

LYNDON MAGAZINE



JANUARY &
FEBRUARY 2024



Lyndon Methodist Church

Leap Year

MINISTER IN PASTORAL CHARGE

Rev Karen Webber

Contact Tel 07505 109287



LYNDON ROOM HIRE

Contact via

Tel: 07930 617301

Email via

lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

STEWARD TEAM

Contact via

Tel: 07930 617301

Email via

lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

MAGAZINE EDITOR

Lynne Tyler

Email via

lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

Website

<https://lyndonmethodist.org.uk>

Charity No: 1150167

INDEX

Page	Title
4	Minister's Letter
6	Jews of Jerusalem sent priests
9	Macmillan Cancer Support - Tub2Pub
10	Prayer For January & February
11	Offertory Giving to Lyndon
12	Christmas at Lyndon 2023
14	The Covenant Service
16	Exodus! Justice for God's People
22	Lyndon's Christmas Fayre Report
24	Stay and Play Group
25	Thought for the Month
26	Quiz & Puzzles
29	Lyndon Community Page
32	Notices & Events
34	Upcoming Services

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Ministerial team or the Editor

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

As we step into the embrace of the New Year, may love and hope guide our journey. In this season of newness, may we be inspired by the boundless love that unites us all.

I'm mindful that we are entering into the New Year carrying many stories. Some of us are learning to live without a loved one. Some of us are facing new or ongoing health and well-being concerns. All of us carry struggles of some kind.

May the boundless love that unites us hold us all. May we extend kindness to one another, reaching out with compassion and understanding. In times of joy and challenge, may love be our guiding light, fostering a spirit of unity and warmth within our homes, our church and our community.

Jesus called us to "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you should love one another." (John13:34)

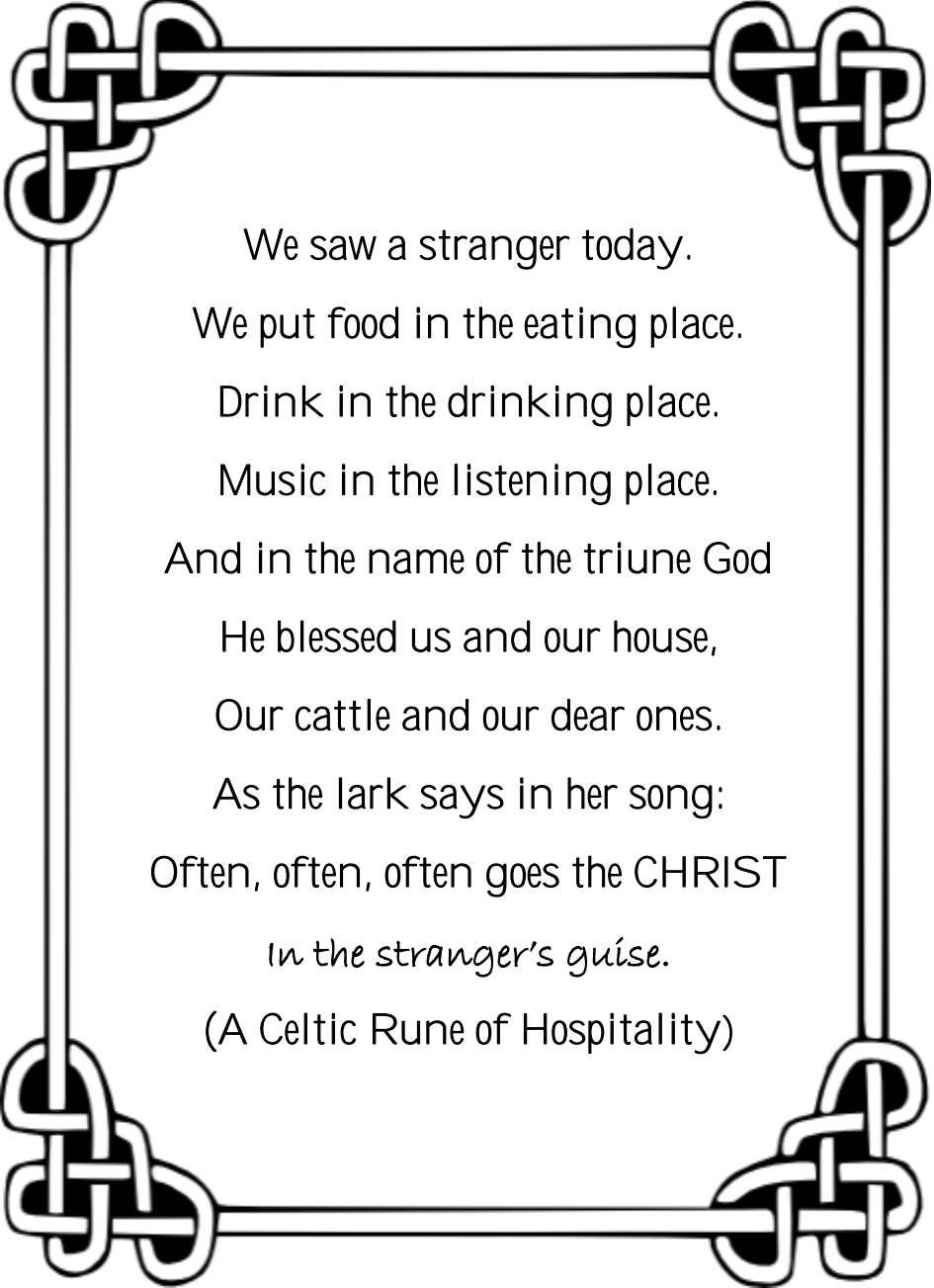
As we embark on a new chapter, may we embrace hope as the beacon that lights our way. Together, may we cultivate an atmosphere of optimism, trusting in the possibilities that the future holds. In our shared faith, may we find strength and encouragement, knowing that hope is a powerful force that moves us forward.

The prophet Jeremiah said: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare not evil, to give you a future in hope."

May the New Year bring an abundance of love and hope to each of you. And may we, together, create a year filled with blessings, growth and shared joy, as we continue to walk in the light of God's boundless loving kindness.

