew leans forward: ‘Jesus, I know that tax collectors deserve abuse, but the way some of the Pharisees speak to You is disgusting. Rabbis have always been respected in our culture. Even when their ideas are unpopular, people still show them respect.’

‘Master’ – Matthew hesitates – ‘the local centurion owes me a few favours...you know what I mean? If you kill me to speak to him, perhaps he could “encourage” them to improve their manners...’

Jesus raises His eyebrows. Matthew swallows hard.

‘Master, why don’t we approach the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. Let’s tell him about this abuse and provocation. Let’s ask him to protect our rights. Master, we must do something – before things get out of hand!’

They saunter by
Suddenly some junior priests saunter by, stop and glare – their smirking faces alive with contempt. One of them points in the direction of Jesus and makes a comment. It triggers a burst of derisive laughter from their group.

‘What’s the difference?’

Male brain, female brain: what’s the difference?
A BBC News health report of 3 December 2013, titled ‘Men and women’s brains are “wired differently”, caught my attention.’

It featured a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, which revealed that men and women’s brains are connected in different ways.

A research team from the University of Pennsylvania, USA scanned the brains of nearly 1,000 men, women, boys and girls and found striking differences in what they termed ‘connectome maps’.

The overall winner will have their logo used and will receive an extra prize of two days of outdoor activities with Aberdaron’s Outdoor Activity Advisor (date to be mutually agreed).

Please send your completed entries to Aberdaron Advent Campsite, Glen-yr-Afon, Aberdaron, Pwllheli, LL53 8BT.

Closing date for entries: 30 March 2014.

Winners will be notified by post and announced at the 50th Anniversary Weekend (16-19 May 2014).
devotional

What kind of sheep are you?

by Karen Shelburn

want us to consider two subjects today – leaders and sheep. If you go to a university library and look for books on leadership, or books which contain sections on leadership, you’ll be spoiled for choice – there are so many. If you google the term ‘leadership’, you’ll get 34 million hits! University libraries don’t contain so many books on sheep, though, and the Google hits are fewer at 43.5 million, which is still an impressive figure.

However, if you look at a Bible concordance, you will find that the words ‘lead’, ‘leader’, ‘led’, ‘leadership’ total about 1500 occurrences, whereas ‘sheep’ is mentioned about 500 times. An interesting reversal. If you do any research on the subject of leadership, it becomes obvious that authors are not in agreement as to what leadership is and is not; what type of people make the ‘best’ leaders; what characteristics a person needs to be a leader; or how potential leaders can be identified and developed. There are just a couple of things which are common to all the many theories – leaders have followers, and leaders have the ability to influence others, for good or ill. If I were to ask you to name some well-known leaders, the ones generally remembered are those who have had a negative influence – such as Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and Gaddafi. But there have been good leaders too – do still, in fact – and they had the ability to influence others, mostly for good.

In our society, the term ‘followers’ takes on special significance. If I mention Kay Perry, Justin Bieber or Lady Gaga, some of you will immediately know that I am referring to Twitter, the social networking site. Katy Perry (singer) has recently topped Justin Bieber (singer) as the most followed person on Twitter – when I last checked, she had almost 48 million of them! Now, leaving leadership for a moment, think about identifying some well-known sheep. I can think of three – ‘Baa baa black sheep’ (who had three full bags of wool); Dolly, the cloned sheep; and Shaun the sheep of Gromit. Maybe you can think of some others.

A sheep, as a species, tend to be followers. They have an instinct to follow the sheep in front, even if it’s not going in the right direction. Sheep tend not to walk in a straight line for very long, easily straying off in different directions, they are also gregarious animals, tending to flock together. They learn to recognise the face and voice of their shepherd, and will respond to him. Sheep are prone to a number of skin diseases and parasites, so they have to be doped regularly in a chemical solution. And sheep can be stubborn, they like to do what they like. If you’ve ever watched One Man And His Dog, you’ll know the frustration of moving even a small flock around a field or into a pen. Sheep are very talkative, they are also easy prey for predators such as foxes and wolves.

