

Rejoice!

March/April 2022



The Magazine of the
West Norfolk Methodist Circuit

In the Midst of 40 days – Lent 2022

Ash Wednesday and Lent 1 have just passed. Luke's Gospel: Luke 4: 1-13, recounts the temptation of Jesus by the devil. What devils are you facing? What devils is the world facing? Climate crisis, poverty, famine, or the War in the Ukraine, just to pose a few. There are personal crises, too. In all of these, and more, we need God's intercession with each of us.

Lent reminds us that whilst Jesus was on earth, he was continually seeking his Father's counsel. His means was the same open to each of us: prayer [or simply put, conversing with God, dialogue]. Yet, we are also reassured, John's Gospel: John 14:15-31, by the peace of Christ that help is available to us now through the Advocate, the Holy Spirit.

These thoughts may be with us for some time to come:

A Prayer for Peace from the Methodist Church

Holy and Gracious God,

We pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders.

We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear.

We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness.

We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek for peace.

We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ.

Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine.

And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son. Lord have mercy.

Amen

Blessings to you this Lent, Rev Robert, Superintendent

Praying together in the Circuit

Gracious God, we approach Holy week and Easter with hearts full of praise, in your love you have saved and redeemed us through the precious blood of the lamb.

O unexampled love, O all-redeeming grace,

How swiftly didst thou move to save a fallen race:

What shall I do to make it known what thou for all mankind has done

[Charles Wesley 1708-1788]

Paul, after his conversion lived to tell and teach people about Jesus.

Throughout the ages his writings have touched countless lives.

2 Corinthians 5: 17-21 Amplified Bible

Therefore if anyone is in Christ that is, grafted in, joined to Him by faith in Him as Saviour], he is a new creature [reborn and renewed by

The Holy Spirit]; the old things [the previous moral and spiritual condition] have passed away, Behold, new things have come [because spiritual awakening brings a new life]. But all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ [making us acceptable to Him] and gave us the ministry of reconciliation so that by our example we might bring others to Him.

1 Timothy 2: 1 - 6

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be offered to God for all people; for kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence toward God and with proper conduct. This is good and it pleases God our Saviour, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth. For there is one God, and there is one who brings God and human beings together, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself to redeem the whole human race.

Almighty God, hear our prayers

We give thanks for our Queen; hold her secure in your love and peace.

We pray for your world, for the leaders of all nations to serve with integrity and transparency for the wellbeing of their people.

For nations in turmoil, we pray for justice and for people to be able to live peaceful lives. For nations in poverty to receive help and hope.

Compassionate God, hear our prayers for the people of Ukraine, deliver them from evil, may they see your victory in their nation.

For those who have escaped the conflict and are seeking safe havens. For families separated, for those who have been injured, those who have been bereaved. Thank you for the response to humanitarian need as people are giving financially, practically and opening hearts and homes to refugees. We pray for your protection and safety for each one.

Restoring God, we pray for global recovery from the pandemic, for individuals recovering from the virus and those who have been affected by all the restrictions of lockdown, many living with regrets, in fear and uncertainty. For those who are suffering with mental health problems.

We pray for the worldwide concerns about climate change and for areas living in the aftermath of natural disasters, flooding, strange weather patterns. Guide us to make necessary changes.

Redeeming God, hear our prayers for your church throughout the world, a 'called out' people' seeking your kingdom, your righteousness, your glory, co-operating with our triune God to share the gospel in words and love.

*' O breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and power; O breath of life,
come, cleanse, renew us, and fit your church to meet this hour'.*

[Bessie Porter Head 1850-1936]

We pray for our Circuit, our Ministers for every person, every fellowship every location. For those not able to return to share in worship and fellowship, for those with health problems, for your nearness to each one.

For each church seeking your way forward for such a time as this.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15: 13

Prayers have been requested for : Derek and Viv, Stephanie, Margie, Janice, Trisha, Linda, Andrew, Mavis and Julia, Judy, Kath, Stephen + Victoria, William, Tom, Sarah.

PRAYER

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire (StF 529)

Prayer is not asking for things. It's not like a letter to Santa Claus. Traditionally, prayer has several sections: Praise, confession, thanksgiving, dedication, intercession and petition. Only the last two involve asking for things.

When we ask for things, we are not telling God what to do. We are telling him what we would like to see happen. These things may or may not happen, or, at least, not in the way or at the time we would like. For example: if we pray for healing for someone, there may be several outcomes, one of which may be that God, through his Spirit, will so influence the mind and the spirit of the person concerned, that they physically recover – or maybe not. We mustn't expect that God

will immediately flick a switch and perform a miracle just for us because we have prayed hard or because we've been especially good.

