

O Come Let Us Adore Him



STRATFORD-UPON-AVON METHODIST CHURCH

R E P O R T I N G

DECEMBER 2016

Advent Angels

Dear Friends

During December I invite you to be an Advent Angel. You will be given a credit card size angel in worship on the first Sunday of December. On the reverse of the angel card will be the name of another member of the congregation. The idea, as with 'Secret Saints' last, is to remember in prayer daily the person named on your card and if you wish, do something encouraging or kind for the him or her during Advent.

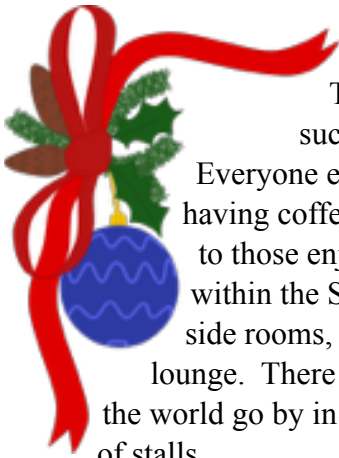
Thank you to everyone involved in the Christmas Bazaar – I know it was quite a marathon for some of you. There was a good atmosphere throughout the day and, on your behalf, I received many favourable and appreciative comments. I hope despite the hard work those of you who ran the event enjoyed yourselves.

Thanks too to the Avonside Players. Again, the effort in preparation and performance must have been huge but what a splendid evening (I went on the opening night). There is bound to be sadness in the members of the Avonside Players now that they have performed together for the last time but I hope it is outweighed by their awareness of the joy and entertainment they have given to audiences over the last fifty years and of the friendships that they as a troop have enjoyed.

Peace, Hope, Joy and Love through Advent and Christmas.

Audrey





The Bazaar on November 19th was a huge success in every way.

Everyone enjoyed the day. From those just sitting having coffee and biscuits down the middle of the hall, to those enjoying the bouncy castle and various games within the Sanctuary. Lunch was a great success in the side rooms, and everyone really loved the Grotto in the lounge. There was something for everyone, from watching the world go by in the hall or crafty things in the foyer, and lots of stalls.

A great big thank you to everyone who helped in any way, particularly those who helped clear all the snow away!

The profit for the day was £1,240.

Maureen Beckett

An Old story retold – A Baby changed everything

This is the story of Cherokee Sal, the Indian wife of an owner of a mine in North West Canada. Days before she gave birth to her first child, her husband died. Now in childbirth she dies too. The tough miners are dumbfounded. They laid the baby in a rough wooden box and they came one by one to stare at it. None of them had seen a baby in years. Guns, picks, shovels, dynamite, rocks, these things they understood, but a baby!

The story goes that one of them rode into a nearby town and returned later with a cradle and all the things a baby would need.

Somehow the baby, fed by clumsy hands, clung sturdily to life.

But that clean cradle in the midst of all the dirt of the hut seemed wrong. They whitewashed the hut, hung curtains at the window.

That one clean hut led to others being cleaned. The miners took a look at themselves. Decided they needed a clean up too. They became more considerate. Changed men. The fact is that the baby changed everything. And so did the baby at Bethlehem.



The Green Corner



Congratulations once again on the good news about Toilet Twinning.

Now we are probably feeling anxious about the implementation of the Paris agreement but let's not lose heart. There is good news about plastic bag non-use as we go shopping and use our own. Apparently it has had a welcome result in the reduction of litter on our beaches so saving dangerous effects on wildlife. Now we need to take care of our disposal of balloons and candle lanterns!

Meanwhile, enjoy this little "green" quiz about plants in the Bible.....

1. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed.....
2. Sounds as if it might be used to sweep the floor.....
3. A feeling of regret in a French street.....
4. Spice that sounds like an invitation.....
5. An extremely keen condiment.....
6. Regarded as a vampire repellent.....
7. When reversed it might eat into your furniture.....
8. Result of a hole in your bucket.....
9. Sound made by a snake suffering from singultus.....!
10. Played on at Wimbledon.....

