

Rejoice!

December / January / February 2024/5



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

Dear All,

Hello! And welcome to our new edition of Rejoice – the magazine packed full of news and events within our Circuit. This is a great resource to check out what is happening across our Circuit and support each other in the various events that each Church Community arranges.

This magazine was for many years edited by our very own Barbara Foster who, in her indomitable style, would request and chase after contributors to ensure that Rejoice magazine was a very valuable contribution to the life of the West Norfolk Methodist Circuit. She was a wonderful friend to so many of us, an inspiring preacher and leader of worship and always ready to support, challenge and help anyone who needed any of those things! We miss her greatly but rejoice that she is safe in her Heavenly Fathers House.

I don't know about you, but I had an incredibly eventful Hallowe'en evening. I'd spent the afternoon preparing pumpkins with my boys which, as you can see from the photograph, were really rather creative and well done! The boys and I decided that we would hand out sweets to those arriving at our door dressed as all manner of things, with some even arriving by riding on dinosaurs!! We estimated that 200 mini bags of Haribo to last us the evening would suffice... we were VERY wrong! We met that night over 200 different people on the door, without any trouble, fear but with lots of laughter and fun! Very often, the comment made as children went back to their parents laden down with, yet another bag of sweets was, "I recognise him! He comes into our school and takes assemblies!" And it got me thinking of how we might respond to this night in the future, knowing that it is absolutely a night that not everyone enjoys or appreciates... A night where, traditionally, the Church poked fun at death and evil as it recognised that above all things Christ has the victory and, in fact, those things were humiliated by Christ at His resurrection!

I had the privilege of following this with two reflective services where I led congregations in remembering those whom we have loved and

lost and whom we have placed into the care of God made the time such an incredibly special few days in my life, my ministry and my own walk with God.

And so, we now turn our attentions to the coming seasons of Advent and Christmas where, once again, we recognise that 'the hopes and fears of all the years' are met in the Christ-child. And maybe that takes on a new resonance for us this year as we look at the troubles and uncertainties in our world.

May we take the time gifted to us during Advent to tiptoe with wonder through the season as it sparks with the electricity of the promise that are to be fulfilled before we truly celebrate the season of Christmas as it arrives.

'O Come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel'

With much love of the coming seasons,
Rev Paul, Jacob, Sam and Benji.



Praying together in the Circuit

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1: 1-5, 9, 14

Father, we pray for the season of Advent,
JESUS, LIGHT OF THE WORLD



LOVE JOY

PEACE HOPE

Our focus on Jesus, his birth and his coming again in glory, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Thank you for your love for us, the joy we experience receiving Jesus into our lives, for your peace which pervades us and the hope we have in you and your eternal purposes. We pray that the light of the glorious gospel of truth may shine throughout the world.

We pray for all expressions of love at this time, for the recipients to be blessed. For hospitality given, for shoeboxes filled with gifts sent to children in many areas of the world. For those who recognise the needs of people and reach out to help, for all charities making a difference in people's lives. Help us Lord, to share your love as we are called to, we long for lives to be transformed by your love.

We pray for those who feel hopeless and see no way out of their circumstances. Remembering before you many who have lost their homes in areas of conflict and have to shelter in ruined buildings with no provision of basic needs. We pray for refugees to find refuge in places of safety and a welcome for a new phase in their lives. Help of the helpless, Lord - abide with each one, dispersing the darkness and shining hope into their lives.

Lord, we pray for peace throughout the world, peace in nations, and amongst nations, in our towns and communities in lives and relationships. For people who in their turmoil, long for peace.

May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Romans 15: 13

Lord, you are the source of our joy, the reason for our joy.

The joy of the Lord is our strength.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come, Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.

[Isaac Watts]

Sovereign God, we pray for your church throughout the world its witness, worship, fellowship and service. May we be faithful to you and by your Spirit's power, fruitful for you.

We pray for our Circuit, for your plans for us and your provision for us. We pray for our Ministers and our Leadership team, for all who are involved in leading worship. We pray for each Church community and location, for the ministry of all believers.

Revive Thy work, O Lord, While here to Thee we bow;

Descend, O gracious Lord descend! O come and bless us now.

[Albert Midlane 1825-1909]

Prayers have been requested for Norma.

Around the churches



Clenchwarton

DECEMBER

SATURDAY 7TH CHRISTMAS CONCERT AT 2.30PM

TICKETS: ADULTS £5 UNDER 16'S £2.50

A FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR CMC, ST. MARGARET'S AND KL
NIGHT SHELTER

SATURDAY 14TH CHILDREN'S CHRISTINGLE MAKING
AFTERNOON

2PM- 3.30PM

(FREE EVENT. ACCOMPANIED CHILDREN PLEASE)

SUNDAY 15TH NATIVITY AND CHRISTINGLE SERVICE AT
10.30AM

JANUARY 2025

SATURDAY 18TH THE JANUARY TALK 2.30 - 4.30 PM

SUNDAY SERVICES 10.30AM

EVERYONE MOST WELCOME

MAIN RD CLENCHWARTON PE34 4AQ

Dersingham

We are busy making our preparations for Advent and Christmas. The advent wreath and candles will be set up and the candles lit using an Advent liturgy. Members of the congregation are invited to read the liturgy and light the candles each week. The liturgy is 'Signposts through Advent' and invite us to an Advent journey. We are asked to travel hopefully, faithfully, expectantly, joyfully, and to arrive at our journey's end on Christmas Day with wonder and worship.

As part of our preparations, we will be writing an extra Christmas card or two for the MHA Christmas Friendship appeal and bring joy to an older person. MHA will ensure it reaches those in their community who would most benefit.

