

Rejoice!

November 2015



**The Magazine of the
West Norfolk Methodist Circuit**

Just a thought.....

I will begin this thought with questions. What does Advent mean to you? Does the thought of Advent excite you or does the thought of Christmas looming with all that it entails turn you off.? Have you thought what impact Advent can make in your faith journey? These are questions I believe we ought to be asking ourselves right now.

“ADVENT is the consecration of waiting in our lives,” writes Maria Boulding in ***The Coming of God*** (Canterbury Press, 2001). “Some things cannot be skimmed or hurried. . . . Faith can demand long, patient waiting, when nothing seems to be happening.”

The Advent meditations familiar to us speak of the darkness before dawn, the hidden germination of the seed in the earth, the hope for things not seen, a profound engagement with the need to walk by faith and not by sight. The trouble is that all around us Christmas has already arrived. We see Christmas well before its arrival. Decorations going up, mince pies being sold, cards and presents waiting in shops for us to buy; the din of Christmas is already beginning to shut out the Advent story. Even Advent Calendars with any kind of Christian meaning are few and far between.

In this merry go round of Christmas we need to keep Advent stillness within ourselves; to take stock of the amazing gift that is being offered to us in the coming birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I know you will hear this many times over the next few weeks, but it is a most wonderful passage of scripture, a piece of poetry by the pregnant Mary that surely must inspire us all in making more of the advent story:-

“My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.” (Luke 1: 46 – 49)

Ponder awhile on these words; be uplifted and be prepared for the coming of the one who has, who does and who will continue to bless you and will do great things for you.

So take time, sit still, feel the anticipation of what is to come and prepare yourselves for the birth of the Son of God.

O come, O come Emmanuel, Redeem thy captive Israel O come, O come, thou Dayspring bright! Pour on our souls thy healing light; Dispel the long night's lingering gloom and pierce the shadows of the tomb.

Steve

Praying together in the Circuit

Psalm 100

Sing to the LORD, all the world! Worship the LORD with joy;
come before him with happy songs! Acknowledge that the LORD is
God.

He made us, and we belong to him; we are his people, we are his flock.

Enter the Temple gates with thanksgiving;

go into its courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise him.

The LORD is good; his love is eternal and his faithfulness lasts forever.

Sovereign God

You are worthy of the highest praise.

Our thoughts of you fill us with joy and thanksgiving.

In our small corner and throughout the world

we pray for your Holy Name to be exalted.

May our worship be as a fragrant offering, pleasing to you,
acclaiming your sovereignty, your goodness, love and faithfulness.

HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME.

Gracious God

Deepen us in prayer, draw us ever closer to you.

Your thoughts, your ways are so much higher than ours.

We bow before you and ask you to use us in your eternal purposes.

Our individual lives,

our churches throughout the circuit.

We want to seek you with all our hearts,

to be open and receptive to all you want to give us and do within us.

The desire of our hearts is to love and honour you.

We pray for a fresh outpouring of your Holy Spirit.

Give us a new understanding of what it means to be the body of Christ,

subject to Christ the living head, each one of us a member,

with a new sense of unity, bound together by your Spirit.

YOURS IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY.

For ever and ever. Amen

Prayers have been requested for:-

Derek + Viv , Stephanie, Janice, Amy, Trisha, Linda, Ruth Harbach, Andrew, Mavis, Julia, Rachel, Judy, Dulcie + Neill. Kelly, Kath, Stephen + Victoria, William, Tom . Ken and Norma. Brian Osborne.

86, Rosemary Way
Downham Market
PE38 9UB

To my dear friends in the Downham Market section and around the Circuit,

I'm writing from my new address shown above. I'm sorry I missed the September and October editions of Rejoice, I got the dates mixed up. At the beginning of this new Methodist year I wanted to take the opportunity to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your faithful, constant prayers, messages and support over the past eighteen months. As you know, in addition to dealing with illness I have had to accept that I was being retired from my ministry because of it. That was devastating and so difficult to come to terms with.

I know I've hidden away during the past months, usually too debilitated to do anything else but often finding it difficult to publicly acknowledge how poorly I've been. That's a character flaw I expect.

It has, and continues to be, a hard road and the journey seems to be a constant series of one step forward and two steps backward. But God is good and so are his people.

Throughout all of this time I have been aware of the love and prayers holding me up when I have found it difficult to hold myself up. Thank you so much. Words cannot sufficiently express my gratitude.

