

Time 2 Share at Home

In the last newsletter I mentioned a presentation event to launch the new **Time to Share at Home** boxes. There was a not surprising, nevertheless still disappointing, non-existent turn out from clergy. There were a small number of lay attendees who became very energised by the presentation and the content of the boxes. By the end of the morning ten boxes had been taken with very clear ideas on who and where they would be used. This was very encouraging to see. Three of the boxes were taken by a toddler group. One of the leaders fed back to me the following day that they had met as usual as a group that morning and during a conversation with a parent the boxes were mentioned. The parent’s interest was aroused and once offered a box for free their face lit up and they have taken it away! I am now excited to hear the stories of how they used it and spiritually what difference it made. I’m left wondering what God might do. Another person, who is on the Management Committee of her local playgroup intends to see if there may be an opportunity for me to present to the parents. Others took a box that they intended to offer to specific households that they thought would be interested to trial them.



The presentation did bear fruit but isn’t the only way that I will need to use to gain access to people who would want to use these boxes.

As a simple but genuine offer I would be happy to come and present to target groups in churches and toddler groups. There may be other groups that would benefit and I would be happy to discuss these on a case by case basis. As always do get in touch to move this idea forward with a group you have recognised would like to hear all about these materials.

A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.
Issue number 174 December 2025

Diary Dates

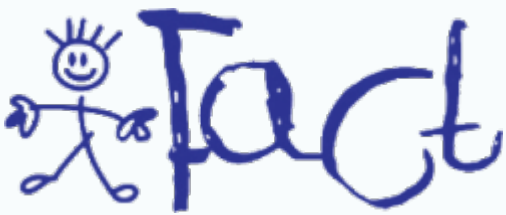


I’m encouraged that we currently have three volunteers coming into the office on a weekly basis to help in the production of the boxes. That said, I am very happy to have others join the merry band as many hands make light work! Do get in touch and come and see what’s actually involved.

The picture above shows some of the stock we have built up. Just to contradict myself, I will be much happier when we have created more stock but I will be as happy once we have given them all away!

To be clear.
These boxes are free of charge!

Dec	
8 th Dec	Day retreat
9 th Dec	Hope Church Hounslow Toddlers
14 th Dec	North Hillingdon Methodist 9.30am
21 st Dec	Ashford Common Methodist 10.30am
22 nd Dec - 4 th Jan	Closed for Christmas break
Jan	
11 th Jan	North Hillingdon Methodist 9.30am
12 th Jan	Laleham Playgroup (pm)
13 th Jan	Hope Church Hounslow Toddlers
14 th Jan	Little Fishes Toddlers
15 th Jan	Towntree Pre-school (am)
16 th Jan	Minnows Toddlers
18 th Jan	Ashford Common Methodist 10.30am
19 th Jan	Playbox Pre-school
20 th Jan	Tiddlers Toddlers
21 st Jan	Footprints Toddlers
22 nd Jan	Seedlings Toddlers
23 rd Jan	Playtime Toddlers
25 th Jan	Staines Methodist 10.30am
29 th Jan	Little tots Toddlers
29 th Jan	Trustees Meeting



Faith Awareness
in Children Trust

Majestic king, now small and weak,
the Word of God must learn to speak.

All things being equal, you should be receiving this latest newsletter as December starts. Therefore, I feel safe in using the ‘C’ word - Christmas! Yes, we are in the season of Advent, the awaiting of the arrival of Jesus the Saviour of the world. The one who came as a babe and the one who will, one day, return again. He who was born of a virgin and was both God and man at the same time. As I write that sentence I’m transported back to my time at Bible college, sitting through Christology lectures wondering what on earth they were talking about! My struggles were not helped by the students wandering around smugly stating that, ‘It was the beautiful paradox’. I confess I was having less than godly urges in those moments, as I wanted to remove their smile that shouted they had a neat and tidy certainty. I wanted to offer them some of my wrestling and wondering of how to hold the two possibilities of Jesus being both God and man at the same time without becoming aligned with those early theologians now counted as heretics! Just because it’s unfathomable for me doesn’t mean it’s untrue. I have contented myself over the years with allowing God to be God, to be beyond me while yet intensely engaged with me. (Another paradox!) I suspect my wresting is part of the reason I really dislike the way Church does Christmas! Its attempt to simply expose the depths of the Nativity in a palatable way has often led to a sugary, romantic, mush which is often heard in the romantic drivel that is sung. We get lost with donkeys, innkeepers, stables and wisemen standing next to shepherds. None of this is part of the story, but we love it because as we focus on that, we don’t have to explain how we hold the reality of Jesus being simultaneously God and man.

FACT enabling children and households to reflect on the Christian Gospel

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All is not lost (for me), I’m more and more encouraged by recent songs from the latest Christian songwriters. They are starting to afford me opportunities to sing truth with their carefully crafted words and simple tunes that are easy to pick up and sing along to. This Christmas I will be using this song in my intergenerational worship.

https://resoundworship.org/song/on_christmas_day

This extract below, of the words of the song, I find really insightful. I have created a song video, having purchased the recording and used a photo I took some years ago at a public exhibition in Rome!

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I love the idea of Jesus needing to learn how to speak while at the same time being the logos (word) of God. I hope you have a great Christmas and my challenge for you is that you wrestle with ‘the beautiful paradox’ which will lead you to worship an awesome God, who is beyond our understanding yet He became Immanuel - God with us.