Go Well, Karen





We saw a stranger today.
We put food in the eating place.
Drink in the drinking place.
Music in the listening place.
And in the name of the triune God
He blessed us and our house,
Our cattle and our dear ones.
As the lark says in her song:
Often, often, often goes the CHRIST
In the stranger's guise.
(A Celtic Rune of Hospitality)

The Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. (John 1 v 19)

Over the last few weeks I have been struck by the number of times in the Gospels that the religious authorities either questioned Jesus or got to know what he had done and said. The words in the heading referred to John the Baptist but many similar situations are recorded in the Gospels when the Jewish authorities questioned Jesus. Usually, we read “The Scribes and Pharisees, or Pharisees and Sadducees asked....” So, who are these people? In this issue I thought we would look at who they were.

Levites

The Levites were descendants of Levi, the third son of Jacob and were set aside to carry out various functions at public worship. Originally these took place in the tabernacle which was a movable tent during the journey through the wilderness, and subsequently at the temple in Jerusalem.

Those who were priests presided at the altar of sacrifice and those who were not priests carried out subordinate roles and were musicians, gate keepers, craftsmen, guardians of the temple, judges, and temple officials.

When the Jews reached the promised land of Canaan, the Levites were not given a specific territory like the other tribes but were scattered into 48 cities across the whole land. Details of what they were given can be found in Numbers 35 v 1-8. It is thought that as one of the duties of the priest was the honour of offering fire to the Lord, this was a sufficient inheritance. (Joshua 13 v 14)

Over the course of centuries, the functions of the priests changed and became obscured.

The Levites were effectively both the spiritual and civic leaders of the nation.

Pharisees

Pharisees were a strict religious sect among the Levites, but they were not priests. They were sticklers for keeping the law and thought themselves superior to other Jews and were very self-righteous.

Not only did the Pharisees insist on the keeping of the laws and customs revealed to Moses in the Torah or Pentateuch, (the first 5 books of the Bible) the Pharisees insisted in the keeping of what were known as “the tradition of the fathers” which ran to about 600 additional rules. They believed that salvation came from absolute obedience to their interpretation of these rules and ignored God’s message of mercy and grace for the forgiveness of sins. These beliefs are still held by some Pharisees to this day.

The Pharisees asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment in the Law to which he replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind etc.” (Matt. 23 v34-40). Quite different from the many laws imposed by the questioners.

They thought that they were superior to others and liked to receive adoration from others. Their piety was flaunted about but they were rightly accused of being hypocritical as they did not observe all the laws they imposed on others. Jesus denounced them in Matthew 23 v 27-28.

When Jesus ate at Matthew's house with tax collectors, he was challenged by the Pharisees for what they regarded as a breach of the law. (Matt. 9 v 10-13)

Sadducees

Sadducees were made up of the wealthy upper class priestly party and thought the temple could be used as a place from which to trade.

Unlike the Pharisees they rejected the Old Testament except for the first 5 books which were written by Moses. They believed strongly in these and in Levitical purity. They also revered the temple with much sanctity.

They relied on logic rather than faith.

Unlike the Pharisees they did not believe in angels, demons or in a bodily resurrection or eternal life.

The Sadducees tried to trick Jesus by asking him a question about life after death which was a bit rich when they did not believe in it. (Matt. 22 v23-33)

Scribes

Scribes were also referred to as teachers of the law. They copied the scriptures (Old Testament only) for the synagogues and interpreted the law and emphasised the traditions. They were masters of the Hebrew law. Those who were teachers of



the law taught the law in place of a priest. Nehemiah 8 v 9 refers to Ezra the priest as being a scribe.

When Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic man the teachers of the law accused him of blasphemy. (Matt. 9 v1-8). They were also present at the meal in Matthew's house referred to above, under the heading Pharisees.

As they believed in the resurrection, they were mainly Pharisees, although some were Sadducees.

Herodians

The Herodians were a small group of Hellenistic (Greek) Jews who wanted to break free from Rome and set up a descendent of Herod the Great as king of Judea. They had power from 55 BC -93 AD although this was restricted by the authority of Rome for much of that period. It is thought that they were a Jewish political party who supported Herod, but there is no certainty about this.

The Herodians were Edomites, the descendants of Esau, whereas the twelve tribes of Israel were descendants of Jacob, the twin brother of Esau.

On several occasions in the New Testament, they teamed up with the Pharisees to challenge Jesus. The uniting factor was that they both wanted to break free from the Roman occupation and instal their own person as king. The Herodians wanted to restore a descendent of Herod and the Pharisees wanted to restore a member of the Davidic line on the throne.

After Jesus healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue on the sabbath the Pharisees and Herodians went out of the synagogue and began to plot how they might kill Jesus. (Mark 3 v1-6)

Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin was the highest court in both religious and civil matters and was the name of the assembly of elders and tribunal which met in Jerusalem. It consisted of 70 members plus the president who was the High Priest. It was known as the Greater Sanhedrin. All major towns had a Lesser Sanhedrin which consisted of 23 members. The Greater Sanhedrin acted as a kind of Supreme Court and heard appeals from the Lesser Sanhedrins. No historical evidence has been found to link it to the council of 70 elders set up by Moses. (Numbers 11 v16)

The make up of the 70 members consisted mainly of Pharisees and Sadducees of which the latter exercised the most influence. This is not surprising as they were from the wealthy upper class priestly party.

The change Jesus made

With the coming of Jesus there was no more need for the High Priest to enter the Holy of Holies once a year to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people as Jesus made a once and for all supreme sacrifice on the cross for sin.

Salvation was no longer dependent upon keeping hundreds of minute laws, but simply upon repenting and believing on Jesus as the saviour of the world and seeking to follow his way.

Barry Davis



Greene King is running 'Tub2Pub', a recycling campaign to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support and recycle plastics.

From 1 January - 11 February 2024, it's pubs, restaurants, and hotels will accept your clean and empty: Confectionery tubs, Biscuit tubs and Cracker tubs

We're all guilty of indulging in chocolate, sweets and crackers over the festive period, and in the UK we are buying tens of millions of these plastic tubs yearly!