The Christmas tree and Church windowsills will be decorated in good time for our Carols by Candlelight on **Sunday 15th December 3.00 pm** led by Revd Dr Rich Ncube. We are usually joined by many from the village as we sing familiar words and marvel once again at this special occasion.

Christmas Day service will be at **10.30 am**.

Christmas cards with times of services are given to everyone associated with Dersingham Methodist including those who attend Church activities and hall hirers. We know these are appreciated.

Our prayer for everyone is that we may know afresh that Jesus Light of the World has come.

Elizabeth Batstone

Downham Market

Our building has been very busy over the last few months. We have hosted the Synod and the Methodist Historical Society. Our Sunday school has restarted, currently just once a month, but they seem to have a great deal of fun. Another welcome addition to our services has been people from the local care homes. Rev Paul led a moving Remembrance Service on the 10th of November, which included memories from his walk earlier this year along the Normandy Beaches raising money for the Army Benevolent Fund. Hopefully we can persuade him to share more about this in the next issue of Rejoice.

A new floor in the Function room and radiators in the church have improved the building. I'm sure we will be glad of the better heating in the church as the weather becomes colder. Plans to improve the ladies' toilets are well underway.

The building itself is home to forty groups and a café, which also provides meals on wheels to locals unable to get out. The picture on the front of this edition of Rejoice is by Heinz Heisler, a church member, who also runs an art group in the building. A nice side effect of having such a busy schedule is that people have access to the church whenever they need a quiet place to pray or simply think.

We are starting our Advent activities with a service for those for whom Christmas will be a difficult time. We will be joining with other churches in our local area to share carols both outside Tesco's and in the town hall. Our young people, and the young at heart will be well catered for with a party, Messy church, a candlelight service and performances of an alternative nativity by FenSong, our children's drama group. There is even a baptism during advent, always a special event, but even more so during the lead up to Christmas.

As we head towards 2025, may we at Downham Market Methodist Church wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

FELTWELL METHODIST CHURCH, COMMUNITY HALL & GARDEN

Our OPEN KEYBOARD event has proved an interesting idea with villagers taking the opportunity to have a dabble on the piano keyboard in the foyer of the chapel. Young people have left the school bus at the end of the day and stopped to play the piano. Neighbours of the chapel have told me they have heard it being played. Another young man came to play and asked if we had any sheet music he could use at the piano. It's amazing what resources we have at our fingertips which help us to engage in mission.

Sundays are different at Feltwell. We don't have your standard hymn and prayer sandwich. We don't follow the Lectionary; we take life and the Bible as our cue for learning. How often do you read that Jesus, or even John Wesley went into a temple, or church, to share the scriptures and teach. Temples and churches were for the upper classes who went to church every week. The poor, the workers, the uneducated were taught the scriptures and educated in the errors of their ways, out in the fields and on the streets. Our non-conformist Sunday Fellowships are proving popular with members as we look at life, study the Bible and try to understand how the two are complementary through open discussion. It is a fact that the more we take part practically in "the lesson", the more we will learn and remember. This has been proved by the way our members recall the themes of our previous fellowships on Sundays. And we now enjoy a 'family' lunch at one of the eateries in the area each month. We have also suggested having Sunday Fellowship on the grass when we have a lovely warm and calm day, maybe in the spring and summer of 2025.

Next year is the 90th anniversary of Methodism on the current site, which cost £75 in 1935, bought from a local farmer. If anyone in the circuit has any artifacts, photos etc from those early days, we would love to include them in our exhibition and anniversary celebrations.

Please get in touch.

We had a Tables Sale in October when we served hotdogs and bacon butties as well as serving and selling cakes. In November we had a Christmas Craft Fair with crafters from across Norfolk. These events are often measured by the amount of money we raise. However, the perception of our community that our aim is to raise as much money as we can, is not doing us any favours. Our aim must be to engage in mission and share the love of God with our community by showing that our doors are open and anyone is welcome and welcomed.

One Sunday in October we welcomed a couple of new residents in the village. During a follow-up pastoral visit, the two declared that they felt so welcome because they were welcomed, and had a conversation with, every member present, not just the steward. I have been to Methodist churches where nobody spoke to us, despite staying for refreshment after the service!! Is it somebody else's job to welcome visitors? We are not here to judge on God's behalf. If we don't show love at the doors, they may appear 'closed' to visitors.

Saturday 14 December we will be opening our doors to visitors to the "Tunnel of Light". As well as the sparkly lights and displays visitors will glimpse a nativity scene, which will hopefully include full size mannequins (*the next best thing to real human statues*)

You are welcome to visit anytime.

TUNNEL of LIGHT



and

CHRISTMAS CREAM TEAS

SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER

3.00pm

- * People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.
- * "Kebab" was not even a word never mind a food.
- * Cornflakes had arrived from America but it was obvious they would never catch on.
- * The phrase "boil in the bag" would have been beyond comprehension.
- * The idea of "oven chips" would not have made any sense at all to us.
- * Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold.
- * We never heard of Croissants we certainly couldn't pronounce it,
- * We thought that Baguettes were a problem the French needed to deal with.
- * Garlic was used to ward off vampires, but never used to flavour food.
- * Water came out of the tap, if someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it they would have become a laughing stock.
- * Food hygiene was all about washing your hands before meals.
- * The one thing that we never ever had on our table in the sixties were elbows.

"My"How the world has changed!!

St Faith's

It is good to be able to share again through *Rejoice* our preparations for the very busy Christmas Season in our Church family life.

