

# Coalpool Methodist Church

## 2011



[www.coalpoolmc.co.uk](http://www.coalpoolmc.co.uk)

## From The Editor

Well what a year and goes by so quickly  
First I apologise for the late arrival of this years magazine, I usually try to get it out by the Christmas Fayre, but with one thing another it has been hard to find the time to edit it. You will find it a little thinner than usual, due mainly a lack of material gathered over the year. Special thanks to everyone that has contributed articles, keep them coming. Probably we may schedule the magazine to come out at the end of the year, well December time at least, handy because I have managed to included this years Christmas Fayre report. I have had good response from people looking at our web site, [www.coalpoolmc.co.uk](http://www.coalpoolmc.co.uk) you can find information on there, updated regularly and if you want, you can even join our mailing list, it's free. Just leaves me to say, have an enjoyable and peaceful Christmas, enjoy the birth of our Lord, the coming of Jesus and may 2012 bring you happiness. God Bless

Phil Broadbent

## Dates For Your Diary

### 2012

Saturday 14th January	Coalpool Christmas Party 1.00pm
Saturday 11th February	Coffee Morning 11.00am
Saturday 11th March	J.M.A service 11.00am
Thursday 5th April	Maundy Thursday Service 7.30pm
Monday 23th April	St George's Day Party 7.00pm
Saturday 2nd June	Diamond Jubilee Party
Saturday 7th July	Strawberry Fayre 2.00pm
Sunday 15th July	Anniversary of Song. 11am & 3.00pm
Saturday 6th October	Coffee Morning
Sunday 23rd September	Harvest Festival Service 11am
Sunday 23rd October	Church Anniversary 11am
Saturday 24th November	Christmas Fayre 11.00am

## Coalpool Methodist Church

*Thoughts from Linda Brown (Lay Worker)*

Where has the time gone! I cannot believe that I have been in this Circuit for just over two years. I have shared in some wonderful experiences in the time I have been here throughout all the Churches and have met some wonderful people who have been such great friends to Don and me. One of the Church's I work alongside is here at Coalpool and we have shared in great times of friendship and fellowship which have been of great encouragement to me and I can honestly say there has been some tremendous times of fun and laughter, when helping with Christmas Fayre's and Coffee Mornings etc. One of the new ventures we are working together at Coalpool for the New Year is a Drop-in Coffee Morning (details will follow) and I see this as a great way of reaching out to the Community and letting people know we are there for them, it is only with the help and commitment of the people here, who give so much of their talents and time to this Church that we can achieve this and I thank them all greatly for all they do. This will be an exciting time for the future of the Church and we pray for God's guidance, so to all who may read this please support if you can. I would like to leave you with a Christmas poem which I pray will speak to us all.

Linda Brown

### **What is Christmas?**

*Is it just a day  
at the end of the year?  
A happy holiday filled  
with merry good cheer?  
A season for presents –  
both taking and giving?  
A time to indulge  
in the pleasures of living?  
Are we lost in a meaningless,  
much-huddled daze  
That covers our minds  
like a grey autumn haze?*

### **Cover Photos**

**Top:** Is this why we go to Coalpool?

**Middle:** Fun at the Party

**Bottom:** Who owns a pair of shoes like these?

## MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends, [revtjohn@davies28-04.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:revtjohn@davies28-04.freeserve.co.uk)  
**'Good King Wenceslas looked out.....'**

I love a traditional Christmas. For us on the farm it was a break from hard work – a time of carols and churchgoing, but also of good food, of colour and light amidst the darkness – and of warmth. Lots and lots of lovely heat.

