

# Good-News Desk!

The Magazine of Tylers Green Methodist Church



Minister:  
Rev. John Richey

New Series No. 118



December 2017



MAY THE

*Christ* OF *Christmas*

BE WITH YOU

## Dear Friend,

As I write this Christmas Newsletter, it is the middle of November, and some people are already beginning to look forward to Christmas. Christmastime is when many folks will make special effort to gather and celebrate with family and friends, for them Christmas will be a great and joyous occasion.

Yet Christmas is also a season that heightens sadness for some, whether because of the death of a loved one; the tragedy of family break-up, or families separated by distance; Christmas will serve only to remind them of their loss or separation.

There'll be others for whom Christmas serves only to remind them of their financial poverty; many having little money to buy food, pay utility bills and meeting the cost of putting a roof over their heads, let alone having the finances to buy Christmas gifts. So, Christmastime will serve only to remind them of their financial poverty.

Little wonder I've heard several folks say, 'the sooner Christmas is over the better.' There'll be one or two folk I'll struggle saying to them 'I wish you a happy Christmas' for I've little doubt that for them it won't be; perhaps even for you now reading this Newsletter.

There's a story about a little girl who asks her Dad, a medical doctor how the heart works. Dad, delighted by her question, sits her down, draws a diagram and explains how the heart and the internal organs in the human body work. After finishing the little girl looks very confused and says Daddy – 'but you haven't explained to me where all the love comes from.'

At Christmas, Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, God's present, an expression of His divine love for the world. When Jesus later dies suffering on a Cross, we learn that this is also God's expression of divine love for the world.

The joy at Christmas and Jesus' death on a Cross, both explain to the world where all the Love comes from: that in spite of every appearances, and all realities, Divine Love is what lies at the heart of human suffering. Christmas and the Cross are inextricably linked; the Christmas joy and the pain and suffering of Jesus on the

Cross, both are expressions of God's divine love for the world and for of you.

I pray that whatever your circumstances happen to be this Christmastime, joyful or sorrowful, surrounded by family and friends or alone, whether rich or financially poor, might pause to ponder God's Divine love for you; discover Jesus born again in your heart that leads you to discovering the true meaning of Christmas.

I pray that you will have a happy and God Blessed Christmas.

John

## OUR NEW MINISTER

The Circuit Leadership Team is pleased to announce that, with effect from August 2018, the Revd Vida Foday has been appointed as Presbyter in this Circuit. She will assume John Richey's responsibilities when he sits down at the end of this Connexional year and will have pastoral charge of Cryers Hill, Downley, Holmer Green and Tylers Green churches. Vida joins us from the Romford Circuit and will be moving here with two of her adult children.



**REV JOHN RICHEY** John writes 'An update on my hospital appointment Tuesday 21/11/17. Minutes before I was due to be operated on, the anaesthetist discovered I had an irregular heart beat -after a few tests felt it best to postpone the operation to a later date. A later conversation with the cardiologist concurred with the decision made, so now waiting for a cardiologist appointment before the operation can go ahead.

This is all very new as far as my medical history is concerned; seems nothing is quite so straight forward these days. Nevertheless, thank you for the various well wishes ensuring me that I (and Ruth) remain in your prayers, so uplifting.

On a different matter, I trust you'll all be excited by the fact Vida has accepted the HW Circuit's invitation from September 2018. I'm sure you'll hold her and her family in your prayers, and Vida will be blessed if she feels as loved and valued as I do.'

## Diary and Notice board - December 2017

### **BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP**

The Bible Study Fellowship will be meeting on Monday, 4th December, 2.30 pm at 3 Green Street. On Monday, 18th December our meeting will be at 131 Cedar Avenue at 2.30 pm. Please bring along a seasonal item to share - a poem, reading, music or anything of interest. This will be followed by tea, mince pies, fellowship and a warm welcome to anyone who would like to join in (please let Rev. Angela or Rosemary know if you wish to come).

### **WEAR IT PINK DAY**

A massive thank you on behalf of Janette and myself for all the church support of our 'Wear it Pink' day in aid of Breast Cancer Research. We raised £282 and with £38.50 of Gift Aid added making a grand total of £320.50 AMAZING!

(Lawrence emailed some photos of the day but, unfortunately, I deleted them in error! I will ask Lawrence to send them again when he returns from holiday and either include them next time or display them in church—Peter).

