

Rejoice!

December 2018/January 2019



And Mary gave birth to her first born son and laid him in a manger.

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

Dear Friends,

I am writing this in early November in the week leading up to the centenary of the ending of The First World War. It has been an interesting and slightly unusual few days. Much of my work is of course centred on the King's Lynn area, but I have had a couple of trips to Norwich in the last week. Sunday 4th November was the day for a special confirmation service in Norwich Cathedral. I had been sharing with the Rev. Julie Boyd, Rector of St Faith's, Gaywood, in preparing four candidates for confirmation from our joint Anglican/Methodist Church at St Faith's. It is always a privilege to be with people at this special point on their spiritual journey. It was wonderful, as the climax of this, to share with the Bishop of Lynn in confirming the four St Faith's candidates. It felt like a powerful public testimony to the unity which Anglicans and Methodist share at St Faith's.

Then, on the Wednesday 7th November, it was back to Norwich again to share at the Roman Catholic Cathedral in the start of the visit to the Diocese of Norwich of the Archbishop of Canterbury. With our Methodist Chair of District away on other duties (very important business at our Stationing Committee) it fell to me as one of the Deputy Chairs of District to represent the Methodist Church in the procession at this ecumenical service. Again, what a privilege to be in the Roman Catholic Cathedral with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Norwich, the Roman Catholic Bishop of East Anglia and representatives of several other churches in the Norwich and surrounding area. The Archbishop spoke of the importance of seeking and living out unity in and between our churches. In a divided world, in a week leading up to the centenary of the ending of the Great War we were expressing a commitment, even though we might still have a long way to go, to be fully reconciled with each other. To seek and to try to live out such unity has always been something I have seen as a central part of my ministry. It is an integral part of the life and mission of the Church.

I rejoice in the good and positive links between the churches in our area. There are some excellent projects under the umbrella of Churches Together in King's Lynn which really benefit people, sometimes vulnerable people, in our community. It is great to experience our unity at St Faith's and to be part of coming ever closer together at North Lynn where we are hoping to redevelop our Methodist building as a shared Anglican/Methodist project. I am heartened to hear of shared projects elsewhere in the Circuit, including the sharing of the building at Stow Bridge and worshipping together at Marham.

Let us seek to live out that prayer of our Lord, that his disciples might be one, that the world might believe.

In a divided world it is all the more important that Christians should be living examples of a commitment to be reconciled with each other and to work together positively in witness and service.

By the time you are reading this we will have moved on from the season of Remembrance into Advent and we will soon be hearing again those well-known words of the prophet Isaiah:-

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Prince of Peace.”

As we have especially been moved by Remembrance this year and as we move towards Christmas let us be faithful in serving the Prince of Peace.

Andrew Maguire

Experience the Heart of Christmas
A Festival of The Nativity
Feltwell Methodist Chapel
Saturday 8 December From 3.00pm
Nativity scenes by local children,
students & groups
A warm welcome
and refreshments await YOU
and Sunday 9 Dec 10.30 - 12.30

Praying together in the Circuit

Now Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your servant go in peace. With my own eyes I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples: A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel. Luke 2: 29-32

Simeon, 'a good and God fearing man' was guided by the Holy Spirit to go to the temple that day, and there he saw what he had been waiting and longing to see, the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

Lord, we give thanks for your precious gift given in love and offered to all people. For all throughout the ages who have not seen and yet believed. Let the light of the glorious gospel dawn on people today enabling them to experience your saving grace and enter into relationship with you with hope and a future. May we live each day in reverence and awe of you, obedient to you, guided by your Spirit, involved in your mission and waiting for your coming in glory.

We give thanks and ask your blessing for the ministry of Christians who come together to serve those in their communities needing help and support to address specific problems. For Christians Against Poverty, Night shelters, Foodbanks and others who seek to reach out with the specialist help they give, motivated by your love.

We pray for people invited to enjoy hospitality on Christmas Day with meals provided and fellowship shared. For Churches with Social Centres and open doors who regularly offer hospitality and welcome people in your Name. Lord for your blessing on all Christian activities planned for children to enjoy and celebrate the wonder of Christmas and experience your love. For all 'Children in need' in all areas of the world, hold them secure in your love, protect them from all danger. May there be a response of compassion in recognising and seeking to meet their needs.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Prayers have been requested for:-

Derek + Viv, Stephanie, Janice, Amy, Trisha, Linda, Andrew, Mavis Julia, Rachel, Judy, Dulcie+ Neil, Kelly, Kath, Stephen + Victoria, William, Tom, Ken + Norman, Brian Osborne, Sarah, Petula and Bob.