When we pray for ourselves, we may ask for patience, or wisdom, or determination or something like that, and expect that we may get help through God's Spirit. If we pray for a new car, or a fine day, we should not be so confident.

St Paul says that The Spirit prays with our spirits before we even say a word. God knows what we are going to say without any words spoken. Nevertheless, we should pray because it is good for us to pray. We can pray at any time and in any situation – a constant awareness of God.

God is an influencer – do we listen to his podcast?

Dudley Pickston

CIRCUIT SERVICE DOWNHAM MARKET SUNDAY 1ST MAY 6.30 p.m.

You are warmly invited to this special Circuit Service at which long-service certificates will be presented to two local preachers. Dudley Pickston 60 years and John Miles 50 years.

We give thanks for Dudley and John and their commitment to their calling.

The service will be **in person** at Downham Market Methodist Church and also by zoom.

Please book the date and come and celebrate.

Elizabeth Batstone
Circuit LWP Secretary

A Deacon

I was recently asked to write an article for the Methodist Recorder as part of a series on testimony and calling. It was suggested that I might offer it as a contribution to Rejoice, so here is an account of the road which led me to ministry and ordination (hoping that I'm not giving too many secrets away.....?)

Some reflections on my calling.....

When I was asked to write this reflection I sat down at my desk, here in our quiet corner of the Norfolk coast, and two things came to mind from my own experience of being called. One was the oft-quoted (or rather misquoted) *"Here I am Lord, send someone else please!"* The other was a piece of advice, given only half-jokingly, that you should only go into ministry if you can't avoid it. In my case, clearly neither of these things worked.....

I wish that I could offer something dramatic about my own story, something exciting which would light up the back page of the Methodist Recorder, but for me there was no blinding revelation or 'Damascus Road' experience, instead (as for so many) simply a quiet, persistent, nagging feeling which wouldn't go away, until I eventually gave in and started to push the relevant doors (something which will resonate with a few folk) – a conversation in a church kitchen after a service; a letter of appreciation; the encouragement of those with years of wisdom and experience; the words *"I think you should consider ordination"* which wouldn't go away. Eventually, when these things *didn't* go away, I turned to one particular wise friend and asked, *"I've not actually heard God speaking to me, just other people pointing me in a particular direction – how do I know that this call is real?"*. The reply came, *"Just remember that, sometimes, God uses other people to open our eyes to these things?"* I couldn't argue with that one.

As you might expect, the question *"why Diaconal ministry?"* has often been asked, and for me it was always clear (despite persuasion otherwise by some). The two-fold calling to a particular type of ministry and commitment to a religious order was something which I couldn't separate, and this call has been strengthened constantly over the years. Alongside the question *"why...?"* have also come, *"...are you going to be ordained one day?"* and *"Why not a proper minister?"* ...usually followed by a pause (while I dig deep for a gracious response) and then some interesting discussions. I sense that there is still some further 'gentle educating' to be done – even after 130 years+ of Diaconal history! – and I hope I've been able to make a small contribution there.

Over the years I've also been asked, from time to time, to share a

conversation with someone who is exploring a call to ordained ministry, or with a candidate already following this pathway, to help them in their discernment, and it has been a privilege to listen to their stories before opening up some of the possibilities which might lie ahead. Inevitably this has involved many questions and, in reflecting on them, it has been good for me to revisit the pathway which led me through my own calling. Throughout the conversations, it has been important for me to share certain things – encouragement, always to be open to wherever God may be calling us; being prepared for surprises (some more challenging than others) and, of course, a reminder that whatever we are called to do, God will always give us the strength and resources to carry us through, even though that may not seem obvious at the time.

Whenever I do a “stock take” of where my ministry has taken me, I experience my “Desert Island Discs” moment – in other words, finding it nigh on impossible to single out just a few high spots, but certain things spring to mind immediately.

- Your first circuit will always have a particular, special significance. I had the joy of my first station being on the glorious Isle of Man, a truly beautiful place with remarkable people, and the memories will never leave me. Pity the circuit which finds itself with a wide-eyed and bewildered (and occasionally clueless) probationer – but here I was met with only kindness, encouragement and support. One day I commented how grateful I was, and received the response, “*We decided that you need to be looked after, as well as us*”. What could I say? I accepted that with immense gratitude, and a piece of my heart remains on Ellan Vannin.
- My second appointment took me back “across” to England, this time to the Wirral, a place where more friendships were forged and where, once again, I received far more than I could have hoped to give. It was from there that I married my presbyter husband, forming yet another ministerial couple and thus causing yet another headache for the stationing process. My leaving “do” doubled up as our wedding reception and the folk from my churches pulled out all the stops to give us a truly memorable send-off (even forgiving my new husband for, I quote, “pinching their minister”).
- This was followed by seven years serving in hospital chaplaincy – a wonderful (and, dare I say, diaconal-shaped) opportunity to find ways to bridge the gap between church and community. Memories remain of countless stories shared in “corridor” conversations, often with staff or patients of no faith; sitting holding the hand of someone in