Make sure your tubs don't go to waste and bring your clean, empty plastic confectionery and cracker tubs to any Greene King managed site from 1 January - 11 February 2024 to be recycled.

Simply leave your tubs with a Greene King staff member at the bar or welcome station within one of their locations.

After 11 February, all tubs will be collected and taken to a plastic reprocessing centre where they're shredded, before being sold onto plastic manufacturers to use in place of virgin plastics. All money raised from the sale of Tub2Pub plastics will be given directly to Macmillan Cancer Support.

I am thinking that if we get lots of Methodists collecting these, we could make a massive impact! It seems very win:win!

Here is the link: <https://www.tub2pub.co.uk>

Many thanks for reading.

Peace to you,

Ruth

Deacon Ruth Yorke

Prayer For January and February

For all peoples, at home and abroad who are suffering from financial difficulties, war, hunger, homelessness, lack of medical facilities, trafficking and other forms of exploitation. We continue to pray particularly for the people of Ukraine, Israel, Palestine and the Yemen.

For people facing fires, floods, eruptions and earthquakes and also for those in the emergency services facing danger as they go to help others. We think of those in our own country suffering as a result of the recent storm Henk.

Pray for the work of the Leprosy Mission.

For those in authority that they will direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and peace, so that we honour one another and seek the common good.

Also please pray for:

Pray for those we know who are unwell or with serious illness and for the families of the bereaved. Pray for those who are anxiously waiting for test results or operations. May they all feel God's healing touch.

Pray for the doctors, nurses, care workers and volunteers. Give them the skills and strength they need to support those in need.

We pray for those members of our congregation who, for whatever reason, are unable to join us in our acts of worship. May they know that they are still in our hearts and minds.

Pray for our services in January and February and all those that lead them. We also pray for all those volunteers that help our services to run smoothly. Help us to think about the ways in which we can help, too, to bring your love and message to our community.

Amen



Offertory Giving to Lyndon Methodist Church.

Having looked at a cash flow budget for the current church year to 31/12/2024 it is clear to me that despite some increases in rental fees to those using the premises, offertory income is likely to remain at the same level as previous years. This is certainly not keeping up with some increased costs

We have been very lucky that we had just signed a new energy contract before all the prices went up exponentially. Unfortunately, this contract has now run out and renewal of our contracts for the supply of Gas and Electricity for the next two years is estimated to work out at an 80% increase on based on usual usage. Other expenditure is likely to be higher as we have to rely more on professional help to maintain the premises. In addition, our level of contribution to the running of the Circuit has also increased.

The bible has several texts in respect of tithing for example Genesis chapter 28 v22 expresses Jacob's vow to give a tenth to the Lord. Two further verses from the bible are Leviticus Chapter 27 v30, "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord", and Proverbs Chapter 3 verse 9, "Honour the Lord with your wealth".

I would, therefore, ask Church members and our congregation to consider the amount they offer in the plate, envelope giving, payments through bank transfers such as standing orders and fast payments and see whether it is possible to increase it. As one of our supermarkets keeps telling us, "Every little helps!".

Thank you, Tony Ludlow



Christmas at Lyndon 2023

Christmas at Lyndon, once again, saw a variety of services and experiences to celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We started with the Christmas Fayre at the end of November (see the report later on in this magazine) and finished with the Christmas Eve communion where a few of us took communion just as Christmas Day began.

The church was beautifully decorated and we'd like to say a special thanks to everybody who helped to decorate the church and took part in the services and helped to make it a memorable Christmas for us all.

Some members of our congregation could be seen and heard singing carols at Tesco's along with other members of Hatchford Brook Churches Together.

At our Gift service on the second Sunday in Advent, the gifts of chocolates,



biscuits, fruits and other luxuries were blessed before they were sent to the South Yardley food pantry where they were gratefully received.

We held a candlelit carol service on the evening of the third Sunday in Advent. The church looked amazing with the candles flickering along all the windowsills, so much so that the pictures don't totally capture the atmosphere

created during this service as we listened to the telling of the Christmas story through the reading of the Scriptures and the singing of Christmas carols.

On the morning of Christmas Eve we held our Messy Christmas Crib service which

was a service with a difference. We started by inviting everyone in the congregation to come up and wrap a couple of Christmas gifts - chocolate or oranges, before taking them back with them to their seats. We then had a scavenger hunt throughout the church with the children encouraged to find a wide range of objects including numerous cuddly toys, a cushion, a woolly hat, a cat's feeding bowl and a candle. These items were then used to retell the story of that very first Christmas, with lots of laughter and congregational



participation, with the final item being the candle to remind us all the Jesus is the light of the world.

The gifts that had been wrapped at the start of the service were carried up to the front of the church as part of the offertory. This was to remind us that God has given so much for us and in response we can give ourselves to Him. At the end of the service the gifts were distributed to the members of the congregation as they left, so in one sense, people were also giving to others.

On Christmas Eve night we held our Christmas Eve communion service, an opportunity to reflect on the true reason for Christmas, outside of the present wrapping, feasting and family celebrations.

At every service in Advent each year, we light the advent candles, 4 red candles, one each week, culminating with the central white one on Christmas Day to represent the birth of Christ. The picture shown on the right shows our Advent ring in the early hours of Christmas morning. As you will notice, there were only 3 red candles lit, as well as the central white one. The reason for this is that



in order to remember all those who have died in the Israel/Palestine conflict, Methodist churches across the country were called upon to leave their second Advent candle unlit this year.

The call not to light the candle, which represents peace, on the second Sunday in Advent (10 December) and on subsequent Sundays, follows the news that celebrations to mark Christmas in the Holy Land will be subdued this year.

The President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gill Newton, commented, "The events of over 2000 years ago and of now, remind us that sadly, nothing much has changed. We are still caught up in conflict and challenge, fear and uncertainty. This Advent, to stand with Palestinian Christians, we invite Methodist Churches to leave the Advent candle on the Second Sunday unlit and for it to remain unlit throughout advent."

"God is still present even in the most difficult places, and in the midst of violent conflict so many people are wishing for and seeking peace!"

The Covenant Service

At the start of the new year Methodists make a distinctive resolution. Our Covenant service this year is on 7th January and I thought it would be interesting to look at the significance of the service and its' origins. The information is taken from the Methodist Church website.