The Reverend Raymond Francis Trudgian, born Nanpean, Cornwall March 21st 1937, died at Swaffham Community Hospital October 3rd 2018, aged 81.

On Friday 19th October at London Road the funeral service was held for one of our supernumerary ministers, the Rev. Ray Trudgian. Ray was a man of many parts, as reflected by the range of speakers at his funeral. Two of his children, Paul and Nicci, spoke about him as a father. His contemporary, the Rev. Geoff Barnard, spoke about the Zambia connection. Ray had gone straight from his ministerial training at Wesley House to Selly Oak College in Birmingham for intensive missionary training. His first appointment as a minister was as warden of a community centre in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia (now known as Zambia), and he was ordained in Lusaka.

Mr Ian Allonby spoke on behalf of the National Poultry Club; Ray had kept bantams from the age of 10 and was widely known as “the chicken man”. Many churches around the Circuit will have been treated to a visual aid during a service involving Ray’s beloved chickens.

Mr Larry Peters, a Jewish friend of Ray and Angie’s, spoke about his commitment to interfaith relations and his work with the Council for Christians and Jews, and finally it was my privilege to speak about the “Cornish connection”. Although he led a truly itinerant lifestyle, Ray remained a true Cornishman through and through, and his love of the homeland ran through his veins like a seam of Cornish tin.

Over the course of his ministry Ray served not only as a mission partner and circuit minister but also as International Secretary for the Christian Education Movement, and as lecturer in Religious Education at two teacher training colleges. Throughout his ministry Angie was by his side, and they celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary in August this year. Ray and Angie joined us in the Circuit when they retired to St Germans in 2001. Ray’s continued ministry among us and his wonderful beaming smile, were a true blessing. Ray was beloved by many and will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Catherine Dixon

Fanny Crosby

Frances van Alstyne aka Fanny Crosby is a great heroine of the faith. Her sight was destroyed by a medical blunder when she was six weeks old, and yet she grew up to be an amazingly independent woman and a great writer of hymns and gospel songs. We are all very familiar with two of her greatest works, *To God be the Glory* and *Blessed Assurance*, but how many of her others have you sung? At Highgate on Sunday 3rd February the afternoon service will be based around her hymns. Do join us for a good sing and to hear the story of an inspiring life of faith. You are also warmly invited to join us a fortnight earlier, 20th January, for our Chapel Anniversary Songs of Praise service (from Mission Praise). Come along, choose your favourite, and celebrate with us!

ransomed SAVIOUR Jesus Christ LOVE	THE GOSPEL HOUR	restored JOY healed FORGIVEN PEACE
	 <p>with Rev. Steve Oliver every Sunday evening at 9.00.p.m.</p> <p>Listen on</p>	
Radio Heacham .org.uk Local Internet Radio		



**Christmas Tree
Festival
Pott Row Methodist Chapel**

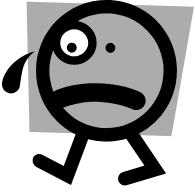


Friday 7th & Saturday 8th December,
10am - 4pm
Sunday 9th December, 2pm - 4pm

Cake & gift stalls, refreshments

Carol service, Sunday 9th Dec,
6:30pm
Led by the Rev. Catherine Dixon





Any items for the **FEBRUARY/MARCH** edition should be with the editor by **JANUARY 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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REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING

You know you've been teaching too long if:

1. As you enter a theatre with a group of friends, you ask if anyone needs to go to the toilet.
2. You say everything twice.
3. As guests leave your house, you ask if they've remembered their scarves and mittens.
4. You say everything twice.

John Miles

Christmas Coffee Mornings

South Wootton - Wednesday 5th December
10am-11am
London Road - Saturday 8th December
10am-noon
All welcome!

Around the churches



Wimbotsham news

The Church Council Meeting was held on 22nd October, chaired by Rev. Stephen Oliver in the absence of Rev. Maurice Stafford who was on Sabbatical.

Our function room is the venue for our Bible Study meetings which are held fortnightly and are very successful, organised by Mick Blanks and Mary Davies. Also we hold Prayer meetings monthly and we warmly invite anyone who would like to come along to these times of sharing fellowship with us over a cuppa and biscuits.

