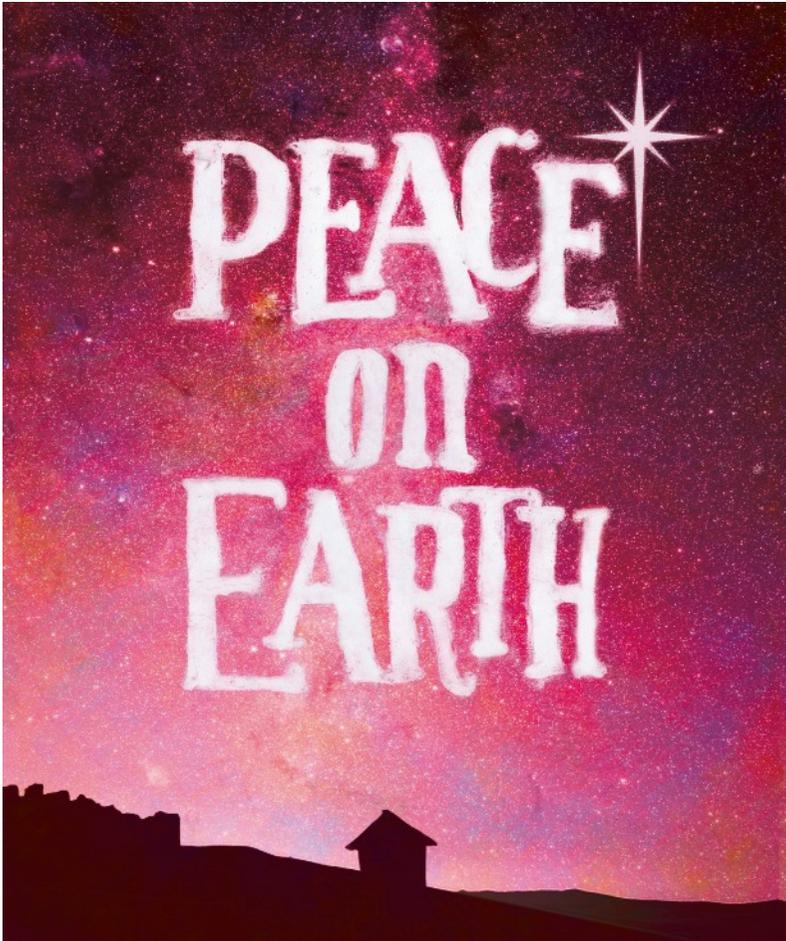




# KINGSDOWN MESSENGER



*December 2017-January 2018*

# SERVICES FOR DECEMBER-JANUARY 2018



- 3 Dec 10.30 Mrs Regina Prempeh
- 10 Dec 10.30 Mrs Penny Pedley, Family/Parade/Gift Service
- 17 Dec 10.30 Rev Rev Michaela Youngson, Holy Communion  
6.00 Mrs Penny Pedley, **CAROL SERVICE**



## CHRISTMAS EVE

- 24 Dec 10.30** Rev Dr Calvin T Samuel  
**11.00 pm** Mrs Penny Pedley/Rev Rachel Bending,  
Holy Communion



## CHRISTMAS DAY

- 25 Dec 10.00** Deacon Ramona Samuel
- 31 Dec 10.30 Mrs Penny Pedley, **CIRCUIT SERVICE** at  
KINGSDOWN

## 2018

- 7 Jan 10.30 Mrs Penny Pedley/Rev Rachel Bending - **Covenant Service & Holy Communion**
- 14 Jan 10.30 Mrs Rekha Cheriyan, Family Service
- 21 Jan 10.30 Mrs Penny Pedley
- 28 Jan 10.30 Mrs Regina Prempeh



## The KINGSDOWN MESSENGER

Copy deadline for the February 2018 issue is Friday 26th January 2018

Editors - Pam and Alan Smith  
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magazine@kingsdownmethodist.org.uk





As I write we have yet to reach Advent, and yet, as far as the shops are concerned, we are well into Christmas! The shelves are full of decorations, cards, 'gifts', lights, and all that the retailers would love us to feel are essential elements of Christmas celebrations.



In all the busyness of Christmas preparations it is easy for panic mode to set in. All the peripheral stuff of Christmas takes over and we find ourselves caught up in the consumer whirlwind. Desperation sets in and, not knowing what else to get, we splash out on some jokey gift that will raise a smile on Christmas Day and then gather dust forgotten in a corner. Those who have little feel enormous pressure from adverts to spend more than they have (post-Christmas debt can be crippling) to meet the expectations of children, often for 'must have' toys that will be enjoyed for a week and then be set aside.

As I ponder this, I find myself thinking of another busy place, the town of Bethlehem, 2000 years ago, bustling and bursting at the seams with people, the inns, traders and others, no doubt, making generous profits from overcharging them and exploiting their desperation for food and accommodation.

