

Rejoice!

February/March 2019



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

Dear friends,

By the time you read these words we will be well into 2019 and Christmas and New Year will be a distant memory. As the year moves on we look forward to March 6th which is Ash Wednesday and beginning of Lent. I thought I would say a few words about Lent because I believe it to be largely misunderstood. The seasons of the Church Year were constructed to help generations of Christian believers live out together their discipleship. From time to time we ask "What are you doing for Lent?" This immediately makes it solely something an individual does. Then we think in terms of giving up sugar in coffee or living without chocolate biscuits. This misses the point. Lent is so much more. When I was in Yorkshire there was a tradition of eating Corned Beef Hash on Ash Wednesday! I think this was a misunderstanding of the use of Ash on Ash Wednesday. Methodists were invited to a service of "Ashing" at the local C of E Sadly there is no invite at Downham!! The ash is important as it reminds us of our mortality, our sinfulness and our humanity. It is an appropriate starting point, which can then proceed to the possibilities that our Lord and Saviour Jesus can bring us. We are challenged to journey with Jesus through Lent, seeking to be open to the Holy Spirit, serving him in the place and work that we are placed in with thankful and joyful hearts. Of course we do that in the midst of a busy life with many other demands upon us. But there are simple things we can do. We can join a Lent group; there will be several running in the Circuit. We can read a Lent book; I reviewed some last year for the Methodist Recorder and can let you have them. Or we could take the advice of Justin Welby who suggests, "Read Luke's Gospel, taking a small chunk each day but asking 3 questions. What does it say? What does it mean? What am I going to do about it?"

A small period spent in this way opens us up to what God truly wants us to do and be. Justin Welby also recommends a short time of silence, which will be tricky at first because we are easily distracted by stuff in our heads that we need to see to. We will not get a Damascus Road insight every day but nevertheless it will be deepening.

Lent though is greater than self-improvement. We are part of communities of all shapes and sizes. We need to look at our lives in relation to these communities. God calls us to be more aware, to be a better listener and to be more open to those around us.

Justin Welby again writes, "The discipline of a good Lent is to find again how we welcome the stranger, how we practice hospitality and how we listen." Finally we need to pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done". To listen to the call to connect with the world and with what's going on around us we need also to pray "Here I am, Lord, send me". So I hope that our journey as communities, churches and individuals through Lent will be a really blessed time.

Sincerely Maurice

Lent Reflection Group 2019

I will be running my usual group during Lent, creating a space for those of us who wish so to do to reflect on our life of faith. The group runs for about an hour. There is no preparation or homework, you can speak or just listen, and participants are welcome to come for as many or as few sessions as they are able. All are welcome. It will begin on Tuesday 12th March at 10am at South Wootton. As for the topic? At time of writing that is not yet confirmed. We shall gather in faith!

Rev. Catherine Dixon

On going to the local post office, situated in a WH Smith store, for my Christmas religious stamps I was told they had none and to return in a few days when they should arrive. This I duly did and they had arrived.

On opening envelopes sent through the post I checked the stamps. Out of thirty plus there were just two religious stamps! (A second class and, on Christmas Eve, a first class.)

Have folk forgotten these stamps were produced and just accepted what was sold them? I know we are a multicultural country but, after all, it is the CHRISTMAS season, not that celebrated by other denominations. It seems that our beliefs are being side-tracked in this secular world.

A grumpy elderly woman!

No name necessary.

Praying together in the Circuit

To everything there is a season
and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1

Solomon wrote of the seasons of life. In our Christian calendar we follow God's amazing plan for mankind which will succeed through his Son. It guides us during the year through the seasons of the life of Jesus which have deep meaning for us.

During ADVENT we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus and our calling to prepare for His second coming. At CHRISTMAS we recall the prophecies given and the events and the people involved leading to the birth of our Saviour. During EPIPHANY we look at and wonder at who Jesus is - Emmanuel, God with us. In LENT we remember the temptations which he overcame and his time of trial and suffering. On GOOD FRIDAY we remember his sacrificial death and our salvation. At EASTER we celebrate the wondrous victory of the resurrection of Jesus and the new life he gives us. After forty days the ASCENSION of Jesus our risen and ascended Lord. Ten days later at PENTECOST the promised empowering of the disciples, the church born and sent out in the power of the Holy Spirit. Then it's ORDINARY time, when the Church is Spirit led. It's an everyday season lived in expectancy of his coming again, any time, any day.

We give thanks that every day is a gift and every season has a purpose. We commit every day to you and to your purpose. Lord keep us close to you, walking in faithful and loving obedience every step of the way. As we step out in discipleship, co-operating with you, lead us day by day in your perfect will. By your Holy Spirit give us freedom to share the good news of the gospel and speak of you and the great things you have done. Raise up your church at this time in love and power. We pray for an extraordinary time of blessing and

outpouring of your Holy Spirit touching people in their everyday lives, in our communities, throughout our nation and all the nations of the world. We pray that 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea' [Habakkuk 2: 14] and that 'one by one people will say, I am the Lord's' [Isaiah 44:5].

