

February 2018
The Bridge No. 24

**Newsletter of
Ponte Sant'Angelo
Methodist Church Rome**



MINISTER`S LETTER

Have you noticed how important food is for all our celebrations in Church? Whether we have birthdays or baptisms and confirmations or our monthly pot luck lunches, the community of Ponte Sant`Angelo comes together to celebrate its unity and fellowship in Christ at the conclusion of worship in our schoolroom. But in our worship too, we come together to share in the bread and wine of communion once a month as we affirm our fellowship not just one with another but one in Christ, gathered around the Lord`s Table.



**Jesus said to his disciples.
"Do this in remembrance of me."**

At our Covenant service on the first Sunday in January we re-affirmed our baptismal promises to be followers of Jesus, his disciples doing his work in the world. As the communion hymn reminds us:

To fill each human house with love,
it is the sacrament of care;
the work that Christ began to do
we humbly pledge ourselves to share.

Two ways we can do this as we journey towards and through Lent is

Firstly, to spend more time in bible study, reading particularly about the life and teaching of Jesus. Maybe set yourself the task of reading right through this year`s gospel of Mark? Some notes to help you will be available at the back of the church. Our worship on Sunday needs to be supplemented by our Christian education as we grow in grace and in knowledge of God.

Secondly we can, as Jesus himself did, devote some time to fasting as well as to prayer. Churches Together in Rome each year take a particular focus for our Lenten giving and working together for good in some part of the World. This year the Rice Bowl project is to support a food programme

with children in Sri Lanka (see an article about this later on in this edition). The origins of the title **Rice Bowl Project** go back (as those who have been here a long while will remember) to an appeal to church members to have a simple meal, of plain rice, once a week and to give the proceeds of the cost of your normal meal to the project. I reckon this would mean that on average we should be giving at least 3 euros per member per week throughout the six weeks of Lent. So let's aim again for a total of at least 1,000 euros as our contribution from Ponte Sant'Angelo. Envelopes will be available from Marius on 18th February and will be collected up on Palm Sunday the 25th March.

One consequence of our eating together is that we generate a lot of waste which is not good for us or for the world we live in. There has been a lot of publicity recently about governments doing more to reduce plastic waste which is finding its way into our oceans and seas and on our beaches with disastrous results for marine life, the food chain and our public health. But, as with all things environmental, it starts with us. And we as a Church Council want to promote a responsible use of our resources. So there is a note about the Church Council discussion on this and what we are proposing. Let us know what you think in time for the next Church Council meeting.

We have just finished our annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Sadly, we can't always share a communion meal with some of our Christian sisters and brothers, though our table here is an open one for all baptised Christians. But we can work with others to feed our hungry world, both spiritually and physically. Our quest for unity demands that we work together for God's mission.

As the last verse of the communion hymn (StF 596) reminds us:

Then grant us courage, Father God,
To choose again the pilgrim way
And help us to accept with joy
The challenge of tomorrow's day (Fred Kaan)

Let us go into this year full of hope that we can together work for God and for good in the world.

Pastor Tim

World Methodist Council

The WMC has announced the award of the **Methodist Peace Prize**. Methodist Churches in Italy (OPCEMI) was chosen for their work with and commitment to migrants and refugees dating back to 1989. This small church (part of the Union of Methodists and Waldensians in Italy) has exhibited great courage when faced with the large crisis of refugees and migrants flooding Europe. When others said the problems were insurmountable, the OPCEMI's attitude has been that "we could do no other- we could not sit by and let this happen".



It is fitting that the work of OPCEMI and Methodist churches in Italy has been recognized in this way, leading to the present work done by Mediterranean Hope through the FCEI and in collaboration with the Community of St. Egidio. Recently when I visited our President, Mirella Manocchio, she gave me a copy of a book *Una Chiesa in Cammino*, written by her father Alfonso about the pioneering work of Methodists in Sicily with migrants, in Palermo and Scicli, from the 1970s

onwards. Do ask Pastor Tim if you would like to borrow it to read.

The Lampedusa cross pictured above is put on our communion table to remind us of our commitment to the work of Mediterranean Hope in conjunction with our Ecumenical partners.