On 20th October 2024 we had planned a service of Joint Confirmation with three candidates with +Jane, the Bishop of Lynn and Rev. Paul Critchley both confirming the candidates into both the Church of England and the Methodist Church which has been our custom here at St. Faith's since the Anglican/Methodist Sharing began 50 years ago. Unfortunately, Bishop Jane had to pull out at the last minute, so the service has been re-scheduled for Saturday 15th February at 10am. Visitors from the Circuit are very welcome to attend this service if they so wish.

The first sign of Christmas at St. Faith's is our annual Christmas Fair which, this year, will be held on Saturday 30th November at 2pm in the Gaywood Church Rooms and will be opened by Gary Walker who organises the weekly Park Run in the Walks and is involved with other local groups.

Our spiritual preparations for Christmas will commence the following day when we will be singing those wonderful Advent hymns at our 9.45 am service, always a very special day in our Church's calendar.

Our usual monthly coffee morning takes place on Saturday 7th December at 10am in the Church Rooms.

The following day, Sunday 8th December, we will be holding our Annual Gift Service when we bring gifts for local children between the ages of 0 and 5 years. Emma Bell from Action for Children in King's Lynn will be receiving the gifts for distribution locally amongst children in need.

Later that Sunday at 4pm we will be holding a 'Blue Christmas' for the first time. This service is intended for those who are struggling with bereavement and the other challenges which life can bring and offers the comfort of Christian hope and healing in the knowledge that they are not alone in their struggles.

Our Christingle Service this year is on Saturday 14th December at 4pm and in the evening of the following day, Sunday 15th December, there is a Christmas concert with Your Choir at 6.30pm.

Our Christmas services proper start with our annual Candlelight Carol Service on Sunday 22nd December at 6.30pm. Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve is at the usual time of 11.15 pm and on Christmas Day at 10 am, a Christmas Family Service will be followed by St. Faith's Christmas Lunch. This will be held in the Church Rooms at 12 noon when a delicious Christmas Dinner with all the trimmings will be served for anyone who might be on their own on Christmas Day. It is available free of charge but booking is essential via the Church Office, tel. 01553 279687 or email : office@stfaithsgaywoodlep.org.uk

We send all good wishes for Christmas and the coming New Year.
Joan Greening

Heacham

Firstly, we must send our best wishes to the new editors/composers of Rejoice. We wish you well – but also remember fondly Barbara.

It is quieter (in the nicest sense) here following the departure of our friends who come during the summer – when they are visiting and staying in Heacham (and abouts) in their holiday homes. We always look forward to seeing them.

Our last social event was an afternoon tea in aid of the Methodist Homes for the Aged – much enjoyed and fitting farewell to our visitors. Thanks to all who attended.

Our plans for the next few weeks include a Christmas Lunch at the beginning of December.

On 21 December at 2.00 pm there will be a Carol Service followed by refreshments – mince pies and (innocent) mulled wine. Congregation members will be asked/able to choose their favourite carols. It will also be a Christingle event – for all ages.

25 December – Rev Rich Ncube will lead the service, and the carols will be of his choice.

Our best wishes to all in the Circuit for a warm, happy Christmas and safe New Year.

Highgate

We recently became a 'class of London Road' as our membership is lower than the required number. Thank you, London Road, for taking us on board. Our service at Highgate is 3.00 pm, any time you are unable to attend your usual morning service why not come and worship with us. We've been preparing Shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child trusting they will bring smiles, excitement and pleasure to the children as they are sent with love. The boxes will be blessed at our service on 17th November led by Peter Worrell. We are delighted that the South Wootton house group led by Elaine will be meeting at Highgate on Monday evenings for their Advent Course 'Watch and pray'.

Sunday 22nd December Stephen Harrington will be leading worship for our Carol Service. We are planning to have a Sankey afternoon in the new year and would love to welcome you and your voice to make a joyful noise to the Lord. Date to be decided.

Hilgay with Southery

We have had a busy autumn. At the beginning of September, the front of the chapel got a face lift. Old worn bricks were removed and were replaced with specially made new bricks. Repairs were also made to the chimney and boundary wall

and the downpipes were painted. A section of the kitchen ceiling will be repaired between 4th and 16th December. Many thanks go to John Redcar, who is doing both sets of repairs.

Our September coffee morning was very well attended and raised £256. We gave half of the proceeds to MacMillan Cancer Care. We take it in turns to host the village coffee morning with the village hall. Last year, our January coffee morning started an hour later than normal at 11a.m. so as to include a winter warmer lunch of soup and freshly baked rolls. We hope to do the same in 2025.

We held our harvest service and lunch on 6th October and were pleased to welcome Revd Gordon Tonge and Deacon Lynne to lead our worship and join us for lunch.

On the first Sunday in November, it has become our tradition to hold a service of Memorial and Thanksgiving to which we extend a special welcome to members of the community. This year it was led by Revd Paul Critchley.

On Remembrance Sunday we hold a community commemoration at the village war memorial followed by a short service at the chapel. Hilgay Silver Band play at both. This year Revd Christopher Bishop kindly agreed to lead both acts of remembrance.

Guild is back! Meetings began again on October 8th and are fortnightly until the last meeting on Good Friday 2025. The Members of Hilgay Wesley Guild warmly invite you to join us for any of our meetings at Hilgay Methodist Church. All meetings begin at 2.30p.m: December 3rd Meeting to be

arranged. December 17th Cake and Carols GUILD has a varied programme including speakers, quizzes and social events as well as one devotional meeting in four. For further details, contact Pauline Driver 01366 387317 or Elinor Gudgeon 01366 388314



CAROL SERVICE led by Revd Paul Critchley @ Hilgay Methodist Chapel 2.30pm. 24th December

Hunstanton

During Lent, we joined with the Union Church for lunchtime services followed by a Soup Lunch; over the six weeks each church hosted three events and organised speakers to lead the worship. We decided to do more together and to invite the three other churches in Hunstanton to join us for a Walk of Witness through the Town on Good Friday and a Sunrise Service on the Green on Easter Day. All the churches joined in and, as a result, we formed *Hunstanton Churches Together*. In August, we held an open-air Songs of Praise service on the Green, with the Salvation Army Band accompanying the hymns, and were very happy to see holiday makers joining in. Every few months we join for a service and Faith Lunch with each church taking a turn at hosting and organising the event. The Methodists hosted the most recent one which was attended by forty people. We believe that together we can be a stronger voice in the community.