But, in a hidden corner, in a shelter, maybe an outbuilding, maybe part of a house, we don't know, but a place normally set aside to house the animals, a miracle takes place that will change history. It is a very ordinary miracle – the daily miracle of birth – a young woman bearing her first child in a strange place, far from her home, in conditions far from ideal, even in those times.

We know so little. We do not know whether Mary had anyone with her – perhaps local women supported and helped her, as her mother and the women she knew would have done in Nazareth. We do not know how much she knew, whether she was prepared for the birth and knew what to expect. Whatever she knew, she must have been frightened and felt very alone. That disturbing day, 9 months earlier, and the conversation with the angel, may have seemed along time ago.

But in that place, aside from all the bustle and busyness, the miracle occurred and God, creator of all we know and all we don't, emerged as a human being into the world, fragile, vulnerable and dependent.

In the midst of the busyness and consumer pressure of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Christmas, I urge you to take time, as part of your preparations, to, figuratively, go and sit in that stable in Bethlehem, and, in stillness, allow your heart and mind to be touched by the wonder of the gift that was given to us there. It is unsurpassed.

And let's pray that all our Christmas celebrations may reflect that wonder, and honour it.

I'll close with words that, for me, sum up the wonder of Christmas:

*Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,  
love indestructible in frailty appears:  
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,  
lifts our humanity to the heights of his throne.*

(Graham Kendrick)

Wishing you all a blessed Advent and a truly wonder-full Christmas.



## ***Royal Engagement***

*As we were going to press Prince Harry and Meghan announced their engagement. We are sure the whole of the Kingsdown family and all our other readers will join in the celebrations and pray that their life together will be long and happy and blessed with a family.*



# **Family News**

It was concerning to learn that our Associate Pastor, Penny, had had a fall from her bicycle on the morning of the Remembrance Service, but carried on with the service anyway. We trust that she has had no lasting ill-effects from the fall.

We were sorry to see **Juliet Edwards** on crutches at church last Sunday and to learn that she has strained a tendon in her leg. Get well soon Juliet or you won't be able to tackle the Christmas shopping!

In our Prayer Book last Sunday we were asked to remember in our prayers **Christina** who is recovering from an operation for cancer of the tongue.

We were also sorry to hear that our old friend, **Jill Ward**, had had a fall in Barton-on-Sea, breaking an ankle and seriously damaging her wrist. We wish her well and a speedy recovery. Please remember her in your prayers.

Jill had already sent a Christmas greeting to all her friends at Kingsdown which reads:

*A Christmas Message from Barton-on-Sea*

*May His gentle love surround you  
At Christmas-time and always  
May God bless you all*

*With our very best wishes*

**Jill & Roy**

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*As Jesus brought peace,  
Turn us into peacemakers.  
As Jesus brought hope,  
Make us messengers of hope.  
As Jesus brought love,  
Rekindle love in us,  
So that the birth of the baby in Bethlehem  
May be a beginning and not an end. Amen*

# MHA Ealing Live at Home Scheme Christmas Party – Wednesday 6th December



The MHA Ealing Live at Home Scheme are organising a Christmas party on Wednesday 6th December from 11am – 2.30pm at Greenford Baptist Church, Beechwood Avenue, Greenford UB6 9UA. Christmas lunch will be served at 12.30pm.

To book places, cost £5, please contact Trudi or Tanvi on 020 8813 0519 or email [ealing.liveathome@mha.org.uk](mailto:ealing.liveathome@mha.org.uk) .

## Weekly and monthly offertory envelopes

I am most grateful to those in the Kingsdown congregation who channel their giving to the church via bank standing orders or via weekly or monthly offertory envelopes. These are a great help in ensuring a regular income for the church.



A new cycle of envelopes will begin shortly and boxes are in the church foyer for those who have used them in the past. I hope you will all be willing to continue, and if anyone else would like to start giving in this way please have a word with me.

**Derek Matthews,  
Church Treasurer**

*from Kingsdown Nativities*



## Autumn Reflections: Growing in Prayer



will continue on Sundays 26th November, 3rd and 10th December at Ealing Green.

**All of these sessions will be at 5.00pm except for the session on 3rd December which will be at 4.00pm.**

The sessions at Greenford on Wednesday afternoons will continue as planned. For more information contact Penny Pedley on 07484 542879 or e-mail [pennypedley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pennypedley@yahoo.co.uk).



## Associate Pastor King's Hall Urdu/Hindi-speaking Church, Southall

The Ealing Trinity Circuit is seeking to recruit an enthusiastic English and Urdu/Hindi-speaking part-time Associate Pastor to work primarily with the King's Hall Urdu/Hindi-speaking church in the multicultural area of Southall.