their last hours of life or with families gathering to say goodbye to a loved one; drinking tea with CCU staff at midnight after a call-out (a rare chance to be offered a cuppa when things were just a little less frenetic than during the day). Hospitals are places of emotional highs and lows; in one moment, helping a couple face the unbearable heartbreak of the loss of a stillborn baby – the next celebrating with a patient as they walk out of the ward in far better shape than when they entered it (something for which we chaplains took all the credit, of course). While there I discovered, somewhat bizarrely, that several members of staff, although proud Welshmen, were fellow Leeds United supporters, and whether or not this helped to boost my street-cred is still open for debate; however, having arranged a trip to see our beloved team play (the then lowly) Hereford United, the match ended in an embarrassing defeat for us, and thus the myth that chaplains have a divine hotline was swiftly dispelled.

- When my husband “sat down” a few years ago, I soon noticed that he was enjoying his new status far too much, so I asked the Order for permission to retire early, partly to share his retirement, partly to train in spiritual accompaniment – and so began another new chapter. Being “w/a” created openings to serve in different ways; among other things, helping others to explore their vocation, offering a listening ear to Diaconal student ministers and encouraging folk to find space for retreat and contemplation, together with colleagues from “*Reflect*”.
- And so to our quiet corner of Norfolk. We decided to ‘come to rest’ here, bought a little house on the coast and had planned to spend our days walking on the lovely, unspoilt beaches with our dogs, supporting the local economy by patronising the many coffee shops along the way. Clearly, the Almighty had other ideas about my intended cappuccino consumption and so I currently find myself helping out with some pastoral work locally (the moral of the story; when you “retire” and the local minister and circuit steward come a-calling.....beware).

All of which brings me full circle; remember.....if the call comes, be open to the possibilities, expect the unexpected and have faith that, whatever God asks us to do, he will provide the means for us to do it. I’m grateful that this has been so for me – and from there I must carry on trying to practise what I preach!

I wonder if any of you has a story to tell about how God has called you to serve him in some way and which you might feel able to share in a future edition of Rejoice? If so, it would be good to hear from you!

*Deacon Lynne Sylvester-Tonge
West Norfolk Circuit*

Praise God!

'Oh, praise the Lord!'

It's an exclamation that we don't hear very often these days: an expression of surprised joy that seems to belong to the nineteenth century rather than our own; or, as my mother sometimes used to exclaim when she discovered a little money hidden away somewhere, or some food item at the back of a shelf: 'Oh, corn in Egypt!' (See Genesis 42:2.)

We might hear ourselves say the words, but more important, God hears. He loves to hear our exclamations of praise as they spring from the heart. It strengthens the bond between us and our loving Creator. Pet owners will easily recall the wide-eyed love that our pets give us as they show appreciation of our generous and loving care. In response, we feel a further surge of love towards them, strengthening the bond of affection. God doesn't *need* our praise, because his blessedness and joy are already complete, but when our love is expressed in word or deed it adds strength to the bond of love between creature and Creator. We gain something more by acknowledging his generous, undeserved love. In recognising our Heavenly Father's grace, we become richer in joy that remains with us for ever.

Many of the psalms in the Old Testament are expressions of joyful praise for the Lord's goodness and love, Psalm 103 being the best known. The psalmist is addressing himself: 'Count your blessings! Name them one by one...'

'Forget not all his benefits...' and the psalmist proceeds to name them. First, the Lord, who is our Heavenly Father, **forgives** us when we go astray but seeks the homeward road. Perhaps it comes as something of a surprise to realise that God has always been ready to forgive: he is eternal and does not suddenly change. What does need to change is our awareness, our realisation of that forgiving nature, always there, waiting for us to respond; our need to **believe** and accept his offered forgiveness.

He **heals**. Do we ever pause to reflect on the wonders of the immune system in our bodies and the way our skin repairs itself after a cut or bruise? In recent months we have all been aware of the divine gift of creating vaccines and the labour of those who have patiently administered them. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!' As with the healing of our souls, so with the healing of our bodies and the calling of those who carry out God's purposes of loving care.

He '**crowns** us with steadfast love and mercy.' Not only does he provide for the basic needs of life, but he gives us so much more. Our cup runs over with blessing. Do our hearts overflow with praise and a spirit of sharing?

Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 1 what is probably in God's mind as he gives us so much more than we need for ourselves: 'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, *so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*'

As in his readiness to forgive, so in his steadfast, never failing love: **we are constantly renewed** as long as our hearts are open to his grace. People of old believed that the eagle lived an unusually long life: its life was renewed as it soared and rode the currents of the air, and our psalmist offers us that thought, reminding us how this steadfastly

loving God 'crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.'

The sheer infinitude of God's grace and our sense of calling to immerse ourselves in that unimaginable depth of love are expressed so well in the hymn "Now I have found the ground wherein": **'With faith I plunge me in this sea'**.

It continues with another seascape image:

Fixed on this ground will I remain,
 Though my heart fail and flesh decay:
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
 When earth's foundations melt away;
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.

'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!

Finally, we may recall that two even more famous hymns owed much to Psalm 103, "Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven." (Henry Francis Lyte) and "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation" (various).

Father-like, he tends and spares us;
 Well our feeble frame he knows;
In his hands he gently bears us,
 Rescues us from all our foes.
 Praise him! Praise him!
 Widely as his mercy flows.

Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life and restore thee,
Fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever before thee,
 Then to thy need
 He like a mother doth speed,
 Spreading the wings of grace o'er thee.

Rejoice! Praise him! You're a child of God!

Around the churches



Burnham Market

It is with great regret and sorrow that we announce that Burnham Market Methodist Church is closing down. Our membership has shrunk - we are now down to three active members, none of whom is particularly able bodied, so it is no longer possible to continue to meet.

We shall be holding a Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of this church, on Sunday, 15th May at 3pm, when we hope to welcome many of our friends in the circuit, especially in the Hunstanton section. We are grateful for the ministers, preachers and circuit officers, who have supported us and led our worship over the years.

We shall continue to remain as members of the Methodist Church, as we join with our friends at Stanhoe.

Mavis Cleaver

Stanhoe

We continue to meet once a fortnight, as we did when we alternated with Burnham Market, for a number of reasons: we are few in numbers; two of our three stewards have served for nearly 20 years, with no prospect of replacement, and as we are situated on the edge of the Circuit, we hesitate to ask for preachers to come out to us too often (although we are very pleased and grateful when they do - sometimes from the opposite ends of the Circuit). We are delighted that our numbers are swelled by the three Burnham Market members, Mavis, Joy and Shirley, who now worship with us, and also very grateful that Colin plays the organ for us whenever he can, and brings his wife, Moira, with him. For the times when Colin is unable to play, we have now equipped ourselves with Singing the Faith discs, which can be played on our electronic organ.

We look forward to welcoming the Student Cross pilgrims, witnessing as they walk during Holy Week, from Leicester to Walsingham, carrying a heavy wooden Cross. They come in for a short time of refreshment, (hot cross buns),

rest and worship on Good Friday morning, and inspire us with their faith and especially, their singing, which raises the rafters of our little village church.

Later, on Good Friday afternoon, we shall be welcoming Philip and Elizabeth Batstone, who are leading us in a service of quiet reflection.

On Easter Sunday, we look forward to our own Minister, Rev. Richman Ncube, leading us in a Service of Holy Communion.

We congratulate our senior steward, Valerie Shackcloth, and her husband, Willie, as they celebrate their Golden Wedding on 25th March. Willie, while not a worshipping member of the church, supports us in so many ways, with giving lifts, and taking care of cutting the grass and the hedges outside. We value them both, as they give so much of their time, energy and love to Stanhoe Methodist Church.

Elizabeth MacLeod

Feltwell

NEW LOOK WEDNESDAYS

To help raise funds for our disabled persons' access we are offering Bacon Butties & coffee 10.00am to 12 noon along with Community Gardening.

THEN from 1pm – 3pm it's "*Indoor Sports Club*"

Our Monday CRAFT GROUP continues – 2.00pm to 4.00pm

.... A new era of craft with new members and men meet to do repairs and adaptations.

We have helped the village to inaugurate FELTWEEL IN BLOOM with the ambition to join Anglia in Bloom in 2023. Anglia in Bloom is part of the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom. We are planning several large planters around the village in key locations and natural English bulbs at the entrances (gateways) to the village. Hopefully we will have a kaleidoscope of colour this year. This has come about as a direct result of the development of our Community Garden. In what was a large patch of green, much of which was grass, we have created borders and several pots planted with hundreds of bulbs, some of which are providing splashes of colour already. We have rescued four Belfast sinks from Icen Academy. We dismantled some old tubular steel chairs and welded the together to make frames to stand the

sinks on and we will plant them with strawberry plants hoping for juicy strawberries this year.