### **REV ANGELA SINGLETON**

Just to let you know the good news that Angela is now home from hospital. All has gone very well with fitting her pacemaker and she just has to rest and recuperate.

### **INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

There will be a leaflets available setting out the times of the Christmas services. These are intended for you to use as personal invitations to come along. I hope to have these ready for you to take on Advent Sunday—3rd December. This is a new venture and I am printing just 50 leaflets this year. It would be great if they are all used and result in 50 new faces in church sometime over the Christmas period. Three things are necessary: 1) pray about who to invite, 2) invite them, and 3) pray again!

This is a commitment for every day in Advent, which begins on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. The idea is that alongside opening your traditional Advent calendars, you make a special effort this Advent to put an item aside to bring bringing to church on the Sundays in Advent, or you can make a donation of £1 coins – a box will be provided.

One Can would love you to collect the following items or £1 coins.

- Tinned tomatoes
- Tinned potatoes / dried mash
- Tinned vegetables
- Pasta sauce
- Soup
- Coffee/hot chocolate
- Tinned spaghetti
- Tinned meat meals (curries, stews, mince, hot dogs)
- Ham/corned beef
- Jam/spreads
- Squash
- Biscuits
- Long-life milk
- Toilet rolls
- Toothbrushes and paste
- Shampoo and shower gel
- Washing up liquid
- Soap



Your gifts are always appreciated by those who receive them.

*Anthony Billington of the LICC (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity) pays tribute to the mother of Jesus.*

## **There's something about Mary**

The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end.'

'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?' (*Luke 1:30-34*)

While it has always been possible to make too much of Mary, it has been all too easy to make too little of her. Because, even if she is not an object of faith, she is an *example* of faith. And a very real example too.

Her story is elaborated in later Christian literature and art, with accounts of her own miraculous birth and childhood, accompanied by regular angelic visitations. Annunciation scenes sometimes portray Mary as reading Scripture or praying, or spinning purple thread for the temple veil – none of which is found in the gospels.

Instead, like the fishermen and tax collectors who would be called, her heavenly encounter comes in the midst of everyday life – as an ordinary Galilean girl engaged to be married to Joseph. And, like the rest of us would be, she's surprised and scared by the arrival of Gabriel.

Her response to his message is just as human, and wonderfully real. Faced with the increasingly amazing announcement – child, then son, then great, then Son of the Most High, then king, then eternal – Mary is frozen back at step one. A child? She's young, but she's not stupid; she knows how babies are made, and she knows she's not been with a man. And so she says: 'How will this be, since I am a virgin?' No deep theological question. No amazing insight. No request for a sign. And no objection: 'I am the Lord's servant... May your word to me be ful-

filled' (Luke 1:38).

It's a staggering response. Her reputation would be at stake, and her husband-to-be might want nothing more to do with her. She will play out something of the scandal of the gospel in her very self, and yet consents to do so as a servant of the Lord. She believes the word that is spoken to her, even if she doesn't fully understand it, and her trust exercises itself in submission.

Then, as her story goes on, faith and obedience will give rise to joyful singing and quiet reflection – all appropriate responses of ordinary, everyday servants of God since, at Christmastime and all times.

## **The Bible for dyslexics**

The Bible Society has just released St John's Gospel and Romans in a dyslexia-friendly format. It uses thick cream-coloured paper, clear fonts and wide-spacing, as opposed to the almost transparent paper and dense text found in many Bibles. Would this make a good Christmas present for someone you know? Details at: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/bibles/dyslexiafriendly>

A little girl went to visit Father Christmas in the local garden centre grotto. He welcomed her with a smile and the question of what she would like for Christmas. The little girl gasped, and stared up at him in horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"

## **Living with the gods**

I don't know if you have heard any but Neil Macgregor is doing a series of broadcasts at the moment called Living with the gods on radio 4 at 9.45am for 15 mins. Also available as a podcast and on BBC radio iplayer. Excellent - just heard one on pilgrimage.

There's an exhibition of the same name at the British Museum which runs to April 2018. We also plan to go to the Ashmolean in Oxford for their exhibition Imagining the Divine - that runs until February 2018.

Sue Horley

## **Vertigo** by Nigel Beeton

“Glory to God in the Highest!”  
Sang all the angels of light  
Save only one, and that was me  
The one that’s frightened of height!

“Unto you is born a baby  
“Born in David’s Town this day!”  
I think they’ve heard – can we go home?  
The ground is a long way away!