The post is part of the leadership team under the direction of the Superintendent Minister and includes:

- Leading worship
- Pastoral care
- Involvement in several exciting mission projects in the Southall area.

The post will involve 10 hours per week at an hourly rate of £14 - £16 depending on experience and qualifications. Closing date for applications is midday 19th December 2017 and interviews will be on 18th January 2018. For more information and an application pack go to

[www.ealingtrinity.org.uk/vacancies/](http://www.ealingtrinity.org.uk/vacancies/)

or contact

[office@ealingtrinity.org.uk](mailto:office@ealingtrinity.org.uk).

# Preparations for Christmas

Though there will not be a Northfield Avenue Traders' Event this year, Christmas is still coming, of course! At Kingsdown, most of our usual Advent and Christmas events will continue, and as always they can only be successful if we have a lot of willing volunteers.



One again Fielding School has asked for their pupils to visit our Nativity displays, so we shall have to get them out again! BB members have kindly volunteered to do the heavy carrying, but **volunteers will be needed on Monday 4 December from 10am to decorate the church.** Anyone who has a crib set that they are prepared to give or to lend to us for the display, should let Penny or me know as soon as possible.

Also if anyone has things with an angel or dove-of-peace theme - posters, books, decorations, cards, anything that can make a show - please also offer that to one of us.

**Fielding School visits are on 11, 12 and 13 December.** Exact times are not finalised yet, but it is expected to be 9.30 to 11.30am and 1.30 to 3.00pm. **There are lists on the Foyer Notice Board for volunteers to sign up to help with these visits;** it is always a very enjoyable activity and no previous experience is necessary. There may well be additional dates, for Splash & Dash, and for any other nurseries that contact us later, so please keep an eye on the Notice Board.

Of course, the church will be open as usual to visitors on Friday and Saturday mornings throughout Advent, which will provide additional times for our neighbours to see the cribs.

It is intended to have cards printed again with invitations to our Services. Please take a few to give to friends and neighbours.

Anyone who has questions to ask or helpful suggestions to make regarding church decorations, please speak to Penny or myself.

**Poinsettias required** - Ivy would much appreciate the donation of poinsettia plants to decorate the church from the start of December.

**Kathleen Loveridge**



## **Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter at Kingsdown**

From Sun 26 November to 17 December, Kingsdown will be hosting the winter night shelter for the homeless, on four Sunday nights. Many thanks for all the practical and prayer support as we prepare for this time.

**In particular, there is one Monday morning, 4th December, when three of our usual volunteers are not available so it would be much appreciated if anyone else is willing to help with breakfast and clearing up from 6.45am to 8.30am.**

**Please contact Sue Barton tel 020 8840 7704  
email [sue.garland6039@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.garland6039@btinternet.com)**



*Pam and Alan would like to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas, and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.*

*A big 'Thank you' to all our contributors to **The Messenger** over the past year. We couldn't do our job without you!*

*As usual, instead of individual cards, we shall be sending a joint card to everyone and making a donation to 'All We Can' (MRDF) a charity of the Methodist Church*



## Christian Aid Week - 2017

£3,590,000.75 - our total so far for 2017, and this includes all the events during Christian Aid Week plus the two sponsored walks - Circle the City (300.00) and the Richmond Riverside Walk ((634.00).

Very many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this excellent result I should like to name all of you, but there are so many and I would probably omit someone - so please accept my thanks. And let us remember that during 2017 we have helped some of the 65 million refugees across the world.

## Christian Aid Christmas Appeal - Enough for Everyone Everyone should have enough to eat this Christmas

Have you seen the lovely photo of Colette and her daughter, in the Church foyer? Earning a living in Burkina Faso is hard and its even harder for mothers like Colette who used to spend days at a dusty mining site in search of gold with her six month-old baby strapped to her back. Despite her efforts Colette often went for days without finding anything to sell and this meant she couldn't afford regular nutritious meals for her family. Her situation got so bad that her baby became seriously malnourished. Thanks to support from Christian Aid's local partner, Colette hasn't had to return to the mines. Through a market gardens project, she was given a plot of land and tools to plant and grow a variety of vegetables to feed her family and herself. She says "The garden changed my life; I can sell vegetables and my food is very rich now; my children are no longer malnourished. I feel very safe in my garden. There it is peaceful."

CHRISTMAS DAY is special in Colette's household - a time of celebration and sharing. Just like the UK, the food on Christmas Day is special too. The food is prepared before they go to church, and then shared with friends and neighbours. Colette sells the vegetables she grows so she can buy spaghetti for her family. She says "Spaghetti is special for us on Christmas Day; we can eat it and be happy." At Christmas we celebrate God's overflowing love to us in the gift of his Son. Sometimes our Christmas celebration feels like it overflows, and gets away from us. So we're asked to consider 'what is enough'?

*Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.*  
ISAIAH 58:10

You have read the story of Colette, who lives in Burkino Faso, and now read about Achai and her family who live in South Sudan. South Sudan is in the grip of a humanitarian catastrophe after suffering four years of devastating conflict. Almost four million people have been displaced, harvests have been disrupted and food prices have soared due to a major economic crisis. People like Achai are desperate and struggling to survive. In South Sudan, 6 million people like Achai don't have enough to eat. Achai is the sole earner in her family as her husband is disabled. The crisis has left her completely powerless to feed their children.

Tragically Achai has been forced to gather wild leaves for her children to eat. Her biggest concern is her youngest child, Geng. For him to be healthy, she needs to eat well to produce enough milk to feed him. But hunger has left her unable to do so. And how is Christian Aid helping in this situation? Christian Aid is on the ground in South Sudan doing everything possible to save lives - providing families like Achai's with food vouchers so they are able to purchase the food they need at the local market. The voucher's mean that families like Achai's can access food previously unaffordable to them; they don't have to rely on handouts, and can instead provide for themselves. Achai says "I am grateful for the support that Christian Aid gave me and my family during this trying time."

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We can also help this Christmas Appeal by attending the **two carol concerts** mentioned in the November Messenger.

One at **St John's, Waterloo, on Thursday, 7 December**, and the other a **Gospel Christmas at the City Temple, on Saturday, 16 December**. Posters (very small ones!) can be seen on a notice board in the Church Foyer. If you wish to attend and have difficulty in obtaining tickets, please contact me.

If you wish to respond to this Christmas Appeal, I have Emergency envelopes, which I will gladly pass on to Christian Aid, or conversely, you can post them.

## **UK AID**

And remember, all donations made to the **Enough for Everyone Christmas Appeal** between 6 November 2017 and 5 February 2018 will be doubled by the UK government up to £2.7 million.

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Our first Christian Aid event in London in 2018 will be the Annual Supporters' Event on 25 January.

Please look out for full details in the Kingsdown notices nearer the time.

**Ruby Warne**

## **THE BOX IN THE CHURCH FOYER**

Very many thanks to the Kingsdown friends who have left stamps, socks and postage stamps in the box recently.

Since Christmas is approaching, I expect to find many more stamps in the box!

Socks are also needed urgently for the West London Mission (Hinde Street Methodist Church) for the 100 men and women who visit the Day Centre every day.

Please don't forget SPECS - and if you receive a new MOBILE PHONE at Christmas, the box would be pleased to receive your old one!

**Ruby Warne**



# **KINGSDOWN CLUB**

## **PROGRAMME for JANUARY to APRIL 2018**

**Meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of each month. All are welcome to attend.**

Transport is available for anyone who should need it. Please contact Eileen Tobias - 0208 567 4205 for details.

JANUARY 9<sup>th</sup>

A BINGO and QUIZ AFTERNOON

JANUARY 23<sup>rd</sup>

"THINGS I'VE SEEN"

AN ILLUSTRATED TALK by ALAN SMITH

FEBRUARY 6<sup>th</sup>

DAVE ENTERTAINS

FEBRUARY 20<sup>th</sup>

A TALK by MRS PENNY PEDLEY

MARCH 6<sup>th</sup>

GRAHAM JENKINS ENTERTAINS

MARCH 20<sup>th</sup>

LYNDA SILK SINGS and PLAYS for us

APRIL 3<sup>rd</sup>

A TALK by JANET SMITH

APRIL 17<sup>th</sup>

AGM and BINGO AFTERNOON

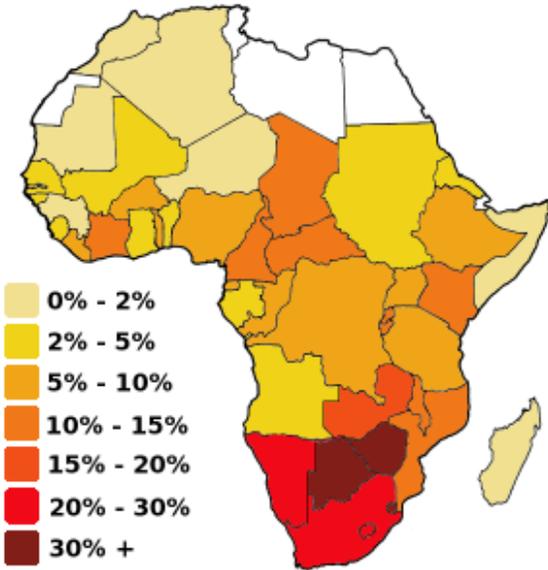
***THE NEW PROGRAMME BEGINS ON 1st MAY 2018***

# Supporting the older people in Cameroon

Conservative estimates put the number of children around the world who have lost one or both parents to HIV at over 17 million – 90% of whom live in sub-saharan Africa. Even worse, almost 3.4 million children in sub-saharan Africa under the age of 15 are living with HIV themselves.