In our beloved, cold and draughty Welsh farmhouse normally the ice used to form on the INSIDE of the bedroom windows, as well as the outside, normally there was only one modest fire in the kitchen. But for Christmas normal winter life was suspended. Like being back in Tudor or Victorian times, there was warmth, and plenty to eat and drink. In the massive and normally unused 'middle' room, which should have been the living room had it not been far too large to heat for most of the year, a Yule log surrounded by mounds of coal blazed for days in the vast fireplace; I used to sit for hours enjoying it, and sneak down at night when everyone else was asleep just to look at it glowing under the small coal put on to damp it for the night. And as I sat there I would rejoice at the heat and think of good King Wenceslas taking his winter fuel to an elderly man gathering sticks, whilst my heart went out to those who could not heat their homes, I knew some. A local widow, who habitually had a fire of three coals, no more, no less. Other homes too where people wore layer upon layer upon layer to keep warm. Even as a child I knew well that there were many worse off – and a lot colder – than we were. My father, raised in a jobless home, in a mining valley, in the depression, would tell of scavenging slag tips for a few precious lumps and then seeing if you could get home with them without getting caught. Perhaps that was why he liked to burn that big fire at Christmas. Fuel poverty is not a new phenomenon. We have simply forgotten what it is like, due to cheap North Sea Gas, and the relatively inexpensive oil which has been with us for the last few decades. I fear those days are gone for good – and now on top of rising unemployment, the Welfare Reform Bill and increasing food prices we face increasing heating bills as well.

Like the Welfare Reform Bill it will hit hardest those homes where life is already a struggle, where every penny is counted, people see little hope in the future, for them or their children and especially in urban deprived areas such as ours. That is why the initiative by the Community Foundation Network to accept donations from those who do not really need their pensioners Winter Fuel Allowance and redistribute it to those most in need is to be commended. It has rightly struck a chord with our nation, raising £100,000 in its first week. I would defend a universal fuel payment – many senior citizens who need it would be too proud to claim it themselves and would otherwise fall through the net, but it is equally right that those who really don't need it should give some or all of it up to those who do. The Black Country Food Bank too is a marvellous initiative and will help give hope to those in increasing hardship, from families to teenagers thrown out of their homes by callous parents. This Christmas, let us remember those in need both abroad and at home and do what we can to help – and may the peace and blessing of the Christ Child rest upon us all.

Every blessing

*John Davies*

[www.localgiving.com](http://www.localgiving.com)  
J10 Foodbank Mon or Thur 10:00 – 1:00  
Church @Junction10  
323 Wolverhampton Rd ,  
Walsall, WS2 8RL  
[www.blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk](http://www.blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk)

**Good Gifts From above,  
by the late Betty Sandoz**

**When you are lonely, may God give you love.  
When you are down, may God give you joy.  
When you are troubled, may God give you peace.  
When things are complicated, may God give you simple beauty.  
When things are chaotic, may God give you inner silence.  
When things look empty, may God give you hope**

## Report on this last years charity

Every year we nominate a different charity, which gets our total support. This last year no exception as we chose to give to The Alzheimer's Society, who continue to provide quality information and services to people with dementia within the local area. The local society is now based in Glebe House, 3 Bradford Place, Walsall, WS11PL or if you got the internet find out more by email to: [walsall.branch@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:walsall.branch@alzheimers.org.uk) or visit the main web site: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk).

Our total raised was in the region of £400.00. Well done.



Another great quiz, organised by Judy and Phil invited the masterminds of Britain to pit the wits against the questions. There was no theme this year, but we managed ten teams, a total of about sixty taking part. The winning team, pictured left, won the new, coveted trophy, supplied by Robert Robinson. First and second placed teams donated their winnings to Coalpools fund, we raised £232.50

## A Gift of a Heirloom

At a time when Mrs Beryl Wright was putting items together for us to sell at Coalpool, I was cheeky enough to ask if by any chance she had a cloth suitable for use in Communion. Our existing one, kindly donated by Joyce and Reg Butler some years ago, was well past it's best, (now in our archives) Without hesitation, Beryl offered a cloth, which her mother, Minnie, had at the age of 17 years, crocheted the edges, (some 90 years ago) a heirloom indeed! What kindness to donate it to Coalpool, we shall treasure it. Over the years Beryl and her sister in law, Mary, have supported Coalpool in many ways, we owe them a debt of gratitude. **Edna Popple**

## In and Out of Christmas. 2010/11

The Church builds up for the Christmas season, with the first event on 27th November 2010, with the all famous, "Christmas Fayre". Traditionally this event like most, includes a lot of food, this one no exception. Hot pork baps, the speciality of the house, a range of stalls selling out of their wares, visitors making a "B"line to pick up the bargains.

