

# Rejoice!

**December 2022/January/February 2023**



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

Dear Friends,

"How many more sleeps until Christmas?!" is a question that gets asked in our house over the coming weeks... Fortunately, as I write this, the question has not been asked yet this year and I've not had to calculate the days, weeks, hours, minutes or seconds to the 25<sup>th</sup> December!

Have you heard your first Christmas song yet on the radio? In the shops? I have. I've heard a word or a sentence or a jingle of bells and quickly thought to myself, "I'm glad I've not got to listen to this all day.!!" Not in a 'Bah humbug' way at all... Rather in an 'I really don't think I'm prepared for all this as yet' way...!

I think the earliest I've heard "I wish it could be Christmas every day" was on the 31<sup>st</sup> October one year whilst having a meal with friends in a well-known food establishment that sells pizza! 31<sup>st</sup> October, I ask you!! And, whilst I haven't got the capacity to work out how many seconds that was until Christmas Day I can confess that as I'm writing this on the 11<sup>th</sup> November, I have worked out that there are 43 days, 11 hours, 56 minutes and 30, 29, 28, 27, 26 seconds before the big day rolls into being...!

Despite the Christmas adverts appearing on the television, the big boxes of chocolates appearing in the shops (I'm not telling how many of those I've bought to replace the ones I bought for Christmas Day..) and the endless jingles, tunes and songs in shops, I find myself wanting to hang back... There is still Advent to wander through before we get to the 25<sup>th</sup> December. I want to be able to properly 'do' Advent. I want to take my time. Enjoy the journey. The scenery. The view.

Throughout Advent, we build up to remembering the incredible, the astounding, the humbling journey that God undertook in order to be amongst us. The mystery of the incarnation. Of God putting on the clothes of humanity and seeking to live amongst us. Of leaving the glory, the splendour of heaven. Of being born into the mess and stress of poverty.

We take a scenic route. The B roads not the Motorway. The 'Come Thou long expected Jesus' way rather than the wishing of Christmas every day...

But when it comes. When those 43 days, 11 hours, and now as I write 43 minutes and 10, 09, 08, 07 seconds are up and Christmas Day is

here. Oh, what a celebration there will be! 'Joy to the World' for 'Born in the Night' 'While Shepherds Watched their flocks' 'Ding Dong Merrily on High' 'Angels from the Realms of Glory' sang 'The First Nowell' for 'Love came down at Christmas'.

And that is what the waiting and the celebrating is all about.

Just that. That God, in His infinite wisdom, loved the world so much that He gave His only Son – Jesus – that we might understand how much we are loved by Him. That we might grasp how wide and how long and how high and how deep the love of God is for the world and for each one of us. Incredible. Indescribable. Amazing Love. Love Divine. Joy of heaven to earth come down.

With all our love and thanks for your friendship and fellowship,  
Paul, Jo, Jacob, Samuel and Benjamin.

(43 days, 11 hours, 38 minutes and 05, 04, 03, 02, 01 seconds left to go. To wait. To prepare.)

### **Moderation**

A lot of people love extremes. We have it not only in religion, but in music, sound, politics, sport etc. It is said we mustn't "sit on the fence". But often, the moderate position is the right one.

In religion, shall we say we have left and right (for want of a better way of putting it). We have on the left, a fundamentalist idea of the Bible, rigid moralistic views and worship which contains engineered emotionalism. (Who is this "Gaad" anyway?) On the right we have tradition as more important than the Bible, a rigid moral code, worship which is quite formal, with old fashioned language, and some doctrine which has no basis in the teaching of Jesus.

A moderate position takes a sensible view of the Bible, has variety of worship not bound by strict protocol, and hymns and teaching aligned with the social responsibility, love and caring which Jesus taught.

As Methodists, we are non-conformists (or are we?) Are Methodists "Modest, Moderate and Modern?" – not always.

Dudley Pickston

## **Praying together in the Circuit**

But when the right time came, God sent his Son, who was born from a woman and lived under the law. God did this so that he could buy the freedom of those who were under the law. God's purpose was to make us his children. Since you are now God's children, he has sent the Spirit of his son into your hearts. The Spirit cries out "Abba, Father". Now you are not slaves like before, you are God's children, and you will receive everything he promised his children. Galatians 4 4 - 7

Father, your love for me out-poured through the gift of your dear Son  
His life laid down, wounded and scarred, that we might be as one.  
Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour divine, by you I am made new,  
My life is yours, no longer mine, as now I live in you.  
O Holy Spirit, from above, for all 'in Christ' you came  
Produce in me your fruit of love to glorify your Name.  
Lord God, renew your Church on earth, as channels of your grace  
And as your Spirit gives new birth, the whole wide world embrace.

The world is overwhelmed by need which you alone can meet,  
You save, redeem, sustain and keep, you make each life complete.  
Your grace is like a waterfall, cascading full and free  
And Lord this grace extends to all, Oh, let the people see.  
How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in ?  
And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard ?  
And how can they hear without someone preaching to them ?  
And how can anyone preach unless they are sent ?  
As it is written "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Romans 10: 14-15

Abba, Father, thank you for your love, your presence with us and all we celebrate at Christmastime. Our hearts are full of thankfulness that we have received your precious gift, the greatest gift ever given, your indescribable gift of love and life given for everyone to receive.

We long for this to be a time when light will shine into hearts and lives revealing the truth of who you are, your love for each one and the precious gift you have for them.