At the end of July, we held our first Flower Festival using the theme of *Anniversaries*, ending with a Songs of Praise on the Sunday. Members of the congregation and friends made lovely arrangements to commemorate notable events, people and

charities with special celebrations in 2024. We raised £600 in donations, so were able to present £300 each to representatives from the RNLI and RSPCA who came to a Sunday service and told the congregation about the work of their charities.

Most recently, we had a successful Bring and Share Harvest Tea, followed the next day by a joyful Harvest Festival service led by Richman and ending with dancing in celebration and thanksgiving.

Looking forward to Christmas, there will be a joint Carol Concert at the Union Church on Dec 14th, and a Midnight Service at St Edmund's on Christmas Eve to which all are invited, as well as our own Sunday morning service of carols and readings, and 9.30 am service on December 25th. We are hoping to hold a Toddlers' Carol and Chaos Service so are busy contacting groups that might be interested in bringing toddlers to join us. Although young at heart our members no longer fit the required age group!

On a sadder note, recently we have lost two of our much loved members: David Ralphs and Peter Jackson. They were both men of faith and we know that they are now with the Lord.

London Road

We have had a busy time lately clearing the vestry ready for the builders to solve our problems with damp. They also discovered a hole in the roof which hadn't been helping matters! Happily, we are now watertight, and the end is in sight.

Inevitably clearing the vestry has unearthed all sorts of archives which we are sorting through. This has meant we have a glimpse at the life and witness of many faithful souls who have attended and tended to London Road over many decades. What a privilege!

We are looking ahead to Advent. We have a house group which will be meeting at Highgate Chapel. The Advent Course is entitled "Watch and Pray" and will follow this year's lectionary readings for Advent. It will be held on November 25th, December 2nd, 9th, 16th at 7.30pm and will consist of bible readings, discussions, prayers and refreshments. All are welcome. Please contact Elaine Sargent for further details ([01553 673570](tel:01553673570)).

We will be holding our Christmas coffee morning on 14th December 10-12 and on Thursday 19th December at 6.30pm we are having a carol service designed to coincide with late night shopping. Christmas services are still at the planning stage but our annual decamp into the hall is in the offing to keep everyone warm and cosy and to save on the heating.
Lesley Evans

THE BEACON – North Lynn

The Beacon in North Lynn is very much looking forward to its Christmas activities. This year, we have a full line up of events including a Christmas market, wreath making and craft activities on Saturday afternoons. Working collaboratively with others, the Guides will be running a special Christmas themed prize bingo, and following the success of last year's live Nativity, we will be repeating it again with members of the public and livestock joining us in the telling of the nativity story with our carol services afterwards. Last year included Police Officers, youth workers, teachers, support workers as different

characters – many of whom are keen to join us again in their different roles.

This year for a time of reflection we will be using the story of Narnia to guide some of our activities, including an immersive experience where we will have to creep through the wardrobe past some coats and trees to then enjoy a screening of one of the Narnia films with Turkish delight. Continuing with this theme, our Filling Station service will be moved from its usual second Sunday of the month to the 15th December exploring themes of the gospel in the story of Narnia.

We will also be continuing with our regular events such as messy church and community meal but with a Christmas flavour to them!

Finally, our advent season will conclude with our midnight communion service and the Christmas day service. In January, we shall be having a special epiphany service to bless the homes in the surrounding estate.
Jon

Pott Row

The end of September saw our celebration of Harvest, and also our Chapel Anniversary. While we had a ‘quiet’ celebration this year, no Flower Festival or event, we were able to give a good amount of food to the King’s Lynn Night Shelter as well as £170 in money donations. The steps at the front of our chapel were covered in tins, boxes and other items of food, and we reflected on Harvest in a Local Arrangement service. Paintings and stories of traditional harvests, reminders of the beauty of our world, and of our role in looking after it... and of course, we sang a good selection of harvest hymns!

Now, we’re planning for Christmas and our Christmas tree festival, held at the start of Advent this year on Friday 29th and Saturday 30th November culminating in our Carol Service at 3pm on 1st December. Local schools and other village organisations have been approached, we’re all beginning to plan our contributions, and we hope for a really

busy and happy few days. Thursday 28th November is decorating day, and its usually chaos as everyone descends, but somehow the strings of light go up into the right places, and it all gets organised! Cakes will be baked, and ready to sell, there will be tea & coffee, biscuits, crafts... we always appreciate and enjoy seeing friends from round the circuit, so if you're reading this before the event, do come along and see us + the trees! The chapel will be open from 10am to 4pm on Friday 29th and Saturday 30th, and from 10am on the Sunday... if you don't get your Rejoice magazine in time to attend that, our regular monthly coffee morning will be held on the 12th of December from 10.30 and many of the trees will still be on display then. Later in December we hope to work with our friends from the Anglican churches in our local area to welcome children to our chapel for ARC (Art and Religious Crafts), an event that usually involves a lot of glitter it seems but is also a lot of fun. With all this going on, I think the chapel vacuum cleaner will see much use...!