With the help of the raffles and tombolas and of course the special visitor Santa clanging his bell to attract people into the fayre, it all helped to make a very successful event raising £802 for our funds. Of course we started the season of Advent, the lighting of the first candle, then one each week, till the final candle lit on Christmas Day, a somewhat magical time. This led us up to the evening of the Candle Light Carol Service, on 19th December, the choir and congregation sung out to a welcomed full house, yes even under the extreme conditions of heavy snow. Thank you all for the effort everyone took to get there to make it a truly wonderful Christmas Carol Service. Christmas morning, our special family service at 10am, was enjoyed by a few, though the Simmons family made their annual pilgrimage from across the road, to join us in a small service, led by our Gilbert. The festive celebrations came to an end with the "Christmas Party", on 8th January, not really Christmas, but the only date we could have, due to Coalpool's very busy social calendar.

Over sixty people attended to enjoy a superb meal and during the afternoon party we had a quiz and the usual raffle. There was no need for any other entertainment, because everyone enjoyed each others company and fellowship, chatting the time away. As always a very big thank you, to all that helped in any way.

### Grace

A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their, six year old daughter and said "would you like to say the Blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say" the girl replied "Just pray what you've heard Mummy pray," answered the wife. The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner"

## Your earliest memories

How far can you go back, what's your earliest recollection of life, what image is cast in your mind, it's funny we seem to remember things of years ago, but can't remember what we did yesterday or my case five minutes ago. Well I can go back to when I was about 6 months. I had contracted Scarlet Fever and the image I can still see, was of my Mom and Auntie Mabel looking into, what I remember was my cast iron cot, I can still to this day visualise the side rails, this was at Kingswinford Hospital. Another is when I was outside, lying in a pram underneath the window and the cat had jumped onto me and I cried out for Mom. Next was first days at infants school, I cried my eyes out, didn't like stopping dinners because, I to this day still remember the smell of boiled potatoes and cabbage and on a recent visit to the school, after 55 years, it still smells of it! Judy can recall the first day at nursery and coming home in her very pretty dress and helping her mom pick the blackcurrants from their garden. Another memory was going to hospital having her tonsils out, aged about three years.

What's your earliest image, that's got you thinking, let me know. *Phil*

### **COALPOOL LANE** a little history

**Coalpool was inhabited by the 1540's when a family named Stone owned Coalpool House. There was a mill here in 1692.**

**Field names of Far and Near Coal Pit Pieces indicate early mining activity.**

**In the mid 19th Century Coalpool village was centred around the junction of Harden and Goscote Lanes. Ryecroft Cemetery was laid out in 1894 and a pathway at the rear which led to the Sixty Steps crossing over the railway line was known as Colliers Walk.**

**Early in the 20th Century Coalpool Lane was very narrow, bordered by hedges and banks with just enough room for two carts to pass.**

**(Walsall Local History Centre Essex Street Walsall)**

A man went on holiday to Ireland. On return he brought back two sacks of mobile phones. At customs, he was asked if he had anything to declare and they wanted to know what was in the sacks. They looked and then asked why he had so many phones. He replied they were for his friend, who asked to him to be sure to bring back two saxophones !!!!



## *Womens World Day of Prayer*

Coalpool again hosted the service which had been prepared this year by the women of Chile. St Thomas R.C shared the prayers and readings with us and it was good to welcome them and so many other friends. Our Chapel was decorated with fruit and flowers, the Chilean flag was displayed, together with pictures giving some idea of life in Chile. Chilean women, we are told, tend to work in less well paid jobs and are adept at juggling work with family responsibilities. It is disturbing to learn there is a high incidence of domestic violence and the Churches have taken a stand, offering recreation workshops and providing spiritual support ill treated women.