Sheep, as a species, tend to be followers. They have an instinct to follow the sheep in front, even if it’s not going in the right direction.

In the Bible God uses the imagery of sheep and shepherd to illustrate how our relationship with Him should be. Take for example Psalm 100:3 (NKJV): ‘Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.’ Unfortunately, sheep can also be used as a fitting image for our waywardness and rebellion, as seen in Isaiah 53:6 (NKJV): ‘All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way.’

Sadly, then, calling someone a sheep is far from complimentary. It most likely suggests that he or she is neither a great leader nor a good sheep. For all sheep doومed to behave like this, though? Perhaps not.

2Here’s where

If we are going to be ‘His people and the sheep of His pasture’, perhaps we could choose to be ‘leaders’ instead. I am sure in 2014, I am sure it will please the Good Shepherd.

*Wikipedia.org/en/Imagery_of_sheep

Can you help?

If you can provide any details relating to W. A. Giltin and Son and the role they played in providing work for our members in the post-war (1945) period, please contact the editor.
Annual Toy Service
The December Toy Service has been an annual event at Stanborough Park for more than half a century since it was instigated by the late Alf Kelly, who received an MBE for his community service work. Present at this year’s service on 10 December was Marjorie Davison, who had been involved in the same event at the Ealing church, Alf’s daughter, Pat, worked with her late husband, Lionel, at the ESDA office in London and told Alf about it. The rest is history!

As Christmas approaches members of Stanborough Park Church dig deep into their pockets to purchase and donate new toys for needy children in the Watford area, so on that Sabbath morning worshippers were greeted once again by the sight of hundreds of toys festooning the platform. The event is now organised by Pat Walton, who keeps to the same format established by her father. The toys are collected and distributed to needy families by social workers who know where the toys will find good homes.

According to Pat, ‘The social workers from various institutions who are working in the children’s sector are delighted with the toys that they take away from Stanborough Park Church to give to the families they are working with.’ For many of the recipients there would be no Christmas were it not for the Annual Toy Service.

Each year, the Mayor of Watford attends the service. Receiving the toys on behalf of the children, the mayor, Dorothy Thorhill, thanked the congregation for their generosity and reminded those present that although the economic situation was improving there were still many needy families in the area who would benefit from these toys. She said that she always enjoyed visiting the church – for her it was a ‘quality’ church where every aspect of it from the lawns at the front demonstrated that attitude.

Summing up the event, organiser Pat Walton commented, ‘The Toy Service always gives me a thrill, especially when I see the children coming down the aisle onto the platform to put their toys in the sacks. Some of the children do struggle to put their toy, which they do not want to part with, into the sack. It is also very rewarding to receive the toys ahead of Saturday morning from older folks in the church, who seem so delighted to be giving a toy to a child at Christmas.’

Newbold School breaks own record
Every year, children in Years 5 and 6 at Newbold School organise a Christmas sale in support of Great Ormond Street Hospital. They each choose, plan, advertise and man their own stall and raised a fantastic amount. This year, for the first time, the total was over £900. Gill Hudson, Year 5/6 teacher, was delighted and said, ‘For me, the children do not see this event as a school activity but as their own project. They are so proud of what they are doing and it brings them together as a team. It is such a reward to see how much they enjoy it and how it develops their teamwork skills. It is also great to see how much money they can raise for a great cause.’

Senior School breaks own record
The students at Newbold School also organised a Christmas sale in support of Great Ormond Street Hospital. They each choose, plan, advertise and man their own stall and raised a fantastic amount. This year, for the first time, the total was over £900. Gill Hudson, Year 5/6 teacher, was delighted and said, ‘For me, the children do not see this event as a school activity but as their own project. They are so proud of what they are doing and it brings them together as a team. It is such a reward to see how much they enjoy it and how it develops their teamwork skills. It is also great to see how much money they can raise for a great cause.’

ADRA gets Stanborough support
Stanborough School did their part in the annual ADRA Gift Box appeal last year. Here we have photos of their most successful form, Y8, and of Y10, along with the school’s appeal co-ordinators, Ms Pizzuto and Mrs Hussey.

