He was always a family man, making it a rule to eat with his family every evening and never bringing work home. He was a very hospitable man, loved parties, especially family parties

At Selly Oak he was perhaps best known for his environmental activities. He and Duncan Miller began the SOMC Green Group in 2001. He also served the church in other ways: on the management committees of the 2 student houses (originally MIH and the Overseas Guest House) for over 40 years; he helped to look after manses and other Methodist properties, was District Lay Stationing secretary for a period, a Class Leader and served more than one spell as a church steward.

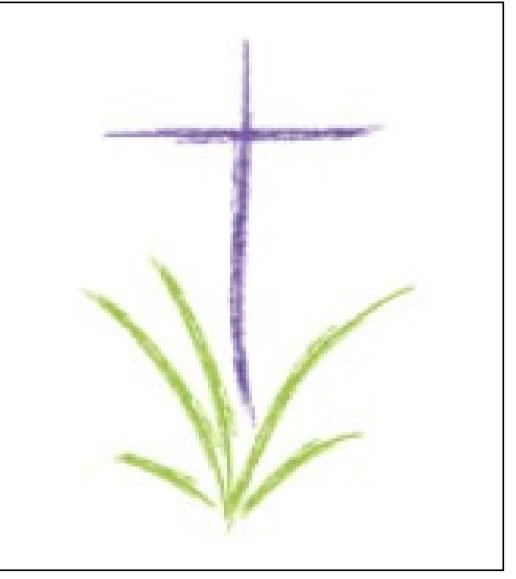
Valerie

	15 <sup>th</sup> April 3 <sup>rd</sup> of Easter	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 4 <sup>th</sup> of Easter	29 <sup>TH</sup> April 5 <sup>th</sup> of Easter	
8:30 am	B Calvert HC	V Jambawo HC	V Jambawo HC	
10:30 am	A Geary	ECH	K Webber	
6:30 pm	N Johnson	CS @ Shirley	V Atkinson	
	6 <sup>th</sup> May 6 <sup>th</sup> of Easter	13 <sup>th</sup> May 7 <sup>th</sup> of Easter	20 <sup>th</sup> May Pentecost	<b>27<sup>th</sup> May</b> Trinity
8:30 am	A Geary HC	V Jambawo HC	V Jambawo HC	D Eadie HC
10:30 am	V Jambawo HC	V Jambawo ACM	B Calvert	M Foxall
	M Claridge	G Hall	I Bhogal HC	V Jambawo

# Church Magazine April 2018

Suggested donation: £1





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# The Suffering Servant

Vincent Jambawo

From Mark 8, verses 31-38 we read:

Then he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said to the multitude

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

What does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What can a man give in return for his life?

Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

This is an uncomfortable reading in the sense that the Son of man must undergo great suffering. It is almost an acknowledgement that we must suffer, which is not a kind thing to say to somebody who might be suffering now. You might be in a very bad position spiritually or physically, actually suffering. You can think of the people who are running away from war in Syria: how are they encouraged to hear t

That the church must extend itself into political arenas – recognising that it is not easy to be a Christian in politics.

John died aged 91 on 1st January 2018. He is survived by his Wife Joyce, Brother George, Son Stephen, Daughter-in-Law Sharon and Granddaughter Hannah.

Stephen Parr with extracts from Joan Stoker's 1992 profile of John

#### **David Eddens**

David was born and brought up in Kenilworth. His was an idyllically happy childhood, much of it spent outside. When he was a small child his parents were asked to tend the garden of a very old lady and encouraged to use the produce. His earliest memories were of riding home on summer evenings on the truck his Dad had made, surrounded with fruit and vegetables. It gave him a lifelong love of kitchen gardening. There were lots of weeks spent with his mother's family in rural Herefordshire. As a lad he ran free in the fields with a group of small boys, making dens, climbing trees and scrumping apples. School posed only an unwelcome intrusion to this and was not a great success. It is easy with hindsight to realise that he was dyslexic. He failed the 11 + but then began to do a little better, passed the 13+ and finished his secondary education at Coventry Technical school. He and his family were members of the local Methodist chapel, which provided not only firm rooting in the faith but also the only meeting place for young people in Kenilworth in the 50s.