“How many loaves have you?” was an appropriate theme for this service from Chile, as bread is eaten at every meal and is very much part of everyday life. As a tribute to these brave women, our women wore brightly coloured skirts, tops and shawls to represent their traditional dress. We displayed bread as a sign of their solidarity and hope in Christ, water to represent their many springs and earth, wheat to be turned into bread to feed their people. Chileans have suffered greatly over the years in their efforts to gain better living conditions and prayers were offered for all who had been ill treated or died for their cause.

Jean Blackhall was our speaker and keeping to the theme, “How many loaves have you?” She referred to the Widow of Zarepath, who was willing to give her only meal to Elijah (1 Kings 17) and to the feeding, by Jesus, of the Five Thousand, with just five loaves and two fishes. (Mark 6 v 30-44)

Jean reminded us of the 33 miners trapped underground Chile, for 69 days, how many loaves did they share?

A verse from one of the chosen hymns, seems to have stayed with me:

“Put Christ into each others hands, He is love's deepest measure,

In love make peace, give peace a chance and share it like a treasure.

It was a lovely hour, shared with women, (and some men) in 170 countries.

It was estimated that 5,000 plus services will have been held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland alone. Some lovely words were spoken and sung, we left blessing each other and sharing bread.

It was a privilege to have been there.

***Edna Popple***

## From The Senior Steward ..... Gilbert Rowley

The year 2011 has been fairly successful one for Coalpool Methodist Church The Thursday fellowship has been growing in popularity since it began, supported well and the people that attend, love it! The lunch after the service has been the icing on the cake, no doubt, but the varying topics have kept the interest alive, long may it continue, with your support. I wish to say a special Thank You to all who provide the food, we average around 22 people but higher figures on some days have been known.

On a downside, we are disappointed that we don't get any young folk or children, other than one regular and that's Kathy, we do welcome all. The work goes on, including the missions and I take this opportunity to thank Vera for JMA collections and Pauline for the general fund. Altogether we raised £700 to help those starving children we see on our TV screens, we are the second highest donator in the Walsall Circuit! Finally, I would like to express on your behalf, our thanks to Linda Brown, our organist Joyce, and to **everybody** who work so hard to keep our little chapel alive and so welcoming, not forgetting our minister Rev. John Davies.

**"I can't believe I have 3 more lawns to mow", said Tom forlornly.  
"I think I have split personalities" said Steve being frank!**

### Why Jesus is Better Than Santa

Santa lives at the North Pole: **JESUS is everywhere**

Santa rides in a sleigh: **JESUS rides on the wind and walks on water**

Santa lets you sit on his lap: **JESUS lets you rest in his arms**

Santa comes but once a year: **JESUS is an ever present help**

All Santa can offer is Ho, Ho, Ho: **JESUS offers health, help and hope**

While Santa puts gifts under your tree: **JESUS became our gift and died on a tree.....the cross**

**We need to put Christ back into CHRISTmas!**

# 50 "The Golden Years"



Well what an achievement, fifty years of marriage celebrated amongst family and friends together at Coalpool. Daughters Angie and Sandra, with some help from Church friends, got the event organised for a fantastic party. Tables waited on by daughters and granddaughters, as we were served with fish and chips and dessert to follow, excellent fine dining.

Entertainment provided by a magician/comedian Ron Popple "Close encounters of the magic kind" Comedy bingo, in Welsh, from Angie, don't know who won, couldn't understand her. And even Elsie herself chipped in a with fine sing along.



The Tiller Girls

The partying didn't stop there, celebrations with family continued on and both were very happy with all that went on. A great time was had by all, very best wishes to you both.

Love from Coalpool

## Congratulations Elsie and Eugene



**From Marleen Swanepole,  
South Africa**



Our 14 year old dog, Abbey, died last month, the day after my 4 year old daughter, Meredith, was crying and talking about how she missed Abbey. She asked if she could write a letter to God, so that when Abbey got to heaven, God would recognise her, I told her that I thought we could so she dictated these words.