I'm also humbled by the constant loving care and attention of my family who, in addition to their own life problems, have gone above and beyond in caring for me. And dealing with moving house in the midst of all of this has been stressful to say the least, as I could do very little myself.

Recently I have been quite ill yet again and have been receiving treatment at Norwich hospital. (*Special thanks to those who have taken me to some appointments*) The treatment has been helping so I've had some better days. I have some more appointments, some for scans and procedures, in the coming weeks. That's exhausting in itself.

No two days are the same so life is very unpredictable and 'planning' anything can be difficult so I have to take it as it comes, making the most of easier days.

I was recently able to enjoy a lovely time of fellowship at Downham Market's Harvest Lunch which was my belated 'Farewell' gathering. Thank you all for your lovely comments and for my gifts, in particular the beautiful painting courtesy of the very talented Heinz.

It was great that Janet Mason was preaching at the Harvest Service as I was able to send my love and best wishes via Janet to all the folk around Kings Lynn area with whom I spent such a memorable and rewarding time before coming to Downham Market.

I always wanted to be Superwoman but it seems I have to be content with being 'Supernumerary'. Does that mean I'm good at Maths?

As you can see I remain in Downham Market so I hope to see you as and when I can. I hope there will soon be days when I can get to a service, or a coffee morning or other event. (*Although the weather is turning very quickly isn't it?*) *Brrrr....*

I hope you all know how dear you are to me and how much I value you all. God's blessing be upon you all as you serve him so faithfully. Thank you again for your unfailing support.

Marie
xxx

Rev Marie Whitcombe.

Christmas Tree Festival

December 4th/5th/6th

At Pott Row Methodist Church

Friday/Saturday 10am - 4pm

Sunday 12 noon – 4pm

Refreshments available

Carol Service

Sunday December 6th

At 6.30pm

Led by Rev. Catherine Dixon

All are welcome

DOWNHAM MARKET CRAFT FAIR

NOVEMBER 7TH

9AM – 4PM

REFRESHMENTS

PROCEEDS TO CHURCH FUNDS

Around the churches



North Lynn

"It could do with a coat of paint". "Hasn't been touched for some time". "Bet they would like it looking nice". "Let's ask them"

So went a conversation during the summer holidays amongst a group of young people as they considered a task they could do in the community as part of a 'Summer Camp' organised by the National Citizen Service. Who are they - a Government sponsored service for 16-18 year olds to help young people build their confidence, prepare them for life and give the community a positive benefit. So it was that the Church and Hall and Foyer in North Lynn Methodist Church were transformed during the summer, fit to host a new season of activities and welcome our new partner minister.

The group of 16 young people, part of this summer's programme of activities based in Norfolk, had spent a week at the Mepal Activity Centre, a week in the Bircham Construction Training Campus and whilst there had sought a practical project to do based on their team building and project planning experience. Some of them resided in North Lynn and so were ready to offer their time and energies to redecorating inside the building. They also raised the money to pay for the materials and equipment. After a frantic weekend of clearing and preparing by the congregation the young people arrived bright and early on a Monday and set to work. Careful preparation on their part resulted in a super job, all fresh looking and clean. They finished the week with a Friday fund raising event attended by friends and family and church users. We are thrilled with the result!!

The impetus led to washing all the curtains, floors and soft furnishings and by the time of our Covenant Service we were all set for our new church year in virtually a new set of familiar surroundings.

The year has indeed begun well - our new partner minister, Rev. Becca Rogers is "enjoying a new dimension to Parish Work" as she meets members of the local community, joins in our activities whilst being the associate minister in King's Lynn Minster and Vicar of St. John's in the Walks King's Lynn. Becca and her husband Tim along with their dog George are becoming familiar faces in North Lynn and we look forward to the future with her.

Coffee on the Couch began slowly but numbers are increasing. Our new volunteer Natalie makes really tasty cakes during the morning and are much liked - do come and try one soon! Likewise Mums and Tods has a new set of

youngsters now that former members are in formal school. Play, chat, friendship and a prayer are always available. The regular Community Meal continues to be appreciated and our Guides and Brownies enjoy their regular meetings as does the Ladies Fellowship. Our big event was the annual Harvest Supper, the Minster Vicar again providing the tasty sausages, beans and jacket potatoes, not forgetting the home-made apple pies for pud! Entertainment followed and all 50 or so who gathered spoke afterwards of a really enjoyable evening.