Messy Christmas
I am sure that my church was not alone in hoping to use the Christmas season as an evangelistic opportunity. Here in The Watering Hole church plant we have used various approaches over the last few weeks so that ‘by any means possible we may win some’. These ranged from carolling in a local bar to leafleting 500 homes around the community centre where we meet, and holding coffee and chat sessions in three local homes, where people were invited to explore the nativity story in new and interesting ways. Yesterday one person said, ‘I never thought about it much before. I just got on with getting ready for Christmas. Now I know that God used people to help Him do what He wanted to do. Christmas will mean something more to me now.’

One problem we experience is that people often won’t come to a church service, so we decided to follow Jesus’ ‘Go’ command and take church to them instead. So Messy Church went into a school on four Friday evenings during this past November/December. The school kindly advertised the event for us in their weekly newsletter and in this way we picked up some extra families.

What is Messy Christmas? Well, for us, each week starts with a communal meal followed by themed crafts that families do together. The evening finishes with a Bible presentation and carols. A highlight of each week has been that each family has been working on creating their own gingerbread nativity house. As they have crafted together there has been opportunity to talk about the meaning of Christmas and the life lessons learned from each character’s involvement. On the last Friday of our Messy Christmas series the families proudly took home their completed nativity sets, a reminder right throughout the Christmas season that God is with us and wants to be with us eternally – some day very soon!}

PASTOR ROSEMARY LETHBRIDGE

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PASTOR ROSEMARY LETHBRIDGE
Milton Keynes

To say that Sabbath, 7 December, was a big day for the Milton Keynes Central and West Bletchley congregations puts it mildly. The morning and most of the afternoon saw a Pathfinder investiture. This was followed by a baptism service. Those baptised were Linah Murage and Raquel Flecknell of Milton Keynes Central, and Vimbai Muradzi of the West Bletchley congregation.

BARRY GOWLAND

Great Yarmouth

A few years ago, a family came to live in Great Yarmouth from Portugal. Amelia Gasper was already a committed Adventist and so she attended our church in Great Yarmouth along with Joel, her youngest son. Some time later her eldest son, Ruben, started attending church as well and was eventually baptised in 2012. He is now training for the ministry at Newbold College.

On Sabbath 14 December the whole Gasper family were together in church again, this time for the dedication of Leonardo, the child of Amelia’s daughter and husband, Marisa and Tiago. But what did Joel tell the congregation that the reason why he had chosen to be baptised was because he accepted Jesus as his Saviour.

Reflecting back we can see how the Holy Spirit has prepared Joel for this experience. Ever since his first attendance with his mum, Joel has shown a definite interest in the church activities. Even when Amelia was away in Portugal for a few months, Joel faithfully attended church. We thank the Lord for what He has done in Joel’s life and for the example he is to our other young people.

PASTOR MICHAEL I. WALKER, COMMUNICATION SECRETARY

Leamington Mission

Recently Leamington Mission gained two new members, each with a different story to tell.

Rachel Thomas attended an Adventist church in Jamaica as a young girl, but this had stopped by the time she was a teenager. She subsequently moved to England, but never forgot her early church experience. Sensing that the Holy Spirit was drawing her back to God, she started going to services at an Evangelical church in Leamington. Then, earlier this year, she walked past Leamington Mission one day. She immediately started attending each Sabbath and knew that she had, at last, ‘come home’. She has since had Bible studies with Arunus Taikarkus (an elder), to ‘refresh her memory’. Being a bit frail in health, Rachel elected to be accepted into fellowship rather than try to negotiate the baptismal steps! The congregation were thoroughly blessed as she spontaneously began singing, ‘I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God’!