Intergenerational Worship

November’s theme was ‘Sensory Worship’. This is often dismissed in some quarters as the ‘touchy-feely stuff’ or the gimmicks used to amuse members of the congregation. However, a biblical approach to acts of worship would most definitely insist on us offering the totality of ourselves. When asked by a teacher of the law what the greatest commandment was, Jesus instantly repeated the words set out in the books of the law in the Bible that say, **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.** NRSVA To love God, to follow God, and to worship God takes our totality, not just our understanding or speech. Acts of worship for many, regardless of denomination or theological emphasis, often settle into comfortable rhythms and patterns and then inadvertently succumb to over familiarity. By using a number of simple sensory elements to enhance what we would often do in worship brings a freshness and a new perspective. It allowed us to worship as whole people. We used a ‘welcome rap’ with simple actions that everyone was keen to join in with.



The short talk considered the image of a child being fed ‘solids’ (which are far from being solid!) For the feeder, the issue is all about the process, to get the food into the child. For the child, the issue is all about the experience of the multiple sensations; the food being tasted, it being felt in the mouth and squeezed out through the lips etc. The feeder may continue to shovel it back in but it’s just as likely to come back out as there are two competing issues at play. We allowed a song to aid our prayers for peace in the world and our nation and finally we all had a small beanbag onto which we wrote our names. A gentle challenge was given to keep it in our pockets and use it throughout the week as a prompt to pray.

Rev Ken Kingston - NHMC

Time to Worship Together began at North Hillingdon Methodist Church in February 2024. The monthly services have been an opportunity to invite families and others to an act of worship that is more interactive. Whilst this has had limited success (though not for the want of asking), the church has also seen other aspects of growth and development.

Praying

We have discovered different ways of praying. At first, some people said they found that prayer was missing. However, we opened our eyes and our ears to what was happening, and realised that prayer was taking place in the activities and the conversations during them. We were doing prayer, rather than just speaking or hearing prayers. And the joy was that prayer was able to continue using the ideas and things that we were invited to take home.

Gaining confidence

Once every couple of months, members of the congregation take responsibility for leading an act of worship themselves. **Time to Worship Together** has given us the confidence to explore and try out new things, such as creating a mountain from recycled rubbish as we looked at the account of Jesus’ transfiguration. And we were able to get some flags out to wave in the singing of hymns, following how well this had gone down a few weeks ago.

Increasing involvement

Different people are becoming more willing to be involved in leading worship, whether it is leading a meditation or read a small passage on the spot. And at November’s **Time to Worship Together**, one woman said how much she was enjoying the monthly services. She described it as a time when it was easier to participate in worship, rather than sometimes feel a bit like a spectator.

The key to all this is the invitational approach, which is behind so much of **Time to Worship Together** - whether it is inviting new people, inviting new ideas or inviting everyone to come and worship together. Our challenge now is how to take hold of this opportunity (with Simon’s help) and take it forward into the months and years ahead.

This column was written by Ken.

December’s Service

In December the worship will be centred around a part of the birth narrative of Jesus, found in Matthew’s Gospel. The emphasis is on Joseph’s numerous engagements with the angel. What a man of faith! He cared enough for Mary that he didn’t want to see her disgraced and was ready to quietly break off the engagement. We will read of the angel stepping in to change the course of history.



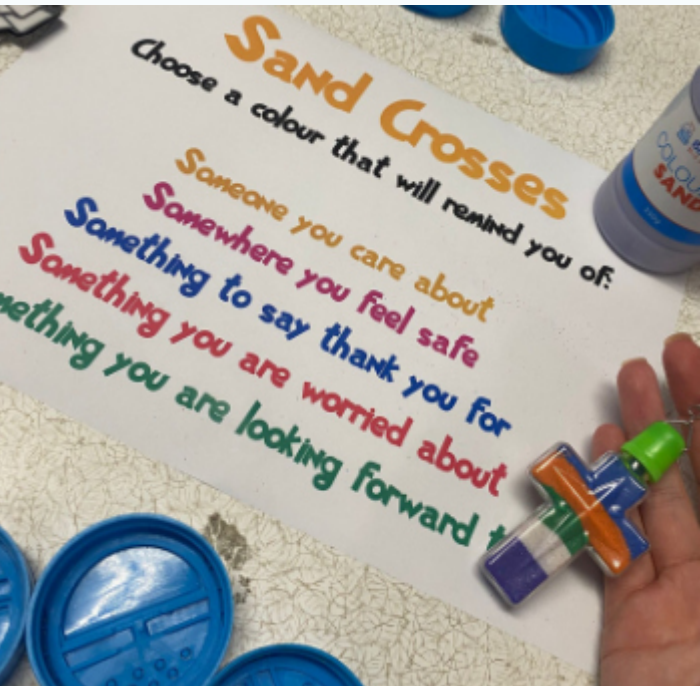
We will unpack three of the virtues we see in Joseph; friendship, helping / supporting and grace. The image below is of an A3 sheet that we will use in our prayer time. There is space to write names of people we will show friendship to, offer help to, and show grace to over the Christmas holidays. Once the names are written, prayers will be offered for them.



Finally there will be a wooden nativity scene decoration to be coloured and then, hopefully, hung on people’s Christmas trees as a simple reminder of who Christmas is really all about.

Boys Brigade

I enjoyed an evening at the Boys Brigade Company that meets at Ashford Common Methodist Church. I was able to work with the Anchor section first, then do a simple devotion for them and the Junior section whom I went onto work with for the last part of the evening. The theme for the evening was the Cross. We took part in a logo quiz and then a craft activity while also taking time to consider what the Cross symbolised and how we can talk to God about anything, recognising that Jesus has made a way for us to be friends with God.



Instructions for the craft



Finished, sand-filled Crosses.

**The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction!
But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God.**