Plans now follow to celebrate our 52nd anniversary at the end of November and then welcoming the community to our pre-Christmas events.

Neville Posnett

Pott Row Methodist Church.

Harvest Festival.

Once again the church was full of colour as you walked through the door. There were more people in our congregation this year, including 5 children who entertained us with a song about a scarecrow, and then joined us with refreshments after the service. The food that was donated was given to the food bank in King's Lynn.

The Tree Festival.

This year we will have decorated trees on display again. The church will be open on Friday December 4th and Saturday December 5th 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday 6th December 2pm till 4 pm After which we will have our Carol Service at 6.30pm

There will be bric-a-brac, Gifts and Cake stalls, plus Tea/Coffee etc.

For further information ring Beryl on 01485 600593. Hope to see lots of you there.

Jenny B

HOSPITALITY AFTERNOON

Hospitality Afternoon with a free lunch for all at Pott Row Methodist Church on Saturday 14th November from 12 noon.

Come along and join us - it's free!!

Hilgay

Our Harvest weekend started with a special Shell Group meeting on Saturday 3rd October. It was attended by 10 children who created a harvest banner and table decorations for the Ploughman's lunch which followed. The children were great in helping to prepare tables and food and 48 people shared a lovely fellowship meal together.

On Sunday morning, worship was led by Deacon Janet and our harvest gifts were given for the Downham Market Foodbank. We continued our fellowship with tea and coffee etc. afterwards and thanks must go to all who helped make it a successful weekend. We look forward to more friendly events in the future.

Gwen Dearsley

Belated birthday wishes to Gwen. Another ten to go Gwen!

London Road

Harvest 2015

With many donations made to our Food Bank collections in the past few weeks Harvest seems to have been going on a long time this year.

However The Harvest Festival Weekend started with a Harvest Supper on Saturday 26th September.

All those who attend “sang” for their supper rather than having a grace.

An enjoyable meal of cottage pie and a “vegetarian” alternative was served to over 30 people.

This was followed by apple pie and custard or cream, or if you are from Cornwall BOTH, coffee or tea and chocolate mints.

A magnificent total of £166 was sent to SEND A COW so that others may have a future harvest.

The supper was followed by a Light Hearted Quiz with prizes for both winning and losing teams.

The church was decorated quite splendidly by the ladies of the Flower Committee thanks to generous donations from the congregation.

The 21st Kings Lynn Scout Group had a parade service on the Sunday and brought many superb gifts of produce which will all go to the Food Bank.

Our service was led by Lesley Evans, who also encouraged us to celebrate “Carrot Sunday” by getting the Beavers to hand out carrots to every member of the congregation.

Lesley’s theme was “God the Faithful Gardener” and with the help of audience participation, demonstrated the produce of three gardens – apples from the Garden of Eden, olives and olive oil from the Garden of Gethsemane and grapes from the vineyard of Jesus the true vine.

Baskets of flowers from the window sills were sent to those of our members who could not be with us.

A Harvest Festival of Thanksgiving – Praise – Fellowship for all God’s wonderful gifts.

David Gifford

Message from London Road Catering Dept.

Many grateful thanks for the very generous donations participants at the Pastoral Carers Day on October 10th made in respect of the Soup and Fruit Lunch.

After expenses a cheque for £ 100 has been sent to the mental health charity Mind.

Thanks

The Balding Hikers

Downham Market

What a wonderful sunny month we have just had and so right for harvest time; we also had a wonderful harvest festival service. Having lost several of our flower arranging team over the years, we decided to try to involve the whole Church family, not just two of us doing an assembly line to decorate our thirteen windows. In the end every Church organisation took a window, Brownies, Guides and Boys Brigade, Junior and Messy Church as well as the stewards, Prayer Shawl members and other clubs. And what a delightful assortment of harvest representations we had from a small farm to fruit and veg made from coloured tissue paper as well as the usual hedge gatherings and flowers. This left some flower arrangers free to decorate every inch of the Church and social centre so that it all looked and smelled lovely for the very happy service which was led by Janet Mason. Being an all age worship service, we had all our young folk taking part. We sang all the well known hymns lustily while masses of contributions were taken to the front, later to be sent to the food bank or if perishable sold to add to our gifts to All We Can. After the service we were all ready for the shared lunch, why does everyone else’s food always taste better than your own? And a time of happy fellowship. My grateful thanks to all who helped beautify our premises but especially to Meg Cooper, who not only spent several days artistically decorating all corners but also went foraging in the fields and hedgerows producing an abundance of berries, greenery and dried seed heads. With the fruits of harvest all around us, the words from Galatians 6 v.22 echoed in my head. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control and I prayed that we would put as much effort into gaining the fruit of the Spirit as had been put into producing the harvest around us, so that we could live our lives more as He would have us live them.