We held our first Coffee Morning (for a very long time) on Saturday 20th October which was also very successful and well attended. We heard from some people in the village who came along that previously didn't know where the Chapel was, and they have asked us if we could have a monthly Coffee Morning. So, now we have solved their problem! Every third Saturday of the month from now on there will be a Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac, tea/coffee, cake and biscuits. We are also aware that there are others who over time have had difficulty in finding us or not knowing we are here. So we have met with the Parish Council to request that a fingerpost sign to our "Methodist Church" be made up and erected for all to see. We are grateful that they have agreed to progress this application for us through the Norfolk County Council and are considering where the sign will be placed.

Our Carol Service is on Sunday 16th December 11 am – 12 noon

Dates for the diary (with all fixtures being regularly continued into 2019):

Bible Study: 4th and 18th December, 8th and 22nd January at 10.30 am – 12 noon

Prayer meeting: 11th December and 15th January at 10.15 am – 11 am

Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac: 15th December and 19th January at 10.15 am – 12 noon.

We send warm greetings for the Christmas season and New Year to all.

Mary Rose

Downham Market

Ladies Friendship Circle

Two more meetings have gone by. The Fish and Chip Supper was well supported and we all enjoyed our meal, finishing with a cryptic TV quiz. I understand (as I was on holiday) that the bring and buy sale with a blue theme went well and was very enjoyable. Meg and Janet entertained everyone afterwards.

Our next meeting December 5th is a Poetry evening with members reading a poem of their choice to other members. December 19th is our Christmas evening with a buffet supper and entertainment. Please note this meeting begins at 7pm dress up if you would like to. If anyone would like to come to this meeting you will be very welcome.

We have a break during January so the next meeting will be February 13th 2019 with Bingo.

February 27th is a talk about Guide dogs by Mrs Southgate.

All the members with you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year
Margaret Fox

Our weather continues to keep us on our toes. After having to take down the gazebo over my plant stall one Saturday, it was in danger of taking off, the heavens opened and the downpour made it necessary to pack everything away. It was then quite a relief to go into the hall for the next three weeks when we had two craft fairs with an Action for Children coffee morning in between. I think, unless the weather turns very mild, the outside stall is finished till the Spring and it's indoors with just house plants, but I shan't be able to attract all the folk coming out of Morrisons opposite! This year we didn't seem to have a proper Spring, straight from Winter into the hot spell which lasted all Summer.

At the moment, after early morning rain, my daily walk along the river Nar has been in glorious sunshine making the beautiful swans look even whiter; change of company though. My poor little staffie type mongrel Bella finally had to go to the vet for the last time. She was eighteen and had had a cancerous growth in her mouth for nearly two years and her quality of life suddenly dropped. One walk by myself, must keep up the exercise routine, then my daughter took me to a little family charity near Yarmouth, (bigger charities won't let over eighties have dogs), and I now have a rangy white lurcher bitch Millie who is ten. Like greyhounds, lurchers are couch potatoes and do not need really long walks which suits me fine. I have to keep her on a long lead till she is really settled in. She did squeeze past me one wet Tuesday morning and loped off along the A10 towards Downham. It was pouring with rain, lorries were going past non-stop and I ran after, shouting, but to no avail. Back to my daughter's to shout to her to get on her bike in

pursuit while I followed with her lead. Fortunately a lady had stopped her car and caught her before she got to the next roundabout. Now she is shut in one room before I open the outside door. Millie has been passed around a lot in the past few years but I am sure with a lot of love she'll realise she now has a good home and will not attempt to run away. The next stage is off the lead in a friend's field which is secure to make sure she comes back when I call her. She is already used to my daughter's two rescue dogs, walking with them along the river bank; they are off the leads of course. When the river banks were cleared of the high nettles etc. she wandered down and the next minute decided to go for a swim with me hanging grimly onto the extended lead. I managed to reel her in safely, but I bet none of the fishermen there had ever caught anything so big! (Apologies to non-dog lovers, back to business.)

Hazel reported that the theme of the Messy Church session in November was 'Listening and learning' as we thought about how Jesus welcomed children to him and how important it is to listen. Adults need to listen and learn from children. Activities included trusting others to guide us through a blindfold trail, making a rose window model and thinking about what is at the centre of our lives, making butterfly pretzels, making masks, because sometimes we hide behind masks, and a gratitude tree on which we could hang leaves on which were written things for which we are thankful.