National Service transformed him. He was selected for officer training, where he discovered his qualities of leadership. He spent most of his time in Cyprus, moving troops and vehicles across the island. In the army he met young men who were graduates and who encouraged him to aim at a university education, which he did, after studying for his A levels in the evenings.

After graduation he came to work for a firm of surveyors in Birmingham and after several years, was asked to go to what was the Birmingham Polytechnic to set up a degree course in surveying and Estate management. He remained there for the remainder of his working life, being awarded a chair and acting as the first Dean of the newly established Faculty of the Built Environment.

and became involved with the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs in which he was active until 1995, serving as a member of the National Youth Committee for 21 years.

In 1955 John & Joyce moved again, this time to Weatheroak on the outskirts of Birmingham as John had taken a job working for Birmingham Association of Youth Clubs (BAYC), training voluntary and part-time Youth Leaders at Windmill House. 1957 saw the birth of their son, Stephen; another move of house to Perry Barr in Birmingham and his post nationalised, resulting in employment with the National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC). From 1961 to 1963 the job was based and the family lived over the office at 'The Birmingham Settlement' in Summer Lane, Birmingham. During this time he and the family worshipped at Perry Barr Methodist.

In 1963 John was appointed as a Lecturer in Youth Work and had a welcome return to Westhill College under Rev. Dr Fred Milson. John was to remain there for the rest of his working life, with a year taken out on sabbatical at Manchester University during 1967-68 where he studied and attained a Masters Degree in Education. Accompanying the move to Westhill was a transfer of membership to Selly Oak Methodist Church, then in Bristol Road.

On retirement John increased his involvement in church life becoming Circuit Steward and a member of the Property Committee. He also continued with Local Preaching and with the amalgamation of the Birmingham Methodist districts John set himself a personal target of preaching in all 37 churches. His took his final service during January 2017 at the age of 90 and with 65 years as a Local Preacher.

During his retirement he also continued working with BAYC and NAYC and with related organisations such as 'St Basils' Young Homeless Project where he mentored the founder and ultimately became Lifetime President of the organisation. John also contributed to the founding of Open Door Counselling Service for Young People and was Chairperson until his death. He was awarded the MBE in 2012.

In an interview with Joan Stoker of SOMC John summarised his beliefs and over-riding interests as follows:

A life-long passionate concern for young people.

That his kind of Christian service is best offered outside the church and that Christian witness must be extended outside the church. Page 13

No wonder Peter took Jesus aside to remonstrate with him, because this is not what people want to hear, people who have given up their lives and livelihoods to follow him, trusting in his messianic credibility. We are so accustomed to the message of crucifixion that sometimes we don't realise what a jarring thing he was saying at this point. The great hope of the Israelite people is that they would be released, be liberated from Roman domination. That is what they were hoping for, and when the disciples left what they had been doing, they thought they had found the Messiah who was going to do something great. A Messiah, not only for themselves but for the nation of Israel. Instead, he says "The Son of man must undergo great suffering" and, worse still, "Even you, if you want to follow me, you are likely to undergo great suffering". So, not a very comfortable or encouraging message if you are in a dark place.

But why is Jesus saying this? Why are we being called to suffering? Why, when we are a body of many parts, do some people suffer more than others. Why do some people get an aggressive cancer and others don't? Why do tragedies strike other people and not us? Why is there so much suffering? The suffering of Jesus and his followers needs to be understood properly. Jesus does not suffer because there is something inherently good in suffering. Our Lenten practice of starving ourselves, by not eating chocolate for example, thinking "the more I suffer, the holier I become" - is that just suffering for the sake of suffering? A token torture? Is that what we are called to? In Isaiah, we are told "for my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways". It is important to understand exactly what Jesus is saying, that you might undergo suffering, and what it means for each of us as a part of that body. What is going to happen with the suffering? Jesus not only rebukes Peter but outlines the context of his suffering: his suffering isn't for the sake of it, but happens in the context of Peter's (and our) values and principles: you might undergo suffering, you might live in comfort, you might be living in peace, but

the knowledge of what the world has to be and what it is becomes a form of suffering: an ability to empathise and show compassion in different situations is in many ways to die to yourself. This is the suffering that we are called to be: in the body of Christ, in order for everyone to be affirmed, everyone must be prepared to die for themselves, and for others to have to die for yourself - it is a terrible suffering in itself but this is the suffering that we are always thinking about. In our human nature, we want to be prosperous, successful and influential.