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. Bob and Petula; For all who mourn the passing of a loved one.

Wonderful Counsellor. Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace minister to those experiencing seasons of difficulty physically, mentally, spiritually. May each person know your presence with them never leaving them, never forsaking them, an ever present help in times of trouble. We pray for seasons of blessing, healing and wholeness.

Overcoming/Overwhelming

Uncertainties
Go hand in hand.
Is that so hard
To understand?

Not being sure
And in self-doubt -
Emotions raw
Within, without.

Some certainties
Are hard to bear-
Tenderly sealed
By loving care.

Sue Ash

Around the churches



Hilgay

We had a busy time during Advent. Our afternoon of window sill decorating went very well, with various village organisations taking part. This was followed by Cafe Carols. Our annual Christmas Eve service was well attended once again. A lovely evening of worship and fellowship to begin Christmas. Mince pies, tea and coffee were enjoyed after the service.

Our Christmas card to each other was available for people to sign and donate to New Dawn India. I am very pleased to report we have raised enough to purchase two sets of school books giving street children an opportunity to learn, a sari for a grandmother, giving her some dignity, school uniforms with shoes for three children so everyone is equal and helped provide computers to give a World Wide Web learning experience.

By the time this magazine is published our Covenant service will have taken place followed by a fellowship tea.

Our Guild meeting will continue on February 5th and 19th and March 5th and 19th. All are welcome; Meetings begin at 2:30pm.

Pauline Driver.

Terrington St Clement

Pre Christmas seems a long time ago. But at Network we had Barbara Foster on "Memories", Elizabeth Batstone on Advent and an afternoon of Christmas readings by members including a mince pie with our tea.

We had a very successful Christmas Coffee Morning with a light lunch of soup and ever present mince pies with cream.

The usual raffle and stalls were there; Jenny's games results were Baubles in the bowl, Jeanette Hunter, weight of the pudding Maureen Martin, Bear's birthday Gillian Watson sweets in the jar Rod Payne.

Over Christmas we collected £141.75 from Network, Christmas service, card money and donations. Thanks to all.

We shared united services with the C of E in our Church.

Our New Year party on February 2nd will be from 2pm till 4.30 ish food served at 3pm.

Everyone is most welcome to attend.

Linda Howling

Stanhoe

This contribution comes from the Isle of Lewis, some 600 miles away from Norfolk. Today, 7th January, there is a tremendous gale blowing, and the view from our windows, as I write, is a spectacular one of Atlantic waves breaking over the cliffs half a mile away and our attempt to walk the dogs on the shore this morning was cut short, as we were literally close to being knocked over by the force of the wind. For the moment we are trapped on the island, as all ferry services are cancelled. On the bright side, we still have electric power, and an internet connection; the stove is alight, and we are warm and dry and hoping that eventually we shall be back taking up our usual duties and responsibilities in Norfolk!

As for life in Stanhoe Methodist Church: We enjoyed a wonderful Christmas Carol Service on 9th December, led by our own minister, Rev. Steve Oliver. Visitors and friends enhanced our usual numbers, and we were especially delighted to welcome member Betty Holmes, with her daughters, Christine and Pauline, her granddaughter, Lucy, and great granddaughter, Holly: four generations coming back to Stanhoe Methodist Church, where Betty and her late husband, Tom, were once stalwart mainstays in our congregation. Sadly, Betty suffers from severe dementia, so nowadays is not usually able to attend church.

After the service, which this year was a joint Carol Service with Burnham Market methodists, we had a time of fellowship, serving drinks and mince pies. A retiring collection was taken in aid of the new King's Lynn Night Shelter, and East Anglian Air Ambulance. The sum collected was augmented from church funds, so that we were able to send £100.00 to each charity. We now look forward to our service celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, on 21st January at 2pm. This is usually very well supported by Anglicans and Roman Catholics from Stanhoe and neighbouring villages, and will be led jointly by Rev. Steve Oliver and the vicar of Stanhoe, Rev. Peter Cook. As always, we shall be serving tea and cakes after the service. We wish all our friends in the Circuit a Happy New Year, and especially thank those Local Preachers and Ministers who continue to come, sometimes a considerable distance, and lead our worship.

Elizabeth MacLeod

Downham Market

Ladies Friendship Circle

Happy and Healthy New Year to everyone.

Our two December meetings went very well. The Christmas evening was a great success. We started with a buffet supper which was supplied by the committee. This was followed by a potted pantomime "Cinderella" several

Members taking part. It was very funny and a good laugh. Then we finished with Christmas songs.

Our first meeting in 2019 will be 13th February with Bingo. February 27th is a talk about guide dogs.