SUNDAYS

10.45am to 12 noon – Fellowship and refreshments

During Lockdown we didn't see local preachers in Feltwell. When we were allowed to meet we engaged in a fellowship type meeting with refreshments. It was fortunate for us that The Methodist Church was sending out The Vine with themes for sharing. We chose some hymns to fit the themes and readings from the Bible and other Christian material from the internet. One of the developments from this was that we engaged the group in discussion about the theme and how it impacted the lives of the group. The elements of our fellowship gathering, generally are:

- start time 11 am; however, the steward waits until all have arrived to begin, i.e., once the fellowship "family" is complete

2-3 hymns

- prayers
- readings (lectionary based)
- theme & message from The Vine or the lectionary (chosen by the preacher)
- open forum discussion, led by the preacher and steward (during this time, tea/coffee is shared)

- preacher & steward will determine the actual order of the service. This has helped our group to grow closer together and talk openly. We have continued this format because members have felt they have benefited, and by taking an active part they remember more of the message and have often reflected on it in subsequent weeks.

We can be contacted on Facebook, Messenger or mobile 07712578721 or by email mikegw15@gmail.com _Mike & Brigette Wilkinson



We're collecting these blister packs to be recycled. Just think how many we could recycle if everyone in the village delivered theirs to our recycling point.

I expect 80-90% of our Circuit congregations take pills of some sort. Just imagine how many recyclable blister packs that amounts to. We have filled a sack since Christmas!! As a circuit we could make a significant impact on recycling. There are selected Superdrug stores receiving blister packs which are collected by a company called Terracycle.

Don't ask "Can we do it?" Rather ask the question "Is there a reason why your church could not get involved and recycle 1000s instead of sending them to landfill to pollute the earth?"

1st Saturday each month 10.30am - CAKES GALORE and Coffee morning. In March we raised £96 for the Ukrainian appeal.

Oh, and don't forget our monthly music and quiz night on last Saturdays. 6.30pm. We call it "Old Codgers", but it's for anyone who likes to listen to good music enjoys a bit of banter and a light hearted quiz, oh... and you can dance too!

Light snacks are often available along with hot & cold drinks.

Terrington St Clement

Our Easter coffee morning is on April 9th from 10am to 12 pm. There will be the usual stalls, raffles.

Tea and coffee will be available.

We mourn the death of Viv Simpson a member of our congregation and our prayers are with the family, especially Derek and Jonathan

Linda Howling

Hilgay

The Guild meets on 5th April with the AGM

Our Good Friday Service is at 2:30pm with Hot Cross buns.

On March 31st we shall hold our bi-monthly coffee morning from 10-1130am.

Pauline Driver

Heacham

Recently we joined other Church members for the World Day of Prayer. The theme this year, prepared by the England, Wales and Northern Ireland Committee, was "I know the plans I have for you". It was a very enjoyable service, with a very good, mixed congregation.

This reminded us of the plans we, here at Heacham had made for the year but none of them could be committed to a definite date. We planned to resume Fellowship Meetings (hopefully now to start after Easter); coffee mornings on certain Saturday mornings (the next to be 19th March, and possibly the third Saturday of the month thereafter); games and bowls afternoons/evenings also to recommence. Val, here, is also leading flower arranging classes - with some very delightful results.

Lenten Services have started on Wednesdays at 3.00 pm. Midweek Communion and Bible Study sessions are also in place.

So, awakening is happening albeit slowly.

On a sadder note, this month we learned of the death of Betty Speed. She was a member here for many years but had been resident in a local home for some time. Together with her husband, Geoff, she had been a valued helper when lunches were provided here some years ago now. Sadly, Geoff died at the beginning of the pandemic. Now they are reunited.

We pass on our condolences to all around the Circuit who are experiencing loss too.

For the summer, we hope to celebrate the Jubilee with a flower festival over the first weekend in June. More details of that to follow. Something light to focus on during this, world wise, time of strife.

We add our thoughts and prayers to others in the Circuit for all in war zones around the world and count our blessings, knowing and trusting God has plans for us all.

Joan Careless

Clenchwarton

We are continuing to worship in our lovely refurbished chapel. As the covid restrictions ease we are joining together with the parish church with a view to bring the village closer together. We join them to worship in the church and they join us at the chapel once per plan. We are having a coffee morning for the Queens jubilee in June and are giving out a sunflower seed and a pot for people to plant and grow on. Later in the year there will be a prize for the tallest sunflower. We hope to spread a little sunshine around the village.