Mathilda Kjolner has been attending Leamington Mission for just over a year with her husband Christopher and two young sons. They moved to Leamington from London following Christopher’s job relocation. When Mathilda met Christopher she wasn’t an Adventist. However, they have since married and Mathilda’s faith has slowly developed over the years she has known Christopher. She requested baptism and has since had Bible studies with Rob Pierce, also an elder at Leamington, and was baptised on 12 October last year. Unfortunately for Leamington, Christopher and Mathilda plan to move back to Norway, their home country, soon, to be closer to family. We wish them all the best in their new life.

LORRAINE GLINTON

Lakenheath

On 14 December 2013 at the RAF Lakenheath Chapel our members were blessed with a baby dedication and a baptism. What a great way to close our first year of regular weekly services in this venue.

Pastor Colin Stewart first dedicated Elyse, child of Lorraine and Adrian Lemard, who live on the airbase. Their family was also there to help mark this special occasion.

Then followed three unique baptisms, where the candidates could be fully immersed while the pastor stayed bone dry, much to his delight! Andrew (20) and Jacob Shone (14) were baptised by Pastor Colin Stewart with the help of their father Rick and Mathilda, who is the church’s head elder. Charles Tarte from Fiji was also baptised with his family in attendance. It was a wonderful and blessed day, and a time of great celebration enjoyed by the many who came.

BONNIE STEINBRUNNER (LAKENHEATH LEADER) AND COLIN STEWART

Holcombe Road

Friends, family and church members gathered joyously at Holcombe Road Church on Sabbath, 30 November, to witness the baptism of Roque Puranda and Janice McGlashan. Before entering the pool Roque asked for the hymn ‘I will early seek the Saviour’ to be sung, expressing his desire to know more about Jesus. Janice used her spiritual gift of singing to express her feelings: ‘I’ve traded my shackles for a glorious song – praise the Lord I am free at last.’

It was a wonderful experience, hopefully to be repeated when those who responded to the appeal are baptised this year.

CAROL YOUNG

baptisms
Community Services at Leeds Central

The Community Services department at Leeds Central is an active one, and its work provides its services to both the members and the wider community.

Leeds Central is a diverse church with members and regular visitors from Africa, the Pacific, the Caribbean and Europe. The department also holds an annual cultural evening in November, during which members and visitors can display their national costumes and prepare their national dishes for everyone to try.

The department collects tinned food items for the homeless and works closely with a special unit that supports women who have suffered domestic violence. They also visit residential homes and hospital wards, often with the support of the Adventurers club members.

Their work for the senior citizens includes a weekly Monday club, and an annual Christmas meal where members of the community and the church are able to mingle.

By EDDIE ANDERSON

Church raises £75,000!

The generosity of the London Ghana church was again evident at last year’s annual fundraising event, during which more than £75,000 was raised. Annually, the members are encouraged to count their blessings during the past year and then give the Lord a ‘harvest’ for His protection, forgiveness and blessings.

Dubbed ‘The Annual Harvest’, this is an opportunity for the members to dress in their traditional kente and white outfits, which signify victory. They also enjoy heart-warming songs from the various singing groups amid praises and dancing.

According to the first elder, Collins Amofah, ‘Members have been fantastic and inspirational in giving and that is why the Lord’s blessings have been enormous in this church.’

These funds have gone towards acquiring their own place of worship and the support of various evangelistic meetings in the United Kingdom.

The ‘Harvest’ was preceded by a two-week revival series by Pastor George Dadey of the Reading church. A similar programme was held at the Lee Valley church, where nearly £40,000 was raised.

By NANA SIFA TWUM

GBK Communication Day

The Great Brickklen street church in Wolverhampton celebrated their Communication Day last 12 October, with Pastor, Julian Hibbert, editor, as their guest speaker. He spoke on the chosen theme, ‘Keep Alive the Message of Hope’, showing that the best way to achieve this is through vibrant, Jesus-loving, ordinary church members!

The seminar was interactive, and the members had the chance to ask questions and share their own views on the subject. It was a great day, and the congregation were encouraged to continue to share their stories and experiences with others.