March meetings are 13th March - Peter Thorpe with slides on the History of the Bagge Family.

27th March is our Annual Lunch at the Castle 12noon for 12.30pm.

Everyone is welcome to come to our meetings

Margaret Fox

Considering we are well into January the weather has so far been kind with my daily riverside walk done in cold crisp sunshine or under overcast skies but much milder and not too much rain, though as my new dog Milly has had to have an operation on a paw we have not been able to go very far.

Remembering the Christmas period evokes happy memories of our carols by candlelight service when Fensong helped by starting the service with Once in Royal David's City; singing and signing the Zither carol and telling the Christmas story with their very energetic puppets. With a congregation of over 150 there were lots of young families there all enjoying the nearness to Christmas. The Christmas Day lunch and entertainment for those who would otherwise have been on their own was also well supported and enjoyed, and I helped at the Churches Together stand at the lighting up ceremony when we handed out muffins and mince pies together with three different booklets telling the Christmas story for different age groups. Here too were lots of families enjoying the funfair, music from the band and school choirs and as darkness fell, the colourful illuminations when the lights were switched on. There was a very happy atmosphere, a good start to Advent.

The first Messy Church of 2019 was held on 11th January and saw some new families attending. We even had a dog with us who liked to have Bible stories read to her! This time we were thinking of Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12. We remembered how Jesus grew up from the baby we thought about at Christmas and how he had a human father and a heavenly father. We also talked about how he learned and that we all need to learn and that we are all part of families, including our Messy Church family. At the end of the session, one little boy cried because he didn't want to leave and go home. We hope to see him and his family next month!

Churches Together had organised 3 sessions of carol singing at Tesco, the 3 Friday evenings before Christmas and this too was good fun and fellowship.

The store was very busy especially on the 3rd night and as usual the folk of our town were very generous (we raised over £200 on the first two evenings) which is a good start to the fund for next year's Christmas hampers when we supply a Christmas dinner with all the trimmings to folk who are finding it hard to manage in these difficult times. Of course this will be added to during the year as each Church has a fund raising event in support. We sent out 33 hampers each costing over £30 and could easily have helped out more families had we the resources.

We had our Covenant Service on Sunday 13th when nine folk were received into membership. The next Churches Together meeting is after the date this article is due in, but one advance notice is that the annual World Day of Prayer Service will be held at 2.00 at the Salvation Army Citadel on 1 March. The next edition of Rejoice will cover April and May but should be out at the beginning of April in time for news of activities for Easter which is very late this year.

Our Saturday coffee mornings have recommenced after the Christmas break and we continue to provide a warm place for fellowship with tasty refreshments and bargain stalls to browse. The property committee is investigating the possibility of adding a porch to the front of the Church so as to incorporate an electric door to enable the existing heavy door to be pinned open. The cost is bound to be astronomical, but we wait to see what they can come up with. Meanwhile we carry on with our fundraising to help with the other numerous bills for our Church and buildings.

We have been warned that the Beast from the East will be bringing severe weather soon; America and the Continent have already had above average falls of snow. Hopefully by the time the next edition of Rejoice is out in time for Easter the Spring will have arrived. Keep warm, keep well and keep praying.

Joan Macey

Meg Cooper would be very grateful for anyone who can offer to provide flowers or to assist in the arranging of them every week.

Downham Market Methodist Church – House Groups Over the past few months conversations have been taking place about growing the life of the church in depth, numbers and age spread. One of the early outcomes of this was to encourage more people currently in the church to get involved with a house

group. The response has been good and three new house groups have been established (taking the total to five plus 'Start the Week Right'). In all nearly fifty people are now involved in regular group study and fellowship.

If you are not yet in a group and would like to join one (or just have a chat to find out more), then please do get in touch with Dave Friswell

(david.friswell@outlook.com)

Stow Bridge

A good new year to all readers. It seems Father Christmas treated many people well, with good gifts, food, warm clothes and homes. Surely a time to give our Lord our grateful thanks as we see on our T.V screens so many people with little food and shelter in Africa and Asia.

With our family we were privileged to attend two Nativity plays, by school children in a C of E Church, full to bursting with people smiling at their efforts. It's lovely to see and hear the Christmas story, with the children, pretty decorations, lights and all the "Happy Christmases" given to so many people. May I give my opinion of the Queen's speech? She gave some comforting thoughts and some home truths on the real Christmas.

The members of our Church made the building look very attractive over the Christmas period and deserve a big **THANK YOU!**

Peter Hewitt

Pott Row

Christmas Tree Festival - what a wonderfully decorated chapel again this year! There were about twenty five trees all around the walls and on the stage. It would have been impossible to pick one more outstanding than the others, but the theme behind one I found particularly interesting. It was a folding wooden tree decorated with angel silhouettes which had pictures and writing about people who had led (or still lead) inspirational lives. These included amongst others - Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela and My Mum.