We were sorry to say goodbye to Robert in July but are enjoying working with Richman as our new minister - and we're delighted that there will be another edition of 'Rejoice' as we always like to find out about news from round the circuit. If you want another 'date for your diary' from us, we're planning a coffee morning in aid of Tapping House Hospice on Saturday 15th March 2025.

Happy Christmas to all from Pott Row!

Stanhoe

We welcomed Rev. Steve Oliver back to lead our worship at our Harvest Festival on 29th September – a lively and inspiring service, especially when he lined nine of us up at the front of the church, and used us to demonstrate the story of The Creation – exactly how remains a secret, but it did involve the distribution of sweets!

Our church was decorated with locally grown produce, from the gardens and allotments of members and friends, as well

as gifts of tinned and packaged food. Afterwards, we sold off the fresh fruit and vegetables, honey and jam, and the sum raised was rounded up to £100.00 from church funds, which together with the dry goods, was donated to the local food bank.

We were very sad in September, to hear of the death of Jeremy, husband of one of our members, Sushila Russell. They owned and ran a smallholding on the outskirts of Stanhoe, although he actually worked as a barrister in London during the week. He was keen apiarist (beekeeper to you and me) and he and Sushila were very generous with their produce, especially at harvest time, when Sushila would arrive at church with boxes of plums and apples from their trees, as well as honey and jams. Sadly, Sushila will now be giving up the smallholding and moving back permanently to London. We shall miss everything she did for our church – she was also a skilled flower arranger and of course, we shall miss her for herself.

Our Christmas services will be held on 8th December (Advent) and 22nd December, when we look forward to welcoming our own Minister, Rev. Dr. Richman Ncube, to lead our Christmas Carol Service.

Elizabeth MacLeod

Terrington St Clement

Here at Terrington St Clement we have had quite a busy few months. Aswell as our usual Saturday Coffee Mornings we have had special ones to coincide with Easter and our Chapel Anniversary in June. This year our building was 19 years old, and we celebrated with a service taken by Reverend Debbie Caulk, Robert's wife. It gave us a chance to wish her and

Robert well before they left for Lincolnshire! The day before we celebrated with a display by all the organisations who use our premises plus photographs from the last 19 years of Flower Festivals, celebrations and services. We have had a good variety of services, including Worship Team ones that are prepared by a team of three Stewards, Café Services prepared by Jackie Goddard for us to lead, some Preacher-led services and, of course, those led by Jackie which are usually Communion Services. Our Harvest worship was led by Joella Nash, who led us in our singing with her guitar, and donations of tins and packets were made to the Food Bank.

Once a month we have a Methodist Women in Britain meeting on a Wednesday afternoon. Sometimes we have a speaker and sometimes we have a member's afternoon when we have a theme, when hymns and readings are chosen by our ladies. Our meeting in July was extra special as we had a visit from two ladies from Baby Basics, a charity that has a branch in Dersingham. We were given a demonstration of how they fill a Moses basket with clothes, bedding and toiletries to give to a new Mum who needs a safe place for her baby to sleep. Referrals are made by health professionals. We were able to give them a donation and some of us had knitted cardigans and blankets for them to use.

Our monthly Thursday evening Bible Study group has been looking at the book of Genesis and we have also been enjoying monthly Film Nights which are followed the week after with a discussion session. Films to look forward to are "Star" in December and "West Side Story" in January. We are fast approaching the season of Advent, and we will be using "Hush the Noise" as our Liturgy before lighting the

candles on our Advent wreath at the start of each service in Advent, Christmas Day and into Epiphany. As we get caught up in all the preparations in the weeks before Christmas, it is always good to have this time of reflection.

Wimbotsham

It was good to see a full chapel when we celebrated a Baptism and it was so lovely to share with the family at our service with Rev.Paul, on that Sunday morning. A happy occasion for everyone.

In October, we raised £75.00 for the Guide Dogs for the Blind at our coffee morning. We hold our regular coffee morning every third Saturday each month and they seem to be going down well with good support, and lots of enjoyment shared with folk coming from near and far. Many thanks to the makers of lovely cakes and sausage rolls! A welcome to all is waiting.

In November our small church family will hopefully enjoy a Soup and Crusty Bread Lunch together, straight after our morning worship. (Oh, Sorry !



.....this is not an open invitationjust us at Wimbo !!!!)

Usually, we share this lunch after our Harvest service but this year it wasn't possible to do that, so instead, after Harvest we made a collection for the Food Bank.

On Sunday, 22nd December we shall be having our Carol Service in the morning.

With best wishes to all from all at Wimbotsham.
Meg Cooper

Circuit Service

On the Sunday 29th September, a Circuit service was held in The Beacon Church, North Lynn, in the West Norfolk Circuit. The Beacon is a Methodist and Anglican Partnership.

Circuit minister Revd Dr Richman Ncube, welcomed everyone to this special occasion

The certificate for twenty-five years' service and the President and Vice-President's letter was presented to Stephen Harrington by Elizabeth Batstone, Circuit LWP Secretary. Stephen gave a short testimony, Bible reading and the congregation sang two of his favourite hymns. The Revd Jon Price, Anglican Minister, gave the address. Afterwards the congregation enjoyed refreshments in the Community Hub and Café of the Beacon.

Elizabeth Batstone

Circuit Leader of Worship and Preachers' Meeting Secretary



West Norfolk Climate and Justice Group

Circuit Twinning and campaign to raise money for the Methodist High School in Matjinge, Zimbabwe

Since May 2023, a small group of interested people from the 16 churches in West Norfolk have been meeting to discuss climate change and related concerns and to plan our circuit twinning with the Matjinge circuit in southern Zimbabwe, which is where our minister, Rev. Dr Richman Ncube, grew up and was educated. As part of this, we have been exploring ways to support each other. We identified an urgent need to improve the water supply at a rural boarding school, owned by the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. This school is the secondary school which was attended by Rev. Ncube.