These factors have combined to place an unprecedented level of pressure and workload on surviving grandparents.

HIV has caused much direct suffering but – in wiping out full generations of many families – it has also left grandparents tottering under a weight they never expected to carry.



At sixty-five years old, one grandfather put it this way. "Looking after orphans is like starting life all over again, because I have to work on the farm, clean the house, feed the children, buy school uniforms. I thought I would no longer do these things again. I am not sure if I have the energy to cope."

The situation is compounded also when grandparents themselves are HIV positive, as they balance family responsibilities alongside health issues that would be a heavy burden even on a young, energetic parent.

Percentage of the Adult (ages 15-49) population with HIV/AIDS. Data from UNAIDS.

## ....the older people in Cameroon continued.

In an article in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, one HIV positive girl of 13 years old, describes the issue, saying: 'There are no disadvantages being cared for by an older carer but it is just that my grandmother who would care for me keeps on falling sick and so I take care of her until she recovers and she also does the same.'

### Building independence and confidence in Cameroon

In Cameroon, All We Can is supporting a local organisation that has a specific focus on reaching older people. Community Development Volunteers for Technical Assistance (CDVTA) started out of a passion for serving the older generation – the founder of the organisation describes older people as providing a vital “canopy of wisdom” in society.

Supported by All We Can since 2004, CDVTA understands the importance of empowering older people to exercise their full democratic rights – and helps them give voice to concerns about the way in which Cameroon’s government policy impacts both them and their local community.

In setting up a network of clubs for older people, All We Can and CDVTA are helping to create a support infrastructure which has both psychological as well as practical benefits. Through these clubs members not only keep in touch with peers – they can also find sustainable business opportunities and develop sources of income such as goat rearing.

**Extraordinary Gifts**



**How to buy**  
<http://allwecan.org.uk/shop>

Select a gift by clicking the 'Add to cart' button, and it will be added to your shopping cart. Pay securely with a credit/debit card or via your PayPal account.

Alternatively call 020 7224 4814

# St Paul's Cathedral - visit by CTinCE

(Churches Together in Central Ealing)



A chilly November day saw a group of some 30 people from 'Churches Together in Ealing' meet up at the platform on Ealing Broadway Station. The group were on their way to visit St Paul's Cathedral in the City - many having lived in London for many years and had not visited that famous church.

The Cathedral is only a short walk from the Underground Station but enough to make the warmth once inside the Cathedral very welcoming. As with all major places of interest there was a

security search - in the cold of the Porch but very essential these days.

After a short wait in the warm foyer we were taken through the barriers to start a tour of the Cathedral Church with one of the Canon's as our guide. Starting with a side chapel we learnt all about the various 'churches' that had stood on the site since Norman times in 1240. The present cathedral, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, was built between 1675 and 1710.



The stairs up to the side gallery

St Paul's Cathedral was the tallest building in London from its construction until 1962. The dome is the second largest in the world at 366 feet high and is reached by climbing 259 steps (which we didn't do!). St Paul's is one of the largest churches in the world.



The Canon showing the old carvings

The Canon took us up to the Galleries that run along the side of the the Cathedral above the side aisles into a 'secret' space not usually open to visitors. Here is stored a great collection of stone masonry dating back hundreds of years, as well as old pulpits and a room with a scale model of the whole building.

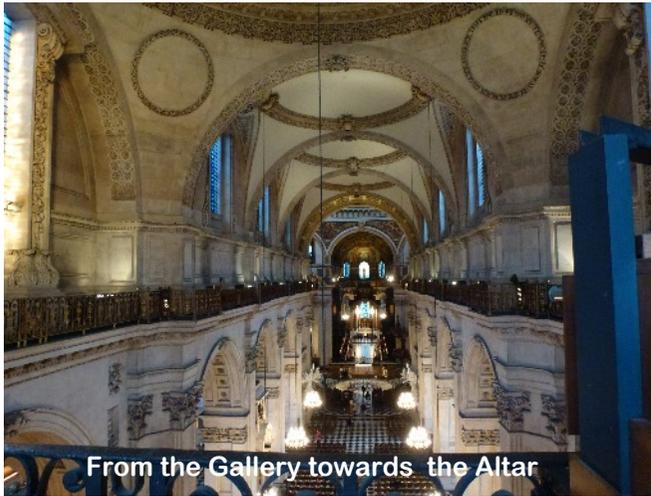
The views down into the Cathedral were excellent and showed off the scale of this building.



Three bombs did land very near to St Paul's during World War II but only a small one exploded and caused comparatively little damage to the site. Lieutenant Robert Davies, Royal Engineers and a member of his team George Cameron Wylie were each awarded the George Cross for defusing the bomb, and then taking it to Hackney Marshes to be exploded. George Wylie's GC is in the Crypt Chapel at St Paul's.