Joan Edwards

Wimbotsham

I am sitting writing this little piece in early March. The sun is shining brightly, the sky is blue with just a few wispy clouds. From my window I can see Snowdrops, Crocus, Daffodils and Primulas all in flower. The flowering currant in our back garden is just beginning to burst into bloom. What is more, as we emerge from a Winter during which many suffered from storms and flooding, we also appear to be putting behind us the worst of the pandemic which has caused so much pain over the last two years. As I think on that, I am reminded of the promise found in Genesis 8:22 “ As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease” and I realise how much we have to be thankful for.

Now the news brings us the horrors of the war in the Ukraine. We hear of the suffering of the Ukraine people but also hear predictions of the effects that the war is likely to have on the lives of people worldwide and especially on the

poorest among us. As we pray to God for those affected by the war, let us also remember his faithfulness to us over the years and be thankful as when put our trust in him we will not be disappointed.

At Wimbotsham we too are slowly recovering from the effects of the pandemic. Members and Friends who had been unable to join us on Sunday Mornings are now returning and it has been a joy to welcome our friends from Stow Bridge who have been obliged by falling numbers to cease their worship services in that village. Being a fairly small congregation at Wimbotsham we really do miss those who for one reason or another are not able to be with us for a week or two and are delighted when they are able to return.

Our coffee mornings on the third Saturday of each month restarted in December and although attendances have been quite small so far we are hopeful that they will build up now the weather is improving. The next two dates are April 15th (Easter Saturday) and May 20th. Why not join us from 10am with lots of Bric-a-Brac and books for sale. We also have Bible study every other Tuesday and the Schoolroom is used by several other local organisations.

Let me close by wishing all readers of this magazine a very Happy Easter from all at Wimbotsham.

John Houghton.

Gaywood, St Faith's

As we at St Faith's progress through the season of Lent, we look forward to Passiontide and the triumphant ride on a donkey of Jesus as He enters Jerusalem with palms scattered in his path.

This year our observation of Palm Sunday will be tinged with sadness as our congregation bids a fond farewell to our popular curate, the Rev Laura Purnell and her Lay Preacher husband, Martin. Laura will lead the 8am service and together they will lead the 9.45 service which will be followed by coffee and cake in the Church Rooms when we will have a chance to say our own personal goodbyes to the husband-and-wife team..

Laura and Martin will be leaving Gaywood after nearly four years as Laura is to take up a new post as Team Vicar within the Dereham and District Team Ministry based at Shipdham. Laura will have responsibility for churches at Shipdham and Bradenham and will live at the vicarage in Shipdham. Her new role will also have a responsibility for schools chaplaincy within the Team Ministry area. During their time with us at St Faith's, Laura and Martin have become a popular team, working under the direction of acting Rector, the Rev Karlene Kerr. Laura has been particularly associated with youth work, leading

a youth club at her Wootton Road home on Sunday evenings while Martin has led services as a Lay Preacher and carried out chaplaincy work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn.

Everyone at St Faith's Anglican and Methodist Church wishes Laura and Martin every happiness and success in their new roles and we send them on their way with our love and our prayers as they begin a new chapter in their respective ministries..

In the evening of Palm Sunday there will be a Passiontide Devotional service starting at 7pm and this will include special items performed by the choir. The following day, Monday, 11th April, at 11am, the Chrism service will be held at Norwich Cathedral. During this service, led by the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham Usher, the oils are blessed and clergy from across the Norwich Diocese renew their vows. The service offers a rare opportunity of seeing a large number of Norfolk and North Suffolk clergy gathered together in the Cathedral. It will also be one of the last major services for the Dean of Norwich the Very Rev Jane Hedges, who will be retiring in May.

On Wednesday of Holy Week there will be a 10am Holy Communion service at St Faith's and on Maundy Thursday there will be a service of Holy Communion at 7pm and a Methodist service via zoom also starting at 7pm.

On Good Friday morning (starting out from St Faith's Church at 10am) people are invited to join the Walk of Witness. A large wooden cross is carried from St Faith's along the main road into King's Lynn. The Gaywood group meets up with other churches outside the Minster on the Saturday Market Place and then processes through the town centre stopping at a number of locations for a Bible reading and a hymn. All are welcome to join this public act of witness.

At 11am on Good Friday there is a Methodist Circuit service via zoom.

At 2pm on Good Friday there is an Hour at the Cross service which many people find is a most moving and reflective service on the day when we remember Jesus dying on the Cross.

In the evening of Holy Saturday there will be a Confirmation service at the King's Lynn Minster and a number of St Faith's members are to be confirmed. Finally, we reach the glorious Easter Day when we observe Christ's Resurrection from the dead. At Faith's there will be an open-air (weather allowing) dawn service starting at 6am led by the Rev Karlene Kerr. This is a beautiful service as those attending share Communion together as the dawn breaks overhead and we hear the birds singing. Alleluia, He is Risen, He is Risen indeed, Alleluia.