Father God draw people to your Son, in His presence may they experience love which lifts them from darkness into your marvellous light.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given ! so God imparts to human hearts the wonders of his heaven, no ear may hear his coming but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in. [Phillips Brooks]

Thank you for those who throughout the years have been messengers of the good news and have shared with others their personal story of what you mean to them. As we prepare to enter a new year anoint us to be those who through your Spirit will be used for your purposes.

“Send us the Spirit of thy Son, to make the depths of Godhead known.

To make us share the life divine, Send Him the sprinkled blood to apply, Send him our souls to sanctify, and show and seal us ever thine” [Charles Wesley]

The Father sent the Son, The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit, The Father, Son and Holy Spirit sent the Church into all the world.

We pray for the East Anglia District and for Pray 2-3

Praying, Renewing, Healing.

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

## Circuit Pastoral Carers' Day – Autumn 2022

Our latest Carers' Day took place on 15<sup>th</sup> October and was well supported and well received by those who came. I'm grateful to Mary Cumbers for the following report which she has put together, but we have also had some encouraging feedback from folk who joined us for the day, particularly from beyond the circuit. One new friend said, *“I wanted to say how much I enjoyed the whole event; there is always something new to learn from other people's experiences and knowledge. I felt quite at home, not amongst strangers at all.....”* and another wrote, *“I want to thank you for the excellent day you organised. It was inspiring, thought-provoking and so well planned. We, in this area, are very lucky to be able to take part in such a day. And all the extras! Cake, sweets, chocolate, tea, coffee and even specially made dog treats. Hetty loved them!”*

In turn, special thanks from me to everyone who supported the day and for all that we learned from each other.

**A date for your diary!** Our next Carers' Day is planned for **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023** and this time we shall be returning to another corner of the circuit, to Hunstanton. Times and other details will follow nearer the time, but the theme for the day will be how we can enhance our “listening skills”. (It is hoped that we can do this with the help of folk from ‘*The Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions*’).

Meanwhile, thanks again to all who made the day possible – and now I shall hand over to Mary to tell you more.....

*Deacon Lynne*

### Carers' Day

On 15<sup>th</sup> October Pastoral carers met for the first time in a year, they came from six of the circuit chapels and from three parish churches within the circuit. But alas there were late apologies from six other chapels; so sad they couldn't make it. Oh, I forgot to include the two dogs, without them we would have lost two more people.

We gathered at London Road for a day, spent learning about and talking about the terrible disease, Dementia.

The day was led by Rev. Pam Bayliss, while her husband John did all the technology things. They live in Beccles and we want to thank them both for giving up a Saturday to share with us.

The day started with a short service where Pam explained how we can help people with dementia become involved. She put a cloth over the altar table and candles were carried to the altar and lit, then a cross and a Bible were put in place, all visible things, things that a person with early dementia would recognise and understand.

Pam made the day really interesting by adding some drama sketches, which we as the audience were asked to pick apart and explain how to prevent arguments and misunderstandings, which can so easily happen with dementia.

There are three stages of dementia; did you know that? I didn't.

First Stage: loss of short term memory, difficulty with finances, pin numbers etc, Poor judgment, anxiety agitation and distress, inability to manage day by day tasks.

Second Stage: Distress, aggression and anger, wandering and getting lost, inappropriate behaviour in dress, language and behaviour etc. Failure to recognise everyday things, and forgetting to eat and wash etc.

Third Stage: Inability to recognise family and friends and familiar objects, like fruits and vegetables, Increase in physical frailty, shuffling when walking, forgetting how to eat and swallow, weight loss, incontinence, and gradual loss of speech.

Not all these stages will happen at once, it may take many years for all three stages to happen. I thought I would include these stages because it might help someone.

We then heard from two people with experience of dementia in their families; such incredibly sad stories.

Pam followed that by talking about the Spirituality of Ageing. Today's older congregations nearly all went to Sunday School; and some of those with dementia would remember hymns and prayers and Bible stories so don't write them off.

It was then time to eat our picnic lunches; some lovely ladies had made some delicious cakes for us to share, and drinks were provided, thank you London Road.

Pam started the afternoon session by talking about Caring for the Carers of people with dementia. Let us remember that the carers have to deal with the person with dementia 24/7. But they must take care of themselves or they too will become ill. That's where we come in as church pastoral carers. It would always be sensible to phone before you visit, and not turn up as a surprise.

When visiting someone with dementia, take something with you to talk about, for example a book, post cards, photos etc. Don't be afraid to ask questions; what is your favourite hymn, psalm or prayer and then sing or say it together. As a pastoral carer why not send a card at Christmas, Easter and Birthdays to the people you look after; it might be the only one they get.

Our day finished with Holy Communion. We sang some new hymns today, familiar tunes but amazing unknown words to me. It was inspiring and thought provoking, a very interesting and informative day, and I am sure a real blessing to all. Dementia is a subject we will all find very difficult to cope with, I am sure today helped our understanding.

Mary Cumbers

## CHRISTMASTIDE REFLECTIONS

*Luke describes Jesus' development from infancy to age 12: "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."*

In December we celebrate the birth of Jesus but have you ever wondered what his childhood would have been like?