“You’ll find him in a manger there  
“To Beth’lem men! And be quick!”  
OK Gabe, we’ve done our bit  
I’m feeling rather sick!

They plucked their harps and sang their songs  
Their haloes were aglow!  
To be an angel’s not much fun  
When you have vertigo!



### **Ann Dickenson**

My daughter Lindsay and husband Dan had a baby girl on 13th Nov named Isla Jones. She is my third granddaughter. Girl power -- no baby boys in my family for 4 generations,

I was awarded an Honorary Bachelor of Education at the University of Greenwich in October. 47 years after I qualified in Advanced Specialist Physical Education it was decided that the course was of degree standard. Better late than never!

## The Everlasting Turkey

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me  
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.  
On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard  
As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.  
On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,  
The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.  
On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old  
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.  
On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,  
But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.  
On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.  
The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.  
On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince  
When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.  
On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,  
For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.  
On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,  
He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.  
On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,  
Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.  
On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,  
And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.  
On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,  
The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.

### **Fresh from the Word—Bible Study Notes for 2018**

These are really good—and good value at £9.99 for a book lasting a whole year. The writers come from many different Christian traditions from across the world and they include Rev Pete Wheeler, once a member of our Youth Fellowship. Published by IBRA.

# EVANGELISM

Geraldine and Peter recently attended an evening at The Avenue led by Rev Jean Marsh, the District's Mission enabler. Jill spoke about what the Methodist Church says about evangelism. The purpose of the church is stated in the 'Our Calling' policy as being:

## **The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ**

'Our Calling' goes on to say:

- How do we develop friendly attitudes towards everyone we meet?
- Do we have a clear message? Are the words we use straightforward and meaningful to those outside the Church?
- What attracts others to the Christian faith? Are there initiatives we could take to present our convictions? Can we do this with Christians of other denominations? Where should the focus be - on church premises, or in the community?
- How can we learn about effective witness from Christians in other cultures?
- What can we do to make our premises more welcoming?
- Should we consider planting a new congregation in this locality?

What are our plans and targets for making more followers of Jesus Christ over the next year?

It was interesting to hear that whilst there are still church closures, church planting is happening up and down the Connexion.

At the time of writing, we are waiting for the full version of the notes setting out the things we are being asked to think about and when these are received, we will make this available to anyone who wants to know more and there is much more information about 'Our Calling' on the Methodist Church website under 'Who we are' and 'Visions and Values'.

*Editor: David Pickup, a solicitor, considers the problem of booking hotel rooms...*

## **NO ROOM AT THE INN!**

*So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth..., to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (Luke 2 4-7)*

You can just imagine the conversation. Mary's trepidation: "The baby is due any day, and it is a long journey!" And Joseph's reply: "Don't worry, there will be plenty of places to stay. I feel Bethlehem is my second home."

In the end, they *had* to register for taxation, and so they went. A journey of about 80 miles would have taken days, but surely that would be the worst of the trip? What could go wrong once they reached Bethlehem?

If you book a room at a hotel, and when you arrive they say they made a mistake, and are full, what do you do? A contract is still a contract, and if the hotel has double-booked, they have to find you an alternative room at a similar standard. Putting you in their garage is not an option!

On the other hand, if you, the guest, cancels or leaves early, you may have to pay for the full booking. Before you book anywhere, it is well worth reading the small print, because hotels usually have cancellation policies and conditions which may greatly restrict you. If ever in dispute, always get professional advice.

And so, Jesus came down from heaven, and landed in the middle of a humdrum problem about an inn being too full. He came straight into our real world of problems, disappointments and unexpected expense. Our Lord appears among us, not in a palace but in a stable, adored by shepherds, and accessible to anyone of us.

Have a safe, legal and Happy Christmas.

*Editor: Nigel Beeton writes: It is good that we celebrate Christmas in midwinter. Yes, I know it is supposed to be rooted in the old pagan winter solstice festivals, but there is rich symbolism in celebrating Christ's birth at a time when nature is at a low ebb. For God intervenes when humans are at a low ebb; Christ breaks in when we are lost in the depths of our sin, and His new life brings us to the bearing of verdant leaves and rich fruit.*

## **Winter Trees**

Winter trees, of growth denuded  
Bow their heads to wind and snow  
Bow towards a lonely stable  
Unto which some shepherds go.  
Trees that seem so cold and lifeless  
Bow toward that heavenly glow.