The West Norfolk Circuit raised enough money for a survey of Matjinge High School's water supply to be carried out last year, on Nov 3rd. The water supply was found to be failing and a new borehole needed to be drilled as soon as possible. New pipes and tanks were also needed. We asked for a number of estimates to be produced, by companies recommended by the charities Practical Action in Zimbabwe, and Children in the Wilderness. Some of the estimates were unaffordable, but by adopting a step-by-step approach, progress could be made.

By March 2024, the circuit had raised enough to attempt to drill a new borehole. Unfortunately, despite an encouraging hydrogeophysical survey, the first attempt at drilling was unsuccessful. A modest water supply was then found about 1 Km from the school, but this was only enough to install a hand pump, and it would have remained very difficult for the school children to access water.

Further fundraising was then commenced, with a successful coffee morning in Great Bircham raising £500 and a crowdfunding campaign, which raised more than £1000. We held a celebration event at London Road in King's Lynn on May 12th, to mark the anniversary of the twinning relationship and to bring together people from all over the circuit, who had contributed to our campaign. This was a very joyful occasion and attracted some visitors, who had seen advertisements in the local free paper. There was some Zimbabwean music, performances from the West Norfolk Singers and the Fen Song children from Downham Market, followed by a faith tea and a circuit service. Prayers which we had received from the circuit superintendent in Matjinge circuit were used. The event raised another £765. There was then a wonderful flower festival in Dersingham, which raised a

further substantial sum for the fund, and which involved the local primary school children. Thank you to all the local churches, who continued to support this water project.

Following these events, things moved on quickly and the possibility of unblocking a failed borehole in the school grounds, which had previously been drilled in 2020, was investigated. This borehole needed to be unblocked with a drilling rig, but the attempt was eventually successful at the end of June. The school now has a modest supply of water, enough for two small new tanks and a small solar pump and solar panels to be installed. The school have since sent us videos of a ceremony in July, which was held to celebrate the two new taps being turned on.

Zimbabwe has recently been in the news, because of increasing problems with drought in many parts of the country, due to climate change, and a disaster has been declared, with the anticipated failure of this year's harvests. Although the government of Zimbabwe is promising that there will be a programme to drill more boreholes, it is likely that this will concentrate on the capital city of Harare and surrounding areas, not the more rural areas like Matjinge in the south.

Our minister, Rev Dr Richman Ncube, is visiting Matjinge during his annual leave in August, and will bring back news of how the water project has fared. Our circuit twinning relationship will continue, with some input from the Global Relationships team of the Methodist Church in the UK.

For more information please see the link :
<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/west-norfolk-methodist-circuit-1136177>

Rosemary Rayner
Hunstanton Methodist Church





The Big Sing Choir

We meet every Friday evening at 7pm at the Methodist Function Room, Downham Market and sing until 8.30pm. We then have tea and coffee and a natter.

Our choir is ecumenical, so it is made up of some Methodists, some Congregationalists, a number of Church of England folk from various parishes, some from Eternity and St Dominic's.

Our aim is to have a good sing and enjoy each other's company. About every 8 weeks, we take an Evensong out into the Community, and do a whole service, with readings, choir numbers, congregational singing, and sometimes pieces of Drama interspersed. We also feed our congregation by bringing a "Jacob's Join", a buffet supplied by ourselves, so that we can have some Fellowship with the Congregation afterwards. Our aim is to "Love-bomb" a nearby Church, and encourage the Congregation.

On the 17th November, we are departing from the Methodist Church Car park at 3.45 pm and driving to Sutton St Edmund Church in Lincolnshire to perform there. (It is about a 40-minute drive) The Church is very Jane Austin-esque with a Gallery, wood panelling and all the pews are boxed in: it is very quaint. There are a couple of places available still on the minibus, so if you fancy coming along to support them, the cost of a place on the bus is £14.00. Please let Cate (Choir Mistress) know ASAP on 07943523437.

The theme for this service is “Joy”, so many of the hymns are well known: “Joy to the world”, “What a friend we have in Jesus” and specials from each branch of Church such as “Today I awake” (Methodist), “let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silent” (Catholic), “I have that Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy, down in my heart”, (Baptist) and we have some unusual offerings such as “The Monkees’ “Now I’m a believer”, and “You got a friend in me” performed in BSL. The taste is deliberately wide to appeal to many different branches of Church, as many different branches attend, and our performances will be in a wide variety of Churches.

We shall also be performing at the Methodist Church candle lit carols, and in the spring- time, we are likely to be performing at a nearby Baptist Church. Members of the choir are also invited to attend the annual carol singing outside Tesco to raise funds for the Food Bank, so that needy families can have a Christmas Dinner, supplied by the goodwill of local Christians and the Organisational skills of Eternity Church.

If you would like to know any details, please don’t hesitate to give Cate a ring on the number above.



World Methodist Conference

The World Methodist Conference usually takes place every 5 years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Conference was postponed several times and finally took place in Gothenburg, Sweden from 13-18 August 2024. The Conference is open to any member of the Methodist Church. The Conference, with the theme 'On the Move: Migration, Pilgrimage and Guiding Lights', took place in a large conference centre (with adjoining hotel) and the annual meeting of the Uniting Church in Sweden took place at the same time, with the two groups joining for worship each day. About 2000 people attended the Conference, representing churches from across the world. As well as worship, there were daily plenary sessions on the theme, related workshops, shared lunches and an exhibition area.