We can gather a picture in our minds from historic details and archaeological finds of what family life was like at that time in Nazareth where he lived. We can also learn much about his boyhood from his own teachings as - later on- he spoke to the people with stories and parables about daily life. He grew up like any other Jewish boy – at home, at school, at work and at play. We read of Jesus' brothers and sisters, but these terms could also be ascribed to cousins and others in the close community. We know that he was brought up in a devoutly religious home, centred on God's love in a family who faithfully followed God's instruction, recognising the religious festivals.

Archaeologists have found that children in Jesus' day played games similar to hopscotch and jacks. Whistles, rattles, toy animals on wheels, hoops and spinning tops and board games, They played in the open streets, or out in the fields. They made pipes and whistles from reeds or played with a sling and stones.

Imagine Jesus as a little boy in his father Joseph's workshop. Did he take a piece of wood, borrow the tools and carve little pieces himself? Imagine him showing them proudly to his father and running excitedly to show his mother Mary.

In the household, Jesus would have helped his mother at her tasks -- washing up; sweeping the earthen floor; grinding corn, filling, cleaning and lighting the lamp. He would go with her to the village well to draw water. In the market place and the streets of Nazareth Jesus saw all kinds of people – the good and the bad. He would have listened to the open air law court, watched the traders, seen the ragged beggars crying out for alms, noisy news-mongers proclaiming happenings throughout the land, wise men preaching, tax-collectors piling up coins, merchants bargaining, blind men led by kindly friends. He would have heard stories of travellers waylaid and robbed.

On the Sabbath day Jesus went with Joseph to the synagogue service. He went with his friends to the synagogue school at Nazareth. The boys sat on the ground, cross-legged,. They wrote in the sand with their fingers, or with chalk on the flagstones. Their text-books were the Jewish Scriptures which they learned to read and write out, and to know by heart. They learnt the important passages by repeating them over and over again. Sometimes he went to the farms of his friends, chatting with the workers, watching them scattering seed, reaping and winnowing.

Nazareth lay in the lap of the hills of Lower Galilee. Jesus had only to climb the hill to see far into the distance in all directions. He would have overlooked the great Roman road from Caesarea to Damascus, with its constant stream of travellers -- soldiers, merchants, camel caravans and well-laden asses, pilgrims and beggars." You can imagine how Jesus loved to be out on the hills, amongst the beauty of the wild flowers : watching the birds of the air and other living creatures.

Perhaps he loved best to be up on the hills with the shepherds, for he often spoke of them in his teaching, of how the shepherd

loved each single one of his flock, searching for even one lost lamb. And when he had brought it back, rejoicing, he would lie across the entrance to the fold all night keeping out wild beasts. So, by both night and day, the good shepherd guarded his flock, ready to defend them with his own life.

When would Mary have related to him what she had been told by the angel Gabriel? Imagine Mary and Joseph talking together about their son's special gifts. Jesus must have had some profound conversations with them as he was growing up.

Jesus, growing up with his family would have gone through similar life experiences as our own dealing with real feelings, emotions, cares and even doubts and bereavements.

*That is why Jesus understands our feelings and emotions, and as OUR Good Shepherd he never gives up caring for and loving*

Mary Davies

## **Jesus — the fulfilment of all God's promises**

*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God. (2 Cor. 1:20)*

*God has chosen to work in the lives of his children through promise. In his word he makes many promises. In Christ you can see God's promises to you fulfilled.*

*Through your life in him you can say 'Amen' to those promises.*  
Colin Urquhart

.....

## **Jesus the Prophet**

*John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?"*

Jesus told them, "Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen...". Mt 11:2-4

Centuries before, God had promised through Moses, "**The Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me from among you, from among your fellow-Israelites. You must listen to him.**"

Many more promises were made of the Messiah and Prophet who was to come to God's people, some of them being read in public during the approaches to Christmas.

Prophets, of course, do not simply foretell the future: they speak for God and reassure his people. Down the centuries, the descendants of Israel suffered at the hands of many foreign rulers: Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans, but through it all they continued to believe that one day God would send the anointed one, the Messiah, and among other things he would speak for God and save them from the oppressors. John the evangelist tells us of the excitement of Jesus's first followers as they came to faith in Jesus: '*Philip found Nathaniel and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law and about whom also the prophets wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."* John 1:45. In the months that followed, many came to share in the discovery and realisation. For example, after the feeding of the multitude the word rapidly spread: "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world." John 6:14.

**Come, Lord Jesus: speak the words of inspiring love that God wants us to hear.**

## Jesus the High Priest

Jesus is also the one who bridges the gulf between God's holiness and human kind, and makes it possible for us to approach him with confidence, seeking his love, mercy and forgiveness: the mediator.

The writer of *Hebrews* declares that **Jesus is 'the High Priest that meets our needs... He lives on for ever and 'he is able... to save those who come to God through him... He offered one sacrifice once and for all, when he offered himself.'** (Heb. 7:24-27 GNB)

According to John, Jesus spoke of himself in a way that reminds us of Jacob's dream at Bethel in Genesis 28, in which the patriarch saw angels ascending and descending on a ladder that was set between earth and heaven, and heard confirmation of the promise of blessing upon him and all his descendants. Jesus told Nathaniel, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man." John 1:51

*Come let us ascend! All may climb it who will;  
for the angels of Jacob are guarding it still.*

*Alleluia to Jesus who died on the tree  
and has raised up a ladder of mercy for me.  
"As Jacob with travel" (anon.)*

## Come, Lord Jesus: speak to us the Father's words of grace and forgiveness. Jesus the King

At the heart of Israel's longing for deliverance from oppression was the hope and expectation that God would one day send them a king who would save them for ever from dominating earthly powers.