The pulpit was reversed and lit up to show a nativity scene, and there were several more scenes around the chapel.

The front of the stage had the Advent Wreath and the steps were decorated with greenery and tea lights.

The Festival finished with a well-attended carol service led by Catherine, and the lessons were read by representatives from local village groups. The service finished with 'O come all ye faithful' with just the lights from the Christmas trees on - a very moving end to the service.

Shirley and Bill Hone

And from Jenny

The best ever Christmas Tree Festival 2018.

A huge Thank you to everyone who helped in any way. There were more trees, all beautifully decorated. More gifts, cakes, raffle prizes. All donated.

The people who came through the door and supported us, those who attended the Carol Service, Thank you once again from all at the Pott Row Methodist Chapel.

Dersingham

Members of the congregation gave very generously to the appeal from the King's Lynn Food Bank for some extra festive food items to be distributed to folk needing help with food over the Christmas period. Collections at our Christmas services raised £388.36 for the Norfolk Hospice at Tapping House. We shall soon be entering the period of Lent and the Bible Study group, which meets at the home of Philip and Elizabeth Batstone, will start a Lent study entitled "Daring to see God now" on the 31st January at 3pm.

We have coffee mornings on Saturday 23rd February (in aid of the Flower Festival) and on Saturday 23rd March (in aid of Action for Children and Methodist Homes for the Aged). The Flower Festival this year, from Thursday 23rd May to Sunday 26th May, will have biblical occupations as its theme and it will be a celebration of the Church's 129th Anniversary.

Rosemary Caink

Wimbotsham

Our little Chapel was almost full to capacity for the Covenant Service on Sunday 6th January as we welcomed back Rev. Maurice Stafford from his Sabbatical as well as friends from our own Circuit and beyond who joined us in commitment, celebration and worship.

Whilst having become very familiar with this annual service over the years, I admit that I had not previously given much thought to its origins. So, back at home I logged on to the Methodist website (well worth a read!). An hour or so later after being distracted by the fund of other interesting information and discovery I found "Origins of the Covenant Service" relating how in 1775 John Wesley introduced a Covenant Service as an important part of spiritual life in the Methodist Societies. It is recorded in his journal that although initially the covenant renewal service was held on various occasions throughout the year by the end of his life the service was observed typically on the Sunday nearest 1st January. Wesley emphasised that God's grace and love constantly prompts and seeks to transform us as we continually seek and pray to grow in holiness and love.

We are ever grateful for all the Ministers, local and visiting preachers who lead our services throughout the year, together with the faithfulness of members of

our congregation who contribute so much in keeping our Chapel alive and open.

Our fortnightly Bible Study/Fellowship group is a great opportunity for us to feel a sense of support and belonging where - very informally over a cuppa and biscuits - we can freely discuss our thoughts and Christian experiences as we read through and learn from bible passages together. Currently there are about 5 of us and we would be delighted to welcome others to join us. We meet in the function room at the back of the Chapel at 10.15 am till mid-day. Dates of our forthcoming meetings are 5th, 19th February, 5th and 19th March. The delicious home-made cakes plus bric-a-brac to browse through at our monthly Coffee Mornings are proving popular. We are so pleased also that people who previously were not aware that our Chapel existed (as we are rather hidden away down Chapel Lane) are also taking the trouble to discover us. See the back cover of Rejoice for forthcoming dates.

Now at the start of a new year, we look forward to discovering the ways our Lord is directing us in the months to come.

Mary Davies

Gaywood St Faith's

December was a busy month for all of us at St Faith's. Notably, at the beginning of the month, was St Faith's fourth Christmas Tree Festival which was considered once again a great success. People helped in numerous ways to make it happen and thanks are expressed to all those who played a big or little part in the event.

Since 2112 the Festivals have continued to attract new people into the church but they have also had a financial spin-off with the 2018 Festival raising around £1,700 for church funds which is an excellent result.

Over the four days there were a number of highlights..... the two evening concerts, one featuring a group of local singers, dancers and actors led by St Faith's good friend Stephen Hayter. There was hardly a seat left for the second evening concert by the Castle-Acre based Big Heart and Soul Community Choir in what was a memorable evening of sacred and secular music.

A hand-made Christmas Crafts stall, arranged under the direction of Joan Greening, was again a great success. Joan and her team are thanked for all their hard work in making items to sell.

Following the success of the first such event last year, a second lunch on Christmas Day was staged at Christmas 2018 and a team of volunteers helped prepare, cook and serve 64 meals to people from the area, who would have otherwise spent such a special day on their own.

There was a wonderful atmosphere in the Gaywood Church Rooms as people arrived for the lunch and were welcomed into a meet and greet area where

they could relax over a cup of tea or coffee or a soft drink. Rector, the Rev Julie Boyd and her husband, Matthew once again led the lunch project with such energy and enthusiasm and support from Susie Cranko-Page and me. There were about 15 volunteers who helped in numerous ways.

