



West Bergholt Methodist Church

Rev Ken Chalmers – 01206 545253
Church Contact - Judith Fletcher Tel. 01206 241969
Or e-mail awilks10p@btinternet.com

THE LINK

MARCH 2017

SUNDAY SERVICES

WORSHIP at 11 am will be led by

Mar. 5th Rev Ken Chalmers with communion,
followed by lunch and our AGM in the Hall.

Mar. 12th Mr Brian Llewellyn

Mar. 19th Mr Mike Abbs

Mar. 26th Local Arrangement - Mothering Sunday
(N.B. British Summer Time begins – do not forget to
put your clocks forward one hour.)

>>>>>><<<<<<<

If you would like to come to any of our services, or any
other church activities, but would need a lift, please
phone 01206 242511 or 241969.

All children are very welcome. Crèche facilities will be provided
when necessary
For further information please contact Mrs Susan Windscheffel.

OTHER MEETINGS

*Please feel free to join us at any of these – you will be
made most welcome...*

THE WOMENS WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Will take place on **FRIDAY 3rd MARCH** at
Methodist Church

Written by the women of Philippines, the theme will be
“Am I being unfair to you?”

Soup'n Snack Lunch at 12.30pm in Methodist Hall,
Chapel Lane

Service at 1.30pm

**ALL ARE WELCOME - Children & gentlemen
welcome!**

**Shared weekday communion at St. Mary's on
TUESDAY MARCH 14th at 11am**

**SUNDAY 5th March Annual Church Meeting–
approx. 1.00pm**

After lunch following the morning service.

Please stay/come if you can and bring your own lunch
– we will provide hot drinks– 12:30pm.

Please circulate reports before the meeting.

**QUIZ NIGHT SATURDAY 22nd April
at 7pm IN THE HALL**

TABLES OF FOUR at £20

Light Refreshments will be served. You are welcome
to bring your own nibbles and soft drinks (sorry no
alcohol allowed). Book your table by contacting
JUDITH (01206 241969)

FROM OUR MINISTER'S DESK.

The great German theologian and martyr, Dietrich
Bonhoeffer, is reported to have said, during his conflict with
the Nazi regime in his country: “Silence in the face of evil is
itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to
speak. Not to act is to act.”

I have thought very long and very hard as to what I
should write for my next newsletter item, following the
election and inauguration of Donald J Trump as President of
the United States, and in particular the reaction of people all
over the world to those events, and to the series of
statements and Executive Orders emanating from the White
House in Washington DC.

I have friends in the United States on both sides of the
growing divide between those who are appalled at the antics
and actions of the President, and those who are delighted
that someone has come to power with the determination to
do precisely what he declared he would do when on the
campaign trail.

The vast majority of those with whom I am in contact are
in a state of despair over the way in which bigotry, hatred,
and discriminatory behaviour are being deliberately and
cynically fostered and manipulated by Trump - who, let us
not forget, has been proven to have lied time and time
again, during his election campaign and afterwards. That
behaviour has not ceased since his inauguration as the
most powerful man in the world. He seems to embody that
old joke about politicians, which asks “How can you tell
when a politician is lying?” and which gets the answer, “You
can see his lips move.”

There have been all sorts of attempts to psychoanalyse
Trump, to categorise him as either mentally ill or
pathologically incompetent. Parallels have been drawn
between him and such historical figures as Adolf Hitler:
parallels of historical development and characteristics of
personality.

Now I am fully aware, as any other technophiles reading
this piece will be, that in internet usage, such parallels
usually fall foul of what is known as Godwin's Law — that is,
if an online discussion (regardless of topic or scope) goes
on long enough, sooner or later someone will compare
someone or something to Hitler.

However, despite Godwin's strictures, I believe that the
situation in the United States shows that great nation to be
in a state approaching crisis, and that crisis justifies the
comparison between the accession of Trump and that of
Adolf Hitler in Germany.

As a minister, and as a person, I have relationships with
people from all political parties and from none. In every
mainstream political party, I have found people with whom I
have agreed on certain issues, and those with whom I have
disagreed on others. Of course I have my own opinions, and
because the majority of my philosophical outlook tends me
to lean politically a certain way, I would identify myself with
one political party rather than another. That is neither
unusual nor remarkable. I have people I consider as friends,
including people in our churches, whose outlook leads them
into other political pastures. I may not agree with them, nor
they with me, but each respects the right of the other freely
to hold, and freely to express, those opinions - so long as

they do not infringe upon, nor threaten, the human rights, lives, or liberties either of our fellow citizens or our fellow human beings.

Such basic human decency is taken as a given in our unwritten British constitution, and enshrined in writing in the Constitution of the United States of America: but it is my belief that, very soon, those core values of respect and common decency which may be found (one hopes) in most mainstream parties, will soon come under threat - if they aren't already - from the rising tide of racism, misogyny, bigotry, and hatred which the debate about Britain's exit from the European Union, and the election of Donald Trump, have unleashed upon what we like to think of as "the free world".