As you will know, Jesus was descended from King David, who was revered as the royal ancestor who overcame their enemies in battle, expressed his devotion to God in music and hoped to build a temple in Jerusalem, an achievement of his son Solomon. Many acclaimed Jesus as 'Son of David.'

He was also descended from Jacob's son Judah, whom his father described as a lion's cub, and Jesus is sometimes referred to as the Lion of Judah. One of the earliest and most treasured messianic promises is in Genesis 49:10, which speaks of the sceptre, a symbol of kingship: '**The sceptre will not depart from [the family line of] Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come,** and the obedience of the nations shall be his.' (NIV) The sceptre belonged to Jesus, who did not demand the respect due to an earthly monarch, but on the other hand rode into Jerusalem on a donkey in fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy and told Pilate that his kingdom was 'not of this world'.

There are of course many other references in the Bible to Jesus as God's anointed King, culminating in the one that foretells that he will one day be proclaimed as 'King of kings and Lord of lords' in Rev. 19:16. He is not only the one who has been given the rights of Kingship but has also won by his love the supreme place in our hearts.

**Come, Lord Jesus, and rule in our hearts by your glorious love.**

*Sing we the King who is coming to reign,  
Glory to Jesus, the Lamb who was slain;  
Righteousness, peace then his empire shall bring  
Joy to the nations when Jesus is King.*

Charles Silvester Horne

**Recommended reading** for those who would like to explore the topic of messianic prophecy in the O.T. in greater depth, a very readable book: J. Gilbert Miller, *The Road to Emmaus: Christ in the Old Testament*, Illumify Media Global 2019  
David Clark

# AROUND THE CHURCHES

## Terrington St Clement

Our Christmas coffee morning will be on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 10am to 12midday. There will be a raffle , stalls, Jennies games, refreshments and much more. Please try and support us. MWiB continues to meet monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month ,Saturday coffee morning s continue to be well supported. We attended London road service to welcome Daniel Meaden, one of our young people, into membership. I attended the Pastoral meeting to represent TSC. Lots of mince pies and carols to look forward to.

Linda Howling

## Stanhoe

As the cold weather sets in, we are very aware that some local people may well have problems with feeding themselves or their families, and we hope to join in a scheme in the village of Syderstone, where several of us live, to help with collecting and distributing food parcels.

We look forward to the winter months, and all the various special Services: on 11<sup>th</sup> December we have our Christmas Carol Service at the usual time of 11am, when Local Preacher Stephen Harrington will be leading us, we hope accompanied by his guitar. Looking forward to some hearty Carol singing, Stephen!

After the service we shall serve mince pies and hot drinks and share a time of fellowship, with each other, and with our long serving Senior Steward, Valerie Shackcloth, who will be celebrating a special birthday (with a zero) during that week.

On Christmas Day, 25<sup>th</sup> December, we are holding a short family service from 9.30 to 10am, and looking forward to having family members with us, especially Judith and Tim's under-5s grandchildren, because little children are such a special part of Christmas celebrations. We'll be singing Away in a Manger, of course and not a dry eye in the house. (My own grandchildren are aged 15 to 29, and at the time of writing, there is some doubt as to whether they will be out of bed in time).

In the New Year, Our Covenant Service will be led by Rev. Dr. Richman Ncube on 19<sup>th</sup> February; arrangements have not yet been made for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we send Christmas greetings to all our friends across the Circuit, and wish everyone a safe and blessed New Year.

Elizabeth MacLeod

## Hilgay

Our Guild session for 2022/23 began on 8<sup>th</sup> November. This meeting was the AGM as covid prevented us having it at the end of last year's session. Our President Deacon Lynne opened the meeting with Devotions. After the business meeting we enjoyed tea and biscuits and a chat together.

On Remembrance Sunday the village service was led by Rev. Chris Bishop and attended by R.B.L. members, Parish council representatives and members of the village community.

Thanks to Elizabeth the Standard bearer who did such a professional job and to Hilgay Silver Band for providing the music.

Guild programme up to Christmas is as follows: November 22<sup>nd</sup> Rev. Paul Critchley.

December 6<sup>th</sup> Holiday travels with Ian and Kate.

December 20<sup>th</sup> Carols and Tea.

Guild meetings begin at 2:30pm.

On Christmas Eve at 6:30pm Rev. Paul will lead our Carol Service to which everyone is invited.

In the New Year Guild will begin on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January is our turn to host the village Coffee Morning 10am-11:30am

All are welcome.

Our next Church Council is planned for 10am on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

Pauline Driver.

## Hunstanton Methodist Church

It was suggested that we open the church premises every week on Thursday mornings as a warm space for people to come for coffee and a chat. We had leaflets printed and placed them around the town. Our first session on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, was a shot in the dark as we had no idea how many would come to join us, so we were pleasantly surprised to welcome fourteen visitors, some church members, but also strangers who had come along after seeing a leaflet. Everyone seemed to appreciate and enjoy their stay with us, and we are hoping that they will spread the word to others.

On Remembrance Sunday, the service included memories from members of the congregation, poems and the reading of letters and diaries written by soldiers on the front line in both World Wars. The descriptions of the conditions they fought in made clear the horrors of war. The front of the church had been beautifully decorated with a display of poppies in a vase, and with knitted poppies cascading from the Communion Table and spreading across the floor.