Now that our harvest celebrations are over we start preparing for all the Christmas activities. There will be a craft fair in the Church on 7th November

9.00 to 4.00 and of course our Christmas fair on 28th November from 10.00 to 3.00. The hall will be full of stalls; there will be a craft room for children to make Christmas gifts; the social centre will be full of silly games, like Splat the Snowman with prizes for top scores and Father Christmas will be resident in his glittery grotto in the Minister's vestry. Refreshments will be served all day, lunches at mid day with the cafe sited in the function room. Do get the date in your diary and come and do your Christmas shopping at our bargain stalls, while the children can be in the craft room making presents and the younger ones visiting Father Christmas; enjoy home made refreshments all while Christmas music is playing. It is always a good start to the Christmas season to see our premises full of happy people enjoying good fellowship and fun.

Our choir practices from now on will last for an hour and a half as we prepare our music for the Christmas concert to be held on Saturday 5th December at 6.30pm in aid of the East Anglia Air Ambulance, so we shall be enjoying the true spirit of Christmas in the lead up to Advent. The choir will be singing carols on Wednesday 23rd December to the residents of Ashville House. Churches together in Downham also usually arrange at least one session of carol singing at Tesco to collect for Christmas Hampers. (See elsewhere in Rejoice! for dates. Our Saturday coffee mornings are still being enthusiastically supported and we could always do with more bric a brac. I don't know for how much longer I shall be able to run the plant stall outside, I usually joke I am here every week unless it snows, but I was rather shocked the other day to hear a weather warning of a cold spell arriving at the end of October which would bring snow both on high and low ground. By the time you read this we shall know if the forecasters have got it wrong. I hope they have as the purchase of my cottage still hasn't gone through (I've been "homeless" now for three months) and a cold spell will hold up the brickwork and guttering that needs doing before I can move in even when the purchase is complete. I think of Job and try to be patient.

I wish you good health and good fellowship in the preparations for Advent and Christmas.

Joan Macey

LADIES FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

We are now up and running and our programme is full.

We have 29 paid up members, which is brilliant.

Our September meetings have been excellent we had a table sale of Harvest goodies and Harvest poetry on 9th September, with Harvest hymns.

On the 23rd September we were entertained by Dr Thompson who talked about the Royal Weddings from Queen Victoria up to the present time this was hilarious at times. We all had an enjoyable evening.

Our next meetings are 4th November which will be a Beetle Drive and on

18th November we will have a talk by Gemma from the Stroke Association
We meet at 7.30pm in the function room and all our welcome.

Margaret Fox

Terrington St Clement

Network: Mary Houghton introduced Pastor Andy who spoke about a “kuffa” school in Uganda .A wall has been funded to prevent children being stolen for body parts. A well has been dug to provide a good water supply. Also “Granny Ann” Bromhead has sponsored a girl through university and visited the school last July. Mary thanked them for their visit and very interesting talk. Birthday wishes to Janet Carter.

Network: Ruth Hannay introduced Phyllis Bowman who spoke about a Time for Everything as in Ecclesiastes 3 verses 1 to 8. Ruth thanked Phyllis for her visit and presented her with a plant.

Harvest Coffee Morning stall holders = Bric A Brac Eileen Spurgeon and Linda Howling; Cakes and Groceries Margaret Pepper and Ann Cross; Vegetables Fruit and Flowers Helen Maguire and Lorna Hunter; Raffle Pam and David Little; Games Jenny Howling; “ Where was the Rabbit Born?” (Chichester) winner Daniel Powell; Guess the Weight of the Vegetable Basket, Helen Maguire guessed the nearest with 4lb 4oz . Lunches were served by Ruth Hannay, Mary Houghton and Frauke Atkins. Thanks to Margaret Smith for her knitted toys. We raised the excellent sum of £395.40 for church funds. A big thank you to any one who helped in any way.

