

Rejoice!

December 2019/January 2020



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

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

Just a thought....

Let me ask you a couple of simple questions; how many times have you heard the Christmas gospel stories? How many times have you seen them portrayed on greeting cards, in pictures that we see on television?

Every Christmas this wonderful, warm, loving gospel image wraps us up like swaddling clothes. Christmas is like streamers of warm and wonderful family memories of images that we treasure and hold dear, that we wrap around ourselves every Christmas. It keeps us warm in the winter. It makes us feel comforted and hopeful; it brings us back to childhood year after year after year.

Yes, there is a dark side to these stories; yes, there is a terrible and brutal side and yes there is the story of rejection running through it all. But for Christmas day, just for that one day, let us not ponder these things in our hearts.

So, what do I suggest you do on this coming Christmas Day? What do I suggest you do to celebrate this wonderful moment of change in your life? I suggest that you wrap up in Christmas like I'm going to do. That you once again enjoy those visions of angels and shepherds and the manger and the baby in the straw and the animals and Mary and Joseph and keep it exactly the way it's always been for you.

Just for this one day, let it be comforting and traditional. Let it be familiar and warm and loving. There's time enough for you and me to step out in our own incarnation and once again pick up our gifts and go to work with God to face change, to face the world that is hell bent on destroying itself.

But for Christmas day, for this one special day, let us relax into the peace that is holy, into a place where time itself seems to stand still and the winds and tides of change are held back with the sounds of angelic voices drifting through a cold and starry night.

We will celebrate one of the most important days the world has ever known – so let us rejoice and be glad in it and sing just as the Angels did – “Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace to his people on earth”

Steve

Praying together in the Circuit

Luke 1: 68, 78

'Praise to the God of Israel for he has come to his people and redeemed them' Our God is merciful and tender. He will cause the bright dawn of salvation to rise on us and to shine from heaven on all those who live in the dark shadow of death, to guide our steps into the path of peace."

Zechariah and Elizabeth, were chosen to be the parents of John the Baptist, who had a very special purpose - to prepare the way of the Lord! Zechariah praised God for all that had been revealed to him as a new era began in God's eternal plan.

Merciful God, thank you for Your Covenant of Grace.

'For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God ' Eph 2:8-9

May we never lose the wonder of Emmanuel, God with us.

The awesome sacrifice of Jesus in giving his life for us.

The marvel of the Holy Spirit within us.

Holy Spirit, move within us now, let your love and power flow enabling us to be preparers of the way for others to know you.

Let this be the time when the bright dawn of salvation will bring forth a spiritual awakening and response in hearts and lives.

May we use every opportunity to share your love in words and deeds love which gives its own message and brings blessing.

As we journey thoughtfully through Advent, celebrate Christmas, prepare for the new year and the season of Epiphany we commit ourselves anew to you in love.

Rejoicing for all you have done for us, praying that you will use us at this time as we long for more of your glory to be revealed.

We worship you in awe and wonder, You are worthy of all praise.

Prayers have been requested for:

Derek + Viv, Stephanie, Margie, Janice, Amy, Trisha, Linda, Andrew, Mavis & Julia, Judy, Dulcie+ Neil, Kath, Stephen + Victoria, William, Tom, Brian Osborne, Sarah. Ann having chemotherapy and for her husband Mike.

Joan waiting to go for heart repair, Amy, 15, having a new prosthetic femur fitted as her old one broke,

Margaret Pickston would like to say;

Thank you everyone who donated money on my memory walk for Jess. £446 has now gone to Student Mind.

IN AID OF KINGS LYNN NIGHT SHELTER

Magdalen Singers and friends will be having a Celebration of Christmas concert at London Road Methodist Church on Saturday 14th December 2019 at 7pm.

Admission—FREE

Interval drinks and mince pies for sale at a cost of £1

There will be a retiring collection in aid of the Night Shelter.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas

Enquiries to Jan Jarvis on 01553 813185

Christmas comes but once a year
But when it comes it brings good cheer.