The work with migrants has been commended many times in recent weeks by Pope Francis, who has chosen to highlight the necessity for Christians to be hospitable and to reach out to those who land up on our shores, with practical support through teaching and health care and help for employment. Fr. Antonio Spadaro reminded us in a recent lecture at the

Lutheran Church that the Pope himself is a migrant, son of migrant parents from Italy to Argentina and now the reverse migration which brought a Cardinal “from the ends of the earth” to be Bishop of Rome!

Churches Together in Rome has chosen as its biblical and theological work together to study a book on ***Love the Stranger***. In our first session we were reminded how many of us at the meeting were migrants, though mostly voluntary rather than forced to flee countries because of social and economic circumstances. I hope that the presence of our Lampedusa Cross is a sign of our solidarity as pilgrim people who journey together with other Christians in our common love of God which leads us to love our neighbours.

INTERN NEWS

The past couple of months have been busy for me - December was full of Christmas events and activities, I especially enjoyed the All Age worship service which I was involved in and the carol service at the British Embassy. Before I went home for Christmas my brother Joseph flew to Rome for a few days and it was great to show him the sights! I really enjoyed spending two weeks at home for Christmas and my birthday with my family and friends! January has also been a busy month with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. I enjoyed going to the evening prayers at St Paul`s Without the Walls Basilica for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It was such a lovely service in a beautiful church. Despite, the business of January I am really enjoying being back in the beautiful city!

Also, on the 12th January it was great to be able to attend Animazione Giovanile Roma first meeting of 2018, where a group of us



discussed ideas and activities for the next couple of months together. It would be great to get some more young adults going to the youth group meetings and activities! Look out for details about activities on the notices.

I am also excited to start creating and developing a website for the Methodist Ecumenical Centre Rome (MEOR), which I have many ideas for. Publicity wise, I have started posting on the churches Facebook page and Twitter, so please follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

On the 3rd February I am flying back to the UK for another residential with the other interns, who I'm looking forward to see again and hearing more about their internships. The three days will focus on leadership and speakers include Helen Cameron and Gareth Powell.

Abigail

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

We were delighted to welcome into membership by confirmation Grace and Florence on Covenant Sunday and to celebrate in advance Florence's 16th birthday. The following Sunday we were able to celebrate Sofia's 2nd birthday.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Twinkle's father earlier this month. Twinkle, Vijay and Mark returned to India for the funeral and we hold them in our prayers at this time.

We are glad that Sandra Mi is recovering after surgery. We are sorry to have lost some people who have moved away from Rome recently, Anna Twomlow to start studies in London, Judith Same and Fortunate who have returned to Zimbabwe. We are pleased to welcome those who have joined us recently; Michael Annang returning after many years away and Fiona Kendall, a Methodist local preacher and lawyer from the UK who has recently taken up a post working with Mediterranean Hope.

Sri Lankan use of MEOR

We have been glad also to welcome Pastor Festus Pinto and colleagues from Sri Lanka to worship. They and others connected with the work of Lanka Bible College are using space in MEOR for 6 hours a week to pursue Bible and theological studies.

BIBLE STUDY HOME GROUP

Bible study home group "Monteverde" meets on **Saturday at 5.30 pm**. We will meet every 15 days from 5.30 pm to 7.15 pm to sing Christian songs, to study the God's Word and to pray, in an atmosphere of love and respect for one another. The participants belong to different Christian denominations, thus allowing us to share a great variety of experiences in the Lord, build us up in the Word and create fellowship.

We have just started studying the book of Acts.

Here as follows there are the dates of meetings until May 2018 ; dates might be susceptible to variation, therefore before coming please contact us:

3/2/2018

17/2/2018

10/3/2018

24/3/2018

07/4/2018

21/4/2018

05/05/2018

20/5/2018

**Details: Mobile 338/1675680 - Via del Casaletto 63 (Monteverde area) -
Buzz Montelli-Milani
Come and join us!**

Alessia and Federico

The Ecumenical Garden at S. Gregorio al Celio - Sponsored by Churches Together in Rome

Needs more members of all its congregations to volunteer to help maintain this worthwhile project!



On two Saturdays a month, from 10am – 1pm.

Rose and Wayne Wentz, from the Caravita Congregation will supervise volunteers in planting, raking, weeding, trimming. All tools provided. Please contact the Rev`d Dana English from All Saints` Anglican Church at dlenglish1@gmail.com if you are interested in helping! Please join in this project to strengthen our ecumenical ties and enjoy the beauty of a garden in the middle of Rome!