By News

Erdington Mens’s Health Day

Dr Patrick Lowe is a public health consultant in the West Midlands and well-known to both the general public and our church. On 9 November 2013 he was the guest-speaker for the Erdington Men’s Health Day. During the worship service he explained how the moral, ceremonial, civil, sanitary and dietary laws of the Old Testament can positively influence our health and general well-being (Deut 15:29). He showed as well how important the Adventist health message was back in 1863, when viewed against the low life expectancy in the nineteenth century in both Europe and the United States.

In the afternoon session Dr Lowe identified three areas in the world where people live longer than the normal global average of 71.88 (65.71 for men; 79.14 for women): Okinawa (Japan), Oviedo (Sardinia, Italy) and Loma Linda (California, USA). Studies done in these areas identified dietary habits as the main causation of longevity, but in Loma Linda the vegetarian diet, exercise, abstinence from harmful products and the Adventists’ community cohesion and spiritual relationships featured significantly as the main elements that explain the marked longevity.

Dr Lowe went on further to talk about the causes of snoring, diabetes and impotence, and the prevention of prostate cancer among men. He identified lycopene, a powerful antioxidant found in tomatoes, as beneficial in the prevention of prostate cancer and reducing tumour growth in men with prostate cancer. Studies have shown that raw tomato and cooked or pureed tomato products, such as tomato paste, spaghetti sauce, sun-dried tomato, tomato juice and ketchup, are all good for fighting prostate cancer.

According to him, broccoli and cauliflower are also useful in preventing prostate cancer. Soybeans and legumes, such as beans, peanuts and lentils, also may contain cancer-fighting properties. Figs and fruits such as guavas, pawpaws, strawberries, watermelons, pomegranate juice and mangoes also have been associated with the prevention of prostate cancer among men.

A lot was covered within a short time by Dr Lowe, and his presentations highlighted the need to embrace a healthy lifestyle, with good food, good air, responsible exercise and sunlight all being necessary for good health.

By JOHN OSEI-BEMPONG

News

Opening night at Balham ‘theatre’

As part of the Mission to the Cities project, Opal Johnson-Christie, head of the South England Conference Education department, commissioned the play, ‘Why We Believe’. Written by Mary Grey, it was presented at the Balham church on 24 November last year.

The play is designed to inform our members of their history and teachings and is followed by a productive question-and-answer session. It is suitable to invite your non-member friends to attend and uses appropriate humour to get its message across.

The response was overwhelmingly positive, eliciting comments like: ‘I think it is a very creative method of outreach and the script was very good. . . . I will be trying for it to be brought to my local church.’ Pauline Bradnock.

‘Using drama as a medium is a good way to appeal to the general public and break down prejudice.’ Joy Alexander.

For more information about the play and how to get it to your church, contact the SEC Education department.

By VICKY WARD

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Communications Day

On 23 November 2013, Manchester South held a novel Communications Day, the first in over a decade. It was meant to awaken the church and encourage a sense of continued revival and reformation, and to show members how to evangelise and spread the three angels’ messages. It also served to make members aware of the Communications department and how it can support the other departments of the church.

Raj Sathnival was the preacher and his moving message made the members realise that change has to be made in the way we communicate with each other.

After a good vegan lunch that promoted the aim of the CHIP programme, Andrew Modelly presented a seminar on how to use technology and advertisements in the simplest of ways to promote the three angels’ messages and develop relationships.

The seminar was interactive, and the members had the chance to ring up someone on loudspeaker and tell them that they love them. This was a hard challenge but it turned out to be a blessing for those who took part.

By SARA FRANCISCO

Yardley welcomes Adam and Aiko

On Sabbath 30 November last year, Yardley Church hosted a special welcoming service for Adam Ramdin (who previously pastored at this Birmingham-based church) and his wife Aiko. Adam and Aiko, who had tied the knot on 27 October, were invited to be blessed by Pastor Alan Hush. The couple enjoyed renditions by Ashley Alan, Jeharra South and the newly formed Yardley Youth Choir and Guitar Group. They also received heartfelt tributes by Craig Gooden. Adam’s former students from the PEACE academy, the NEC presiding Pastor Lorance Johnson, and many others.