Now it was down stairs to the Crypt which extends under all the Cathedral area with numerous chapels, displays, tombs and a very nice Cafe.

The Cathedral Crypt is the burial place for a a number of famous people -James Barry (Artist), John Donne (Poet), Ethelred the Unready (King of England from 978-1013 and 1014-1016), Alexander Fleming (Scientist), Henry Moore (Sculptor), Horatio Nelson (British Navy Admiral), Arthur Wellesley (Duke of Wellington), and Christopher Wren (Architect – who designed St Paul's Cathedral). The tombs can be seen in the Crypt which is also one of the largest in the world.



From the Gallery towards the Altar

Our tour culminated in reserved seats in the Quire to join in Choral Evensong sung by the Cathedral Choir.

A very uplifting end to a very informative and interesting visit. Thanks go to Noreen Barnes-Hoggett of CTinCE for making the necessary arrangements

*from 'A Messenger Reporter'*



### **A CHRISTMAS GIFT LIST**

- |                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>To your enemy -</i>    | <i>Forgiveness</i>           |
| <i>To your opponent -</i> | <i>Tolerance</i>             |
| <i>To a friend -</i>      | <i>Your heart</i>            |
| <i>To a customer -</i>    | <i>Service</i>               |
| <i>To all people -</i>    | <i>Charity (Love)</i>        |
| <i>To every child -</i>   | <i>A Good Example</i>        |
| <i>To yourself -</i>      | <i>Self-restraint</i>        |
| <i>To God -</i>           | <i>Everything you've got</i> |

*Submitted by Val Elgar*

# REFLECTIONS - "THE COLOURS OF FRIENDSHIP"

Once upon a time the colours of the world started to quarrel. All claimed that they were the best; the most important; the most useful, the most beautiful; the favourite.

**GREEN** said, "Clearly I am the most important: I am the sign of LIFE and of HOPE. I was chosen for grass, trees, and leaves. Without me, all animals would die. Look over the countryside and you will see that I am the majority."

**BLUE** interrupted, "You only think about the earth, but consider the sky and the sea. It is the WATER that is the basis of life and drawn up by the clouds from the deep sea. The sky gives space, peace and serenity. Without my peace you would all be nothing."

**YELLOW** chuckled, "You are all so serious I bring laughter, gaiety, and warmth into the world. The sun is yellow; the moon is yellow, the stars are yellow. Every time you look at a sunflower the whole world starts to smile. Without me there would be no FUN."

**ORANGE** started next to blow her trumpet "I am the colour of health and strength. I may be scarce, but I am precious for I serve the needs of human life. I carry the most important vitamins - think of carrots, pumpkins, oranges, mangoes and papayas. I don't hang around all the time but, when I fill the sky at sunrise or sunset, my beauty is so striking that no one gives another thought to any of you."

**RED** could stand it no longer: he shouted out "I am the ruler of all of you. I am BLOOD - life's blood! I am the colour of danger and of bravery: I am willing to fight for a cause: I bring fire into the blood. Without me the earth would be as empty as the moon. I am the colour of passion of of love, the red rose, the poinsettia and the poppy."

**PURPLE** rose up to his full height: he was very tall and spoke with great pomp. "I am the colour of royalty and power. Kings, chiefs, and bishops have always chosen me for I am the sign of authority and wisdom. People do not question me, they listen and obey!"

Finally **INDIGO** spoke much more quietly than all the others, but with just as much determination..“Think of me, I am the colour of silence. You hardly notice me, but without me you all become superficial. I represent thought and reflection, twilight and deep water. You need me for balance and control, for prayer and inner peace.”

And so the colours went on boasting, each convinced of his or her own superiority. Their quarrelling become louder and louder. Suddenly there was a startling flash of bright lightening, and thunder rolled and boomed: rain started to pour down relentlessly. The colours crouched down in fear, drawing close to one another for comfort.

In the mist of the clamour, rain began to speak. “You foolish colours, fighting amongst yourselves, each trying to dominate the rest. Don’t you know that you were each made for a special purpose, unique and different? Join hands with one another and come to me.”

Doing as they were told, the colours united and joined hands. The rain continued “From now on when it rains, each of you will stretch across the sky in a great bow of colour, as a reminder that you can all live in peace. The rainbow is a sign of top for tomorrow.”



And so, whenever a good rain washes the world, and a rainbow appears in the sky, it is to let us remember to appreciate one another.

Wishing the Kingsdown Church Family a Merry Christmas, and Healthy, Joyous, Abundant, and peaceful New Year 2018.”