Have fun when checking the sources. Translations vary but I'm sure you'll find them.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Matt.6.29 | 6. Numbers 11.5 |
| 2. 1 Kings 19.4 | 7. Proverbs 5.4 |
| 3. 3.Luke 11.42 | 8. Numbers.11.5 |
| 4. Isaiah 28.27 | 9. Leviticus.14.52 |
| 5. Matt.13.31 | 10. Isaiah 40.6 |

Happy Christmas!

Brenda Birnie

FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS!

Our Toilet Twinning project has proved to be yet another demonstration of our congregation's overwhelming generosity. When the project was launched in August All Age Worship the Green Group had set a target of £300 so we could twin our 5 toilet facilities with a latrine in Africa at the cost of £60 per toilet. Over 30 collection boxes were issued with a request that the money be handed in by Sunday 6 November.

It soon became clear as generous donations were made that we could raise the target figure and by 6 November we were in a position to send **£900** to the Toilet Twinning organisation which is administered by Tearfund. This means we can now twin the New Room toilets and the Ladies and Gents toilets with 3 school block latrines at the cost of £240 per facility and twin the disabled toilet, the toilet by the lounge and the manse toilet with 3 individual latrines in Africa. Certificates of the twinned latrines will be hung to show their location.

Up to now more than 64,000 toilets have been built funded by Toilet Twinning but needs listed below show more needs to be done.

- One in three people across the world i.e. 2.4 billion people don't have somewhere safe to go to the toilet
- Bad sanitation is one of the world's biggest killers: it hits women, children, old and sick people hardest
- Every minute, three children under the age of five die because of dirty water and poor sanitation
- Today, around half the people around the world have an illness caused by bad sanitation
- In Africa, one of the reasons that half of young girls drop out of school is because the school hasn't got separate toilets for boys and girls
- Not having a loo makes women and girls a target for sexual assault as they go to the toilet in the open

We would now encourage you to spread the good news about the Flush Away Poverty campaign and to twin your home toilets.
www.toilettwinning.org/twin-your-toilet-now

Lim, Evelyn, Sarah, Hannah, David, Brenda and Audrey

SNIPPETS AND REMINDERS

CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARD

A Reminder from Maureen that the Church Family Christmas Card will be available for distribution from Sunday 4th December.

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

If you want to come to the lunch please sign up on the sheet in Wesley Hall. Sheila Brown will be cooking lunch on the day and would welcome all the help she can get. Please give her a call if you can help in any way on 01789 205246. Many thanks.



Stratford Men's Meeting Point on December 12th is a Coffee morning at 18, Salmon Court, Wellesbourne. Graham and Marilyn Miatt invite all members together with their LADIES from 10AM - 12 NOON

The local Action for Children Team invite you to join them on Friday, 16th December at 6.30pm by the Royal Shakespeare Theatre on Waterside to sing carols to those hurrying by for the play. If you can't sing, why not come and shake a bucket.

There will be hot drinks and mince pies after at the Church.

HERE IS AN EARLY DATE FOR YOUR NEW DIARY

The 9th Holiday at Home is booked for August 22nd 23rd and 24th 2017 entitled "A World of Colour"



presented their final production at the end of November. Three very happy evenings were held on the 24th; 25th; 26th with a sellout of places on each evening. There was lots of laughter and a nostalgic sadness that we were closing the final curtain after our 50th anniversary. Finding plays and recruiting actors has become more difficult so we have to say the time is right for us to bow out.

The next few months will be a time of sorting costumes and props ready for a sale in the spring. This production supported the Shakespeare Hospice and the Church and figures will be available for next month's Reporting.

Our Annual Quiz has been rearranged for January 9th so make a note in your diary and come and share another pleasant evening with us

As always, thank you so much for your support over the years.



Our last SING meeting for this year was spent looking at Advent hymns and then having an early sing of our favourite carols before spending a casual hour chatting and sharing some light lunch.

The group very much wants to carry on with the monthly meeting so the next date will be on January 30th - last Monday of the month and usual time of 12 o'clock. Why not give it a try.

Sheila Giles



The Advent bells call out ‘Prepare

Your world is journeying to the birth
Of God made Man for us on earth’

And how in fact do we prepare for the great day that waits us there

The twenty-fifth day of December, the birth of Christ?