By POLICE JOHN
First Pathfinder investiture
Although the Great Yarmouth Pathfinder club was only started last year, its children have worked so hard that they were able to hold their first investiture on Sabbath 30 November. The Area 8 Pathfinder sponsor, Waldron Tyronne, along with Rio Espilger, our pastor, conducted the investiture service that afternoon. We felt so proud of our young people as they marched into the sanctuary wearing their smart uniforms.

Six Pathfinders were invested on this occasion: two from the Friend class and four from the Explorer class. In the Friend class Avinda Gassela and Johnna Wilkinson were invested with honours; and those who received honours in the Explorer class were Joel Gaspar and Rebecca Mbusini. Nardi Gassela and Leo Lukas. The honours were varied but included the study of seeds, dogs, cats, candle making, baking, cake decorating and knot tying. During the service, each one was given the opportunity to demonstrate something of what they had learnt.

Leo Lukas came from the community, and next year his twin brothers, aged 12, will be joining the Pathfinder group too. It is our intention to reach out to the community, and Pathfinders offers a wonderful opportunity of reaching its young people.

PASTOR ALAN HUGH, NEC Pathfinder director.

Great Brickkiln Street investiture
Sabbath, 7 December, was Investiture Day at Great Brickkiln Church, Wolverhampton.

It all started with the sound of drums as the various age groups were called to attention. Then, as the ceremony progressed, a packed congregation witnessed three new Master Guides being invested and welcomed to the Pathfinder team. Five club members were awarded the Advanced Pathfinder Leaders honour, and it was pleasing to see happy young Eager Beavers receiving their certificates too. Those who achieved excellence in their Pathfinder activities had their names inscribed on a gold trophy. The morning was rounded off by a brief but inspiring sermon by Pastor Alan Hugh, NEC Pathfinder director.

Children’s Day at Fartown
On 5 October, the Fartown Seventh-day Adventist church held a Children’s Day programme entitled, ‘Instruments of Praise’. Children are like jewels in the hand of God. They are susceptible to the Gospel and will, if taught efficiently, love Jesus and not be ashamed to tell others about Him. This was evident during the worship service as they gave their testimonies, and told how they witness to their friends through song. They also led out in singing, played musical instruments, took part in Bible reading, and dramatised the story of King Saul and the positive effect David’s harp music had on him. The depressive gloom that had settled on Saul was lifted, and comfort and peace filled his soul.

There were two sermons, delivered by two of the children, who preached with enthusiasm and conviction. At the end of the day we all felt refreshed and truly blessed to be a part of the event.

FARTOWN COMMUNICATIONS

Crieff awards
It was a very exciting day on Sabbath 23 November for eight children at Crieff Church – Finlay, Gabriela, James, Kamila, Zofia and Zuza. In recognition of their hard work in the Adventurer club, their leader, Shirley Froude, organised a special award ceremony performed by Pastor Bob Rodd.

Wearing their Scottish scarves and woggles, the children marched up the aisle singing their theme song. After reciting the pledge and law, the Adventurers were each awarded a certificate and special medal.

CHRISTINE BAUWENS, COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY

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First Pathfinder investiture
Although the Great Yarmouth Pathfinder club was only started last year, its children have worked so hard that they were able to hold their first investiture on Sabbath 30 November. The Area 8 Pathfinder sponsor, Waldron Tyronne, along with Rio Espilger, our pastor, conducted the investiture service that afternoon. We felt so proud of our young people as they marched into the sanctuary wearing their smart uniforms.

Six Pathfinders were invested on this occasion: two from the Friend class and four from the Explorer class. In the Friend class Avinda Gassela and Johnna Wilkinson were invested with honours; and those who received honours in the Explorer class were Joel Gaspar and Rebecca Mbusini. Nardi Gassela and Leo Lukas. The honours were varied but included the study of seeds, dogs, cats, candle making, baking, cake decorating and knot tying. During the service, each one was given the opportunity to demonstrate something of what they had learnt.