Let's keep the cheer going all year though. Don't put Jesus away with all the decorations.

**Downham Market
Christmas Fair**
Saturday December 7th
10 am - 3 pm



**Santa's Grotto,
Games, Competitions, Jewellery,
Homemade preserves, Plants, Toys,
Charity stalls and much more.**

Refreshments

Free admission

For more information 07443046104



Around the churches



Feltwell

I'm sorry I denied you the enjoyment of my witterings in the last edition. We have been so busy at Feltwell I forgot to tell you about it. You will, by now, be aware that we have developed plans to upgrade our Community Hall. We have been inspired by the members of the local community who have attended our events and shared ideas and support for our work. Newcomers to the village and citizens from further afield have found a warm welcome and comfort at our Elevenzies and Well-Being mornings. We are blessed with a good group of very confident and welcoming ladies whose reputation for a warm welcome is epic and epidemic.

The well-being group, named "**FeltwellBeings**", which is not a "church" group, has been awarded its funding by Lily, and is establishing a firm base of members, already up to 20 thanks to the enthusiasm and foresight of Pat, whose idea it was. Currently meeting fortnightly they engage in supportive conversations, bagatelle, Jenga and gardening, with speakers and other activities in the pipeline and often music in the background

In August I mentioned starting a 'pensioners' playgroup'. Well, sort of..... Following another chance comment by a visitor about the background music we played at Elevenzies, we have started "**Old Codgers Night**" where us oldies and the younguns can enjoy music from our childhood, 50s, 60s & 70s. October's event saw pensioners up and dancing to the likes of "Build me Up Buttercup", 'Young Girl' and 'Rock Around the Clock' and even enjoying some group singing. Those attending have brought buffet food for all to share meaning the £2 entry fee can support drinks and cost of using the hall. Our Monday **Craft & Chat** group is working on creating a Christmas banner which will be displayed at our Festival of the Nativity. The group has seen

new members recently and may soon be in a position where it needs to move into a bigger room.

Our 2nd **Festival of the Nativity** will be held on Saturday 21st December from 3.00pm. Groups in the area have been invited to create their version of The Holy Nativity Scene which will be exhibited around the church during the weekend,



including our Carols by Candlelight service at 3.00pm on 22nd December. We include in this event any Nativity scenes which people have brought back from their journeys round the world. Last year the smallest was only an inch high!

HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL YOUR OLD FRIENDS AT FELTWELL

Mike Wilkinson

(Remind us what the bar code means please!!)

Terrington St Clement

Network MWiB Mary Houghton led the afternoon beginning with readings by Ann Cross "Autumn" and Ruth Hannay "Love". Joella Nash gave a very interesting explanation of her role as Wedding Celebrant. She does not attend at church weddings, only other venues. After applying and training she and another colleague share the service, one to write and one to speak. She has attended many venues in the area, including Holkam, Congham Hall, Titchwell Manor and Pentney Abbey. On another occasion Lorna Hunter read "Tanners and Bobs" and "Smile". Reverend David Howarth took his theme from Hebrews Chapters 11 and 12, Hope is our Anchor. He shared his memories of the years 1965 - 68. He attended St John's College Durham and encountered many different cultures. Justin Welby attended the same university as did other bishops.

Coffee morning and Knit and Natter continue to attract a good number of people.

Our Christmas Coffee morning is December 7th 10am -1pm, stalls, games, raffle and light lunches. All are welcome.

Our New Year Party is Saturday 11th January 2pm- 4.30pm. Musical items, poems and comedy sketches. Again all are welcome.

God bless

Linda Howling

Pott Row

A reminder of our "Christmas Tree Festival"

Friday 6th and Saturday 7th December open 10 am - 4 pm

Sunday 8th December open 2pm - 4 pm.

There has been a change to our Carol Service on Sunday 8th December at 6.30 pm. It will now be led by Mrs Sheila Johnson.

All are welcome.