As Christmas approaches, we are in discussion with the local primary school about hosting a couple of carol services for them. It would be lovely to see and hear young children in our church, as we are a predominantly older congregation. The Stroke Group, which meets here every week, have also asked if their Christmas meeting can include a brief service in the church with carols and readings. Other Christmas plans include: an afternoon Advent carol service on December 11<sup>th</sup>, at 4pm, more carols on December 18<sup>th</sup> at 10.30a.m, and a brief morning service at 9.30a.m on Christmas Day.

We send Christmas Greetings to all Rejoice readers.

Jean Hornbuckle



## Heacham

I am writing this after we have just returned from the combined Remembrance Service with St Mary's. An excellent joint affair with Sheila Johnson giving the address – this was meaningful and inclusive of all involved during wars. As we stood by the memorial, several good comments about this were overheard.

However, the memorial event was slightly dented. For those respecting the day and time, listening to the names of those commemorated being read out – standing in the middle of the road – it came as a surprise to hear the following. A driver (obviously taken by surprise that the road had been closed and therefore obliged to turn onto an adjoining road), stopped, opened his window and loudly enquired "What's going on here?!!" "Lest we forget" took on another important significance.

The activities at Heacham seem to be increasing! We are hoping for a busy, enjoyable December - and, of course, all who are able to join us are very welcome.

The programme (plan) so far is as follows:

Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 3.00 pm an Advent Carol Service for the elderly and others who do not like to venture out after dark.

Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 12...30 for 1.00 – Christmas Lunch.

Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> December 10-12 noon Coffee Morning.

Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> December - 1. pm. Toddlers' Carol Service.

Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 7.15 pm. Entertainment by the West Norfolk Singers .

Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> December 10.00 -3.00 pm John Harris will be celebrating a special birthday.

Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> December 10.30 Carol Service led by Irene Garrard.

May we wish all our friends in the Circuit a very blessed and peaceful Christmas, and Happy New Year.

Jane Careless

## Wimbotsham.

I am writing this in mid-November when the weather is unusually mild. The roses in our garden are in full bloom and still producing new buds. The temperature is nearer to what you might expect in September rather than November. However, no matter how unseasonable the weather may seem, the year moves on and Halloween, Guy Fawkes and Remembrance Day are past, leaving us to look forward to Advent and Christmas.

Last month we enjoyed a Sunday evening Songs of Praise, the first time we had had an evening service for many years. It was led by our Superintendent Minister, Robert and made even more special by the presence of his wife, the Revd Debbie with her flute. The service was much appreciated and enjoyed by all present.

Our regular activities continue, with Bible Studies every other Tuesday morning and, of course, our Coffee Mornings on the third Saturday of each month when we are joined by old and new friends for coffee or tea, cake and sausage rolls and to browse through the books and bric-a-brac on offer. Why not join us one Saturday, perhaps you will bag yourself a bargain, but in any case, you will receive a warm welcome.

I could not close without a mention of our forthcoming Carol Service which will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> December at our normal meeting time of 11am, with several of our members taking part. If you happen to be free that morning, we would love to see you.

John Houghton.

## Downham Market

A big thank you to all who have been collecting blister packs and leaving them in the collection point in the church. Beverley and I took close to a car full into Cambridge recently – the nearest Super Drug with a pharmacy that takes the packs in for recycling. We have an all-electric car, too, so there was no pollution from our drive to Cambridge (which we anyway managed to combine with an Ipswich game there!).

If the box sometimes seems pretty full it's not that we have forgotten. Beverley and I are still spending half our time 'home' in Amsterdam and the other half



in Downham. During the latter weeks we take my dad Brian daily out of the Grange care home for trips and cups of tea at his former home where we are staying.

Let me take this opportunity to share our gratitude for how warmly we have been received into the community at DM Methodist Church. It's been a real blessing over the past 4 years and our small group has been a wonderful support too. I first went to the DM church as the age of seven after Brian and Mary moved to DM in 1970. The building has been part of my life ever since, ranging from much-loved Christmas services with my grandparents to sadder moments like the funerals of my mum, Mary, and my sister Caroline.

The personal history of places of worship are priceless and yet at the same time the services today – which are very different to the ones we attend at a 1500-member evangelical community in Amsterdam – continue to regularly inspire us to try and be better people in a world that so needs God's love. Thank you all once again for making us feel a part of your journey...

Andrew Rogers

We in our turn are very pleased to have Andrew and Beverley amongst us. We have had a few new friends join us recently and we are enjoying their company.

Messy Church continues, with the numbers growing little by little although circumstances still keep some families away.

Ladies' Friendship meets twice a month and our numbers have grown. We've had a Members' Own evening when we shared poetry and then Rev Paul came and talked about his walk. The December meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> will be our Christmas party so if you'd like to join us it starts at 2.30pm. We restart on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

I am still hoping a lovely volunteer will take over from Joan as Rejoice correspondent. I remembered this month because Andrew sent in a piece but.....

You have till February to think about it!! Otherwise you'll get more dreadful jokes!!

But we have Christmas next then the New Year and Valentine's Day. We will have a candlelit service to which all the Messy Church families and Guides, Brownies and BB will be invited. This will be on Friday December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 4pm. Candles and Christmas go together, even if they are electric ones!!

Time out from tinsel service will be held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> at 7, a reflective service of loss and remembrance.

Thank you to all those who supported Traidcraft. We must try to organise things earlier next year.