The covenant service, often celebrated on the first Sunday of the year, is at the heart of Methodists' devotion and discipleship, and their dedication in working for social justice. In the service the Church joyfully celebrates God's gracious offer to Israel that "I will be their God and they shall be my people".

This offer is then extended beyond Israel to all people in Jesus Christ, who also provides the supreme example of what it is to live in such a relationship with God.

That relationship primarily involves the corporate life of the community of God's people (i.e. Israel; the Body of Christ). It is concerned with individuals within that group.

What God offers is a loving relationship. The Covenant is not a contract in which God and human beings agree to provide particular goods and services for each other! It is not something that we have to do to create a relationship with God. God has freely and graciously already made it possible.

Rather, the Covenant is the means of grace by which we accept the relationship and then seek to sustain it. It is therefore not so much about getting into a relationship with God as it is about staying in it. It is not about acquiring a relationship with God, but living within the loving relationship that God has already offered us.

God's gracious offer to us is therefore simultaneously a challenge. If God is committed to us, are we prepared to accept that as reality and commit ourselves in return to God? Even if we do choose to accept it, how can we manage to live out our commitment adequately, frail and human as we are?

The New Testament suggests that as we join the group of those seeking to follow the way of Jesus, we respond to God's challenge with him and begin to share his relationship with God as Father. Within the group of disciples, this leads to his Spirit bubbling up in us as individuals, encouraging and enabling us to live out our side of the relationship (i.e. "writing God's ways on our hearts" as Jeremiah 31 describes the Covenant).

All are welcome

All are welcome to share in a Covenant Service, whether you are sharing in a Covenant Service for the first time, have done it annually for many years, or simply want to watch what others do without taking part yourself.

The service is a gift not a demand! And God will give you the grace to do it all. You are not alone!

Origins of the Covenant Service

This idea of Covenant was basic to John Wesley's understanding of Christian discipleship. He saw the relationship with God in Covenant as being like a marriage between human beings (both as a community and as individuals) on the one side and God in Christ on the other (cf. Ephesians 5.21-33).

His original Covenant Prayer involved taking Christ as "my Head and Husband, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honour and obey thee before all others, and this to the death".

Wesley recognised that people needed not just to accept but also to grow in relationship with God. He therefore emphasised that God's grace and love constantly prompts and seeks to transform us, and so we should continually seek and pray to grow in holiness and love.

Over a number of years Wesley gradually saw the need for some regular ceremony which would enable people to open themselves to God more fully. He looked for some means of helping them to hear God's offer and challenge ever more deeply, and to allow God to prompt and enable them to respond.

In 1755 Wesley created a form of service adapted from the works of Joseph and Richard Alleine. These works came from the Puritan tradition of pastoral and spiritual guidance. Wesley therefore insisted that the Covenant Service be located in a framework of pastoral care, preaching and guidance.

This framework dealt with the corporate needs of a particular society of Christian disciples, and within that with the needs of individuals within that group. It therefore linked personal devotion with corporate worship.

There would be a series of meetings about the Covenant involving sermons, explanations and exhortations. An invitation would then be issued for "those as will" to come to the Covenant Service. After a day's "Retreat" for people to prepare themselves in prayer, fasting, reflection and self-examination there would be the Covenant Service itself. This would be held in the context of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Wesley thought that this Sacrament brought into the realm of experience and made real all that was said in the Covenant. He therefore urged Methodists to pay it the highest regard, to put it at the centre of their spiritual life and to share in it frequently.

The process did not end with the Covenant Service. People were encouraged to continue to work out the implications for their lives of the fact that their relationship with God had been renewed in and through Christ. It was accepted that people might find this difficult to do without help, and might "backslide". There would therefore be further pastoral guidance offered to both groups and individuals in the weeks that followed the service.

EXODUS! JUSTICE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

February 11 brings Racial Justice Sunday. This year's topic is EXODUS! Justice For God's People on The Move. The following is a sermon that is included in the Churches Together Resources for Racial Justice Sunday 2024. It seems both poignant and relative to what is happening right now in both the UK and the rest of the world.

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY (1 CORINTHIANS 12:31) By Revd Inderjit Bhogal

THE WAY OF LOVE: SANCTUARY AND HOSPITALITY

Loving, compassionate and welcoming responses to refugees arriving in Britain from across the English Channel are lighting up ways to challenge hostility with protective hospitality. These include 12 small and large church congregations, such as Nailsea Methodist Church and Chester Cathedral, that in 2023 received the recognition of Church of Sanctuary. Their prophetic responses help to unpack a little of what may be defined as a 'more excellent way': challenging hostility with hospitality.

According to a North Somerset Council webpage, some hotels in the area have been used to provide accommodation for asylum seekers. The webpage gives helpful information for the local community. The small Nailsea Methodist congregation reached out to asylum seekers housed in a nearby hotel, with expressions of welcome, friendship and community. The congregation works with other local churches to provide a Conversation Café for refugees. The Revd Deborah Mallet, the local Methodist Minister, stresses the central importance of welcoming the stranger: 'The call to love our neighbour, whoever they are and wherever they come from, lies at the heart of Christian faith. We aspire to be a community of welcome and a safe place for all.'

The Church of Sanctuary award recognises proven commitments to learning about sanctuary issues, embedding practices of hospitality and inclusion, and encouraging others to do the same. It is a marker along an ongoing journey to express deeper solidarity with isolated, marginalised and maligned communities.

A Cathedral of Sanctuary such as Chester Cathedral stands in a long and deep history of giving sanctuary spanning a thousand years. There were many Cathedrals of Sanctuary in the past. The practice of sanctuary in sacred buildings began to reemerge in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s, when a number of people took sanctuary in church buildings. In contemporary practice, sanctuary is provided in communities of welcome and hospitality. This is what a Church or Cathedral of Sanctuary is, with the focus on the congregation working together to build cultures of welcome and hospitality, in solidarity with refugees and people seeking sanctuary.

The ecumenical instrument Churches Together in Britain and Ireland is working with the national charity City of Sanctuary to develop and promote the Church of Sanctuary movement.