In that shed, a new-born infant  
Bathed in golden lantern's light  
Shepherds kneel in awe and wonder  
At the gift of God this night.  
E'en the trees so bare do whisper  
Wondrous praises at that sight.

Winter trees will soon be verdant  
When the winter turns to spring.  
We, like them, can be as joyful  
Death has lost its fatal sting.  
For that babe within a manger  
Brings good news of which we sing.



Glory be to God in Heaven  
Glory be to God, we cry  
For His gift, so freely given  
His own precious Son to die.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
We can live with Him on high!

*By Nigel Beeton*

### **Why Bethlehem?**

A minister asked his Junior Bible class: 'Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem?'

A little one replied, 'Because his mother was there.'

**Christmas gift suggestions:** To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect. -  
*Anon*

### **Thought for the month**

We are better givers than getters. The Christmas story - the one according to Luke, not Dickens - is not about how blessed it is to be givers but about how essential it is to see ourselves as receivers.

**William Willimon**



We've got online carol-singers again!

## Prayer at Christmas

Father of all good gifts,

Thank you for the greatest gift of all – your precious Son, Jesus. Thank you that He chose to live with us so that all who trust Him will one day live with you in peace and wholeness.

Help us Father, this Christmas, to keep you at the centre of our celebrations and, in the midst of all the busyness and rush, to know your presence and the peace that only you can give. And Lord, may we reflect your love to those who don't yet know that you are real and alive and able to help, whatever their situation. In Jesus' name,  
Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*

### **A verse of a new Carol to be found on the Singing the Faith website.**

**God, make us ready for our celebration,  
Praising your Son for his heralded birth.  
Glory on high, as the angels proclaimed it,  
Peace to all peoples and nations on earth.**

### **And finally...**

In a little girl's Christmas drawing, two of the camels were approaching the inn, over which was pictured a huge star. The third camel and its rider were going directly away from it. 'Why is the third man going in a different direction?' her mother asked. She replied, 'Oh, he's looking for a place to park.'

# CHURCH DIRECTORY

## CHURCH DIRECTORY

**Minister:** Rev. John Richey\* - 📞 526747

**Worship Leaders:** Geraldine Nelson and Chris Oxby

**Senior Church Steward:** Peter Stevens\*— 📞 815256

**Church Stewards:**

Toyin Akinwale— 📞 817792

Martin Hellewell— 📞 816168

Geraldine Nelson\* – 📞 815631

Chris Oxby\* – 📞 814982

**Church Treasurer :** Geraldine Nelson - 📞 815631

**Church Council Secretary:** Sue Horley Sue.horley1@gmail.com

**Room Bookings:** Geraldine Nelson – 📞 815631

**Pastoral & First Steps:** Christine Stevens - 📞 815256

**Property :** Peter Stevens— 📞 815256

**\* Members of the Church Leadership Team**

## Church Premises

Please mention anything requiring maintenance or attention to any of the Property Stewards: Peter and Christine Stevens, Martin Hellewell or Rosemary Newman.

## Good-News Desk

Items for the next Good-News Desk should reach Peter Stevens by the 15th of the month for the following month's edition, either on paper or emailed to [psredkite@googlemail.com](mailto:psredkite@googlemail.com) or 📞 815256

**Note:** Some items in Good-News Desk are included by subscription to Parish Pump—the resource site for Church Newsletters.



## SERVICES DIARY - SERVICES AT 10.45 a.m. unless otherwise stated.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Preacher/Service Details</b>	<b>Vestry Steward</b>	<b>Welcome Stewards</b>
<b>3rd Dec Advent</b>	<b>Rev John Richey—Holy Communion</b>	Martin Hellewell	Christine Stevens and Jenny Crayford
<b>10th</b>	<b>Barbara and/or David Sparks</b>	Toyin Akinwale	Angela Davis and Chris Oxby
<b>17th</b>	<b>Annual Carol Service</b>	Geraldine Nelson	Christine Stevens
<b>24th</b>	No service here but I noticed from the plan that Rev John Richie will be leading a Christingle Service at Holmer Green at 10.30am.		
<b>25th</b>	<b>Peter Stevens</b>	Peter Stevens	Christine Stevens
<b>31st</b>	<b>Peter Stevens</b>	<b>Martin Hellewell</b>	Margaret Hallam and Rosemary Newman

Please pray for all for whom the Christmas season is a particularly difficult time because of bereavement, illness, or poverty.