And now for the dreadful jokes! What if it had been the Three Wise Women instead of the Three Wise Men?

They would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, cooked dinner, and brought practical gifts!

Santa Claus, an honest politician and a kind lawyer were all on an elevator together when they spotted a \$5 bill lying on the floor. Who picked it up? Santa Claus of course. The other two don't exist!

A Nonymous

## Gaywood St Faith's

In Flanders Fields.....the poppies blow, between the crosses row on row. That mark our places and in the sky the larks still bravely singing fly, scarce heard among the guns below.....these emotive words from John MacCrea's famous war poem, were read by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough deputy mayor, Margaret Wilkinson, during the Remembrance Day service in St Faith's Church on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Young and old packed into the church for the annual observance of remembrance and thanksgiving, in a moving service led by St Faith's recently appointed Rector, the Rev Kyla Sorensen. Names of those from Gaywood, who lost their lives in two world wars, were read out by the Rector during the service.

Prayers were said led by churchwarden Susie Cranko-page for all those who had lost loved ones during two world wars and in more recent conflicts in other parts of the world.

Afterwards, outside in the Council Garden, in front of the church, Councillor Wilkinson led the wreath laying at the memorial garden. The traditional parade to the Gaywood Clock war memorial could not go ahead this year due to changes in traffic stopping measures.

The Rev Kyla thanked all those who attended the event and made special mention of the large numbers of young people (mostly members of the Gaywood uniformed groups) who were present at the service.

On November 26<sup>th</sup> King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Mayor Lesley Bambridge was the VIP guest who cut the ribbon to officially open the 2022 St Faith's Christmas Fair.

There was a happy, festive atmosphere at the event with a colourful selection of stalls to tempt visitors to spend their money. Children at the Fair were able to leave their Christmas "wish-lists" with Santa who called in and was in his grotto. All proceeds go towards the general running costs of St Faith's Church. The Mayor was accompanied around the Fair by the Rector. The Mayor spoke of the importance of such Fairs in bringing communities together and enabling people to mix socially.

A lot of preparation work by a small group of volunteers goes into the event and this all comes together on the day of the Fair. The fund-raising group, under the direction of Andy Hiles, were all thanked for their hard work. All

proceeds go towards running the Church on Gayton Road where Methodists and Anglicans worship together, The important contribution that the choir plays in helping to lead worship was recognised during the November 20<sup>th</sup> morning service.

Tribute was paid to St Faith's long-serving choir member, Olwyn Barber. Mrs Barber, aged 87, has been singing in the choir for an amazing 76 years and her remarkable years of service were celebrated alongside that of other long-serving choir members.

After the service a photograph of the existing choir was taken and a celebration cake, made by choir member Sue Benstead, was cut during a reception in the Church Rooms. During the service the choir sang an anthem in honour of her long service and a letter from the Bishop of Lynn, congratulating Olwyn on her 76 years of choir membership, was read.

In thanking all the choir for their faithful service Sunday by Sunday, year after year, the Rev Kyla expressed the hope that some younger people might like to consider joining the choir and anyone interested is asked to chat about it with the Rev Kyla,

As usual in the weeks before Christmas, there are a variety of services when we celebrate the birth in a humble stable, of the Saviour of the World, Jesus Christ,

These include the ever-popular Carols by Candlelight on December 18<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm. Do try to get there in good time because a large number of people is expected to attend, The candle decorations in church include the wonderful Corona that is hung above the chancel and covered in greenery gathered from the Rectory garden, Sincere thanks are expressed to Peter Dexter for all his work in hanging the Corona and the greenery. When it is fully covered and all the candles lit, it looks stunning.

Other special Christmas services include Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> December when there will be a Taize service at 6.30pm.

Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 4pm, sees the ever-popular Christingle service. On Christmas Eve at 4pm is the Crib Service and at 11.30pm is the Midnight mass service. Please note the start time for this service.

On Christmas Day there are services at 8.30am (BCP Holy Communion) and 10am Christmas Day Family service.

As we come to the close of another year, may I take this opportunity to thank St Faith's LEP clergy, wardens and stewards for all they do throughout the year in leading the congregation in worship, prayer and mission. May I also wish all Rejoice! magazine readers and contributors a blessed Christmas and a Happy, peaceful and Healthy New Year.

Richard Parr

## Addams Family Fun!

Rev Paul and Benji has a wonderful time at the end of October playing Gomez and Pugsley in DADS Production of 'The Addams Family'. They had a good write-up from the area NODA representative:

"Two new faces were certainly put through their paces, Paul Critchley as Gomez and Emma Bryan as Morticia were the stars of the show; they complemented each other and worked well together. Their songs were to a good quality, clearly and confidently sung with some stand outs. These two gave good performances throughout, diction was clear and demeanour on stage was good. Their costumes and make-up were very appropriate and well thought through, their confidence showed throughout their performances and greatly contributed to the show."

"Benjamin Critchley gave character into his performance as Pugsley. His also was a confident performance with a well sung 'What If' and certainly shows potential as an actor, he appeared to enjoy himself."

Thanks to everyone who came to support us and watch the show – Rev Paul says that he will try and stop speaking and singing with a Spanish accent as soon as he can..!



(If you didn't see it you missed a treat!!)

## QUIET MORNINGS (VIA ZOOM)

FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 or SATURDAY 25<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY 2023

### *Wisdom from the Desert*

Lent is a journey of self-knowledge. It takes us into the desert and invites us to face up to the reality of who we are and how we should live.