We were delighted that the Borough Mayor of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Nick Daubney and his wife, Cheryl, attended the lunch. The Mayor carved the turkey while his wife helped to make the custard for the Christmas puddings. The civic couple spent time going around the Hall chatting to the guests who came to us from a wide range of backgrounds. A photograph of the Mayor carving the turkey, taken by the Rev Julie, appeared with a report of the lunch in the Lynn News.

Musical entertainment for the lunch and afterwards was provided free of charge by the Hunstanton-based talented saxophone and clarinet player, David Baker. His programme included many all-time classic numbers popular with the older audience.

Although a lot of hard work went into arranging the three-course traditional Turkey lunch all those who helped said it was worth the effort.

Sincere thanks goes to firms and individuals who sponsored the Lunch. They included Dream and Visions, Together Norfolk, Bowers the butchers at Gaywood, Tesco and Aldi at Gaywood, Home Bargains, Marks and Spencer, Riverbank Bakery, the Gaywood Co-op Funeral Services, King Edward V11 Academy, King's Lynn Methodist Charity Trust There were also a number of private donations.

Services during the Christmas period included a series of Gaywood school Carol services for which pupils, staff and parents filled the church pews. There was also the ever-popular Christingle service and the Crib service.

The Christmas Candlelit Carol service was again well attended and those attending were invited to say afterwards to share in mince pies and hot mulled wine. People commented that this was their favourite service of Christmas.

Warm tributes were paid to long-serving and faithful St Faith's member, Carol Bashton, at her well attended funeral service in church on 3rd December.

Carol, who died in a Norwich nursing home on 16th November at the age of 82, was among the original Methodists who left their Chapel near the Gaywood Clock in 1974. They crossed the road when Anglicans and Methodists began sharing St Faith's Church for worship as a Local Ecumenical Partnership developed.

St Faith's Methodist Minister, the Rev. Andrew Maguire, who led Carol's service, told mourners that the church had always had a central place in Carol's life and that her faith meant a great deal to her.

She, together with her late husband, Michael, who died in in 2011, played a significant part in the life of the Methodist Church and in the shared life of Methodists and Anglicans at St Faiths.

Carol was born in Poynton, near Manchester, on 19th December, 1935. She married Michael Bashton in 1962. Their only son, Richard, was born in 1966 at Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire.

One of the most important roles as far as Carol was concerned was that of Methodist Pastoral Secretary.

She faithfully kept the pastoral list for Methodist members and would keep the Minister informed of any particular pastoral needs.

The Rev. Maguire said that in our church life, Carol was always one to offer to do things with grace and humility, never seeking praise for herself but quietly getting on with things.

Carol had been born close to Christmas and one of her favourite Christmas Carols, Once in Royal David's City contains the words He feelth for our sadness and he shareth in our gladness.

God shares in our sadness at a time of sad loss like this. He also shares our gladness at the life of a good and faithful Christian who will be surely welcomed with gladness among the great company of the saints in light.

Richard Parr

M.W.I.B. Forthcoming Events 2019.

Forum Meetings:

At Diss on 22nd February 2019 - 10.00am for 10.30am start.

At Diss on 20th September 2019 - 10.00am for 10.30am start.

World Day of Prayer:

1st March 2019 to be held at:-

St. Faith's Church, Gaywood (11.00am)

Terrington St Clement Methodist Church (7.00pm)

The Salvation Army Citadel Downham Market (2.00pm)

Spring District Day:

28th March 2019 to be held at Dereham Methodist Church at 10.30am for 11.00am start. The speaker will be Judith Lampart.

National M.W.I.B. Conference:

will be at Swanwick on April 5th – 7th.

The speaker is to be the Rev. Dr Val Ogden.

Easter Offering:

15th May at London Road Methodist Church at 2.30pm.

One Day Conference at Belsey Bridge Centre:

Saturday 18th May, when the speaker will be Sally Anne Lomas, who is a well-known Christian Speaker and has presented Documentaries on T.V.

Autumn District Day:

10th October 2019 at Chapelfield Road Church, Norwich. Speaker to be arranged.

A.G.M.: 7th October at London Road Church at 2.30pm.