Alongside people of different faiths and beliefs involved in the work of hospitality and sanctuary, this continues to be an important and urgent work for churches. The

purpose here is to do all we can to ensure that people seeking sanctuary among us have the protective hospitality in communities and cultures of welcome and safety. This is a constructive example of standing up to racist rhetoric and behaviour around refugees. It is the faith-based response to the declared intention of our government to build a hostile environment here to deter refugees from coming to these shores.

AN ENVIRONMENT OF HOSTILITY: STOP THE BOATS

The hostile environment in Britain includes the vilification of refugees crossing the English Channel in small boats, and the threat to send 'illegal immigrants' to Rwanda. That most asylum seekers coming to the UK in unseaworthy vessels across the terrifying waters of the busy English Channel route are 'illegal immigrants' or 'economic migrants' and unworthy of sanctuary here is a fallacy. This was exposed in a Refugee Council report published on 1 October 2023 ('The Truth About Channel Crossings and the Impact of the Illegal Migration Act').

The report analysed British Home Office statistics on Channel crossings and stated that 74% of arrivals in the UK would be recognised as genuine asylum seekers, people who have fled persecution, terror and oppression. Most of the people crossing the English Channel are refugees. According to the report, more than half (54%) of arrivals from across the Channel are from just five countries: Afghanistan, Iran, Eritrea, Syria and Sudan. Almost half of those who come to Britain from outside Europe come here for family reasons. It should be noted that Britain is home to only 1% of the world's refugees.

The former British Home Secretary's language of 'crisis' and 'invasion' and 'hurricane' misrepresents the reality and is unhelpful in the context, and it only serves to ramp up and legitimise hatred and hate speech. Deliberate dehumanising and demonising of refugees in the interest of political purposes, short-term publicity and point-scoring may be hollow rhetoric, but it deepens hatred and is extremely dangerous.

'Stop the boats' is the political mantra now, designed to further the hostile environment as a deterrent to refugees coming to the UK. The criminal activity of traffickers exploiting vulnerable people can be tackled by stopping wars (the vast majority of people seeking sanctuary are fleeing war) and by providing safe and legal routes for refugees seeking sanctuary.

Boats are not only prominent in politics. They are also a metaphor of human life and struggles. Over the last four hundred years, for example:

- We have the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade when by the mid1700s more than 100,000 people every year were being taken on British boats from African countries to the Americas and the Caribbean, chained and enslaved for labour. Harriet Tubman inspired enslaved people in their journeys to freedom with the song 'Wade in the Water': get into the water to keep dogs and their keepers off the trail.
- The Titanic tragically sank with a massive loss of life in April 1912. It was the biggest boat at the time. It was so big because of the huge demand from people to leave Britain and Ireland for a better life in the USA.

- The Empire Windrush is the name given to a former German warboat that carried a thousand people from the Caribbean to the UK, to 'help rebuild the motherland'. It docked in Tilbury on 22 June 1948 and has come to symbolise migration, racism and the Windrush injustice scandal.



- SS Karanja sailed for almost 30 years from 1948, carrying passengers between South Asia and East Africa across the Indian Ocean. This is the boat my parents travelled on in 1948 from Bombay for their journey to Mombasa in Kenya, and I at the age of ten travelled twice on this boat in 1963.
- The 'Vietnamese Boat People', who fled Vietnam by boats and ships following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, and the exodus that continued into the 1990s. Many came to the UK. However, thousands perished in the sea.

At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic it was not uncommon for people to say, 'We are all in the same boat,' though this was far from the truth. Some were in strong boats, those most vulnerable were in flimsy boats, others were looking for boats to be in. 'We are all in the same boat' often represents conversations around Mother Earth and climate change. The Book of Wisdom describes life as a ship passing through stormy waters (Wisdom 5:10; 14:1-7).

Boats featured prominently in Jesus' ministry. There are strong images of Jesus on small boats in choppy waters (Mark 4:35-40), sometimes for safety (Mark 3:9), sometimes using a boat as His pulpit (Mark 4:1), and it was noted on an occasion that when He set off on a boat, alongside His vessel there were 'other boats' (Mark 4:36).

A boat symbolises the ecumenical movement, perhaps based on the idea of an ark, like Noah's Ark. It may be mindful also of the boat Jonah sailed in and from which he was ejected only to be swallowed by a big fish. The logos of the World Council of Churches and Churches Together in England portray the church as a boat floating on the ocean of the world with a mast in the form of a cross, symbolising faith and unity and the message of the ecumenical movement.

Sadly, many of the boats in the news and media currently are unseaworthy or have capsized, broken or overturned. Thousands of people seeking sanctuary and crossing dangerous seas have drowned and died. In 2022 it is estimated that 2,062 people died while crossing the Mediterranean. The true numbers are not known. Between 2014 and 2018, for instance, about 12,000 people who drowned were never found.

Overturned boats are far too common a sight today, symbols of broken institutions that fail to protect people, life savers they claim to be but they are actual moral wrecks. On Lampedusa Island there is in the harbour area what is termed the 'boat cemetery', where dozens of capsized refugee boats are laid out and abandoned. They hold memories and stories of struggle, loneliness, fear, the fragility and passage and hope of life. Shipwrecks are a familiar image in the Bible too; three are referred to in 2 Corinthians 11:25.

An overturned boat is a tragic image. It represents harm and danger, but it also has a shape of a dome or a roof. How can people have safe routes of travel, how can a boat become a symbol of safety again, being rescued, being saved? What part can churches play in this? Churches have not always been the sanctuary they enshrine. How can they pay more attention to their motif, and uphold the sacredness of movement, wading in waters, craving safety, building sanctuary?

After all, the word 'ecumenical' has its roots in the Greek word *oikumene*, meaning the whole inhabited earth, and it embraces all people too. It is about reaching out to, including and being a safe home for everyone. How can we bring safety into situations of harm and danger, and what role can we all play in building communities and cultures of sanctuary, protective hospitality, welcome and safety? There are different strategies being held before us in relation to boats carrying refugees seeking sanctuary across turbulent waters.