**Lita Requinton Stoll**

**Safety isn't the absence of danger - it's the presence of God.**

# 21 December - Winter Solstice

A Midwinter festival has been a part of life since pre-Christian times. When the hours of daylight are fewest, the warmth of the sun weakest, and life itself seemingly at a standstill, our ancestors, the pagan peoples of Europe and Western Asia, kept festival by lighting bonfires and decorating their buildings with evergreens.

Perhaps they believed that the dying sun could be enheartened by fire, and the life of the buried seed assured by the presence of evergreen branches.

With the advent of Christianity, the Spring gods became identified with Christ, and the birthday of the sun with the birthday of the Light of the World.

The early church father Tertullian did not approve of Christmas decorations. "Let those who have no light in themselves light candles!... You are the light of the world, you are the tree ever green...." But by the time of St Gregory and St Augustine, four centuries later, this had changed. Pope Gregory instructed Augustine not to worry about harmless outward customs, as long as the right God be worshipped through them. And so many Anglo-Saxon customs were never discarded, but simply endowed with a new significance.

By 1598 one John Stow of London wrote how: 'Against the feast of Christmas, every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the yeare afforded to be greene.'



*Winter Solstice at Stonehenge*

## Christmas - 'And there were shepherds'



Luke's story of the birth of Jesus is brilliantly told – the angel's visit to Mary to tell her she would be mother of the long-promised Messiah, the old priest in the Temple told by another angel that his wife would have a son to be called 'John', who would prepare the people of Israel for that event, and then Mary and Joseph making the 60 mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, as required by the Roman census. When they got there, no room at the inn, and they settled instead for a convenient stable, where Mary gave birth to a boy child.

Suddenly, Luke changes the tone. 'And there were shepherds ...' – that's what he actually wrote, just like that. 'And there were shepherds', doing exactly what shepherds do, looking after their flocks by night. But this night was different: yet another angelic message – a call to abandon their sheep and go into Bethlehem to see the baby Messiah. They were given directions and a 'sign' to identify Him. He would be lying in a feeding trough. Well, at least they would recognise that.

And why the shepherds, in this glorious story of our salvation? Because the event needed witnesses, and the chosen witnesses would be this bunch of scruffy, smelly shepherds straight from the sheep-pen. Nothing could speak more eloquently of God's purpose than that. This was not a Saviour for the strong, rich and powerful, but for everybody. The carpenter and his wife guarded the Saviour of the world, and the very first witnesses were not kings or priests but a handful of shepherds.

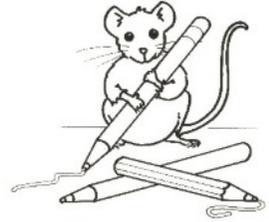
By **David Winter**



Two trucks loaded with thousands of copies of Roget's Thesaurus were involved in a collision soon after they left the publishing house last week, according to press reports. Witnesses to the accident were stunned, startled, aghast, taken aback, stupified....

## **LET US KNOW**

Have you moved house, changed your telephone land line or mobile number or changed your e-mail address ??? Then let us know so we can update the records and avoid publishing the wrong details.



**Thanks. Editors**



## **DO YOU WANT TO SEE LOCAL NEWS ?**

**Then go to: <http://www.ealingtoday.co.uk/default.asp>**

EalingToday.co.uk is a website run for and by local people around W5 and W13. To fully participate and receive a weekly newsletter, become a member - it's free. Much of the content of this site is contributed by local residents, community groups and businesses.

If you have something to say, post an entry on the FORUM, or e-mail [editor@EalingToday.co.uk](mailto:editor@EalingToday.co.uk)



*The Church roof was a matter of urgent concern*

## **6 DECEMBER WHAT'S IN A (CHRISTMAS) NAME?**

What do your family call him, that funny old man in a red robe and floppy hat who pops up everywhere at Christmas? Sometimes he's Father Christmas, sometimes Santa Claus, and in parts of Europe he's Saint Nicholas. That's his real name, abbreviated to 'Santa Claus' by Brits and Americans who don't like to follow the Europeans, and then turned into a more homely, cuddly kind of name for the children. Whatever he's called, his function is the same – delivering presents to children at Christmas.

The first St Nicholas was a real person, about whom a few more facts were discovered this Autumn. He was bishop of Myra, in the country we now call Turkey, in the fourth century. He was known as the friend of the poor, and especially poor or abused children. At (or just before) Christmas he went around handing out presents to them, as well as rescuing some from dreadful circumstances. The red robe our modern Santa Claus wears is a vague representation of a bishop's garment, and the floppy hat is his mitre!

The original good bishop from 1600 years ago is remembered by the Church on December 6th, and the lucky children in Belgium and the Netherlands get their presents then!

**by David Winter**

## **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 busy-ness 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 view of Christmas

The Shepherds had an angel, the wise men had a star,  
The Shepherds came from near at hand, the wise men from afar,  
We too would visit Bethlehem, but it's many years too far,  
But Christ will come to visit us, He comes to where we are.