For some it means an interchange of hunting scenes

On coloured cards. And I remember

Last year I sent out twenty yards laid end to end, of Christmas Cards

To people that I scarcely know – they’d sent a card to me, and so

I had to send one back. Oh dear! Is this a form of Christmas cheer?

Or is it, which is less surprising my pride gone in for advertising?

The only cards that really count are that extremely small amount

From real friends who keep in touch and are not rich but love us much.

Some ways indeed are very odd by which we hail the birth of God.

We raise the price of things in shops; We give plain boxes fancy tops

And lines which traders cannot sell thus parcell’d go extremely well.

We dole out bribes we call a present

To those to whom we must be pleasant

For business reasons. Our defence is

The bribes are charged against expenses

And bring relief in Income Tax.

Enough of these unworthy cracks!



‘The time draws near the birth of Christ’,

A present that cannot be priced

Given two thousand years ago.

Yet if God had not given so

He still would be a distant stranger

And not the Baby in the manger

John Betjeman

An Australian Christmas

*Carol our Christmas, an upside down Christmas,
Snow is not falling and trees are not bare.
Carol the summer, and welcome the Christ child
warm in our sunshine and sweetness of air.*

*Sing of the gold and the green and the sparkle,
water and river and lure of the beach.
Sing in the happiness of open spaces,
Sing a nativity summer can reach.*

*Shepherds and musterers move on the hillsides,
finding, not angels, but sheep to be shorn.
Wise - ones make journeys whatever the season,
searching for signs of the truth to be born.*

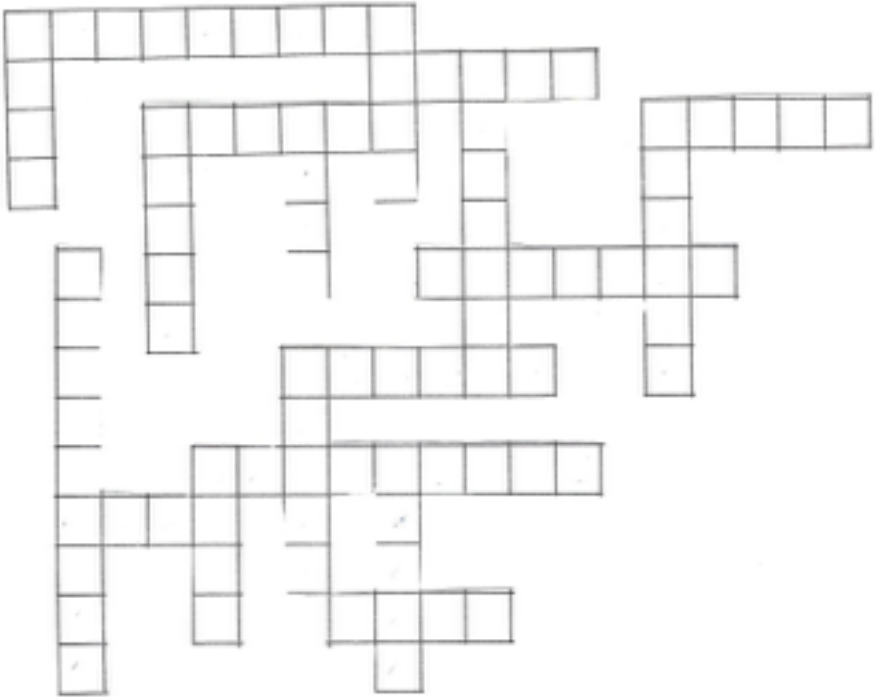
*Right side up Christmas belongs to the universe,
made in the moment a woman gives birth.
Hope is the Jesus gift, love is the offering.
Everywhere, anywhere, here on the earth.*

*Christmas Blessings be yours
wherever you or your family
and friends are.*

*Happy Christmas from
Stratford Methodist Church*



Christmas Fill-in Puzzle



4 Letters

East
Gift
Gold
Mary
Star
Baby

5 Letters

Sheep
Herod
Angel
Jesus
Myrrh

6 Letters

Stable
Joseph
Manger

7 Letters

Gabriel
Wise-men

9 Letters

Shepherds
Bethlehem
Innkeeper

Stratford Foodbank is looking to expand their team of volunteers who work with schools and young people in the area. Currently we have one volunteer (and the foodbank manager) liaising with schools) and we have been very successful in this area; attending assemblies, managing food collections, raising money etc. etc. However, the more we engage the more we are asked to do! – and it is now getting to the point where we need to build a small team of about 3-4 volunteers so that when the existing schools coordinator or myself are away we have other people to call on to go into schools or make evening presentations to Brownies and Scouts etc.