This is a journey which Jesus undertook at the beginning of his ministry. The desert is a place where countless people have sought clarity. It is a challenging journey through which we seek to reorientate our life. Ultimately it is a journey towards God and in God.

In this Quiet Morning we'll take some tentative steps in the company of our spiritual ancestors – the Desert Mothers and Fathers.

9.30am	Welcome & Opening Prayer
	Introduction to the theme
10.00am	Session 1: Vulnerability
11.00am	Session 2: Renewal
12 noon	Conclusion
	Closing Prayer
12.15pm	Finish

*This online Quiet morning will be led via Zoom by Rev Judith Jessop,  
a Methodist pioneer presbyter from Sheffield*

If you would like to attend please e-mail Deacon Lynne Tonge  
[2tonges317@gmail.com](mailto:2tonges317@gmail.com) stating which date you prefer

There is no charge for this event, but donations (suggested £5)  
may be made by bank transfer to

Reflect: Lloyds Bank, Sort code 30 96 18, Account no 02833113 ref Quiet

Day  
21

## Frontline Walk

I completed the 100km Frontline Walk for ABF The Soldiers' Charity during October. I managed to complete it without having done too much training, but did end up with blistered and heavily swollen feet which was a brand new experience for me! Thankfully the medics on the trip kept my feet strapped up so that I could complete the challenge, which was my fifth walk for the charity to date.

I had the privilege of being asked to say a blessing at the start of the walk at Lochnagar Crater and then subsequently was asked by a number of people to say blessings at gravesides during the walk. The walkers all know that I am a Methodist Minister and so I end up being called 'Padre' throughout the week!

I am already considering joining the event again next year for my sixth walk – I suppose I had better start training properly this time!!

Rev Paul



## **Some thoughts about growth**

I expect that like me you have been surprised by the amount of greening and growth that has gone on in our gardens and in the countryside since we have had substantial amounts of rain.

Sparse, parched grass has been replaced by lush green.

Suddenly an array of annuals appeared from seeds I had scattered in the spring and are still in flower as I write this article. A self-seeded tomato plant is in flower beside the more seasonal cyclamens. It is comforting to see the regenerative power of nature when there seem to be so many disturbing things going on in the world.

As a circuit, we are experiencing our own particular challenges especially with regard to the futures of our smaller chapels. At the autumn synod, I bought a book entitled "How Village Churches Thrive", which was published in 2022. Comedian Hugh Dennis wrote the introduction to the book and in it he said he thought many rural churches were "like spring bulbs, ready for the right conditions to release all the potential they hold and to thrive."

All churches whatever their size need regenerative growth if they are going to survive as the years go by. Since reading the book, I have been looking for signs of regeneration and growth in our circuit. Here are some that I have noticed. First, that churches are being able to hold more events to which they can invite people from their local communities. Second is that people from those communities are becoming more confident in responding to these kinds of events. On 5<sup>th</sup> November, Steph and Elizabeth were able to organise a light party at Downham Market Methodist Church for the first time in three years. Twenty-nine children came with accompanying adults. The following day at Hilgay, we had an afternoon service of memorial

and thanksgiving followed by tea and cake instead of our usual morning service, which was attended by several people from the village as well as members of our normal congregation and friends from elsewhere in the circuit. Our Remembrance Service attracted more people than in recent years, including some who had attended for the first time the previous week. For every church, the context is different and therefore the opportunities for growth will differ too but the parable of the mustard seed reminds us that big things can grow from very little seeds. Judging from the prayers in our circuit prayer handbook, we are united in our desire to be welcoming churches that seek to identify need and reach out to our local communities. These are important prerequisites for growth.

Lesley Dent

## **Double Blessing in the West Norfolk Circuit.**

October 30<sup>th</sup> 2022 was a special day and one to be remembered in the lives of two of our young people. Daniel Meaden and Sibiu Ncube come from different churches and have very different interests, but on this day they were united by a common desire to take the important step of faith of being confirmed and made members of the Methodist Church in a circuit service held at London Road Methodist Church. Both were there with the support of family and friends – Daniel with his parents, brother, grandparents and 2 of his 3 godparents (although I'm sure godfather Julian was there in spirit all the same); and Sibiu with his parents (his Dad, Rev Rich, is one of our Circuit ministers), brother and sister – for obvious reasons, their wider family in Zimbabwe could not travel to join us, but we know that they too will have been with us in spirit.

It was a circuit service by name with people attending from many churches across the circuit, but also a circuit service by nature with all our ministers taking part. It started with a good traditional hymn, To God be the Glory, a reminder that although we were there for a very special reason, ultimately it is still God who is to be praised and glorified. After

prayers, we learned a new hymn – a Peruvian Gloria for which we had to split into 2 parts, and fortunately we didn't have to sing it in the Peruvian language.

The readings were shared between representatives from both families. Sibus sister Sindi read from 2 Timothy chapter 1, and Daniel's brother Peter read from Matthew's Gospel chapter 4. Then Rev Robert Roberts had the responsibility of delivering a sermon on the subject of faith. He cleverly made it specifically relevant to the 2 boys as well as more generally relevant to the rest of the congregation, and including an anecdote of teaching the grandchildren about lighting a bonfire in reference to sparking the fire of faith.