Some would say that the Church should not get involved in politics. Whilst I might agree that the Church, corporately, cannot be seen to advance the cause of one political party, I do not agree that the church - by which I mean the individual members who make up the Church - should subscribe to some self-denying ordinance which abrogates our Christian, biblical responsibilities to care for the impoverished, the marginalised, the homeless, and the sick.

As Christians, we need to learn from our own history. In Germany in the 1930's, the churches tried to sup with the devil - to come to some understanding with Hitler and his evil crew. They even tried to accommodate Nazi so-called philosophy within their own belief system and ended up with the abomination which was called Deutsche Christen - German Christians.

We cannot pander in the same way to such abominable, twisted, and spirit-destroying creeds, wherever they come from: whether it be from wicked inadequate individuals (or the organisations which control them), hijacking faith to justify the murder of innocent holidaymakers or people of other faiths, or from those rapacious corporate fat cats - and yes, I'm pointing at you, Mr Trump - who claim a light veneer of spurious Christianity in order to further their own agenda, whilst living lives of conspicuous greed, prejudice, and lack of compassion.

We must stand up against those who would discriminate against the poor, the refugee, and the migrant, fuelled by their own fear of the "other", and by prejudice. We must oppose, and be seen to oppose, those who would hijack religion - any religion - to promote evil acts, lacking in compassion, which dehumanise both perpetrator and victim.

As individual Christians it isn't always easy to speak out, or to stand up for what we know to be right... but surely in our hearts, we know that sooner or later the time will come when our colours need to be nailed to the mast? Perhaps the time is now, before we repeat the mistakes of the past.

Now, the quote with which I began this newsletter is actually unattributable. Bonhoeffer is believed to have said it, but it is not to be found anywhere in writing which is indisputably his work. The quotation I end with, however, is verifiably his own, and though written in the 1940's, it rings down through the ensuing seventy plus years like the Liberty Bell so beloved by Philadelphians:

"We must finally stop appealing to theology to justify our reserved silence about what the state is doing — for that is nothing but fear. 'Open your mouth for the one who is voiceless' — for who in the church today still remembers that that is the least of the Bible's demands in times such as these?"

With every good wish, Alan Jenkins, Minister

The next **COFFEE MORNING** will be on
Weds. 8th MARCH 10 - 11.30am
BRING A FRIEND WITH YOU
Coffee or Tea and Biscuits - 50p
Gifts for Cake and General Stalls
will be appreciated.



Greetings Cards will be on sale

Thank you for your support.

February result - £28-91

Come and enjoy a coffee and a chat.

"Our Story"

A series of meetings led by Rev Ken Chalmers will **now start on Wednesday morning March 15** at 10.30 in our Church hall. There will be three further meetings before Easter on March 22, 29 and April 5. We will continue after Easter on May 17 and 24 **Please note we have had to change some of the dates.** All meetings will be on Wednesday mornings starting at 10.30 with coffee and will close by 12.00. We would love you to come to all the meetings but realise this may not be possible, so come along to as many as you can make. All involved with and concerned for our Church are welcome.

Easter School Holiday Activities

We are holding another of our **Coffee and Craft** mornings providing fun activities for young families (children please bring a parent along). This will take place in the West Bergholt Methodist Church Hall, Chapel Lane from 10.30 – 12.00 on **Monday 10th April**. For further details phone Andrew (242511). Donations of cakes would be appreciated.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



Our next meeting will be at 2.30pm

On Wednesday 15th March – Speaker Rev Ron Smith

SUNDAY MARCH 12th AFTERNOON TEA

We are holding another afternoon tea from 3.00 to 5.00 for the older members of our community, particularly the **housebound and lonely**. We would like to hear from anyone who would appreciate an outing and the company of others for the afternoon. Do you know of a neighbour or friend whom we could contact to invite? Transport will be arranged as necessary. **Offers of help with catering and transport will be appreciated**, please speak to Judith or Andrew.

Lent Groups, 2017

St. Mary's are holding a series of Lent Bible studies in their church hall. You are warmly invited to join them when we will be exploring some of the **Parables of Jesus** and their relevance for us today. Dates for the sessions are: **7 March, 14 March, 21 March, 28 March & 4 April – all at 8.00pm**. The group will start with coffee/tea and biscuits from 8pm-8.15pm and aims to finish promptly at 9.15pm. Each session will involve some discussion in smaller groups. All are welcome – you do not (necessarily) have to attend each session.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Mon. Apr. 10th – Coffee and Craft in hall.
Fri. Apr. 14th – Good Friday Service, at 10.30am at Methodist Church.
Sun Apr 16th – Easter Sunday
Sat. Apr. 22nd – Quiz evening in the Hall 7.00pm.
May 14th – 20th Christian Aid week.

Copy for the April edition should be with Andrew Wilks by the third Sunday in March – Mar. 19th

please.