Next Messy Church will be held on Friday 14th December and this will be the Christmas Messy Church.

At the last Churches Together meeting it was reported that we had raised sufficient funds to cover thirty Christmas food hampers, as last year, but with Christmas Day falling on a Tuesday, it is going to be difficult to get the hampers delivered so that the turkeys are thawed out just in time for Christmas Day. So there will be a lot of work to be done in the few days before. Volunteers are needed and if you can help for a few hours please ring Alex Coates on 01366 384474. She is co-ordinating the operation and will have dates and times worked out. There is no better way to get into the true spirit of Christmas than by helping others not so privileged as we are. To start funding next year's hampers Churches Together folk, and any other singing friends we know, will be carolling at Tesco's on the three Fridays before Christmas, 7th, 14th and 21st from 7.00 p.m. Carol sheets will be provided and Chris Young will accompany us on his keyboard so do come and join us to help raise a good sum and remind the shoppers what Christmas is really about. If you have Father Christmas or elf costumes it will add to the fun. Next year a service for Christian unity is planned for 20th January at 6.30 at this Church. Our Church will again be providing a Christmas dinner for folk who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day at a cost of £12 and transport to and from the social centre can be arranged. Numbers are of course needed for

catering purposes so to have a lunch you will need to get a form from the social centre, complete and return it.

We wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas with family or friends or those you meet at our Christmas Day Dinner.

Joan Macey

Terrington St Clement

At Network Marjorie Bocking illustrated "Borrowing and Lending" in the Bible even though the saying goes "Neither a borrower nor a lender be"

David and Pam Little organised "A Jigsaw Extravaganza" from 10am to 2pm.

Lots of jigsaws were available and there was soup and cake to sustain us. It was well attended and we hope to repeat it in the New Year.

We will have a "New Year Party" possibly in February, details to be confirmed.

Saturday Knit and Natter with coffee is still well attended.

New Beginnings with Rev. Jackie Goddard continues to be very inspiring.

Linda Howling

Hilgay

On Friday evening 2nd November Hilgay Methodist Church hosted an Armistice Centenary Celebration Concert which was very well attended. The idea for this was proposed by Deacon Janet Stafford, who put in a lot of work to make this a successful event.

Groups taking part were Hilgay Training Band with some helpers from the main Band. The band conducted by Mr Brian Doy played two sessions of musical items including two solo pieces by two of the junior members.

Pupils from Hilgay Riverside Academy sang a selection of old songs including 'Daisy Bell', 'Hands, Knees and Bumps a Daisy' and 'Row, row, row your boat'. The children also joined in the Community singing.

A quartet from Anglian Accents entertained us by singing a cappella, '500 miles', 'New Ashmolean Marching Society', 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic' and a beautiful 'Irish Blessing'.

Poems were read by Lesley Dent, Gordon Smith, Deacon Janet and Pauline Driver.

Everyone joined in Community Singing and great fun was had when one side of the audience sang, 'Pack up your troubles in your old kitbag' while the other side sang 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. The concert concluded with everyone singing, 'Let there be Peace on Earth' followed by two verses of the National Anthem.

Refreshments were served by members of the Chapel and although no admission charge was made, donations at the close amounted to £95:00

which was donated to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal in this very special year.

Thanks to all who attended.

The Guild meeting on December 11th will be the last before Christmas so this will take the form of a Christmas afternoon, beginning at 2:30pm. All welcome. On December 18th we hope to be dressing Christmas Windowsills in our chapel. This will be followed at approx. 3:45pm by Cafe Church.

On December 24th our annual Christmas Eve service will begin at 6; 30pm. This year it will be a Traditional service of lessons and Carols. Everyone is welcome to join us. A wonderful way to start Christmas Celebrations.

Pauline Driver.

Pott Row

To commemorate the centenary of Armistice Day we joined the parish church for the service marking the occasion. There was standing room only in the church as different village groups were also joining in, including many children who had made countless poppies for the day. Members of the Scout and Cub troupes carried the colours to the altar and read the names of the fallen from our four villages: Pott Row, Congham, Roydon and Grimston. We moved outside for the two minutes silence and the laying of wreaths - thankfully the threatening clouds passed us by. The Last Post and Reveille were played beautifully and we returned into the church for the rest of the service, which included the prayers led by Stephen Watts.

Refreshments were served and many stayed to look at the interesting display on view.