FOR OUR PURPOSES, I WANT TO TURN TO THE SCRIPTURAL CALL TO A 'MORE EXCELLENT WAY'

What does a 'more excellent way' mean? These words introduce 1 Corinthians 13, a beautiful biblical poem. Its wisdom should not be confined to wedding ceremonies. Its original intention was to give direction to small congregations struggling to discern their best gifts and their calling, how to use their gifts in situations of opposing views and deep conflicts. 1 Corinthians prioritises love. It asserts that without love all gifts are a sham, a show. Words – however angelic and well meaning – without love are hollow rhetoric, like 'a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal' (verses 1-3).

It insists that love has to be incarnated, made real and visible. We have to express love. Love is revealed and recognised in kindness, patience, humility, self-giving,

truthfulness, bearing with one another, keeping hope alive and facing up to all things in life (verses 4-7). It affirms that love is eternal, not a short-term expression; it endures, never ends. Love outlasts. The Greek word used here is *pipto*, meaning that love never stumbles and never trips up. No other gift is 'complete', no other gift lasts as love does, no other gift compares to love (verses 8-13).

Love is the 'more excellent way'. So 'pursue love' (1 Corinthians 14:1). We aim at love, grow towards it, however imperfect our efforts are. It is an ongoing, never-ending pathway. We aim at perfect, complete love into eternity (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).

How can we respond in love to people seeking sanctuary, and consider strategies enshrined in love?

Is it not our calling also to call for politics of love? Wouldn't it be great if political strategy was rooted in love, and if the wisdom of all people were used to work towards a more excellent way? I want to leave you with one symbol of love, and that is sanctuary, protective hospitality. The way ahead I offer as an expression of love is Church of Sanctuary. Church of Sanctuary is a faith-based initiative, a call to prophetic Christian witness. It is an expression of hospitality as a clear challenge to hostility. It is about the inclusion of all, valuing everyone's gifts and contributions.

The aim is to build protective hospitality in ways that are mutually enriching. The hope is that churches will become places for all and will be proud to foster welcome, hospitality and safety to people fleeing violence and persecution. This would be a clear demonstration of Christian discipleship as a holy act of solidarity, an expression of love.

Sanctuary, or hospitality with safety, is a long-standing prophetic theme of Scripture. The foundation is 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18) and 'love the alien as yourself' (Leviticus 19:34). It is the most repeated ethical requirement in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is echoed in Jesus' teaching about how we treat the neighbour and the outsider (Matthew 25:35-40; Luke 10:29-37).

Churches take pride in welcoming all. Many churches go beyond welcome and are thoroughly engaged with supporting refugees and people seeking sanctuary. What value is added by becoming a recognised Church of Sanctuary? You will become part of a movement to build cultures of welcome and hospitality. You will be enabled to engage in more informed ways with serious issues that matter to you. You will connect refugees and people seeking sanctuary to support networks and agencies.

In a Church of Sanctuary, all members of the congregation intentionally work together to learn about the real stories of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. They seek to embed the values and cultures of welcome, hospitality and safety as part of the values of the congregation and community, using these to support refugees and people seeking sanctuary. They include them in their activities, and share with pride their vision, commitment and achievements, and let others know about the positive contributions of refugees to society and the benefits of welcoming others. Buildings can provide shelter, but sanctuary is best provided in human warmth, community and relationships. Individuals and single congregations

can provide hospitality, but this is stronger when it is in collaboration with others, and a two-way process of mutuality and solidarity.

Church of Sanctuary is not a campaigning political movement. It is a biblically inspired initiative; it is about being prophetic, challenging hostility with hospitality. This might mean we become political, and this is in keeping with the style of biblical prophets, speaking truth to power with passion and compassion, seeking justice.

Human warmth and welcome are the sanctuary we all hold and bring into relationships. Learning and working together to grow cultures of welcome and hospitality is rewarding.

You might decide to apply for Church of Sanctuary recognition. The application form is not a tick-box exercise; it remains a learning exercise. The whole process is about learning together. There are suggestions to assist this process in the book *Hospitality and Sanctuary for All* which is available from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

The hope is that churches will become places for all and will be proud to foster welcome, hospitality and safety to people fleeing violence and persecution. This would be a clear demonstration of Christian discipleship as a holy act of solidarity, an expression of love.

The award has value as a statement by your congregation. It is about your inclusive values of welcome, hospitality and safety for all. It is something to celebrate and to share, and will be an inspiration and encouragement to others. In the process you will build and strengthen refugee voices and leadership. The award is not the end of the process; rather, it is an important stage on an ongoing pilgrimage. It's not about getting a certificate to display, as for example in the eco church initiative. It's more about learning together and building communities of sanctuary.

Acts of love are never erased; they strengthen the foundations and the pathways of love, for us and for others. They are a lasting legacy.



Lyndon's Christmas Fayre Report

The Church Christmas Fayre has always been important at Lyndon. Not only to try to raise some much needed funds but to be an event for the whole community to enjoy.

A small team of us got together in the weeks leading up to the fayre to start planning and working out how many people we needed to run stalls and to help in the build up etc. Forms were available in the vestibule to enable people to tick a box and identify where they were willing to help. As we had done the previous year, we made some tables available to the community to be hired. We only sold 5 this year but this was guaranteed income which we didn't need to worry about.



We had a team of people in the kitchen making drinks and selling bacon rolls. These went down really well and it was great to see people taking time out to sit in the lounge chatting.

Again some children from Olton Primary School came to sing in Church and it was fabulous to see the Church full with families listening to the Christmas songs.



Father Christmas and Mrs Christmas did the honour of joining us in the Grotto and around 45 children paid him a visit.

We had several stalls, an amazing Christmas stall amongst them which enabled people to buy their cards, gift wrap and decorations. As usual, there were plenty of goodies on the cake stall, too. We also tried to attract the children by having

games, toys and chocolates. This year we moved the GB chocolate stall and the Children's toys and books stall into the Church. This was to try and ease space in the hall, as well as provide people to keep an eye on our precious worship space.

Overall we managed to raise just under £1,200 which was a great effort.

Thank you to everyone who helped in any aspect of the fayre. Thanks to all the people, including the children at Olton Primary who decorated baubles which were hung on the tree and walls in the lounge, and all down the centre corridor who helped to make the church look so festive.