**Dear God,**

Will you please take care of my dog, she died yesterday and is with you in heaven. I miss her very much but am glad you let me have her even though she got sick. She likes to play ball and swim so hope you play with her. Have sent a picture to you then you will know she is my dog. *Love Meredith*

We put the letter and photo of Abbey and Meredith in an envelope and addressed it to God in Heaven and put our return address on it. After putting lots of stamps on as it had a long way to go, we posted it at the post office. A few days later she asked if God had received the letter, I told her I thought He had. Yesterday there was a package wrapped in gold paper in our porch addressed to Meredith. She opened it and inside was a book by Mr Rogers called "When a pet dies." Taped inside the front cover was Meredith's letter to God. On the opposite page was the photograph and this note:

**Dear Meredith**

Abbey arrived safely in heaven. The photo was a big help and I recognized Abbey right away. She is not sick anymore and her spirit is here with me like it stays in your heart. Abbey loved being your dog. Since we don't need our bodies in heaven, I haven't got a pocket to keep the photo in so am returning it to you. You have a wonderful mother and I picked her especially for you. I send my blessings every day and remember that I love you very much. I am easy to find, I am wherever their is love.

*Love God*

Marleen Swanepole, South Africa

Submitted by David Oakley



This year the service for JMA taken by Linda Brown, was a lovely service.



All the children, including the big children, were presented with badges and certificates for raising money for this great cause. It was nice to see everyone being honoured, but especially for the first time, our Kathy came forward to receive her medal. As always a special thank you to Vera, Pauline and anyone else involved, for the hard work collating and collecting in all the money, a fantastic £362 was raised

**NHS Project**

From the 22nd June for six weeks, Coalpool were privileged to play host to a community health project, sponsored by the NHS.

The courses were held one day a week and local people were invited to attend the sessions designed for anyone with terminal and long term health conditions, but also catered for anyone suffering from, tense muscles, pain, stress/anxiety, depression, shortness of breath fatigue or difficult emotions. Help and management of symptoms in the form of, help with medication, motivation and exercise plan, eat more healthily and feel more positive and relaxed by joining this, Expert Patients Programme, better still, it's free.

Programmes run at different locations throughout Walsall Borough and each session is two and a half hours long.

The Expert Patients Programme was led by Self Care Management Team at Short Heath Clinic, find them on 01922 858673 or email; [selfcare@walsall.nhs.uk](mailto:selfcare@walsall.nhs.uk).

## Birthday Honours List

Listed below are special birthdays during this last year

### 55 years

Rev John Davies

**1956** 1st Eurovision song contest in Switzerland, U.K. did not participate.

Elvis enters the charts for 1st time with Heartbreak Hotel. Suez crisis.

### 60 years

Phil Broadbent

**1951** Festival of Britain in London. No.1 hits were “Tennessee Waltz”, “If” and “Because of you”. Colour TV seen for the first time in New York.

### 65 years

Avril Fallon, Rosemary Bates

**1946** Suntan lotions marketed commercially. Also born this year: Freddie Mercury, Dolly Parton, Steven Spielberg and George Best.

### 75 years

Riette, Pauline Rowley, John Hammond, Doris Clarke,

**1936** Jarrow jobless march to London. King Edward VIII abdicates, “Gone with the wind” published, Stanley Baldwin was Prime Minister and best movies were “Showboat”, “Fury”, and “Modern Times”.

The Queen Mary begins her Atlantic Crossings.

### 80 years

Joan Rowley, Malcolm Popple

**1931** Average house price was £600. Aerosol cans invented in Norway. The Empire State building was completed. Chicago runs out of money and teachers were not paid there for 2 months! Population in U.K. was 46 million. Also born this year: James Dean, Leonard Nimoy, Desmond Tutu, Larry Hagman and William Shatner. Popular songs were: “Sally” by Gracie Fields and “Beyond the blue horizon” by Jack Hylton.