We are holding a Christmas Coffee Morning on Saturday 5th December 10am to 1pm, stalls and raffle with soup and mince pies at lunch time . Everyone is very welcome. New Beginnings and Youth Club continue monthly.

Linda Howling

Highgate

On Heritage Sunday we opened up the Chapel for the first time as part of the celebrations. It was a new venture for us, and we as a congregation felt really blessed. We welcomed over thirty people, some being children who pass the chapel every day going to school, and who were pleasantly surprised and felt the warmth and friendliness of the place. We served refreshments and enjoyed some lovely conversations. We completed the celebrations with our Harvest Festival.

On Sunday October 11th we had a ‘Sankey’ afternoon and we were all in fine voice. Our minister Catherine was so excited! As we sang the old hymns we

thanked God for His faithfulness and never ending love. Bill Barber whose idea it was was sadly in hospital at the time, but thanks to modern technology it was recorded and when he is better, Bill will be able to share with us.

Frances Singleterry

Dersingham

Our Harvest Celebrations are over for another year and several boxes of tins and packets of suitable food and toiletries have been taken to the Food bank in King's Lynn.

The Coffee and Chat mornings will start on Thursday 29th October at 11 am. The sessions last for about an hour and the discussion this time will be about artificial intelligence and the future (i.e. about robots taking over!). On the 12th November the subject is the migrant crisis and suggestions are welcome (either to Rev. Steve Oliver or Elizabeth Batstone) for the sessions on 26th November and 10th December. Come and air your views over a cup of coffee: all viewpoints are welcome.

It is not too early to start thinking about the Shoe Box Appeal, filling a shoebox with items for the sad and needy children we so often see on our television screens. Budgens in Dersingham will be collecting the boxes between the 4th and 18th November. We can help to put a smile on a child's face this Christmas as we celebrate God's love for the world. And if you want to enjoy an evening of fun and laughter you may just be in time to get a ticket from Rene Hayward (01485 541035) for the next Chicken Foot Evening on the 6th November.

The Christmas Coffee morning will be on Saturday 28th November from 10 am to 1.30 pm, and the November mid-week Communion service will be on Wednesday 25th November at 10.30 am.

Rosemary Caink

(P.S. Please can someone tell me what exactly Chicken Foot Evening is! I don't think I'm free that evening!! Ed)

Snettisham

As you may know we always hold a Coffee Morning on the last Saturday of the month which is very well attended. So we decided this year to hold a McMillan Coffee and Cake day. On September 24th, with bunting flying outside and stalls full of wonderful homemade cakes and Tombola inside we opened at 11

o'clock.....to a crowd of eager customers, many of whom had never been in the building. And they kept coming for the next two hours.
We raised £282.50 for McMillan Nurses and we would like to thank everyone who attended or made donations.
A very good day all round.

Gill Burch

St Faith's

As regular readers of Rejoice! will recall, I wrote in the October edition that the St Faith's Church Council had still to meet on 22nd September when it was expected to take its all-important vote on whether the parish wanted to go ahead with major proposals to join Gaywood with The Woottons to create a combined Benefice with three churches (St Faith's and two churches in The Woottons) . The proposals were put forward by the Archdeacon of Lynn, the Venerable John Ashe, and the Rector of The Church in The Woottons, the Rev Canon James Nash.

Church members have discussed and debated the proposals widely since the plan was revealed to them on August 17th by Archdeacon Ashe.

The vote was taken at the Church Council meeting and the result was unanimously against the proposals. Members have indicated that they are willing to explore links with the Church in The Woottons on an informal basis once a new Rector of Gaywood has been appointed. .

The Woottons PCC (Parochial Church Council) had voted in favour of taking the proposals forward..Obviously, for the proposals to go forward in their present form, both church communities would have to be in agreement.

A small team of St Faiths Church members continue to meet to compile the new Parish Profile which is the document sent to parish priests who may be considering applying for the post of Rector of Gaywood. The document explains in detail all about the Parish and what would be expected from a new Rector. The Parish Profile is due to be presented to the November meeting of Church Council for comment and adoption.

November 1st sees the annual Service of Resurrection Hope at St Faith's Church starting at 6.30pm. At this special service, the names of all those people with connections to Gaywood, past and present, who have died during the past year and whose funerals have been held at St Faith's or the Mintlyn Crematorium will be remembered by name. Prayers will be said for the repose of their souls and for their immediate families and friends. This is always a most moving, while at the same time, uplifting service with the focus being on

the fact that these people we no longer see physically are now at rest in God's care. The love for these individuals by their families and friends is eternal. People who have lost someone close to them in past years are also very welcome to the service. Candles can be lit by those present in memory of their loved ones.