The Sinking of H.M.S. Iolaire

Elsewhere in this edition of Rejoice, I mentioned that Roddie and I had been away, staying on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. While there, we were able to join in some of the commemorations which took place to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the sinking of the Admiralty Yacht, H.M.S. Iolaire. You may have seen mention of this in the national news. On the 31st December, 1918, a large number of servicemen, many of them from the Royal and Merchant Navies, coming home on leave after perhaps being away for the whole of the war years, arrived in the port of Kyle of Lochalsh ready for transfer by ferry back to Stornoway, from where they would disperse to their various villages across the island. There was such a large number, that there was not enough room on the regular ferry, so hasty arrangements were made for them to be carried across the Minch on the Royal Navy Yacht, the Iolaire. The ship was overcrowded; there were not enough lifebelts for everyone, the Captain and officers were unfamiliar with the local waters, and the weather was foul, with high winds and strong seas. Most of the passengers had fished around Stornoway in civilian life, so it was said that many of them expressed alarm as the lights of Stornoway came into view, and they became aware that the ship was not headed for the harbour. Sadly, at around 2am on New Year's Day, 1919, the Iolaire ran aground on rocks, only yards from shore, and very quickly capsized. One man, a Finlay MacLeod, (no relation), managed to swim ashore with a line, so that a rope could be pulled back to the sinking vessel, and it was by holding on to this that 74 men were saved. Many more, 218, were lost, some of whose bodies were washed up on to the shore, but others who were never found.

We can only imagine how terrible it must have been, to have been the parents waiting for sons, or wives and children waiting for husbands and fathers, as the news passed from village to village. In a display put on in the local Arts

Centre, Roddie and I saw a representation of a peat fire, with the returning man's nightwear airing in front of it, waiting for the man who never came home. In the same display, there was a replica of the carts in use on the island in those days, usually used for work on the crofts and for bringing in the peat. It was small enough to be pulled by one or two men, and was built of wood, with the sides made of woven branches. It was on these carts that the bodies were placed, and brought back to the home villages, often pulled by their own remaining family members. We spoke to one man whose uncle remembered, as a child of 8 or so, being sent outside to wait in the village street, so that he could bring news of the carts coming through, to the relatives waiting inside.

The tragedy affected almost every family in the Island, and was so dreadful that for years it was not commemorated at all, although a monument was eventually erected. Many family members only found out years later that an uncle or cousin or great grandfather had died in the sinking of the lolaire, because it was just not spoken about. The hurt went too deep.

This year, most villages across the island held their own ceremonies, as well as the main event held in Stornoway, and attended by Prince Charles, and Nicola Sturgeon. All the primary schoolchildren took part in lolaire projects and there was a torchlight procession, and an event of poetry and prose and music on New Year's Eve in Stornoway.

We attended a commemorative church service in the neighbouring village of Carloway, where Roddie's father was born in 1892, and where several of his cousins still live. The service was held in the Free Church of Scotland, next door to the Church of Scotland, which is the church we usually attend, and was a very moving occasion, with psalms being sung, some in Gaelic, with no instrumental accompaniment, only led by a precentor.

Following the service, three grandchildren of men who had died, laid a wreath at the village war memorial.

Although not personally affected, as part-time members of the local community, and with strong family ties, we felt very privileged to have been able to join in the various events, and to talk to neighbours and family members of their own experiences. We shall not forget.

We will remember them.

Elizabeth Macleod

I went for a job in a Dr Barnado's home as an odd job man. The interviewer asked, "Have you had any experience with children?"

I said, "Yes, I went to school with them."



Any items for the **APRIL/MAY** edition should be with the editor by **MARCH 12th**, earlier is good. Any received after this date will be treated as considerately as 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!

Mrs Barbara Foster
140 Stow Road
Magdalen, King's Lynn
PE34 3BD
Tel. 01553 811867
E mail rabbit1308@btinternet.com

From one who knows

Definition of a Church Council

A group of Church members who, individually can do nothing, but as a group, decide nothing can be done.

Definition of a Circuit Meeting

A group of Church members who keep minutes and waste hours!

News!

We are very pleased to announce that Rev. Robert Roberts, currently in the Norwich Circuit, will be joining us as our new Superintendent Minister when Rev. Andrew Maguire retires and Rev. Catherine Dixon moves on. He will be living in the South Wootton Manse.

We look forward to getting to working with him.

Deaf people are welcome at Downham Market.

Small things make a big difference, don't they? Whatever we have at our disposal can be used for good or ill - words can help or harm; we can turn and smile at someone or we can walk by without a glance.

At Downham Market Methodist Church, a group of Deaf people who use British Sign Language have been attending monthly for some time. We're grateful for the small acts of welcome from so many people - like trying to sign Good Morning; for being asked to take part in the service by taking the offering or giving out newsletters; smiling faces and people taking time; hymn words projected onto the wall, because it's impossible to hold a hymn book and sign at the same time! These make a huge difference to the welcome that we Deaf people feel at church, especially when we know people are giving their time and effort for us. It's easy to be isolated when you're profoundly Deaf. Coming regularly, getting to know people and what happens in church with Rev. Anne or an interpreter signing the service, means we can understand everything that's being said or sung, and we can be a part of the church.