Also on Easter Day there is an 8am Holy Communion led by the Rev Kerr and at 9.45am Easter Day service lead by Rev Kerr and Rev Robert Roberts.

The search continues for a new Rector for St Faith's and the post has now been advertised in the Church Times. The closing date for applications is the beginning of April with interviews being held on 27th April. At the end of April it will be sixteen months since Rev Canon Julie Boyd, left Gaywood to take up a new role as Team Rector of the Aylsham and District Benefice.

People walking into church may well have noticed that the glass porch on the front of the church bungalow has been removed. This is the first step in the major re-development to create a new Community Hub, to include a church office and drop-in centre. It will also provide a base for the MIND mental health charity. Fund-raising for the Bungalow Project continues. Anyone who would like to make a donation in (cash or in kind) is asked to speak to Rev Kerr.

By the time Rejoice! readers see this article, the St Faith's Spring Fair will have been held and it is hoped that it was an enjoyable social event and that it raised a good sum for church funds. The last Spring Fair was held in March 2019 and because of legal restrictions imposed by the pandemic, it has not been possible to hold a major fund-raising event since, although the popular Saturday morning Coffee and More sessions have re-started. The next coffee morning will be on Saturday, 2nd April at 10am. Do come along and bring your friends for what is a couple of hours of fellowship and fun in Gaywood Church Rooms.

Richard Parr

Downham Market

We continue to hold morning worship, still masked, still sanitised but seated more closely. We've been unticked! There are still several spaces and we wonder which particular worries are keeping those worshipers away. We also have a weekly evening Zoom, with others from around the Circuit joining us. It's also good to talk in our small groups after the service. Do contact me if you would like details of the link.

Ladies' Friendship has resumed with several new members. We now meet in the afternoon at 2.30. We had a very interesting talk from The Magpie Centre and another about the old Downham Airfield.

Messy Church in its new format usually attracts about 14 children and we have found the parents interact much more. We also find more time to talk to them.

So life goes on, not quite normally but something approaching normality.

We wish everyone in the Circuit a joyous Easter. Take care and keep safe. B

DERSINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH

PE31 6HP

FLOWER FESTIVAL

THEME MIRACLES – GOD AT WORK

26th, 27th, 28th May
10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Books + Cakes + Cards
+ Gifts + Plants

Coffee + Light Refreshments + Teas

Free admission

Sunday Service 10.30 a.m.

Songs of Praise 4.00 p.m.

Proceeds for Church Funds

First meeting of Climate Matters and Social Justice Group

On Thursday, 3rd February, six of us met via Zoom for an online chat. The aims of the group are to raise awareness of issues related to social justice and climate change within the Methodist Church in West Norfolk and in our surrounding communities, to encourage and support action and strengthen our community links. We started with introductions as some of us had not met before. Those present were Ian Baguley (Heacham), Chris Carter (Downham Market), Rosie Rayner (Hunstanton) Deacon Lynne Tonge, Revd Richman Ncube and Lesley Dent (Hilgay). We soon found that we had plenty of ideas and experiences to share. As a result of our discussions, we hope to undertake the following projects:

- ❖ Rosie Rayner is planning to hold a meal in aid of Christian Aid at Hunstanton in June.
- ❖ We hope to hold an eco-festival at Hilgay in September in partnership with other community organisations. We also hope that in time other churches will hold their own eco-festivals, using the model we are trialling at Hilgay, involving their own communities.
- ❖ With help and advice from Reverend Richman Ncube, we hope to establish links with the Matjinge (pronounced Ma-chi-n'ge) Circuit in Matabeleland close to the border between Zimbabwe and Botswana. The circuit is made up of 19 societies. Not many of the churches have buildings. They meet in school classrooms or under trees. However with Covid, the government is discouraging the use of schools. The church is undertaking a programme of building but has limited resources. Despite the lack of buildings, worship plays an important role in the lives of those attending services. As Rich says, "Matjinge people are a passionate happy lot. As is common with many Zimbabweans,

they are gifted singers, poets and dancers. They are passionate with their faith, which has given them resilience in the middle of difficult times, war, famine and post war struggles. "

Rich talked to us about the other challenges faced by the people there and since has provided us with a written report about the circuit and its surrounding area. It is a dry area and the rains are not as regular as they were. When the rains come, they are often accompanied by storms. There is a need to store water for dry times but silting can be a problem in the water storage system. Due to past political unrest and to ongoing economic problems, many men leave to become migrant workers in South Africa and Botswana so there are many women-headed families. The economic activity is dominated by women and the elderly as is community life. Women grow much of the food. However these people have little say in societal development. Currently All We Can is working with a local partner organisation HEFO (Health, Education and Food Security Organisation) in Nkayi in Matabeleland North and has installed a , solar borehole, a water tank and taps, making it easier to grow crops .