"At the going down of the Sun and in the morning, we will remember them.....".the annual service of Remembrance for those from Gaywood who gave their lives for our freedom in two world wars and for those who continue to do so in more recent conflicts around the world, will be held at St Faith's Church on November 8th starting at 10am (please note the time) in church. The church is usually full for this important service at the end of which the Standards of the Royal British Legion (Gaywood branch) and the uniformed organisations (Scouts, Cubs Guides and Brownies) will join the clergy, civic dignitaries and congregation members to parade to the Gaywood Clock War Memorial for the observation of the National two minutes silence at 11am and the laying of poppy wreaths at the Clock tower memorial.

One of the biggest fund-raising and social events during Autumn is St Faith's Christmas Fair. People who serve on the fund-raising committee, under the chairmanship of Ann Ess, have met and discussed their plans for the popular event .

This year the Fair will be held on 21st November in the Gaywood Church Rooms and there will be the usual colourful variety of stalls and games of chance to tempt visitors to part with their cash. All proceeds go towards the general running costs of the Church.

Please make a note of the Christmas Fair date in your diary and do come along to meet up with old friends and enjoy some bargain Christmas shopping. The Fair opens at 2pm.

"Come Thou Long Expected Jesus....." the first Sunday of Advent will be observed at services on November 29th at St Faith's Church (9.45am and 6.30pm).Special Taize services will be held at The Holy Family Church in Field Lane, Gaywood, each Sunday during Advent starting at 5pm. Everyone is welcome to these services of prayer, devotion, music and periods of silence, as we prepare for the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The sessions of the recently formed Art group are being held fortnightly on a Wednesday afternoon, beginning at 2pm. Sessions in November will be on the 11th and 25th. The sessions are open to everyone, whether experienced at painting or a novice. Those attending are asked to bring along their own art materials. There will be a small nominal charge to contribute to the cost of the church heating.

There is an opportunity to spend a few hours browsing around the stalls at the wonderful Christmas Market in Bury St Edmunds. Betty Guy has organised a coach to the Suffolk town on Saturday, 28th November. It should be a lovely day out in the company of friends and the opportunity of looking at more than 300 festive stalls selling a colourful variety of goods and foods. The return fare is £10 and anyone wanting to go on the visit can contact the Church Office for tickets on 01553 774916 (weekday mornings between 9am and 12 noon).

The bench that John Woodford made has been given approval by the Church Council and will remain in its location outside the Church Bungalow in the church drive. There is to be a dedication and blessing ceremony for the new bench at a date to be announced.

Richard Parr

South Wootton

Rev Catherine Dixon will be leading an Advent Course at the Chapel entitled "Walking Backwards to Christmas. This will held on Tuesdays at 10.30am on 17th & 24th November and then in December 1st, 8th and 15th. All are welcome to come and join us. Our Christmas Coffee Morning is on Wednesday 2nd December.

Ladies Group Carol Service is on 17th December at 7.00pm led by Catherine. The Offering is for Action for Children.

MARHAM METHODIST CAROL

SERVICE

6.00pm

SUNDAY 20th DECEMBER

With PAULINE DRIVER

All Welcome!

Please Support Us!