In Star Wars, a moment occurs when C3PO says "We (droids) seem to be made to suffer - it is our lot in life" - Oh, woe betide me, I suffer because I'm meaningless and insignificant. "This is my cross to carry" we hear said when people struggle, but this is not why Jesus suffers - Jesus wants to make a difference, to change things, to subvert the status quo. Things cannot go on as they are because there is so much injustice and inequality. That is why he has to undergo great suffering.

I'd like to be prosperous. I go to the gym to become stronger. We want to be successful and influential, but to do this we have to allow others to grow. We have to allow other stars to shine. My star doesn't become brighter because I have blown out your star - our stars can shine brighter together.

#### Vincent

Thinking about our Future Richard Kirby

A conversation about the future mission of Selly Oak Methodist Church

As many of you will know, following our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2016, we started a conversation about the future mission, life and worship of our church at our Annual Church meeting in the early summer of 2017. Since then lots and lots of people from across our congregation have taken part in the conversation in different ways – including some who were 9 years old and some who were 90 years old!

Returning from further evacuation John described the 9 years from September 1941 as a member at Trinity as formative in his Christian discipleship. He found himself amongst a large crowd of young people that he felt stimulating and inspiring. One of the power-house groups of the church was the Tuesday fellowship led by Albert Gibb and each week they sang two hymns to remember and pray for those serving in the forces during the war years. When the time came for John to join up he found much comfort in thinking they were singing "Father who art alone" and "Holy Father in thy mercy" for him.

Economics in the family dictated that John left school in 1942 and he went to work for Liverpool Corporation as an administrator in the school dental service until he joined the Royal Navy in 1944. Naval Service took John from patrols of the English Channel in a Corsair Class vessel, to Singapore via Australia as part of a Mobile Naval Airbase (MONAB), arriving shortly after that island was liberated from the Japanese. A Chaplain at the base was a Methodist and through him John was introduced to a young adults meeting. Although he was the only European in the group John felt at home immediately and found spiritual support as well as taking part in much needed social activity, including learning to play Badminton – a game he continued to play at SOMC until aged 84. This period of his life convinced John that his vocation was to work with young people.

Following de-mobilisation in 1947 John took up the offer of a place at Liverpool University. That same year he took his first church service in Liverpool as a trainee Local Preacher. He was awarded a Diploma in Social Science in 1949 and whilst attending the Sunday School Anniversary at Trinity that year he met Rev. Bryan Read who was preaching there. Rev. Read was then Youth Tutor at Westhill College in Birmingham and their discussion motivated John to successfully apply for a place at Westhill, undertaking study focusing on Youth Work. John was awarded the Certificate in Christian Youth work in 1950. John's first Job in Youth Work commenced later in 1950 as Youth Leader at Tilehurst Methodist Youth Centre in Reading, Berkshire. His appointment was one of the earliest full time paid Youth Leaders associated with the Methodist Church. The Youth Centre was also where he also met his wife of 65 years, Joyce. After their marriage in 1952 and his accreditation as a Local Preacher John & Joyce moved to Luton where John was Warden in the County's Youth HQ. His responsibilities there also included taking groups of young people to France and Italy and he ran the Fairfield Scout Troop. During this time they attended the Methodist Church in Luton and John continued his local preaching Besides the love of family and friends, Harold's other passion was music, specifically jazz and swing music from the 20s to the 50s, which stayed with him throughout his life, and helped forge many friendships. An enduring image is of him sitting in his favourite armchair, record on the turntable, its sleeve on his lap, eyes closed in concentration, feet tapping to the rhythm and, of course, that blissful smile on his face!

In later life, it became more difficult for Harold and Mary to attend the church on a weekly basis, but they loved the visits and telephone calls from their church family and friends. Harold was a decent and generous man, with a ready smile and kind words never far from his lips. He was a man who relished and appreciated the simple things in life, particularly the love of family and friends. He is sorely missed by all who knew him.