Joseph was a carpenter, Mary a teenage maid,  
The Son of God in poverty was in a manger laid,  
We'll never see the Son of God unless He gives us aid,  
But a wounded hand He stretches out, and calls us to be saved.

The inn was overflowing, no room, not e'en a bed,  
There's now so many lonely and in poverty 'tis said,  
I hope to see, this Christmas, those poor folk being fed.  
O Lord, recall that manger, and give them daily bread.

This Christmas I must show my love more than I've shown before.  
For God has shown His love to me, for all my sins He bore.  
Let's look beyond the stable, to the tomb with open door,  
And know His love will keep us now, and then for evermore.

The stable has a message, His hand held out to save,  
For Jesus Christ was born to die, and rise up from the grave,  
His hand is now stretched out to you from that empty open cave,  
Believe in Him, and walk with Him, have courage, and be brave.

So see beyond the tinsel and the lighted Christmas tree,  
Beyond the cards and wishes, that come to you and me.  
Tell others "It's His Birthday" and love sincerely,  
And show your love to God above, now and eternally.

**Gerald Gossage**





## CHRISTMAS CARDS

Time to write your Christmas cards again – what designs have you picked to send this year? Are they religious ones?

Look in the shops at all the different designs, traditional and modern. Traditional religious cards have usually included the nativity – Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. But what else would you count as religious? The Three Kings? The Bible doesn't say they were kings, or that there were three; just that they were Wise Men, who travelled far to bring special gifts for the baby Jesus.

Do you know why there are so many robins on Christmas cards? The first postmen in Victorian times wore red and were called robins, so robins were shown as delivering cards.



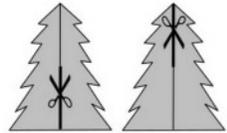
Whatever kind of card you send this year, be sure to include a kind message with love for your friends. Our love is a tiny echo of God's love for all the world.

## CARD or DECORATION

Here is a simple 3-D Christmas tree that you can use as a decoration or a card. You will need green card, crayons, glitter or paint, scissors and sticky tape.

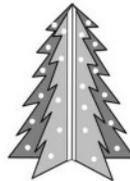
Fold a piece of card in half, then cut it in half. Put the two pieces together and fold them in half again.

Draw half a Christmas tree opposite the fold. Cut along the line and you will have 2 identical trees. Fold the trees in half, very lightly, hardly creasing the centre line to mark the centre of the tree. Cut a slit along the bottom half of the centre of one tree



of the other tree. Slip the two trees together along the slits. To help the tree to stand firmly, use sticky tape to fasten the parts together where they meet.

Decorate the tree. If you are using it as a card then leave an area free of decorations so that you can write on it.



*What goes red white red white red white?*

*Santa rolling down a hill.*

## COMING EVENTS

### DECEMBER

- Mon 4 8.00 pm Guides (most Mondays throughout term time)
- Tue 5 2.00 pm Kingsdown Club - A Painting Demonstration  
by Mr Les Goodchild  
8 pm Property Committee
- Wed 6 1-3 pm Babies & Toddlers (term time only - finishing 13 Dec)  
7.30 pm Church Council
- Thu 7 3.30 pm - 5.30 pm CBSI UK Bible Studies in the Foyer
- Fri 8 10.15 am Coffee Morning in Foyer - everyone welcome  
BOYS BRIGADE 6.30-7.30 pm Anchor Boys, 6.30-8.00 pm  
Junior Section, 7.30-10.00 pm Company Section (term time  
finishing 17 Dec. Re-opens Fri 12 Jan 2018.)
- Sat 9 10.15 am-12 noon Coffee & Chat - everyone welcome
- Mon/Tue/Wed 11-13 Local Schools visiting Nativities Festival at  
Kingsdown
- Tue 12 Liz & Steve Palmer's Home Group
- Thu 14 7 pm Mother Goose pantomime opens at Questors Theatre.  
Runs until 1 Jan 2018.
- Tue 19 2.00 pm Tuesday Club - The Christmas Tea Party -  
Dave Entertains

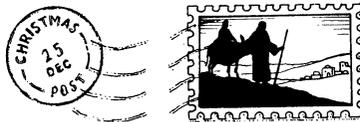
### Future Dates for your Diary

#### FEBRUARY

- Thu 1 7.30 pm Circuit Policy Group at Kingsdown
- Wed 21 7.30 pm Mission and Outreach Committee

#### MARCH

- Thu 22 8.30 pm Finance Committee



The views expressed in articles in The Messenger are not necessarily those of Kingsdown Methodist Church or the Editors.

**Data Protection** - Kingsdown Methodist Church maintains a database of basic information relating to members and the community roll. Keep the Minister informed of any changes to your personal details. The database is maintained in accordance with the guidelines of The Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ to whom any formal requests for access to the data must be addressed.