We shall also be open on Saturday 14th and Saturday 21st December 10 am to 4pm.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Jenny Baker.

Gaywood St Faith's

St Faith's Advent carol service will be on Sunday 1st December at 6.30pm. This is always a beautiful, prayerful service as we listen to His word and respond through the singing of Advent hymns. "Come thou Long expected Jesus.....".

The annual Gift Service will be on 8th December at 9.45am when the congregation is invited to take along an unwrapped gift for a boy or girl. These will be dedicated during the service and will later be distributed through the Vancouver Children's Centre to disadvantage youngsters in the Gaywood area.

Saturday 14th December looks set to be a busy day at St Faith's with the ever-popular coffee morning and more event being held in Gaywood Church rooms from 10am until 12 noon.

The usual raffle will have a seasonal theme with two large festive hampers being raffled - one made up of Christmas biscuits, sweets and other seasonal fare while the second will be made up of a selection of toiletries and cosmetics. Do come along and bring your friends for a lovely morning of fellowship.

Just hours later, starting at 7.30pm, will be a Christmas concert performed in church by the popular Big Heart and Soul Community Choir.

Tickets are ten pounds each and are available on the door or can be reserved or purchased at the church office on 01553 774916.

For the third year running, there is to be a free Christmas Day lunch in the Gaywood church Rooms. As well as a three-course traditional lunch, there will also be musical entertainment and a quiz. It will again be organised by the Rev Julie, her husband, Matthew, churchwarden Susie Cranko-Page and me. The group are well supported by a number of volunteers who assist in all sorts of ways and their support and enthusiasm are much appreciated. The organisers are also appreciative of support from local traders with donations of food and gifts.

The lunch is for people who, for various reasons, would otherwise find themselves alone on Christmas Day. Anyone who would be interested in attending the lunch is asked to contact the Rector, the Rev Julie Boyd on 01553 770952 as soon as possible.

As places are limited, those wishing to attend MUST register their details in advance. Unfortunately, we are NOT able to offer places to people turning up on the day.

As usual there will be a range of services celebrating the Christmas season and during December; Gaywood schools stage their Carol services in St Faith's church.

Thursday 19th December at 4pm (note the time) is the date and time of the ever-popular Christingle service and it is always a delight to welcome families into church for this special service which reflects God's light in the world. It also enables young children and their parents to take a break from all the pre-Christmas preparations and to focus on what is really at the heart of the Christmas message.

St Faith's Church takes on a magical feel when lit by candles and this year the Carols by Candlelight service is being held on 22nd December at 6.30pm. Do arrive in good time for this special service of Lessons and Carols which is always well attended.

On Christmas Eve is the popular crib service at 4pm and, later, at 11.15pm (please note the starting time) is the service of midnight communion. This is the first communion of Christmas and I, personally, love this service as we once again celebrate the birth of Our Saviour Jesus Christ in such humble surroundings in a cattle stall in Bethlehem.

On Christmas Day itself we gather at 8.30am for a service of Holy Communion followed by a family service at 10am.

Full details of all St Faith's Church Christmas services are available through the church office or on the St Faith's church website.

Looking ahead to the first few months of 2020 it is widely anticipated that during the year the first start will be made on the conversion of the old Church bungalow in the church drive into a new community hub, centre for West Norfolk MIND, a drop-in community cafe and a new church office. So there are exciting times ahead for all of us at St Faith's Church. We pray that God will be alongside us as we step out on this new journey of discovery.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every joy and blessing for the Christmas Season and all good health and happiness in 2020. I look forward to writing for you in Rejoice! Magazine during 2020.

Richard Parr

Stow Bridge

I experienced the Act of Remembrance three times this year. The first at St Peter's Stow Bridge at 11am. The second was at Bluntisham Baptist Church with the Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and about twenty young Air Cadets with their band of drums leading the parade. It was lovely to see so many youngsters at the service with some of them sharing the readings. Then the third short Remembrance service at Bluntisham village War Memorial again supported by all the youngest

people from the Chapel and many village people. A lovely sunny day, with Autumn leaves everywhere, but with many sad thoughts and stories of our brave people in all of all the services who had served and given for their country.