As a Deaf group, we are part of Sign the Cross, the ministry among the Deaf community within the Methodist District. There is also a Deaf church in Norwich and a 'messy-church-cum-cafe-church-style group in Lowestoft, called Dawn. In October, we had a special District service at Downham to recognise and celebrate this work, led by our District Chair, Julian. We were well supported by Downham people and had good support from people across the District who travelled to show their love to us and their interest in the Deaf community. Two of our ladies became Methodist members by transfer. Next year, we hope to celebrate baptism for another couple. We'll let you know where and when as soon as we can as everyone will be welcome to come and join us for this special service.

From January, a few of us will be gathering at Downham on the last Saturday of the month for Bible study and fellowship. It will be a good opportunity to discuss what we've learnt in church and to go deeper with some of the stories. As Deaf people we often miss out on things that those

of you who are hearing just pick up as you go along. We've not had opportunity to be part of church for most of our lives, so as you can imagine, we are enjoying coming regularly now. For anyone who feels a bit nervous about trying to talk with us, please don't be. Just remember that the small things - your smile, your eye contact, your best attempts to communicate - are so deeply appreciated. And we hope that the folks at Downham Market enjoy having us there too and enjoy watching worship interpreted into British Sign Language.

If anyone would like to come to Downham Market to join in the signed service, you can check the dates we'll be there on the Sign the Cross website: www.signthecross.com. Or you can email Rev. Anne Richardson on signthecross@gmail.com

CHANGE.....IN ALL AROUND I SEE

On the seventh day of the month when I was wondering what to write about next, one of the prayers in the Methodist Prayer Handbook began "Dear Lord, help me to cope with change." Thank you, Amelia Carter who wrote this; it has got me going. A supernumerary friend of mine said "This is not the same Church as the one in which I was ordained." I could say Amen to that, but I am not in the business of saying whether the changes I have seen are for better or worse, they speak for themselves. I just want to list some of them.

Perhaps the most significant is the ecumenical situation. I was brought up in a village where there were three Methodist Chapels, Wesleyan, Primitive and United Methodist, in none too friendly rivalry. The only thing they agreed on was antipathy to the Parish Church, a sentiment which was fully reciprocated. The bishop of Ely once wrote round his diocese asking how they got on with the Methodists. One reply came back "The Methodists and we are ancient enemies and we prefer it that way." On a wartime troopship I was refused Holy Communion by the Anglican chaplain just when I needed it most. 70 years ago the World Council of Churches was formed and in the town where I was stationed a meeting was called to form a local Council. Rather reluctantly the Vicar came along and made a speech: "You Free Church people may be better Christians than we but you do not belong to the Church." Twenty years later he retired to where I was and he greeted me like a long lost brother and he became Anglican representative to my Quarterly Meeting and always made helpful contributions. The Church of England has signed a Covenant with us in the presence of the Queen. I can hardly believe that I once took part in the

enthronement of a bishop or that for the past 34 years I have been worshipping in the parish church in a firmly held local ecumenical partnership.

The most important change has undoubtedly been the introduction of women ministers, even to high office. Without them the church would grind to a halt. The Diocesan Officer for Ministry came to preach in our church and told us that women ordinands outnumber men in the C of E. In our church we have four women on the staff and just one man.

Looking back, the organisation of the local Methodist church was very different. The Leaders' Meeting which cared for the spiritual life of the church and the Trustees, with responsibility for property, were kept quite separate and had their own financial arrangements. The trust income came from the Chapel Anniversary and the Harvest Festival which were always well supported. After the Harvest there was always a sale of produce on a nearby weekday evening. I remember as a small boy bidding for a jar of honey for sixpence (old money); it was immediately knocked down to me with my father having to pay the proper price.

Another great day was the Sunday School Anniversary. For weeks previously the children had been learning recitations and special music which I remember were produced by a firm from Dewsbury. For the day a platform was erected in front of the pulpit on to which the children, often in their new Sunday best, clambered up to say their pieces and sing those rather trivial choruses. The special preacher's job was to "encourage the children." As a minister much of my diary was taken up with Sunday School Prizegivings, Outings, Parties, Youth Week, Teacher Training Classes, Cradle Roll Services, all sadly now missing in many churches. One of my churches which was closed a few years ago had 200 children on its books.

Headquarters Methodism was organised into a number of Departments (later called Divisions), each with ministerial, lay and office staff – Property (Manchester), Youth (Chester House, London), Overseas Missions (Marylebone Road) and at Central Hall, Westminster - Home Missions, Local Preachers, Finance and the Secretary of Conference. There was a very full committee structure at Local Church, Circuit, District and Connexional level

Some of us have known heady days in Methodism, for instance when membership topped seven million, when the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs was the strongest youth organisation in the country, when we opened two new buildings every week, before so many churches were closed.

So many other changes will have occurred to readers; we not only have an ever changing Church, we live in a different world. I would just like to turn again to little Primary School girl Amelia's prayer and quote it in full:

“Dear Lord, help me to cope with change. No matter how hard it can be, I know you will guide me down the right road.”