We attended the Conference in part to represent Epworth Old Rectory, which is owned by the World Methodist Council, but we knew from previous experience that the conference would be an enriching time. And indeed, it was. The daily worship was outstanding with brilliant music and powerful preaching. The opening hymn, 'How Great Thou Art',

was sung by two young Swedish children - very appropriate as this hymn was originally written in Swedish, 'O Store Gud', in 1885 by Carl Boberg. The morning worship sessions were led by a worship band with two young singers and often accompanied by a group of teenagers interpreting the hymns and songs through dance. The final worship session included a brass band and a scratch choir of voices from around the world.

The keynote talks and panel discussions brought eminent speakers to look into the themes of migration, pilgrimage and guiding lights (this last theme focussing on what can encourage people in their faith). Here are some thoughts we took away with us i) 'the migration crisis is a crisis of welcoming' ii) 'it's not the beginning, it's not the end, it's the journey' and iii) 'we need to offer people belonging without exclusion; recognition without merit and purpose and meaning'.

We attended several thought-provoking workshops. Dave was particularly challenged by the one led by the Principal of a theological college in Ukraine, talking about 'loving your enemy'. Sarah went to a Bible study on the book of Ruth, linking to the conference theme of migration. We have already shared with our house group at Downham Market Methodist Church some insights from a workshop on making Charles Wesley's hymns relevant in the 21st century (ask if you want to know more!).

We feel like our Methodist batteries have been re-charged and are grateful for this wonderful opportunity to share with the worldwide Methodist family.

Sarah and Dave Friswell

God Moments

The Universe is immense, even the size of the Solar System is hard to grasp having watched the programmes by Professor Cox. That God should have a personal interaction with insignificant little me is just staggering!

It was the day of the Budget, and I was in town with a mission to Morrison's but was delayed talking with friends. On leaving them I met an ex-pupil, now a young man in his twenties, in a very sorry state and possibly high on drugs although difficult to tell as he was so distraught. It doesn't take much for someone to tower over me so I was feeling rather out of my depth although, after a hug, he sank to the ground crying. With a comforting hand on his shoulder, I listened to his problems wondering how I was going to handle the situation when along came one of my friends with whom I had been chatting. Seeing my predicament, he came to see if I needed any help. The young man was now worried as it was 15 minutes to his curfew so with the help of my friend, we were able to escort him to his flat a few hundred yards away.

I then messaged another ex-teacher who knew the young man and updated her on the situation. I was relieved when she messaged me later to say the young man's mother was now with him.

Amazing that God should be aware of the young man's need for help from someone he knew. A minute or two either way and I would not have met him. Also, my need for assistance was answered so I felt more secure, and the young man could be led to safety without him getting into any more bother!

These God moments are sent to re-enforce our faith.

Good Speech: Curating a Culture of Blessing

The following article by writer and pastor Gerard Kelly is shared by permission. It comes from his superb series of blogs published regularly at gerardkelly.substack.com. Talk to Andrew Rogers if you would like more information on Gerard and his work.

The word 'benediction', meaning blessing, came into the English language via Old French from a Latin root combining bene - 'well' or 'good' with dicere - 'say' or 'speak.' To bless is to speak out that which

is good. At a superficial level this can reflect a simple desire to wish someone well, but there is so much more to it than that.

In the blessings presented to us the Bible the words themselves are seen as generative. They involve not just well-wishing but a kind of 'speaking into being' of the goodness they describe. Just as the spoken word of the creator, at the beginning of all things, called into being reality as we know it, so the words we articulate have power to call into existence a given outcome. We might go beyond calling this process 'speaking that which is good' to call it 'calling forth good with words.'

To choose to bless, in the sense the Bible suggests, is to want the very best for others and to be ready to speak it out. Fathers and mothers bless their children, holy men their acolytes. Shepherds bless their sheep. Farmers their crops. Kings bless their people and the people, in return, bless their king. And God, Father of us all, blesses an extraordinary range of creatures from Princes and Warriors to simple peasants and from single-cell amoeba to Mensa-level wise men.

This is why the people in receipt of such words are described as 'blessed'. The adjective does not simply note the historical fact that at some stage someone has wished nice things for them. Rather, it describes the condition they live in, which we believe to be improved because the words were spoken.

This generative nature of words of blessing denotes a powerful action largely lost to our culture. We fail to see how deeply words can harm and we have forgotten how beautifully words can heal. We glibly declare that the pen is mightier than the sword yet at the same time teach our children that names will never hurt them. Both cannot be true. The simple truth is that we can do good for others with our words, just as we can cause them wounds that even time won't heal.

No wonder we all so love the adventures of Harry Potter, in which words intoned as spells have almost unlimited impact. Or what of Star Wars? What is the most memorable moment in the whole saga? These are not the droids you're looking for. Words as power. Human beings harbour a deep longing to discover and deploy the force intrinsic to speaking.

What might it take, then, to participate in re-creating a culture of blessing? It will require of us two inner decisions. The first is to believe that the good is possible. Blessings are not fantasies in respectable clothes. They are not letters to Santa. Rather, they see a good that, though distant, is possible, and they speak out its fulfilment. In so doing they paint a world in which the best is realistic; in which our gut-feel for justice; for beauty does not turn out to be ill-founded.

The enemies of blessing are indifference, cynicism and fatalism, all of which rob us of future vision. To speaking of blessing, by contrast, reawakens hope and reinforces confidence. In biblical language, it builds faith. Blessing provokes possibility. It births hope, and it does so with words. What an incredible gift we have been given, to spark with words alone a fire of hope.