The felling of trees to obtain wood for domestic use and for brick making has resulted in deforestation. In the area of education, there is a need for support for young women so that they can continue their education and to raise the aspirations of young men regarding training and education. There is a former mission school in Matjinge

Circuit, which has been upgraded as a bush boarding school.

In addition to the above, we can be contacted for advice about ways in which churches can become more eco-friendly, including working towards achieving bronze, silver or gold eco church awards.

We also discussed possible involvement in the **Platinum Jubilee tree planting** initiative. You may be interested to know that the Woodland

Trust is currently trying to purchase 119 hectares of land on the edge of Thompson (near Watton) to create an area of brand new native woodland. They are working with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, who already care for the adjoining Thompson, Carr and Common Sites of Scientific Interest where there are many pingo ponds (home to a number of endangered species) are found. Purchase of the land will help protect the pingos from adverse effects of nutrient enrichment as well providing woodland habitat.

Since the meeting, I have also found out another way of becoming involved in tree planting through Traidcraftshop.co.uk, you can donate to plant trees. The money will be used to plant trees to offset carbon and fund environmental projects. 25 trees can be purchased for £6.35, 50 for £12.70, 100 trees for £25.40. Traidcraft does not make any profit on these products.

Walking with Micah

This is a two year project helping the Methodist Church in Britain explore what it means to be a justice-seeking church. There are resources on www.methodist.org.uk to stimulate discussion in local churches and beyond as well as worship materials and the opportunity to respond to an e-survey www.methodist.org.uk/walking-with-micah-send-your-response/#e-survey.

Lesley Dent

CECIL FRANCES ALEXANDER – HYMN WRITER

“Jesus calls us o’er the tumult of our life’s wild restless sea” is a hymn which will have been in the minds of many of us in these uncertain times, especially with the horrendous situation in Ukraine.

How easy it is to feel overwhelmed, but may we also be reminded that the writer of this hymn also wrote of the wonders of the countryside around us. “All things bright and beautiful” was probably one of the first hymns we all learned in our young days. The writer was Cecil Frances Alexander, poet and author of

about 400 hymns.

What do we know about her and her life? Cecil, born in 1818, was the daughter of Major John Humphreys and lived all her life in Ireland. She began writing poetry in her childhood. Being timid and shy she used to hide the poems under the rug thinking that her musings would not please her father, a strict disciplinarian and a hardened former Royal Marine. One day he found them, touched, he slipped them into his pocket and sent them to his friend and poet, John Keeble, who pronounced Cecil a born writer and should be encouraged. It then became the custom that each Saturday evening when the family were gathered together, they read her poems making helpful suggestions and encouraging comments.

Cecil married the Anglican clergyman William Alexander, afterwards Bishop of Derry and Archbishop of Armagh, also a poet. Dedicated to charitable work for much of her life, money from her first publications helped to build institutions for the Deaf and Dumb, she was involved in the first Derry Home for Fallen Women and worked to develop a district nurses' service. A tireless visitor to the sick and poor, she was greatly loved for her kindness and helpfulness. She died in 1895 aged 77. Even whilst involved in hardship and suffering, Cecil had written of her faith and God's glorious creation.

As we stroll - or in imagination - through our lovely Norfolk countryside, may we be enlivened by her words. How blessed we are to have birds and wildlife around us, woodlands, riversides, glorious sunrises and sunsets. No purple headed mountains here in Norfolk, but purple headed and other beautiful blossoms, having endured frost and bitter winds, bursting into colour each Spring and Eastertide.

“Saviour, help us hear your call, give our hearts to your obedience, serve and love you best of all.

Mary Davies



SING FOR ZIMBABWE

Saturday 18th June 12.00 until 18.00

Hunstanton Methodist Church

Come and meet Zimbabwean friends and learn more about the country during an afternoon of music, food and fellowship

There will be fun and activities for children

Everyone is welcome; please bring a friend and a contribution of food

We will be collecting for Christian Aid's work in Zimbabwe

The service at 10.30 am on Sunday 19th June will be linked to the event



What's on from March 2022

Saturday 16th April Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac at Wimbotsham 10 am - 12 noon

Saturday 21st May Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac at Wimbotsham 10 am - 12 noon

26th/29th May Dersingham Flower Festival

Saturday 18th June Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac at Wimbotsham 10 am - 12 noon

Saturday 18th June Sing for Zimbabwe at Hunstanton at 12 pm

Great to have a few diary dates!