There was a lack of mention of our young people who have fought in conflicts in recent years; the Falklands for example and other places where we have been peacekeepers and defenders of people's rights. We are thankful and remember them too.

The day ended with birthday cake and tea for our daughter who was born on Remembrance Day 1961.

We really are thankful for our people who fought in all the battles to enable us to live as we do today.

Thanks be to our God.

I don't know who said it but "There are no winners only survivors". With every good wish and thoughts for Christmas.

Peter Hewitt

Dersingham

The recent Quiz Night in aid of MHA funds raised £100 and now members are writing friendship Christmas cards which will be delivered by chaplains and staff to the residents of MHA homes who may not receive many cards as relatives and friends pass away or who appreciate a message of friendship through a Christmas card.

The condition of the flat roof in the Hall is much worse than was at first thought so it was agreed at the Church Council to go ahead immediately with a new roof before the winter really starts.

Consequently we now have scaffolding around the Hall and no room for parking, but it will be nice to have a new insulated roof before Christmas!

Christmas is fast approaching and we look forward to our Christmas Fayre on Saturday 30th November in aid of the King's Lynn Night Shelter. As usual we will be decorating a Christmas tree to join in the Christmas Tree Festival at the parish church in Dersingham. Paul has supplied us with card bell shapes to decorate with glitter and glue,

paints or felt pens, with messages added, linked to the theme of Peace. The boxes for the Food Bank constantly get filled up and one is available for special Christmassy items to cheer those who will not be able to enjoy many of the things we do in the festive season. Our usual monthly community lunch is on the 2nd December and will, as usual, be preceded by the singing of carols at 11.45am led by the Rev. Steve Oliver. The Carols by Candlelight on the 22nd December at 4pm will be also led by Steve, again on the theme of 'Peace be with us' using the Embrace resource pack.

On Christmas Eve there will be Communion at 11.30pm and the Christmas morning service will be at the usual time of 10.30am, both services being led by the Rev. Steve Oliver.

Then we welcome in the New Year of 2020! The week of Prayer for Christian Unity starts on 18th January, but we have to wait until the 2nd February for the annual Covenant Service.

Rosemary Caink

Wimbotsham

From Wimbotsham we would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Coffee mornings continue to go well bringing people in from the village and hopefully, eventually into the church. Mary Davies is putting on a Display of Historical events that happened in and around the village this has created quite a bit of interest. Our Bible Study continues to challenge us .We have been looking at "Peter chapter 1"and the following book "In His Steps "by Charles M Sheldon was quoted as being a good read to run alongside the scripture reading. I'm reading this book now and am finding it a challenge .The United Service was an occasion that reminded me of Circuit services past when so many people gathered together to praise the Lord. "Fantastic" The Service was taken by the Rev. David Simpson.

Mary Rose

Downham Market

I'm afraid you won't get any nature tips or walks with my dog this edition as Joan has been incarcerated in QE while they find out what is the matter with her!

However, Messy Church happened with a smaller attendance due to the appalling weather. The children enjoyed their activities and being together.

As Christmas gets ever closer we are planning our services and activities. Firstly our fair is on December 7th. Do come along and join in the fun.

The Choir will lead our Advent service on December 1st. December 20th will be our Celebrate Christmas service at 4pm and at the service on December 22nd we will be singing more carols.

The Churches Together Service on 19th January will be at Eternity (Sovereign Centre).

We are all asked to remember that from December to March our evening services will start at 4pm.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Joan and we hope to have her thoughts next month.

Christmas blessings and all good wishes for 2020.