Pott Row correspondent

Dersingham

Coffee or tea after the morning service is always much appreciated at Dersingham and the voluntary contributions which have been donated by the congregation have supported a number of causes over the years, mostly Methodist orientated. It has been decided that the money raised over the six months from September to February will this time go to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which does such wonderful work rescuing people from the sea throughout the year. Their income is entirely made up of voluntary contributions and their brave men and women give their services free. It will be good to support them.

With the coming of the winter months it has been decided to change the time of our Evening Service from 6pm to 4pm. We are again joining in the

Christmas Tree Festival at St. Nicholas Church, but this time will be having a smaller tree on one of the windowsills. However Paul has, as usual, provided us with patterns of angels to cut out and decorate appropriately and these will be used to decorate our own Christmas tree in the church. We look forward to welcoming people with an angelic host! We will also be taking part in the MHA Christmas Friendship Appeal and writing cards to those in the Homes who do not get any.

As in previous years children from the local school will be coming to the church at 2pm on the 14th December to hold their own carol service. Steve will lead the carol singing before the community lunch on the 3rd December at 11.45am, and our Candlelight Carol Service will be held at 4pm on Sunday 23rd December. On Christmas Eve we will be celebrating Holy Communion at 11.30pm and Elizabeth Batstone will be leading our Christmas Day service at 10.30am.

And so to another New Year, 2019! Our Covenant Service will be taken by the Rev. Steve Oliver on 20th January.

Rosemary Caink

Gaywood St Faith's

"Oh Christmas tree, Oh Christmas tree how lovely are thy branches..". so goes the opening lines of a famous German Carol. There should be some lovely tree branches on show at St Faith's Church from 7th December when the fourth Christmas Tree Festival is held.

The Festival, which will continue for four days, will feature around 30 mainly real trees with some artificial trees, that will have been all beautifully and imaginatively decorated by local school pupils and members of church and charity groups. The church takes on a magical winter-wonderland atmosphere when all the trees are illuminated, particularly in later afternoon as the natural light begins to fade.

In addition to the trees on show, there will be two concerts. The first will be on Friday 7th December in the evening. It will be a variety concert arranged by local impresario and good friend of St Faith's Church, Stephen Hayter. The evening will include songs and sketches by a group of local talented actors, singers and dancers.

The following evening, Saturday 8th December, will see the popular Big Heart and Soul Choir perform. At both concerts, refreshments will be served and there will be a raffle.

During the day on 8th December will be the usual monthly coffee morning in the nearby Gaywood Church Rooms and it is hoped that people will come along from 10am and enjoy a couple of hours of fun and fellowship with

friends before going into church to look at the trees. There is free admission to the Coffee Morning and the Tree Festival.

One of the popular features of the Festival is a stall stocked full of hand-made craft goods with a particular seasonal theme. A team have been busy over the past months with their fabrics and needles making all manner of items which will be for sale during the Festival.

Once again the tree festival organising team is appealing for help from church members to take on various voluntary roles including stewarding, helping with catering and in various other roles. Please give some thought to what you may be able to do to help.

Following last year's really successful Christmas Day lunch in Gaywood Church Rooms, aimed at those folk who, for various reasons, would otherwise be on their own on this special day in the Church year, it has been decided to hold another lunch this year.

Those attending are offered a traditional three-course turkey lunch with all the trimmings and lunch is followed by coffee, tea and mince pies. Each guest takes home a Christmas gift.

Anyone living alone, who thinks they may enjoy joining together with other folk for the Christmas lunch is asked to contact St Faith's Rector, Rev. Julie Boyd, on 01553 770952. Unfortunately, because our numbers are limited, we are NOT able to welcome people who turn up on the day who have not been booked in.

As always there is a busy programme of special Christmas services on offer at St Faith's Church. In the run up to Christmas there will be a series of school Carol Services when it is lovely to see the church full of pupils, teachers and parents.

Our special Christmas services include an Advent Carol service, the ever-popular Christingle service and the Midnight Communion (start time is 11.15pm) on Christmas Eve, 24th December.

On Christmas morning there will be family service at 10am.

Full details of all these special Christmas services are available by contacting St Faith's Church office on 01553 774916 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings between 9am and 12 noon.

Finally, may I take this opportunity of wishing all Rejoice! readers a Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year. I look forward to writing about St Faith's Church during 2019. God Bless you all.

Richard Parr.