John Garfoot

Facing The Future **(sung to the tune of 572)**

Think of our Church without any Stewards
No one to greet you as you come in the door!
Think of our Church without any Treasurer
No one will know just what the money's for.
We thank you Lord for those who do these duties,
We thank you Lord and humbly ask for more.

Think of our Church without any children
No one to teach or tell them of your care.
Think of our Church without Communion Stewards
Those who prepare the bread and wine we share...
We thank you Lord for those who do these duties,
We thank you Lord and humbly ask for more.

Think of our Church where everyone is willing,
Busy in the work you have given us to do.
Greeting the preacher, the congregation filling
This lovely church with love and prayer to you.
We thank you Lord for giving us the vision
To serve your church and Praise your Holy Name.

(This is not new and some may have seen it before but how relevant!)

SAFEGUARDING AUDIT

A request has come from the District for each church to complete a safeguarding audit and to return the information to the District Safeguarding Officer, Jane Gay, by 12th April.

Wendy Murray (Circuit Safeguarding Officer) and Andrew Maguire have been speaking about this and feel that it would be helpful to have a morning session to

offer support in completing this form. This will also give a good opportunity for an update on some of the issues covered on the audit form.

With this in mind a morning session has been arranged at our South Wootton Church on Saturday 9th February from 10 am to midday.

Each Church has been contacted and asked to send a representative and to let me know who will be attending by the end of January.

Thank you for your help in this.

Andrew Maguire

Jurgen Moltmann (2007) *A Broad Place; an Autobiography.* SCM Press

While I was on sabbatical, I began reading the autobiography of Jurgen Moltmann. As a young German teenager during the end of the war Jurgen found himself conscripted and sent to Hamburg with his regiment. That was the night the allies bombed the city. Deeply shocked by the destruction and loss of life he was sent to a village which was quickly overrun by Allied troops. After hiding in a cellar for three days he made a run for it but was captured. Deeply demoralized he then learned about the Holocaust inflicted on the Jews by his own people. This shocked him and disturbed him. Eventually along with many other Germans he was sent to a prisoner of war camp in Ayrshire, where to his surprise he was treated kindly by both his guards the local Scottish folk.

He continues the account in his own words;

One day a well-meaning army chaplain came to our camp and after a brief address distributed Bibles. Some of us would have rather had cigarettes. I read the book in the evenings without much understanding until I came to the Psalms of Lament in the Old Testament.

Psalm 39 caught my attention.

“I am dumb and must eat up my suffering within myself
My life is as nothing before thee
Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry
Hold not thou thy peace at my tears
For I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as my fathers were.”

That was an echo from my own soul and it called that soul to God. I didn't experience any sudden illumination, but I came back to these words every evening. Then I read Mark's Gospel as a whole and I came to the story of the

Passion; when I heard Jesus's death cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I felt growing in me the conviction; this is someone who understands you completely, who is with you in your cry to God and has felt the same forsakenness you are living now. I began to understand the assailed forsaken Christ because I knew he understood me. The divine brother in need, the companion on the way, who goes with you in your suffering. I summoned up the courage to live again ...

This perception of Christ did not come all of a sudden or overnight either, but, became more and more important to me.... This early companionship with Jesus, the brother in suffering & the companion on the road to the land of freedom, has never left me ever since and I became more and more assured of it. I have never decided for Christ once and for all as is often demanded of us. I have decided again and again in specific terms for the discipleship of Christ when situations were serious, and it was necessary. But right down to the present day, after almost 60 years, I am almost certain that then in 1945 and there in the Scottish prisoner of war camp, in the dark pit of my soul, 'Jesus sought me & found me.' He came to seek that which was lost and so he came to me when I was lost.

Jurgen went on to become a pastor and theologian.

Maurice



West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary

FEBRUARY 2018 onwards

Saturday February 2nd New Year Party at Terrington St Clement

Saturday February 9th Safeguarding Session 10am to midday at South Wootton

Saturday February 16th 10.15 am Coffee Morning and bric-a-brac at Wimbotsham

Saturday February 23rd Coffee Morning at Dersingham

Friday March 1st World Day of Prayer

Monday March 11th Start of the Ecumenical Lent Course in Downham Market Church 10 for 10.30 led by Deacon Janet Stafford

Tuesday March 12th start of the Lent Course at South Wootton

Tuesday March 12th Leaders of Worship and Preachers meeting

Wednesday March 13th Circuit Meeting at 7pm at London Road

Saturday March 16th 10.15 am Coffee Morning and bric-a-brac at Wimbotsham

Saturday March 23rd Coffee Morning at Dersingham

Thursday March 28th MWiB District Day at Dereham

Wednesday May 15th Easter Offering Service at London Road

Saturday May 18th Belsey Bridge MWiB Conference

Thursday/Sunday May Dersingham Flower Festival

Wednesday October 10th MWiB Autumn District Day at Chapelfield Church Norwich