If you are interesting in helping, please send a brief email back outlining why you might be suitable – you don't need to have experience in schools or working with young people, but that would be useful. The amount of time required will be up to you - perhaps 3- 4 hours a month, but you would need some day time availability.

Apologies in advance if we don't get back to you quickly when you reply it's a very busy time for the foodbank at the moment but we are keen to have a team in place as we go into the new year.

For more information please call 07736 611323.

Many thanks

Marion Homer

Ginger Biscuits

This is a quick, simple and very tasty biscuit. I believe I got the recipe from Margaret Smith many years ago.

4 oz Margerine & 12 oz Sugar creamed together. Add one large egg. Then 9 oz Self Raising flour and 2 level teaspoons of ginger. Mix well and spoon walnut size mixture onto greased baking tray. cook at 300 for 25 minutes. Leave to cool and keep in tin.

Memoir of a ‘Sometimes’ Radical Christian

This is the subtitle of *A Luta Continua* (the Struggle Continues) a book by Rev David Haslam MBE which was reviewed in the *Methodist Recorder* of 11 November and recommended. David believes that “to create the community of God inevitably involves struggle” and his story of nearly 50 years of active church ministry certainly bears witness to his commitment to the struggle for God’s peace and justice.

The story begins in 1968 when David, a steward at the World Council of Churches Assembly, meeting in Uppsala in Sweden, was profoundly influenced by its decision to inaugurate the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) which included financial donations to the liberation movements fighting the apartheid regimes of southern Africa.

During his early appointments by the Methodist Church, first to inner-city Coventry and then to Southampton, David became involved with the UK Anti-Apartheid Movement where he served as an executive committee member. In the book there is a picture of David giving evidence on the support of banks for South Africa at the UN Special Committee against Apartheid at UN Headquarters in New York. In 1987 he became secretary of the Community and Race Relations Unit (CRRU) of the then British Council of Churches, having served a pastoral ministry in London’s Harlesden’s Methodist Church which was a largely black congregation.

While working with the Programme to Combat Racism David heard about caste discrimination as mainly practised in India where people are divided into 4 main “castes”, plus a large group of Dalits, the former “untouchables” and adivasis, original tribal inhabitants. So with others in 1989 David formed the Dalit Solidarity Network (DSN-UK) and in 1997 after 10 years working for the Churches Commission for Racial Justice

David used his sabbatical for travelling in India for 6 weeks. He saw first-hand the destructive nature of caste discrimination. David's theology was heavily influenced by the Liberation Theology emanating from South America and at home when he had returned to pastoral ministry in South London he stepped into the shoes of Rev Donald Soper by becoming Chair of the Christian Socialist Movement.

In his last 10 years of "active work" in Herne Hill and East Dulwich David addressed the issue of climate change reminding members of the environmentally-friendly behaviour the church expected of them. Then on "retirement" to Evesham in 2008 he found 2 churches in the circuit with 3 eco-congregation awards. He praises our church which when due for redevelopment "decided a judicious mixture of solar panels, a new gas boiler, geothermal heating and rainwater conservation for the toilets would greatly reduce both its emissions and its energy bills. The inspiration was Lim Ho who helped make Stratford arguably the greenest church in Methodism." Ever the campaigner for justice David founded the Methodist Tax Justice Network (MTJN) in 2012 with the aim of incorporating Tax Justice into Methodism's DNA. He produced a booklet with some Biblical and theological undergirding of the work.

David is steeped in an understanding of the Bible's message of God's passion for peace and justice and Gospel values of loving our neighbour -and the stranger - as much as we love ourselves. He finishes his book "True faith is living in the belief that the struggle makes God's community of love-with-justice more visible, if incomplete. At least, not yet."