There were areas which worked and those that didn't and as each year, we will review for next years fayre and try to improve.

As always, the bigger the team of people, the less work for everyone so we encourage you to have an opinion and to share your ideas and manpower to make an even better fayre in 2024.



Sarah Marks



Stay and Play Group



Stay and Play has continued to build on its success with the end of the year culminating in a stay and play Christmas party.

Eleven children and their carers attended the session on 21st December and they welcomed not one, but two special visitors, Rev Karen and Father Christmas.

Rev Karen spent some time with the children sharing the Christmas story and making Christingles, the children had some party food and then the star attraction, Father Christmas paid a visit with a gift for all the children.

We'd love to see more children in the new year.



DON'T WAIT for things to get easier, simpler, and better. Life will always be complicated. Look for small opportunities for happiness in the moment you are in right now. Otherwise, you might run out of time.

We can't often choose our circumstances, but we can better control our reactions and emotions.

Choose small moments of joy.

Quotes Cafe

January & February Quiz

The answers to the following questions are based on characters from nursery rhymes – Good Luck

1	A trio of visually impaired rodents	
2	He had to vocalise for his supper	
3	Feline and the scam	
4	Not new regal with fossil fuel	
5	Took ill on Thursday	
6	On the town in his night attire	
7	Unmarried arachnophobic young lady	
8	Charles IV with a suit	
9	A number of mouldy glass receptacles	
10	A quintet of small porkers	
11	Elderly parent with empty cabinet	
12	Two dozen dark feathered friends	
13	Ted wed mule (Anagram)	
14	Small type of tie with a quick glance	
15	£1000 informally, not new with Prince Andrew	
16	Not a new fast food outlet	

**Answers please to Lynne Tyler or Church Email
by Friday 15th February 2024**

Decode the New Year Puzzle

Work out the answer to each anagram and make a well known phrase.

Clue: All the answers are in Barry's article

SEWJ

--	--	--	--

SEURLEMJ

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

IVESLTE

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

PARSIHSEE

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

EEUADSCSD

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

BCSRIES

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

RIHDSEONA

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

SRNAEDHNI

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

SUSEJ

--	--	--	--	--

SIPTERS

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

				Y
1	2	3	4	

5	6	7

Y			
8	9	10	

Covenant Wordsearch

Y	D	C	H	A	L	L	E	N	G	E	C
S	J	A	O	A	C	M	G	G	F	W	O
E	X	U	F	V	O	N	U	O	O	B	M
V	S	L	S	C	E	U	V	N	D	P	M
D	Y	I	L	T	C	N	V	O	E	X	I
E	M	E	M	A	I	G	A	O	V	P	T
R	W	F	L	O	V	C	P	N	O	X	M
W	H	D	W	S	R	L	E	K	T	Q	E
G	K	K	G	A	E	P	Q	V	I	T	N
R	U	F	J	G	S	W	F	B	O	H	T
X	C	O	M	M	U	N	I	O	N	L	G
R	E	L	A	T	I	O	N	S	H	I	P

ALL

COMMUNION

GOD

PEOPLE

SERVICE

CHALLENGE

COVENANT

JUSTICE

PROMISE

WELCOME

COMMITMENT

DEVOTION

LOVE

RELATIONSHIP

WESLEY

November - December Quiz Answers

1) Ronald Reagan 2) Wolverhampton Wanderers 3) Andre Agassi 4) Basil Brush 5) Addis Ababa 6) Rolls Royce 7) Tutankhamen's Tomb 8) Ray Reardon 9) Allo Allo 10) Ozzie Osbourne 11) Steven Spielberg 12) Midsomer Murders 13) Peter Piper 14) Charlie Chaplin 15) Maid Marian

Congratulations for 100% correct answers to the Hunt family and Tom and Kate Collen.

The Christmas message was "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace goodwill to all men".

Lyndon Community Page

We really would like to make this page and the whole magazine relevant, therefore, please get in touch. Let us know what you like and don't like and send or give any important events, ideas, offers, stories, feedback or tips personally to Lynne Tyler or by e-mail to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com.

As previously mentioned, to keep this section going, improve this magazine and to try and create a closer community we really need your interaction.

HELLO FROM OUR NEW PCSO

Hello all, I am PCSO 32013 Jonathan Rogers and I wanted to formally introduce myself to the Lyndon community, residents, local business and schools and community groups. I am the new PCSO for the Lyndon area. I am based in the LEOS Team at Solihull Police Station and we cover the Lyndon, Elmdon, Olton and Silhill areas. I have been in the Lyndon area for the last 5 weeks and have met loads of wonderful people that live and work in the area. I have been handing out contact cards to local schools and business and community groups and residents in the area.

Part of my role as the local PCSO for area is to help and build a connection with everyone and work together to address any issues or concerns whether it's helping vulnerable people or with any ongoing issues that relate to crimes happening in the area or to help out with local community groups and schools to help build that strong bond with each other. I am here to provide a policing presence and reassurance within the area as everyone of you would agree that we don't see many police officers walking the streets on foot patrols anymore. I want to be that policing presence walking the streets daily or late evening and at night helping to deter crimes from happening.

I am out and about in the Lyndon area and have been doing foot patrols around the local parks, Hobs Moat Shops and Lyndon Road shops, and been into local business, schools, community groups talking to everyone and been that friendly face for everyone to see. I want to be that point of contact that you can contact if there any concerns or on-going issues within the area or something doesn't seem right.

By working together, we can help stop crimes from happening and addressing any ongoing issues or concerns that you may have and be that point of contact.

My understanding is that Lyndon area has not had a PCSO within the area for the last 12 months so I am making up for lost time and getting myself out and about within the community and being that familiar face.

Once again, I would like to introduce myself to the Lyndon community. If you see me about and about in the area stop and say hello.

My work email is Jonathan.Rogers1@westmidlands.police.uk and please feel free to email me anytime with any ongoing issues, concerns or if you want me to stop by and have a chat or help out with any community groups or school projects I am here and available.

Looking forward to hear from you all.