Churches Together in Downham Market

Carol Singing for Christmas Hampers

At Tesco

Fridays 4th and 11th December

Starting at 7pm

For all the Saints

November can be a dull month but it begins with one of the brightest days in the Christian calendar, All Saints, "A festival I dearly love" wrote John Wesley. I have two little pamphlets written by the same person, the famous Methodist minister Dr Edwin Sangster. They cost 6d each (old money). Both have a brightly covered cover and the same number of pages. If I offered to lend you one which would you choose? One is entitled "You can be a saint" the other "You can be a millionaire." Judging by the queues for lottery tickets and the popularity of TV programmes with big handouts I have little doubt which one most people would go for, though to be fair the other one is also about being rich in a different way, a better way too. For the moment I am concerned with "You can be a saint." But I don't want to be a saint!. In Romans 7 Paul wrote "To all that be in Rome...called to be saints" and many people will be glad this message is not addressed to them. Saintliness is not a popular vocation today, unless it is the 007 sort of saint who is anything but. They think it is to be a holy Joe, a spoilsport. It is not for them. Some people's idea of saints is of rarified beings with haloes. In St Faith's we have no less than 21 of them in glorious stained glass windows and splendid wood carvings. Even in the Roman and Orthodox Churches, who go in for saints in a big way, they reserve the word for men and women of the most exalted virtue. They canonise no more than a dozen or so a year and only these qualify to be called saints. A little girl being taken into a cathedral for the first time got nearer the truth. She gazed with wonder at the beautiful glass windows "Auntie, who are those people in the windows?" "Ssh, not so loud. They are saints." After a few moments gazing at the windows this time an awed whisper came from Jane. "Now I know what saints are, they are people who let the light through." It is as good a definition as any! The fact of the matter is that in the New Testament to be a saint is the calling of all God's people. The word is used some 60 times. They were not people who lived sheltered lives in special places apart from the world, spending all their time in prayer and praise. They were very much in the world. At Rome there were saints in Caesar's household, a little Christian group perhaps in the emperor's servants' quarters, living out their faith there or Christians faithfully bearing their witness in high court circles. There were saints at Corinth, a city that was a sink of iniquity. It was no easy matter being a Christian there. There

were saints at Philippi where Paul was flogged and imprisoned....humble, poor ordinary people for the most part, not by any means perfect but many of them showed what they were made of. Paul, though he didn't know it at the time, was referring to some of the bravest folk of his day. They were just ordinary people but they were mighty in moral and spiritual courage. In days of appalling persecution they dared the unspeakable cruelties of the emperor Nero. One of the most moving things is to see that plain wooden cross in the Colosseum at Rome where so many endured to the end.

Paul just would not have understood anyone not wanting to be a saint, or to limiting this to a special few. All Christians are called to be saints; people who will not necessarily do great things but will do little things in a great way; people who are great in heart, great in mind, ready to build others up and make the world around them a better place. The composer Rossini had such faith in his musical ability that he once laughingly declared "Give me a laundry list (we don't have them any longer, do we?) and I will set it to music." The need and the challenge is for those who will make life a song, bringing the beauty and grace and harmony of heaven into a laundry list, or if you prefer a shopping list, into the everyday circumstances of daily living.

All saints! There's a thrill in these words for the Christian. And you too can be a saint. To be a saint is to go all out for all that God gives.

To go back to Dr Sangster. I once had the immense privilege of hearing him preach. In his sermon he asked the question "What is the church for?" The answer he gave was "To make good men and women." Then he went on: "And how the world needs good men and women"

It still does

John Garfoot

Mary Shorthouse would like to thank everyone for their prayers and cards during her recent illness. She is now back in circulation.

Festival of Light

By the time this is being read Downham Market will have had an alternative to Hallowe'en, with all the darkness that this implies. Plans were for a disco, crafts, a cake and fun! Lots of the Messy Church Mums and Dads were interested so I hope it will have been a success.

Well done them!

Turning Stamps into school books

Did you realise that used stamps can be turned into school books?

'The Stamp Fellowship' (part of 'Embrace the Middle East') sorts stamps and postcards donated by its supporters and sells them. All the money raised goes to the Helen Keller School where it is used to buy books and specialist equipment for visually impaired children.

They are particularly interested receiving foreign stamps and whole collections but even ordinary British stamps can be sent and have value.

Please consider donating them to: *The Stamp Fellowship, Embrace the Middle East, 24 London Road West, Amersham HP7 0EZ.*

John Miles

Messy Church – the catering side!

One of the unknowns is exactly how many children and parents will arrive on the day. It could be twenty or ninety. In the early days of Downham's Messy Church I found it quite stressful because I'd never catered or cooked for more than the immediate family, apart from Christmases when Hazel was usually in charge. More than once I've been grateful that there's a supermarket opposite!

Now we've settled down into a routine where I assume that sixty light meals will be needed for children, parents and team members. Social Centre staff is very helpful and store them for us.

The fun begins about 5 o'clock when we know numbers staying for the meal. October's Messy Church saw 72 meals being required, necessitating a trip over the road for another pizza. Together with parents staying but not eating, we needed 80+ places. A particular challenge this time was fewer team members being available, together with me being slightly incapacitated because of a minor operation on my left hand.

Two of the dads responded magnificently to my request for help with tables, helping to put them out and clear them away at the end. There is a lovely spirit even amid the chaos!

However, we do need more team members to cover for others who are absent.