“I used to be a pilot” Tom explained!

“I’m wearing my wedding ring” said Tom with abandon!

“I’m lost” said Tom in amazement!

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Sept 2010 – Aug 2011

Although we are still in a recession, we are extremely lucky that our collections and direct debits are being maintained, for which we are most thankful to everyone in these financially difficult times.

Gas and Electric contracts were fixed at a fairly good rate so we are trying to keep our costs down as much as we can. An extra duty that Treasurers have to do now is fill in a ‘Carbon Footprint’ form of all gas and electric consumed, and prices paid! Room Hire has been very good this year for parties etc, and also the N.H.S hiring it for 1 weekday over a six week period (All enquiries to Phil Broadbent).

We have finally managed to bring the men's washroom into the 21st Century after 86 years of an old cistern and various pipe sizes, replacing with a Cisterniser and modern pipework and panelling.

New thicker and deeper Communion rail cushions that help all of us that cannot bend much, have been bought and donated, also a new Notice Board outside that attracts everyone to our special events and services, also purchased through donations.

We are extremely lucky to have such generous people and so many members having a variety of talents between them. We need you all, and thank you so much for all your help and support, including all those who help keep our little Chapel looking so clean and fresh. The ladies who work in the kitchen, the men maintaining the building, the garden which always looks lovely, everyone who donates to the flowers and our special charities.

All accounts have now been finalised and checked by our lady Accountant to whom we are most grateful for her help.

Joyce Butler. (Treasurer)

## Sunday Club

## **Bits and Pieces Blog**

As Gilbert has said in his letter, it is disappointing that we suffer, as most Churches do, a lack of children and young folk, new or old coming into our Churches. At Coalpool we average one per week, namely Kathy, hopefully the notice board we theme for the time of year gets people thinking and talking.

### Wesley Day Service at Fishley Church

Gilbert once again organised the 6th annual, open air service at Fishley Church. As most of you know, it reputed that John Wesley stopped off here, in Fishley Lane, on his way towards Stafford. Gilbert was helped by Andy Weller and Billy Worrel, who prepared the site ready. Everyone, even some horses, with their riders, were welcomed to this Wesley celebration, a great attendance of around 60 people from all over came to join in.

The main speaker was Ian Southall, with Linda Brown and Frank Claire taking part with readings and prayers. Lets make it next year hey!

### The Gentleman's

At long last the gents toilet has been saved from being blown up, it got to a critical state, just short of having a nuclear warning put on it. But after some fundraising the demolition began and the old urinals, were gone.

They were replaced with shiny new ones and now we can 'pee in peace'.

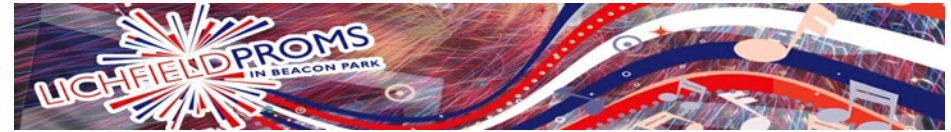
Whilst on the repairs issues, the cupboard in the lobby, next to the ladies toilet, received a new door, thanks to our friendly carpenter, Bob the builder, now the place looks a lot tidier.

### From Fellowship to the Bible

Another twelve months of fantastic fellowship at Coalpool Methodist Church and we are proud of it. Through the social events that take place often, the Thursday fellowship stands out. Meeting every Third Thursday in the month attendance is very good, a small service and variety of different speakers and yes refreshments make this an event you should try. Why not also try our informal Bible study group, meets fortnightly, starts up again January.

### Coming Soon "Elevenses"

We are starting on 11th January 2012 we invite everyone to a new community project called, "Elevenses" basically a drop in event, that will run one a week, from 10.00am to 12.00pm midday. Drop in and take the weight of your feet, come and have a cuppa, a snack and some friendly chat.