Leo Lukas came from the community, and next year his twin brothers, aged 12, will be joining the Pathfinder group too. It is our intention to reach out to the community, and Pathfinders offers a wonderful opportunity of reaching its young people.

PASTOR ALAN HUGH, NEC Pathfinder director.

Great Brickkiln Street investiture
Sabbath, 7 December, was Investiture Day at Great Brickkiln Church, Wolverhampton.

It all started with the sound of drums as the various age groups were called to attention. Then, as the ceremony progressed, a packed congregation witnessed three new Master Guides being invested and welcomed to the Pathfinder team. Five club members were awarded the Advanced Pathfinder Leaders honour, and it was pleasing to see happy young Eager Beavers receiving their certificates too. Those who achieved excellence in their Pathfinder activities had their names inscribed on a gold trophy. The morning was rounded off by a brief but inspiring sermon by Pastor Alan Hugh, NEC Pathfinder director.

Children’s Day at Fartown
On 5 October, the Fartown Seventh-day Adventist church held a Children’s Day programme entitled, ‘Instruments of Praise’. Children are like jewels in the hand of God. They are susceptible to the Gospel and will, if taught efficiently, love Jesus and not be ashamed to tell others about Him. This was evident during the worship service as they gave their testimonies, and told how they witness to their friends through song. They also led out in singing, played musical instruments, took part in Bible reading, and dramatised the story of King Saul and the positive effect David’s harp music had on him. The depressive gloom that had settled on Saul was lifted, and comfort and peace filled his soul.

There were two sermons, delivered by two of the children, who preached with enthusiasm and conviction. At the end of the day we all felt refreshed and truly blessed to be a part of the event.

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UK Zambian Adventist Fellowship
The UK Zambian Adventist Fellowship (UKZAF) is pleased to invite you to the sixth UKZAF Day of Fellowship.

Date: 29 March 2014
Time: 7am–8pm
Venue: The Bishop Latimer United Church, Latimer Hall, Handsworth New Road, Handsworth Green, Birmingham, B16 4FF

Guest speaker: Pastor Vernon Nambo

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ukzaf for booking details.

RSVP: Sister Vivien Mwanaka (07984310924), Brother Bridman Mweemba (07875374776)

Dinner is served
Gloucester Church member, Hella Emrazi, a regular volunteer at the church-operated community soup kitchen, wanted to do something different for the local community. With help from Selina Duhanye, Abi Gardner, Jared Johnson, Tracey Johnson, Neville Kelly, Miriam Morgan and Monique Smith, Hella organised a harvest supper, which was attended by forty-three community guests.

Speaking on behalf of the community, Robin, aged 26, said: ‘We are very grateful for what the church does for the homeless and vulnerable people. They don’t have to do it, but they do.’ Marley, 43, mother of seven, echoed this, adding: ‘It was a wonderful gesture, by a wonderful group of people.’ Michelle, 37, said she ‘felt so blessed by the whole experience. I am so grateful for those who regularly give up their time to help us; they have taught me so much.’

A helper, Tracey Johnson, who really enjoyed the experience, said: ‘There was a great atmosphere.’ Monique, another helper, added: ‘My work commitment limits when I can help out, so when I was approached by Hella, I couldn’t really say no. I jumped at the opportunity to get involved.’

Erdington member honoured
Erdington is an active church where the members are committed to community service of various kinds. There is one member, however, who has received special recognition for his role. On 13 November, Don Parker, a volunteer driver for the Beeline Community Transport in Warwickshire, received a long service award from Dr Timothy Cox, Her Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant for the County of Warwickshire, for his services to the community. For thirteen years, Don has transported patients from their homes to hospitals, clinics and GP surgeries throughout the county. He enjoys this unique service because it gives him the chance to minister to the terminally ill and the elderly about the love of God.

According to Don, no matter where you live and no matter where you worship, you can still put your God-given talents into action. This is truly the spirit of community service.

Iwan (John) Kowarin (1924–2013) d. 20 September
Iwan (John) Kowarin was born on 20 May 1924 in Kyze’zno, Russia to Greek Orthodox parents, Dimitri and Fedosio. He had two younger brothers: Michael and Alex. John was just 9 years old when his father died in prison. His crime, refusing to surrender the family farm to the State.