John Miles

And from Methodist Recorder 2009
An erudite vicar of Leek
Once read all his sermons in Greek
The congregation, as such
Thought it all double Dutch
And didn't come back the next week.

Norfolk Churches Trust Annual Sponsored Ride and Walk

The cycle ride has come and gone - it is great that yearly I am sponsored by so many people.

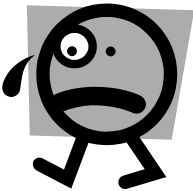
This year it was different - I did my ride on my exercise bike in Pott Row church.

Having done this ride for some twenty years I should know long it takes to cycle to each church! It would have taken quarter of an hour to get to the first one so I timed my riding accordingly and then rested before 'going' to the next and so on until I had 'visited' four churches.

Once again I must thank all those folk who sponsored me so generously for my 'different' ride!

Bill Hone

Sorry Bill, couldn't get the picture!



Any items for the **DECEMBER** edition should be with the editor by **NOVEMBER 12th**, earlier if possible. **If you don't get an acknowledgment of emails PLEASE enquire if I have received them as some articles have found their way into my spam bin which I don't check very often!**

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CIRCUIT PRAYER AFTERNOON

Saturday 7th November 2015

at Pott Row Methodist Church

Arrive between 2-3pm for the prayer labyrinth

Service at 3.30pm

Refreshments available.

A time for fellowship,

A time to share concerns for our Circuit and Churches,

A time to pray for our life together and our future,

A time to have visions and to dream dreams! (Acts 2:17)

More information from the Rev. Catherine Dixon

(This has been rescheduled from September, with apologies for the late cancellation of that event.)

The Rev. Catherine Dixon

And from Pat Benefer

Another gem gleaned from the radio, (what a boon that is!) or of relevance and cheer to those of us getting on a bit!

Even though your outer nature may be wasting away your inner nature is being renewed - nice to know and good to be reminded. It's integral, built in and can't be taken away from us.

Paul Field Concert

Saturday May 21st

Westminster Central Hall

Tickets £5

**Proceeds in support of MWiB project to empower
and educate Dalit women**

For more details or to book a seat 01553 811867

MWiB

On Thursday October 8th a car full of very noisy ladies set off from Downham Market to go the Autumn Day at Diss. The satnav was set but the passengers all assured the driver they knew the way. We made good time and actually found a car park space quite easily. We walked through the town and arrived at the Church in time for a very welcome cup of coffee.

The first part of the day included the commissioning of Rev. Heather Sorrell as the new President. The retiring President Angela Macquiban had come all the way from Rome, where her husband is a serving minister and she passed on the reins to Heather. The President always chooses a charity for her two year term and Heather has chosen EACH, the East Anglia Children's Hospice. We had a very informative and quite heart rending account of their work and hope we can raise lots of money over the next two years.

Lunch was eaten either on site, at the nearby URC church or out in the sunshine. Then after some full throated singing we continued our day. The main speaker was Rev Pauline Greasley, recently retired Chaplain to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. It too was quite moving as she explained part of her work with terminally ill patients.

Then more tea and cakes and home.

There were nine ladies from West Norfolk (plus two husbands) and to anyone who hasn't been to one of these days I would heartily recommend they do. The Spring Day is at Upwell on 21st April. Put it in your diaries!! It's only just around the corner.

Barbara Foster

Rev. Heather Sorrell is a local lass and her father in law was the first Minister in the newly built Downham Market Chapel.

The retiring president's charity was Turning Point Trust and we raised more than we hoped for and saw a presentation of where our money had gone.

West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary

November 2015 onwards

Saturday 7th November Circuit Prayer Afternoon at Pott Row

Saturday 7th November Craft Fair at Downham Market 9am

Saturday 14th November Fellowship Breakfast at Downham Market at 8.30 am

Saturday 21st November, St Faith's Church Christmas Fair, Gaywood Church Rooms, Gayton Road, opens at 2pm,

Saturday 28th November Christmas Fair at Downham market

Friday 4th December Carol Singing at Tesco Downham Market 7pm

Friday/Saturday/Sunday 4th/5th/6th December Pott Row Tree Festival

Friday 11th December Carol Singing at Tesco Downham Market 7pm

Saturday 12th December Fellowship Breakfast at Pott Row at 8.30 am

Sunday 20th December Marham Carol Service at 6pm

Saturday 21st May Paul Field Concert Westminster Central Hall