During the evening of Saturday September 3rd, a group from Coalpool and friends all met in Beacon Park. There was an air of excitement amongst a mass of people setting up gazebos, tables with flags and lanterns everywhere! There was certainly a hearty supper laid out on our table in true Coalpool style!

The concert began with a warm-up by the City of Lichfield Concert Band and then into the "concert proper" with the British Police Symphony Orchestra. With much flag waving, cheering and singing we spent a most enjoyable evening culminating in a truly magnificent firework display.

Beryl would have been proud of our "Rule Britannia" and "Land of Hope and Glory"! What a superb evening! *Edna Popple*

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### *Message From Rotherham*

Remember in the last magazine we reported the Christening of Benjamin at Coalpool, the son of Liz and Tim Parton from Rotherham. We only recently received a photo from the day and a lovely letter, please read.

*Liz and Tim Parton  
Rotherham*



*Dear Rev Davies, I hope you and the congregation of Coalpool Methodist Church are keeping well. My apologies this is very late in sending you a photo, somehow things got in the way and I didn't manage to send a photo via email for the newsletter, please give my apologies to the man who was going to put it in, I cannot find his email address. Benjamin is doing well, he will be one next month, Samuel is three now, although he thinks he's older. We've had some highs and lows recently, with the anniversary of Megans passing, she would have been five in June, but we carry on as best for Sam and Ben's sakes. Please give our love and best wishes to Gilbert and Pauline and all the congregation, I hope we can pop in soon, although I may leave the boys with their Grandma, otherwise they run everywhere. Take care Best wishes..... The Partons*

*Jesus is Love, Love Jesus*

## Heidi Hi



On Sunday 10th April 2011 Heidi Mae was christened by the Rev. T. John Davies. The weather was glorious and the church was decorated with beautiful flower arrangements (thank you Edna). After a quick change into her long white christening gown Heidi

was ready to greet the congregation. She was very excited and a little restless as John gave his sermon and anointed her with holy water. The service was beautiful and Heidi especially liked being taken out to the congregation for them to welcome her!

The service ended with a hymn, 'All Things Bright and Beautiful', perfect for the day (thank you Joyce).

Heidi then had a small celebration in the church hall with family and friends



The hall, decorated with pink balloons and banners, the food table decked with a long pink table runner and flowers.

The christening cake made by Heidi's Nan was iced in pink and white with a pair of pink booties as a keepsake.

The buffet went down well, especially the cupcakes and trifle (thank you Pauline). With tea and coffee flowing (thanks Vera and Derek) a good time was had by all. Heidi wants to thank all of her friends at Coalpool for making her christening day so very special, her mom sends a vote of gratitude too!

*Anna*



## Christmas Fayre 2011



We were lucky again this year to get a visit from Santa, to our Christmas Fayre on 26th November, always making sure to put us on his busy schedule.

We managed to get this picture of him proudly receiving a letter from two special little boys, Charlie and Alfie, which contained requests for two Ben

Ten bikes. Santa told them if they were good boys, then their dreams would come true. This year's Fayre, was a huge success, thanks to all the hard work everyone put in. Again tombolas, raffles, bric-a-brac, jewellery and toy stalls, the basic main stay of most events, were only outsold by the ever popular, cake stall. Thanks go to Vera and Derek this year, the time it must have taken to produce the huge amount of home made jams for sale, then sell out in minutes, amazing.

But let's not forget the Chef's cooking up the Hot Pork Baps, this is what you all come for, I know, you keep coming, we'll keep feeding. Altogether a new record in excess of £1000 was made, excellent job all.

### THANK YOU

I get many kind remarks about the flowers in our Chapel, I could not arrange them without a lot of help and I want to say a very sincere 'Thank You' to all of you for your encouragement, generous donations, providing foliage, frequent use of the Chapel garden, care and watering during the week, help from the Treasurer if funds are low, and last but not least, to Malc for his help and infinite patience.

All rolled into one, we get flowers and greenery created by God and used to glorify our much loved Chapel, His House.