## Sue Yeomans, Anthony Clarke

### T. John Parr MBE - dedicated to working with Young People and his Church

John was born in Everton, Liverpool on 25th September 1926. The second of four children he was educated at Major Lester Elementary School where he gained a scholarship to Alsop Grammar. The family worshipped at Netherfield Road Methodist Mission. John's Father taught in the Senior Sunday school and was Treasurer whilst his Mother led the Primary Department and was Secretary of the 'Pleasant Monday Evening' group.

John described the moment when he first felt something he later attributed to be the awakening of his Christian faith. He was a toddler when one evening during advent he heard carols being sung by the 40 strong church choir outside the family's small house, afterwards his mother invited them all in for refreshments! However it was Robert Naylor, the Superintendent of the Sunday School at Netherfield Road who stimulated a love of the Bible in John, during the classes organised in preparation for the Scripture Examinations which were a feature of Sunday School life.

In 1939 the war interrupted John's education and he was evacuated to Holyhead, Anglesey. However he returned to the city, only to later endure the Liverpool blitz in 1941, during which the family home was badly damaged. As a result of being 'Bombed Out' and with the help of friends in the church the family moved to Huyton, on the outskirts of the city and to Trinity Methodist on Liverpool Road.

Importantly as well as talking, we have also begun to act on some of the ideas coming our of conversations – we held a well attended Church Family BBQ in September, we held an Advent Talk and we have an ecumenical series of Lent Talks, we held a messy Christmas and are planning a messy Easter, Methsoc helped us deliver Christmas Cards to the new houses on the Selly Oak Hospital site.

The outcome of all these conversations was considered by Church Council in February 2018. There are five things that we most want to do together:

- Growing in our faith using our classes and small groups to help each grown in our faith.
- Work with children and young people especially supporting our growing band of young teenagers on their faith journey;
- Church family fellowship a summer family BBQ and an autumn / harvest event.
- Growing new members building links with those with whom we have contacts and sharing our faith.
- Social justice continuing to support in practice our commitment to social justice.

We have lots of ideas that we could take forward in future. Many of these will again be displayed on one of our Welcome Area noticeboards during Lent so watch this space!

Of course acting on these ideas will take time and talents and whilst we have an abundance of the latter in our congregation it can often feel like we are short of the former. Church Council recognised that if we are to take new ideas forward there may be times when we have to put older ideas down and if it is the right thing we should not be afraid to do this.

I hope that this note has helped keep you up to date. If you have any ideas or are interested in helping us take forward our ideas in any of these areas – even if only as a one-off event – then do please let me, Vincent or any of the stewards know and we would be more than happy to talk to you.

Looking forward to the next 50 years....

#### Richard

## **Church Flowers**

## **Muriel Tetley**

Kate Davis has been Flower Secretary/ co-ordinator since 2005. She has been quietly efficient in this role but she has recently relinquished the reins. We thank her most sincerely for all her hard work and she will be very much missed.

As a result, Catherine Kirby and Muriel Tetley now share the role. Catherine will organise the rota for flower arrangers and twist people's arms to "volunteer", as the number of people who arrange the church flowers every week is gradually diminishing. So please, if you wish to "have a go" see either Catherine or Muriel.

Muriel will be responsible for collecting donations towards the flowers. The cost of flowers has escalated dramatically lately so if you would like to remember a special anniversary or date we would appreciate a few more people to contribute towards the flowers. Not only do they remind us of the beauty of God's world when they are in church on Sunday but, thanks to a few volunteers, they are taken to people to show that the Church is remembering them in times of happiness, trouble or sadness. We would very much like to continue this important ministry but we do need the wherewithal to achieve this.

So please, think about donating or arranging.

Thank you, in anticipation!

#### Muriel and Catherine.

# Pancakes, etc

Julia Sheard

There are lots of exciting things going on at our church.

A few weeks ago, we celebrated **Shrove Tuesday** with a fantastic Pancake Party with 35 children, several adults and of course lots of delicious pancakes with chocolate spread and bananas. We had an 'after party' with the Brownies who also enjoyed lots of pancakes. A big thank you to Margaret Heath for juggling the pancakes in the kitchen.