PCSO Jonathan Rogers

BOYS BRIGADE TO RESTART

We are re-launching our Anchors and Juniors sections with effect from Thursday 11th January 2024, Anchors ages Reception to Year 3 inclusive, from 6pm to 7:15pm and Juniors ages Year 4 to Year 6 inclusive, from 7pm to 8:15pm. We are hoping that we will be able to launch Company Section (Year 7 to 9) and Seniors (year 10 to 13) in September. For those of you not familiar with Boys Brigade, please see some information below.

WELCOME TO THE BB FAMILY

We provide opportunities for children and young people to **learn, grow** and **discover** in a safe, fun and caring environment.

There's something for every child and young person, including opportunities to **develop skills, build confidence, make friends, work towards awards, make a difference** in their communities and of course have **fun**.

Our vision is that children and young people experience **'life to the full'**. – John 10:10



The BB is a Christian youth organisation, open to all children and young people aged 5 - 18 years from all faiths and none. Some of our groups are for boys only whilst others are open to boys and girls. Our leaders are only appointed after undertaking a safe recruitment process which includes vetting checks.

Our values are...



Faith



Inspiring



Caring



Trusting

THE BOYS' BRIGADE
> the adventure begins here



OPEN



ANCHORS

5 – 8 Years

ბუნობი

8 – 11 Years

Company

11 – 14 Years

Seniors

14 – 18 Years

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR LOCAL GROUP AT
BOYS-BRIGADE.ORG.UK/JOIN

WELCOME TO THE BB...

Notices & Events

Ladies Club - 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Wednesday 24th January

Wednesday 7th and 21st February

Lunch Club - Fridays 12pm to 1pm

JANUARY

5th CLOSED - HALF TERM

12th Beef Stew

19th Cottage Pie

26th Corned Beef Hash

FEBRUARY

2nd Cheese Flan

9th Braised Liver

16th CLOSED - HALF TERM

23rd Fish Portions

Price: starter £1, main £4, pudding £1

No need to book - Just come along

Monthly Prayer and Bible Study - 7.00pm - 8.30pm

Wednesday 10th January

Wednesday 7th February

Hobs Moat WI - 7pm to 9pm

Monday 15th January

Monday 19th February

Notices & Events

CHARITY SUPPORT THIS CHRISTMAS AND BEYOND

This year we supported two local charities, Lyndon House and South Yardley Food Pantry and we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your kind donations of toiletries, chocolate, boxes of biscuits, cakes and other luxury items. These have now been passed onto the relevant teams for distribution and were all gratefully received.

The support doesn't end there, though. Please continue to leave your contributions to the food pantry in the boxes in the vestibule and on the reception in the centre. The need is greater than ever, and is always much appreciated.

Thanks once again

Kate



LEPROSY SUNDAY

Our Leprosy Sunday this year is 25th February 2024 and the service at 10.30 a.m. will be taken by a Leprosy Mission Representative.

The theme this year is "Unseen" and is based on the text from Zechariah 7 v 9."This is what the Lord Almighty said: Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another."

Brenda

MONTHLY PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY

This group usually meets on the first Wednesday of the month, but for January it will be the second Wednesday.

Led by Rev Karen, we usually start by studying the Bible. For the last few months we have been looking at the prophecies of the prophet Micah, trying to understand them and their relevance for the world today.

We then spend some time in prayer, thinking about what is going on in our lives, in the life of the church and its people, in the life of the community around us, and then what is going on in the world.

It would be great to see some new faces joining us.

Lynne

Services in January

Sunday 7th January

10:30am Covenant and Communion Service

5.00pm Lyndon People

Sunday 14th January

10:30am Service

Sunday 21st January

10:30am Service

Sunday 28th January

10:30am Service

Note : The Circuit has asked that we do not include details of the preachers on our service listing.

Services in February

Sunday 4th February

10:30am Communion Service

5.00pm Lyndon People

Sunday 11th February

10:30am Own arrangement service

Sunday 18th February

10:30am Service

Sunday 25th February

10.30am Leprosy Sunday

Note : The Circuit has asked that we do not include details of the preachers on our service listing.

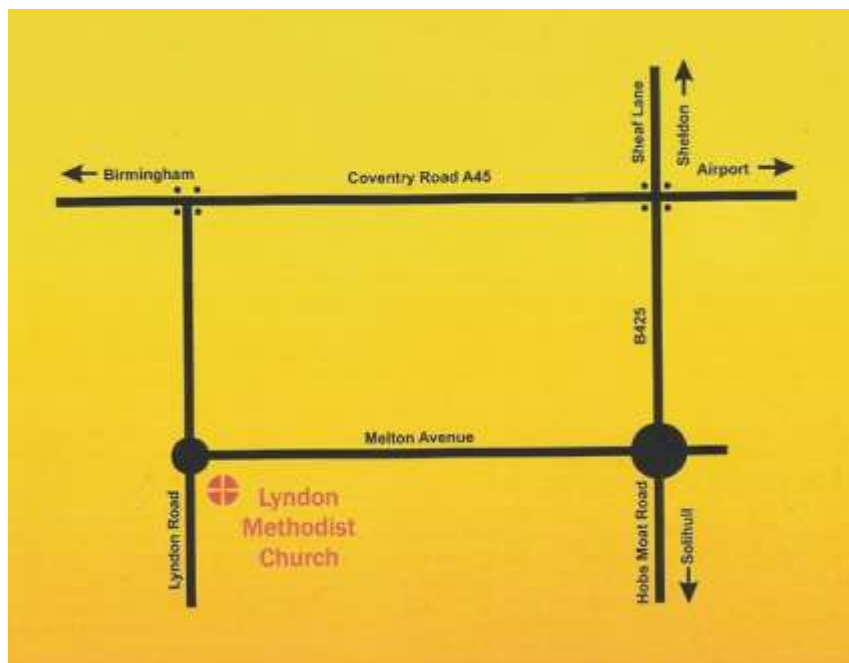
Our next issue will be March 2024

I am looking forward to receiving your contributions by

15th February 2024

by email to Lynne Tyler or to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

or by post to Church – address below



Lyndon Methodist Church
Melton Avenue
Solihull
West Midlands
B92 7QX

<https://lyndonmethodist.org.uk>

Charity No. 1150167