*Edna Popple*

*An enemy takes up more space in your head, than a friend in your heart*

# Mel and Mart, Stateside

Hi to all at Coalpool

Well almost another year over folks our fourth in fact what a year for us, so much has happened. I continue to look after my friends little boy, now nineteen months old and getting a very cheeky character and along with my friends ten year old autistic boy, which gives me great joy. The winter of 2010-2011, was pretty bad, a lot of snow, it went on way through to the end of April. On our return from good ole blighty, landing in Detroit to more snow and very cold temperatures. But hey all the wonderful seasons that God created for us, makes Michigan fabulous for us.



However a bit of snow does not put us off travelling we did our first train trip in USA to visit Chicago, very cold but a great weekend away, we were wrapped up from head to toe, vital necessities for a Michigan winter.

As you know we had to return in April to get our visas renewed and used that time to get and see everyone. We spent four hours in the US Embassy, (where we met "am I bovvered" Catherine Tate) to be told in a very short two minute interview that we had qualified for a renewal and were free to go.

So as our passports would be returned within 7 days, we hopped on a train to visit lovely Walsall. We managed to surprise Martin's Mom and Dad, they didn't know about the trip, but we did let Martin's Dad in on the secret due to his recent heart surgery we didn't want any problems now did we.

Finally arriving at their house, Pat opened the door and well to say she almost fell down would have been an understatement, it made a lovely Mothers Day surprise. I want to thank you personally for a wonderful greeting received by all on my visit to the Coalpool Sunday Service, special thanks to Maggie for keeping the secret (even though she shouldn't have known either, but our Aunt didn't realise at the time) our trip gave time to catch up with people, visit my mothers grave, spend time with our old friends and their new babies/toddlers, amazing what you miss in four years, lol. We managed a trip to see Leeds United a good day but spoiled by 90 minutes of football, as Leeds lost.

Back home, a beautiful Spring come May, a lot of appreciation from Martin's company, the first time in a long while he received a very generous bonus and are working very hard to help us get a Green Card, so we thank God every day for this company and his colleagues, so this year was home improvement year as we love this house so much. In June we took our first trip to Toronto to see U2 in concert, if our phones had worked we would have arranged a visit to see Martin Butler, apologies to him, and will ensure a trip in 2012 is on the calendar.

In July friends from Willenhall paid a visit, we took them to Canada to see Niagara Falls they were thrilled with the experience, fitting in another country to their USA trip. A fun packed 10 days, never a moment lost, we needed a rest by the end but it was all a lot of fun. We ended this trip by returning to Chicago with them, one of our new favourite places to go, that's when our lives changed but for a nice reason. We got a call from very dear friends, who had fallen on hard times, losing their house, job and taking on a responsibility that someone else wouldn't - a sick child. On return we visited, Detroit Children's Hospital to visit the family and let them know, we would make arrangements for them to live in our home for as long as it took to get their lives back in order. In August baby Azaria came out of hospital with her Aunt and Uncle, Mayna and Maurice Hunter, the same day we opened our home to them all and through prayer and love they are getting back on their feet. Born nine weeks premature with little lung capacity, very sick heart, possible disabilities, baby Azaria turned 1 year on October 31st, we praise God for every breath she takes.

Martin and I became very proud Godparents to Azaria, this child is a wonderful inspiration to us, we ask that you keep them in your prayers.

Our Church, Oakland Christian, has been a very loving family to us they have a wonderful motto "**We are family - you were not created to do things alone**".

In August went on our very first Woodward Dream Cruise, running for 13 years its a weekend dedicated to classic cars, plenty of food and drink and a free T Shirt. We still follow the Detroit Tigers and in football, the Detroit Lions, who are doing very well.



Well it's Thanksgiving, as I sign off from this yearly diary and want to say a big thank you for being our friends and helping us to be the people we are.



We ask that you are all blessed by Gods love and grace, have a wonderful Christmas and may 2012 be a very good year for you all, till next year. xxxxx

Love Melanie & Martin Bradley

Mayna and Maurice Hunter with baby Azaria