Then later, on **Saturday 24th March** we had Messy Easter - a chance for children to explore the Easter Story using arts, crafts and other activities. Later that weekend we went for the Circuit Family Farm trip.

loved to get lost in what she called "the jungle" and where a badger resided. Some remember helping her to pick the apples using a fishing net to catch them as they fell.

When Harborne Methodist Church was threatened with closure Margaret worked hard with others to prevent this happening. Although deeply disappointed when it did happen, she continued to support the congregation when it moved to St Peter's and subsequently to Selly Oak. A couple from overseas who joined our congregation said that their decision was based on the welcome they received from Margaret on their first visit to worship. By nature a private person, Margaret quietly made a lot of difference to a lot of lives.

\*\*Jenny Fisher\*\*

Harold Freeman Clarke died in December after a brief illness, bringing to an end a long and happy life, a life full of love and laughter amongst family and friends. We would like to thank all those at Selly Oak Methodist Church for the love and support given to Harold and the family over the past few months.

Harold was born the only child of Dorothy Evelyn and Alfred Clarke in October 1925 and attended Sunday School at St Pauls Methodist Church. It was there that he met a group of children destined to become life long friends, including Mary Elizabeth Rees, a young girl from the valleys of South Wales who became his beloved wife of 71 years.

They remained committed to the church, and as a family attended the founding of the new church at Langleys Road. Harold served as a church steward for a number of years, and organised the delivery and collection of envelopes for Christian Aid in the Selly Oak area. He was no stranger to pounding a beat, having delivered toys to children in more deprived areas of Birmingham on behalf of the church a number of years before.

Harold and Mary lived at the same address in Cromwell Lane for over sixty years, and it is hard to imagine a more welcoming and loving home. The passing years brought five wonderful grandchildren and two greatgrandchildren, who were a constant source of joy and great pride. One of the biggest pleasures of his later life was a search for Chocolate Buttons with great-granddaughter Felicity or simply watching great-grandson Jesse kicking and gurgling on his mat.

#### In Memoria

Margaret Smith only worshipped at Selly Oak Methodist Church for the last few years of her life before moving to a nursing home in Cambridgeshire to be close to her son and family. She is remembered with affection by a number of our congregation and also by those of us who remain from the former Harborne Methodist Church now spread around various churches.

Margaret was an accomplished scholar, a gracious self-effacing person and a loving wife and mother.

Margaret completed an English Honours Course at Bedford College, London University, and was an important member of the Bronte Society becoming one of the editors of the Clarendon Editions of the Bronte novels. Her expertise took her to America on extramural research in this field. Appointed to a part time post at Swanshurst Grammar School before it became a Comprehensive School, Margaret shared her enthusiasm in teaching advanced English to sixth formers who appreciated her gentle, imaginative but decisive approach to the subject. On one occasion for a lesson she engaged a church friend with a trained soprano voice to sing Shakespeare songs as background information to the subject while she played the accompaniment. Margaret also taught for a while at Hillcrest School and even tested the readers badge for our Church Guide company, always willing to engage with the next generation.

Margaret's husband, Albert, a philologist working at Birmingham University Library, very sadly died prematurely when their son Matthew was a teenager. Matthew and his wife Anne have three children and Margaret took great pride and pleasure in watching them grow up and sharing their family life.

For many years Margaret belonged to a Rambling Group comprising longstanding friends and she always took part in their annual rambling holiday.

Over her life Margaret was an active supporter of Harborne Methodist Church. She had a beautiful alto voice and supported the choir and many music events and though not so confident as a pianist she willingly "filled in" on the organ when the need arose. For many years she organized Christian Aid week and always provided lunch for the money counters at her house. At fundraising events she was "mistress of the tea towels" encouraging everyone to donate a tea towel from a holiday location. There were many Church

## A new flag for for the 122nd Birmingham Guides

Our new flag was dedicated during the Parade Service on 25th February.