The part we'd all come for was, of course, the reception into membership and affirmation/confirmation of faith of Daniel and Sibus. This important job was shared equally between Deacon Lynne Tonge and Rev Jackie Goddard. As part of this, Daniel and Sibus had the opportunity to each give their testimony of how they got to the point of knowing they wanted to be confirmed. Both rose to the challenge in their own way, Sibus looking very comfortable behind the lectern and Daniel using a mini slide-show to illustrate his points.

We were treated to music from the Ncube family. Firstly, Rev Rich, mum Sikha and Sindi sang a song of well done to Sibus and Daniel, an act which I am reliably informed is a pleasant custom from their native Zimbabwe whenever there is something to celebrate. Secondly, Sibus joined them to sing in 4-part harmony a song called Masibonge, kuy' uJesu, which translates as Let's give thanks to Jesus. This was enthusiastically accompanied by younger brother Ephraim on his little guitar. Then the confirmation part of the service continued in the usual fashion.

The congregation was invited to represent their church in extending a hand of fellowship towards Daniel and Sibus. It was good to see the large number of people going up to do so. Daniel and Sibus made their promises and each were awarded with their confirmation certificate and money for a Bible or other suitable book of their choosing. This was followed by the hymn; Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? – a very apt choice for a confirmation service.

Prayers of Intercession were also shared between Ruth Hannay and Sheila Johnson, representing the two churches where Daniel and Sibus are now members, before Rev Paul Critchley led a time of

communion, during which we all shook hands with each other to share the Peace – quite a novelty for those of us who haven't done so in over 2 years! After a final hymn and blessing, it was time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important part of the evening (the 1<sup>st</sup> being the confirmation naturally) – a chat over tea and cakes, many thanks to those who provided them. Altogether, a good time was had by all – but now, who's going to be next up for confirmation?

Jenny Sargent.



Picture provided by Caroline Meaden.

### More Happy Thoughts!

What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

Frosted flakes

What illness do you get from eating Christmas decorations?

Tinsei-itis

What do elves learn in school?

The elf-abet

Who is never hungry at Christmas time?

The turkey, he's always stuffed

What do you call a cat on the beach at Christmas time?

Sandy Claws

What happened when the snowwoman got angry with the snowman?

She gave him the cold shoulder.

Articles for MARCH to me by FEBRUARY 15<sup>th</sup> 2023

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## REMINDER

### WALKING BACKWARDS TO CHRISTMAS

The Circuit Advent Study this year is based on Stephen Cottrell's book 'Walking Backwards to Christmas' and will take place at 6:30pm on Sunday evenings on Zoom throughout the 4 Sundays of Advent (27<sup>th</sup> November, 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December). We will not be providing a booklet this year as the material is copyrighted and reproduction is not allowed, however we can provide PDFs each week of the material we will be using. You can purchase your own copy of the book if you wish to do so either brand new or via an internet based second hand book seller such as [abebooks.co.uk](http://abebooks.co.uk)

Walking Backwards to Christmas follows the stories of those involved in the Christmas Narrative and we will spend time pondering on a few of those characters in our time together. If you would like any further information please contact Rev Paul Critchley on 01366 388766 or via email at [paul.critchley@methodist.org.uk](mailto:paul.critchley@methodist.org.uk)



# A CLENCHWARTON CHRISTMAS SHOW

WITH REFRESHMENTS AND RAFFLE

SATURDAY

10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER

2pm

METHODIST CHURCH HALL  
MAIN ROAD CLENCHWARTON



TICKETS £5 (UNDER 16S £2)  
AVAILABLE ON THE DOOR

## Letter to Methodist Recorder

I wrote the letter below to the Methodist Recorder and to my utter amazement it was printed. I feel as a holiday area all our chapels in West Norfolk Circuit should do their very best to have accurate information about their services on display.

Why is it that when away in my caravan it is so difficult; in this age of technology, Wi-Fi and internet; to find the times of Sunday Services? On my travels I can find a Methodist Church named but NO church service times. Often when I go to look at a church notice board the address does not lead me to a church, but to a street --- probably where the manse is. When I have eventually found the church there is often NO times of services displayed. WHY NOT?

This problem also works in reverse, a time is displayed but when I arrive there is no service. Again WHY NOT? You would think that small chapels need the extra offering that holiday makers bring but it's not made easy.

I am sure that I am not the only holiday maker to have this problem. Some circuits do very well, they publish their plan on their website, how simple and how effective; but so many do nothing.

I recently read in the Methodist Recorder about a prediction that the Methodist Church would die out by 2045. If it doesn't pull it socks up and get its act together by using the gifts God has given us to advertise, when and where services are being held then by 2045 the churches might just be empty. Please use this winter to get this problem sorted for next year's holiday makers.

Mary Cumbers



(But not too merry!!)

## What's on from December 2022

Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup> Christmas Coffee Morning at  
Terrington St Clement

Saturday December 10<sup>th</sup> A Christmas Show at  
Clenchwarton 2pm

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December Coffee morning with bric-a-  
brac and Christmas fare at Wimbotsham Methodist  
Church 10 am - 12 noon

### **2023**

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January Coffee morning with bric-a-brac  
and home-made cakes at Wimbotsham Methodist  
Church 10 am - 12 noon

FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> REJOICE DEADLINE

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February is Ash Wednesday

February 24<sup>th</sup> /25<sup>th</sup> Friday/Saturday Quiet mornings.

22<sup>nd</sup> March - 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023 Threads through Creation  
at Peterborough Cathedral