Stow Bridge

A man in a queue at Christmas said, "I'd like to kill the person who invented Christmas!" Another person in the queue said, "They did."

Silent Night, Holy Night has become a nightmare for many people.

Christmas begins with Christ. Perhaps this gives a clue to the secret of a wonderful Christmas. Jesus Christ should have first place in our celebrations and lives.

The carol says, "Love came down at Christmas," and Jesus is love. All true Christmas carols teach us a lot about Christ, who was "Born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth."

The carol "Once in Royal David's city" reminds us "He came down to earth from Heaven, who is God and Lord of all." And more great words from "See amid the winter's snow, born for us on earth below. See the Lamb of God appear, promised from eternal years."

"Hark the herald angels sing, Christ is born in Bethlehem."

A wonderful event and we thank God for it.

Peter Hewitt

with thoughts from a former Lynn reverend, Rev. David V. Jebson

My sabbatical

By the time you read this I will have returned from my sabbatical and will be leading the churches of the Downham section through Advent and Christmas. It has been an interesting and different time with a mixture of experiences. I have been able to visit Holy Island, seen more of my daughter Liz in Nottingham and her family. I visited Sheffield and been able to be part of one of my former churches special weekend, then over to the Gladstone Library at Hawarden, near Chester. I volunteered to help at the new Lynn Night Shelter first with decorating and then after the official opening helping with breakfasts. Finally I had an Advent Retreat at Launde Abbey to prepare for my return. Many of you have had extra work on account of my absence. Thank you to all who have worked so hard. I have missed you all. It has been good to have a change and do things differently but it is also good to be back. Sincerely,

Maurice

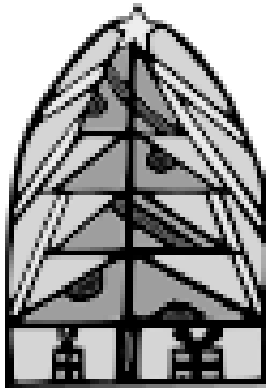
Clenchwarton Methodist Church
A Concert in aid of the Samaritans Purse
Christmas Shoe Box Appeal
Entertainment by a local group
The Flukes Ukulele band

Saturday December 8th

2 to 4 pm in the Methodist Church Hall,
Main Road, Clenchwarton.

*Entry fee of £3.00 per person to include
Light refreshments.*

A great afternoon of entertainment



THE CHURCH IN WARTIME

Watching a fascinating television series “Wartime Farm” gave me the idea of writing about the Church in Wartime. It is a vast subject but I can only describe some of my own experiences. On that fateful morning 3rd September 1939 we hurried home from church to hear Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s announcement on the “wireless”.

“This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German government a note stating that unless we heard from them by 11 o’clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.”

The word “adrenalin” was not in our vocabulary in those days but it could well have been used to describe the strange mixture of excitement and dread with which we heard his words. It would change the course of history. Life would never be the same again. I quote from the 1940 Minutes of Conference:

“We live in days when evils that we thought had passed for ever are threatening the world, and the foundations of civilised life are shaken. All that we have been accustomed to regard as sacred and stable in State and Church is rudely questioned or flung aside and the faith we have learned through twenty centuries of Christianity is openly denied and gravely imperilled.”

For Christians there was immediately a cruel dilemma, whether to support and be prepared to take up the call to arms or whether to hold fast to the pacifist position. Wisely the Methodist Church did not take sides but supported those who took opposite views

I was now 23 and having finished university was looking round for a career. My uncle, John Watson was a missionary in Dahomey (now Benin). He told me of the great need for teachers in French West Africa. Was that something I could do? He arranged an interview for me at Marylebone Road, the Mission House. I was to see Rev. WG Noble, who afterwards became President of Conference. He completely won me over, coming out of his office to greet me. Unfortunately, he told me, things were very difficult in the Mission Field due to the war. To digress for a moment, one of my colleagues in later years was to be the Rev. Ernest Partner. He was serving in Dahomey at the outbreak of war and was stuck there for five years. Another friend, Rev. Bill Ream, had to spend the war

years in China and was eventually taken prisoner by the Japanese. He did a marvellous job among his fellow internees. To go back to Mr Noble, he said: "You know you could do your best work if you were ordained." What me? I was not even a member let alone a local preacher. Out in the London streets again I saw the anxious looks in the eyes of people in those days of what we called the phoney war. The word came clearly to me. "Seeing the multitudes he was moved with compassion for they were as sheep not having a shepherd". I knew that I wanted to be a Methodist minister. Before that could happen I would be due for war service. In this unusual situation the church forgot the rule book and all the necessary exams and interviews were completed within three months before I joined up. To have some choice I volunteered and for the next 5 years 8 months and 23 days I was a member of the Royal Army Service Corps. I was able to have leave to go to the July Committee. Half a dozen of us were in uniform. In the present situation we could not be accepted for training so about forty were placed on an approved list until we should become available. In the event that was not to be for another five years and in the meantime the theological colleges had to be closed.