REPORT ON THE RICE BOWL PROJECT 2018

This year`s Rice Bowl project is supporting the World Food Programme`s Sri Lanka School Meals Programme. In northern Sri Lanka, WFP School Meals Programme is feeding at school 160, 000 conflict affected children in 963 schools helping them to survive and achieve their dreams. Money will be transformed in food distributed every day at school to Sri Lankan boys and girls. It has been suggested that we give the proceeds of the Bake Sale on 4th March to our contribution for the Rice Bowl Project.

Sri Lanka, with a population of around 20 million, nearly 4.8 million people are undernourished and 2.4 million are food insecure. Underweight and anemia affect nearly a quarter of children and women, respectively.



World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. Each year, WFP assists some 80 million people in around 80 countries.



WFP School Meals Programme represents a sturdy safety net providing children with daily nutritious meals in schools, contributing to children's nutrition and cognitive status. School meals:

- improve the physical and cognitive capacity
- keep children's attention focused on their studies
- motivate parent to send their children to school
- help increase school enrolment, attendance and retention.

Photo credits: WFP/Nguyen Duc Hoang



World Food Programme Italia

WFP Italia Onlus
Via Cesare Giulio Viola, 68-70
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www.wfp.org/it - wfp.italia@wfp.org

TEDDY BEAR PROJECT

The Teddy Bear Project is sponsored by The (German-speaking) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Via Veneto. It was formed to provide for babies and young children of immigrants. Currently, a small group of ladies meet at the Lutheran Church the first Thursday most months to provide families with diapers, gently used clothing & shoes, toys & books. The Lutheran Church purchases the diapers.

I'm happy to say that I've been involved with this project for over a year. I love holding the babies and helping the Moms pick out something special for their little ones.

Most of our families come from Nigeria. We tend to have more boys than girls & always need more boy clothes! Our moms are grateful for the donations.

I'm very thankful for the generosity of our church for helping me and our Lutheran friends with this project. There is a box under the table in back of the sanctuary if you'd like to donate gently used baby or children's clothes up to age 5. Shoes are our biggest need. Also useful are books (Italian or English) & toys.

Ask me to see pictures of "my babies."

Thanks, Leslie Kiely

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

On 10th February Pastor Tim has been invited with others to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the community of Sant` Egidio at San Giovanni in Laterano.

On 13th February (Shrove Tuesday) there will be a morning service at All Saints (Via del Babuino) at 11am. This will be an opportunity for us to say farewell and wish the Rev Dana English well as she leaves Rome to prepare for an appointment in England. Many of us have cause to give thanks for Dana's work amongst us particularly her commitment to Ecumenical relationships. The contribution to the creation of an Ecumenical garden at San Gregorio is noted elsewhere.

On 14th February (Ash Wednesday) there will be the Ecumenical service at the beginning of Lent at Caravita at 7pm.

On 2nd March there will be the **World Day of Prayer** service at Via Firenze at a time to be announced (probably 6pm).

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY



The highlight of the many activities in the week was for us the invitation to lead evening prayers in the Methodist tradition at St Paul's Without the Walls. There were not many of us in this vast Basilica but our presence for the first time was significant in providing worship on a nightly basis which also drew on Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox traditions. Thank you to those who came to support it. We had good conversations over refreshments afterwards with Cardinal Harvey, Abbot Roberto and the monks of the community. Pastor Tim preached a short sermon on The Catholic Spirit and we sang two Methodist hymns, *What shall our greeting be* (Fred Pratt Green) and *Love Divine all loves excelling* (Charles Wesley).



FORTHCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES

- February 4th Pastor Tim with communion
 February 11th Pastor Tim (this is a no car Sunday)
 February 18th Pastor Tim
 February 25th Pastor Tim (to include the birthday basket. This is also another no car Sunday). The Church Council meeting afterwards.
 March 4th Pastor Tim with communion

THERE WILL BE BAKE SALE THIS DAY FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Weekly Offerings[P = cash; E = Envelopes; BB = Birthday Basket.]

07 Jan.	P 353, 95	E 498, 00		TTL. 851, 95
14 Jan.	P 148, 31	E 353, 00		TTL. 501, 31
21 Jan.	P 102, 43	E 450, 00		TTL. 552, 43
28 Jan.	P 74, 65	E 463, 00	BB 90, 00	TTL. 627, 65
Total	P 679, 34	E 463, 00		TTL. 2, 533, 34