John and his mother managed their farm for a time, but they were no time for school, but his mother taught him to read between working the farm and odd jobs for cash. John recalled that their meals were simple, but not all was gloom; the boys had many happy hours playing in the river, where they learned to swim.

The Second World War added more pressure to life, and the authorities began arresting people in the neighbourhood—they were never seen again. At 18 John knew he could be next. On 1 January 1943 he escaped Russia with a few friends on a wagon train carrying horses. He travelled extensively on foot throughout Europe, trying to evade capture. The Germans raudit a farm one night, in search of refugees while he was hiding in the barn—he narrowly escaped their prorid pitchforks.

Eventually he and his friends crossed into Austria, and gave themselves up at an American airbase, where they were given the choice: ‘Home (Russia), America or England?’

While in Austria a Mr Heddick influenced John to accept Jesus as his Saviour, and he was baptised in Villach in a water-filled bomb crater. John arrived in Oswestry, Wales, where he lived in a refugee camp before moving to Stoke-on-Trent, finding lodgings with Miss Barratt, an Adventist, and work in the coal mines. He visited the Stoke Seventh-day Adventist church, where the young people accepted him warmly, and he became good friends with Harold Mason—a friendship that lasted for life.

In 1950 John married Eileen and they moved to the Cities as an outreach to the people of Oxford. John had two passions, gardening and personal Bible study, but he also knew a thing or two about car repairs and home DIY. His fuchsias, geraniums and chrysanthemums were among the best, and were often used in church. He specialised in the apostle Paul’s letters, which informed his sermons, but his children’s stories were always of personal Russian experiences. A quiet, principled man, he carried the highest office in the local church celdy with distinction.

As head deacon he kept the church in good order and there was always a team ready to work with him.

After working in the coal mines, where he was also a first- aider, John worked for Hamilton Reid, a painting and decorating firm, for eighteen years up to his retirement. Sadly, sixteen years ago he had a massive stroke, from which he was not expected to recover. But he was determined to walk again, and, with the care of a devoted wife, who attended to his all needs for ten years at home, he did. When home care became overly demanding, Eileen maintained her devotion and care, often reading some of his favourite Bible passages to him in the Bingley Court nursing home.

In life John shared the biblical basis of his faith wherever he was, and could often be heard singing his favourite hymn, ‘How Great Thou Art’. On 29 September, in the presence of his wife and son, John calmly passed away. On Thursday, 3 October, the Stoke church was packed with those who came to pay their last respects to a Christian gentleman. The service was conducted by Pastor Jeff Smith, assisted by the local pastor, Orlando Holder.

John’s body rests in the Newcastle-under-Lyme cemetery, awaiting the call of his Master.
The New Addington church has forty members and is located in Area 6B of the South England Conference. For twenty-six years the congregation has had no home of its own. After much prayer, fasting and faith in God, New Addington finally has a place in the old council office at 90 Central Parade, New Addington, CRIB DJ. Now its members can plan programmes without fear of looking at the clock and waiting on various watchmen to announce that time has expired for the day.

The Holy Spirit influenced one of its members, Denise Mafolo, to approach the local councillor, Mr George Ayres, and tell him about the church’s difficulty in finding a place to worship: the rest is history.

Godwin Benjamin, a long-standing member of the South England Conference, volunteered to represent New Addington in their negotiations with the local council. On 26 July, 2013, the members appointed him as the project manager and the completion date for the renovations was met. Thanks be to God, the doors of the New Addington sanctuary flew open on Sabbath, 14 September. The official thanksgiving service took place on Sabbath, 7 December, 2013, with Pastor and Mrs Sam Davis, president of the South England Conference, in attendance, along with Councillor George Ayres, Zoltan Marjanovics (builder), Nerine Barrett (our local pastor), and other interested parties. The congregation is particularly grateful to Godwin Benjamin for his special role in making our dream come true.