The second decision we must make for a culture of blessing to grow around us is to nurture the belief that words of hope are worth speaking. If we have been taught that words alone aren't enough, or that 'mere words' change nothing, we will be slow to use our own words generatively. Worse still, we may flirt with the belief that positive words are by definition superficial, even hypocritical. Since there is so much in the world that is bad and might just get worse; since evil knows no bounds; since human life is a meaningless cycle spiralling through an empty universe, surely it is wrong to suggest that anything good can happen? Isn't all hope in essence false hope? To bless is to light a candle against such darkness. It is to create a flame that faltering and weak though it may be describes a small circle of light that won't let the darkness win. To bless is to speak and to seek a different future.

There is more in the world that is good than there is that is evil. There is more in your future to be celebrated than there is to be feared. You are a child of God. A creature greatly loved. You are the recipient and the heir of all the blessings your maker has imagined for you.

Want an exercise to practise speaking blessing? Bring to mind a person who has recently really annoyed you; someone you don't understand and find it hard to like. Now think of something that could happen that would raise their spirits. Something that would allow them to lift their

eyes to the horizon and be convinced again of the goodness of the universe. Got it? Imagine it coming to them. How would they receive it? How would their joy be shown? Now grab that - not the good thing that you imagined for them but the joy it brought them - and wish that for them. That is blessing - to want for another that joy. If you want to go further, hold that person in your thoughts and speak these words from Numbers 6:24-26:

“The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make his face to shine upon you
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up his countenance upon you
And give you peace.”
May words of blessing ignite for you the signal-fires of hope.

West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary

November 2024 onwards

Mon 25th November Advent Course Highgate @7:30pm
Fr 29th November Christmas Tree Festival Pott Row from 10am
Sat 30th November Christmas Tree Festival Pott Row from 10am
Sat 30th November Christmas Fair at St Faith's @ 2pm
Sun 1st December Christmas Tree Festival Pott Row from 10am
Sun 1st December Carol Service Pott Row @ 3pm
Sun 1st December Memorial Service at Downham @ 2:30pm
Sun 1st December Advent Hymns at St Faith's @ 9:45am
Mon 2nd December Churches Together Carol Singing Downham Tesco @ 7pm
Mon 2nd December Advent Course Highgate @7:30pm
Tues 3rd December Wesley Guild Hilgay @2:30pm
Wed 4th December Ladies Friendship Outing to Thursford Christmas Show from Downham
Thurs 5th December Churches Together Carol Singing Downham Tesco @7pm
Fri 6th December Messy Church Downham @ 4:30pm
Fri 6th December FenSong Alternative Nativity Downham @ 6:30pm
Sat 7th December FenSong Alternative Nativity Downham @ 6:30pm
Sat 7th Coffee Morning St Faith's @ 10am
Sat 7th Christmas Conncert Clenchwarton @2:30pm
Sun 8th December FenSong Alternative Nativity Downham @ 2:30pm
Sun 8th December Annual Gift Service St Faith's
Sun 8th December Blue Christmas Service St Faith's @4pm
Sun 8th December Advent Service Stanhoe
Mon 9th December Advent Course Highgate @7:30pm
Wed 11th December Churches Together Carol Singing Downham Tesco @ 7pm
Thurs 12th December Coffee Morning Pott Row @ 10:30am
Sat 14th December Rainbow Families Christmas Party Downham 2pm
Sat 14th December Children's Christingle Making afternoon Clenchwarton @2pm
Sat 14th December Christingle Service St Faith's @4pm
Sat 14th December Tunnel of Light Feltwell @ 3pm
Sat 14th December Carol Concert Hunstanton Union Church
Sat 14th December Coffee Morning London Road @10am

Sun 15th December Nativity and Christingle Service Clenchwarton 10:30am
 Sun 15th December Carols by Candlelight Dersingham @3pm
 Sun 15th December Christmas Concert St Faith's @6:30pm
 Mon 16th December Advent Course Highgate @7:30pm
 Tues 17th December Churches Together Carol Service Downham Town Hall @
 TBC
 Tues 17th December Wesley Guild Cake and Carols Hilgay @2:30pm
 Wed 18th December Ladies Friendship Christmas Party Downham @ 2:30pm
 Thurs 19th December Coffee Morning London Road @ 6:30pm
 Sat 21st December Carol Service Heacham @ 2pm
 Sun 22nd December Afternoon Candlelight Service Downham @ 4pm
 Sun 22nd December Candlelight Carol Service St Faith's @ 6:30pm
 Sun 22nd December Carols Highgate
 Sun 22nd December Advent Service Stanhoe
 Sun 22nd December Carol Service Wimbotsham
 Tues 24th December Midnight Communion St Faith @11.15pm
 Tues 24th December Midnight Service Hunstanton St Edmund's
 Tues 24th Carol Service Hilgay @2:30pm
 Wed 25th December Christmas Day Service Downham @ 10:30am
 Wed 25th December Christmas Day Service Dersingham @ 10:30am
 Wed 25th December Christmas Day Service St Faith's @ 10am
 Wed 25th December Christmas Day Service Heacham
 Wed 25th December Carols and Readings Hunstanton @ 9:30am
 Fri 10th January Messy Church Downham @ 4:30pm
 Sat 18th January The January Talk Clenchwarton @ 2:30pm
 Fri 8th February Messy Church Downham @ 4:30pm
 Wed 15th January Ladies Friendship Schooldays remembered Downham @
 2:30pm
 Sat 15th March Coffee Morning Pott Row

Thank you to everyone who sent in copy. Start thinking what you can
 write for the next edition. The deadline for articles is 12th February,
 so we can get the magazine out by 2nd March, just prior to the start of
 Lent.