We are honoured to have such a modern-day prophet serving in our circuit.

Copies of the book (£10) can be ordered from Kath Fraser.

Evelyn Ho and Kath Fraser.

STEWARDS FOR JANUARY

1ST BETTY WALKER
KEN WALKER

8TH SUE RIMMER
JANET LAMPITT

15TH LYNNE DUNNINGTON
HELEN JORDAN

22ND BILL GILES
JACKY MAY

29TH VINCE GLADWIN
LILIAN FITTON

FLOWER ROTA

JANUARY 1ST -
NOREEN PRICE

JANUARY 8TH -
JOAN GRAHAM

JANUARY 15TH -
ANNE STEPHENS

JANUARY 22ND -
BRENDA BIRNIE

JANUARY 29TH -
JOAN TAYLOR



COFFEE ROTA FOR JANUARY

1st Steve Peacop and Ken Walker

8th Graham Hollowell and Helen Jordan

15th Sue Rimmer and Janet Lampitt

22nd Kath Fraser and Joan Graham

29th Gillian Loader and Shirley Dumper

DECEMBER OFFERTORY ROTA

DEC 4TH	MICHAEL LEDGARD	STEVE FARMERY
DEC 11TH	GILLIAN EDWARDS	GILLIAN BOWERS
DEC 18TH	JOHN PARKES	BARBARA HAGGETT
DEC 25TH	DAVID DUMPER	MALCOLM SMITH



*To EVERYONE with a Birthday in DECEMBER
you are wished a very happy
birthday especially*

***KATH FRASER; JANET GARDNER;
SHEILA GILES; VINCENT GLADWIN
AND GILLIAN LEDGARD***

My name is Julia and I am helping to set up a community radio station in Stratford upon Avon called Welcombe Radio.

I am creating a programme, similar to Desert Island Discs, talking to people about their lives and including pieces of music that inspired them along the way. I think everyone has a story to tell, maybe of their family, work they have done or places they have seen. I think we underestimate the value of our life's experiences, and there seems to be a magic in sharing it with others.

There are times when I have sat next to someone on a train and we start talking and the wealth of experience from those exchanges never ceases to amaze me.

I would love to talk to you about your life and music that reminds you of a time in your life or music that inspired you. If you are able to choose six pieces of music that each represent a time in your life, it may be less, it may be more, then we can get together for a chat. When you are ready we can go live on air, the programme goes out on a Friday afternoon.

If you would like to join in or would like to put someone forward who you think has a story to tell please contact me
Julia Hart on 07805 383 557 or email
juliaisabellahart@gmail.com

Equally if you would like to find out more about it give me a ring. I can ring you straight back if you supply me with your number so it's not costing you anything. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes
Julia

JANUARY 2017 DIARY DATES

- 3rd 10.00 Holy Communion in the Church
8th 3.00-5.00 Youphonix!
9th 7.30pm Avonside Players Rearranged Annual Quiz –Fun for all – All welcome
14th 10.00-12 noon Brunch
19th 2.30pm Resources Committee
21st Ecumenical Supper in Wesley Hall
22nd 3.00-5.00 Youphonix!
30th 2.30pm Men's Meeting Point: David Dumper talking on 'Lions International Centenary'
31st 7.30pm Everywomans

WEEKLY MEETINGS

- Sunday: 10.30am Morning Worship then a cuppa
Monday: 10.00-12.00 noon Monday Makers
10.00-12.00 noon Card Making
2.30pm Bible Group
Tuesday: 10.00-12.00am Knit, Stitch and Natter
10.00am Prayer Group
Wednesday: 9.30-11.30 Wesleys Baby and Toddler Group
Thursday: 3.30 – 4.45 Singing Spirits
Friday: 9.30-11.30 Wesleys Baby and Toddler Group
2.00pm Cake and Company

Plus the opportunity to drop in for a cuppa any morning at church

Next month's Reporting will not be published until **Sunday January 8th**. Items for that issue are needed by January 2nd - or earlier by Sheila Giles S/A 296789 or e.mail to

sdgreporting@mypostoffice.co.uk

Happy Christmas