Before being posted overseas I was able to see how the churches were faring and later I was kept in touch by letters from my parents. Obviously the home church faced tremendous problems. When dark nights came many evening services were closed. The call-up meant that fewer men were available with a consequent loss of income and people to take office. Tribute must be paid to those who kept things going. Churches and manses were not immune to bombs. I was stationed in London during the Blitz. My uncle John was minister at Golders Green and I went there whenever I was free. One evening I was at the manse when John said he had to go to the church, which was about a quarter of a mile away. He got ready, but when he reached the door turned back, saying that he had better change his shoes. He had only been gone a few minutes when there was a terrific explosion which shattered the windows. A landmine had come down half way between the manse and church. My aunt and I dived under the table in panic but we were very worried. What had become of John? We were so relieved when he reappeared, blackened and covered with dust. If he had not stopped to change his shoes he would have been right where the bomb came down.

My initial military training had been at Mansfield. I was delighted to find that the Methodists there had turned their schoolroom into a canteen. Many churches did this; some had their ancillary premises requisitioned for

billeting troops, but as far as I was concerned the best thing that the wartime church did was to send chaplains to every theatre of war. I was so grateful for their ministry throughout my four and a half years in the Middle East. I particularly remember a whole year in Benghazi when the chaplain ran a Garrison Church. This was a staging point for battalions on the way to the front line. The church was crowded and the men loved to sing the old hymns. I have often thought that for some of them it would be the last service on earth they would ever attend, For them the words of a hymn quoted by Winston Churchill in one of his stirring speeches would become true in another sense;

“Yet nightly pitch my moving tent a day`s march nearer
home” (From “For ever with the Lord....”)

John Garfoot

Thank you, John, for sharing so many thoughts with us over the year. The editorial committee especially like to read them as very little editing is needed!





You are
invited to
join us
on Sunday
2 December
at 6.00pm
for
A Service of
REMEMBRANCE and LIGHT



helping
people
encounter
JESUS

HUNSTANTON
METHODIST
CHURCH

You are welcome to
an evening with
Estevão Devídes

on guitar

Friday 7 December

Café opens @ 6.30

Music from 7.00p.m.

Tickets £7 Bookings contact:
07799510035 or enquires@
hunstantonmethodistchurch.com



FIND US : Hunstanton Methodist Church, PE36 6AL

at the junction of Austin Street and A149

www.hunstantonmethodistchurch.com

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Christmas is a special time
To give, to serve, to love.
It isn't just about yourself,
But others that you think of.

The presents, the trees, the glowing lights
Are fun but have no part
In what the real meaning of Christmas is...
That is in your heart.

Even if other people don't,
You should try to do
The things that you would want
Them to do to you!

The holidays are a busy time,
But they are sometimes good
Because they keep you thinking
About others like you should.

So this year, try to not think about yourself,
But think of the things you can do
To help others have a wonderful Christmas,
And you will find that you will be happy too.

West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary

December 2018 onwards

Saturday December 1st. Christmas Coffee Morning at Terrington St. Clement

Friday/Sunday December 7th-9th Christmas Tree Festival at Pott Row

Friday/Monday December 7th - 10th Christmas Tree Festival at Gaywood St Faith's

Friday December 7th Christmas Variety Concert at Gaywood St Faith's

Saturday December 8th A Festival of Nativity at Feltwell

Saturday December 8th Concert at Clenchwarton

Saturday December 8th Big Heart and Soul Community Choir at Gaywood St Faith's

Saturday December 15th 10.15 am Coffee Morning and bric-a-brac at Wimbotsham

Sunday December 23rd Carol Service at 10 am

Sunday December 23rd Candlelit Carols with "Fensong"
Tuesday

Saturday January 19th 10.15 am Coffee Morning and bric-a-brac at Wimbotsham