Last year the Guide unit was privileged to be given a donation by the family of Joan Stoker. When Joan was 16, she joined the Rangers at Selly Oak and quickly became enthusiastically involved in the activities. On leaving school, she worked at Cadbury's and became a Guide leader. During WW2, she worked in a factory in Kings Norton but the Rangers remained a very important part of her life. A small group used to camp during the weekends in the summer in the Lickey Hills. Throughout her life, Joan valued Guiding and she was a dedicated supporter of the Trefoil Guild and always keen to take part in any activity. She tested Guides for their proficiency badges and helped them with their DofE awards. In 2012, Joan was awarded the MBE for her work for the community in Birmingham. Her work for the Guides at Selly Oak was an important achievement recognised by this honour.

After much deliberation, we decided that a new unit flag would be a fitting tribute to Joan's work with the Guides.

In dedicating this flag we remembered the Guide promise: I promise that I will do my best, to be true to myself and develop my beliefs, to serve the Queen and my community, to help other people and to keep the Guide Law.

World Thinking Day is a celebration of 10 million girls worldwide that has taken place on every 22nd February since 1926. It remains a day when everyone in Girl Guiding across the world explores and celebrates how we are all part of a bigger movement. Our world association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts have chosen this date as it was the joint birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Scouting and Guiding movement and his wife Olave who served as World Chief Guide.

World Thinking Day remains one of the most important dates in the Guiding calendar and every year the theme of the event encourages members to think about the big issues affecting them and their global community. Previous World Thinking Days have tackled the subjects of world poverty, environmental sustainability and access to education. This year the theme is impact: we want to think about how all our actions have an impact and how we can try to make that impact positive.

## **Dates for your diary**

## **Richard Kirby**

The stewards team have been working hard to collate some of the exciting events going on at our church to assist our planning.

Some events listed are yet to be confirmed and details will change.

If you know of an event that doesn't appear in this list, please let me know. (richardandcatherinekirby@btinternet.com)

#### Richard

Date	Event	
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Circuit Service – Shirley MC	
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> May	Church Without Walls – Harborne Street Market	
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> May	Annual Church Meeting	
13 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> May	Christian Aid Week, starting with Big Brekkie on Surday	
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> May	Pentecost	
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> June	"Around the World in 80 Minutes" Dinner	
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> June	Church Anniversary	
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> June	Church Council	
Saturday 23rd June	St Mary's Hospice Choir Summer Concert, 7 p.m. with guest performers The Volante Trio.	
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> July	Summer Talk – Dr Anthony Reddie "British Identity in the Light of Brexit"	
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> July	Church Family Barbecue	
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Summer Songs of Praise Service	
TBC	Church Council	
Thursday 6th September	Festival Arts Performance	
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September	Church Family Barn Dance	
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Harvest Festival	
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> November	Remembrance Sunday (100 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armistice)	
Thursday 29th November	Advent Challenge Talk	
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	First Sunday in Advent - Toy Service	

## **Dates for your diary (continued)**

## Big Brekkie for Christian Aid Week May 13th at 09:15

Big Brekkie is back!

All over the country, hundreds of people are planning life-saving, world-changing, extraordinary Big Brekkie events.

By doing everyday things, like buttering toast and brewing coffee, volunteers from all walks of life will be stepping out to help the world's poorest people.

**Around the World in 80 Minutes** - an event to celebrate Christian Aid Week and the Church Anniversary. **June 9th at 7 p.m.** 

The lasting impression that a church leaves with anyone is not the buildings and facilities but the people and their faith. One really striking feature of the congregation of Selly Oak is how well travelled we are - what a wide variety of experiences and adventures.

This occasion is an opportunity to share in just a few of those experiences.

8 people will speak about their experiences, illustrated by pictures. The intention is for each to speak for around 10 minutes, so in the course of the evening, we will have circumnavigated the globe - not bad for a Saturday evening. There will be a three course meal and drinks too, so it really will be an evening you shouldn't miss.

Tickets will be made available in the next few weeks. Proceeds will be shared by the church and Christian Aid.

There will be plenty of opportunities for fellowship, plus a few puzzles and games - are you ready to take the Toucan Challenge?

Buy your tickets and come along for what promises to be a really interesting evening. Going around the world in 80 minutes is a huge undertaking - if you're can't join us and the congregation seems a little thin on Sunday, please send a search party.

7im Padley, Jenny Fisher.