A Non

Stanhoe

Not much news from Stanhoe, other than that we look forward to our usual Carol Service, led by Rev. Steve Oliver in the morning of Monday December 8th, our Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service on Monday 22nd January at 2pm. Our Covenant service will be conducted by Rev. Steve Oliver on Sunday 19th January at the usual time of 11am. Since I live very close to the Central Norfolk Circuit as a Local Preacher I sometimes stray across the border. One of my favourite appointments has always been Walsingham Methodist Church, a beautiful and historic church right in the centre of the village of Little Walsingham. John Wesley is said to have preached on that site

(in an earlier building) and it is the oldest Methodist Church in East Anglia. It has never been renovated so it retains the original pulpit, up a narrow and very steep staircase, and many other Victorian features. (I went up to see how it felt, but rapidly came down again before succumbing to vertigo!)

One of my great delights has been the welcome I used to receive from the Senior Steward, Tommy Seaman, and his wife, Sylvia. They were absolutely devoted to the Chapel and kept it going when, to all intents and purposes, they were the only members of the congregation left.

The last time I preached there the congregation consisted of Tommy and Sylvia, two friends from Stanhoe who had agreed to accompany us and my husband. Nevertheless, the Chapel was spotless and decorated with flowers; Tommy had arranged recorded music for the hymns and Sylvia, as always, served tea and biscuits after the service.

Sadly, Tommy died in late September and regular services at Walsingham are no more. I was privileged to attend his funeral last month. It was held in St Peter's Church in Walsingham, which was absolutely packed with members from across the Circuit as well as representatives for The Shrine, with whom Tommy had a strong relationship. (He used to welcome the student pilgrims into the Chapel every Good Friday for an evening service.) Two former ministers, Rev. Andrew King and Rev. Jenny Pathmarajah, came back to pay tribute to Tommy and acclaimed his very strong Christian faith and his dedicated service to God and the Chapel he loved. Tommy had planned his own funeral so we sang the hymns he had chosen in good Methodist fashion, filling the Church with music and remembering Tommy with love and with gratitude.

Elizabeth Macleod

A Veteran relives his past

Just before Easter we had a phone call from a researcher from Channel 4 asking to speak to David. She asked whether he remembered one of the captains he had served under during his days on Russian Convoys

in 1943/4. He did indeed remember him well and the result was that we were taken by car to Portsmouth for the D-Day celebration on the 4th June and put up for the night in a hotel. After the morning ceremony and veterans' lunch we were wafted to the Royal Yacht Club where the captain's grand-daughter, Kristen Scott Thomas, was waiting to be introduced to David and to ask him questions about his memories of her grandfather. The researchers had been unable to find anyone who had served under him on Russian Convoys until they looked on Forces Reunited which I had put him on years ago and had heard nothing from any shipmates. Channel 4 have done three programmes entitled My Grandparents' War and David's programme will be the third one to be broadcast, on the 11th December. He may only appear for a very short time in the programme, but it helped him to relive many memories of a long time ago when he was 18/19 years old. The two other films in the series are 27th November with Helena Bonham Carter and 4th December with Mark Rylance.

Rosemary Caink

(I wonder if David came across my Dad. He was on Russian convoys!)



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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West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary

DECEMBER 2019 onwards

Friday December 6th / Sunday December 8th Christmas Tree Festival at Pott Row

Saturday 7th December Christmas Fair at Downham Market 10-3

Saturday December 7th Concert at St Faith's 7.30

Wednesday December 11th Carol Singing outside Tesco Downham Market at 7pm

Saturday December 14th Free Concert at London Road 7pm

Monday December 16th Carol Singing outside Tesco Downham Market at 7pm

Friday December 20th Carol Singing outside Tesco Downham Market at 7pm

Friday December 20th Village Carol Service at Stow Bridge 7pm

Friday December 20th Candlelit Celebrate Christmas at Downham Market

Saturday December 21st 10.15 till noon Wimbotsham coffee morning with Bric-à-brac and local History display

2020

12th January DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY REJOICE

Saturday January 18th 10.15 till noon Wimbotsham coffee morning with Bric a Brac and local History display