



KINGSDOWN MESSENGER



December 2015 - January 2016

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER



- 6 Dec 10.30 Ms Rebecca Cafford
5.00 Memorial Carol Service (see p.4)
- 13 December 10.30 Rev Rachel Bending, Family/Parade Service
'Dawning Hope' - A nativity service for all ages
featuring a nativity pantomime
- 20 Dec 10.30 Rev Rachel Bending, Holy Communion
6.00 'Sing Choirs of Angels' - An (almost) traditional
Carol Service, Rev Rachel Bending
- 24 Dec 11.30 **CHRISTMAS EVE** 'The Light has Come'
- Midnight Holy Communion to welcome Christmas
- 25 Dec 10.00 **CHRISTMAS DAY 'What a Gift'**
Worship for all ages
- 27 Dec 10.30 Local Arrangement



SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2016

- 3 Jan 10.30 Mr David Richards
- 10 Jan 10.30 Rev Rachel Bending, Family/Parade Service
6.30 CIRCUIT SERVICE at EALING GREEN
- 17 Jan 10.30 Rev Rachel Bending, Covenant Service/
Holy Communion
- 24 Jan 10.30 Mrs Rekha Cheriyan
- 31 Jan 10.30 Rev Dr Jannifer Smith

*(Sermon Series for Kingsdown based on 'We Make the Road by Walking'
by Brian McLaren continuing.)*

Dear friends



Over the last few months in our worship we've been following the first section of Brian MacLaren's book 'We make the road by walking.' In this first part we explored what it means to be alive in the story of creation: a story that includes crisis, calling, captivity, conquest and conversation. Into that conversation comes Jesus, a man whose character, words and example changed history.

Now, in the second section, we turn to consider what it means to be alive in the story of Jesus.

During Advent and Christmas we will look at the stories of Jesus's birth and childhood. We will then move on to consider the stories of his adulthood. In all of this we will be faced with questions as to how we are called to be followers of Jesus today.

I hope you enjoy the next part of our 'walk' together.

Wishing you a happy Christmas and every blessing for the coming year.

Love

Rachel



Weekly and Monthly Offering Envelopes

Regular financial support for Kingsdown, on a weekly or monthly basis, is very helpful for budgeting purposes and I am most grateful to those who do so via the envelope scheme or a bank standing order.

Anyone interested in adopting envelope giving, or starting a standing order, should contact me. Donations can be Gift Aided and the church then claims an additional 25% from HMRC.

A few boxes of weekly and monthly offertory envelopes are still in the church foyer for collection.

Derek Matthews

Midweek Service

Thursdays, at 12.30 pm, Kingsdown will host a weekly short Meditative Service lasting a half to three quarters of an hour. This will be followed by a bread and cheese lunch and 'Open House' when the church will be open to all-comers.

Christmas Memorial Carol Service

For our annual Memorial Service this year the Church Council accepted the invitation of Lodge Brothers, the local Funeral Directors, to combine our event with theirs and hold a joint service at Kingsdown on Sunday 6th December at 5.00 pm. It will be led by our own Minister, Rev Rachel Bending, and many elements will be similar to what we have experienced before. In particular, there will be a roll-call of names of deceased friends and relatives who will be remembered during the service.

If you wish someone to be remembered by name during the service, please complete a slip - printing the name carefully - and leave it in the box in the Foyer for that purpose.

We are grateful to Lodge Brothers both for the invitation, and for their contribution to the organisation and the costs of the occasion, including the provision of our Christmas tree, which will feature in this service and on other occasions during the season.



The KINGSDOWN MESSENGER

Copy deadline for the February 2016 issue is Friday 22 January 2016

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PULPIT NOTICE

announced on: Sunday 22 November 2015

Appointment of two new presbyters to the circuit

Since the announcement by Rev Peter Catford and Rev Suva Catford of the decision to curtail their appointment, the Circuit Invitations Committee has been working with the London District to find replacements to fill these positions.

The stationing of a new presbyter to have charge of **Hanwell Church** and **Pitshanger Church** and a new presbyter to have charge of **Greenford Church** and **Northolt Church** has been a priority for the circuit stewards.

I am therefore pleased to advise you that, following a visit to the circuit on Saturday 7 November 2015 to meet the church representatives, circuit stewards and ministers, two successful matches have been made.

Rev Shirlyn Toppin and Rev Yemi Jaiyesimi will be joining the circuit in August 2016.

Rev Shirlyn Toppin is currently a presbyter in the New River Circuit in North London and will have charge of Hanwell and Pitshanger Churches.

Rev Yemi Jaiyesimi is currently a presbyter in the Barnsley Circuit in Yorkshire and will have charge of Greenford and Northolt Churches.

These appointments are subject to final approval at conference next year.

This is a very successful outcome to the stationing process and I am sure you will join the circuit team in **welcoming Shirlyn and Yemi** later next year.

In the meantime, as you are already aware, Rev Peter Catford and Rev Suva Catford will continue their ministry within the circuit and churches until the end of the current connexional year. Please give them both your continued prayers and support during this time.

Michael Brown, Circuit Steward
On behalf of the Circuit Invitations Committee

FAMILY NEWS

We are not aware of any specific family news to report but do ask for your prayers for anyone known to you who may be feeling rather out of sorts at this time; especially continue to remember **Cecil Smith** and his wife **Barbara**.

We send special Christmas and New Year greetings to all those on our mailing lists who remain interested in what goes on at Kingsdown. Thanks to Mary Osborne for her sterling work on sending out the Messengers each month and Gerald for his involvement in printing them; thanks too to those contributors who ensure we have an adequate supply of material to make our efforts worthwhile .

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM BARTON-ON-SEA

To our Church family at Kingsdown. We wish you all a happy and holy Christmas and all good wishes for a happy and healthy 2016.

Jill and Roy Ward

and Jill adds the following:

JUST A LITTLE LAUGH AT CHRISTMAS TIME

A blonde goes to the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. She said to the clerk "May I have 50 Christmas stamps please?"

The clerk says "What denomination?"

The blonde says "God help us, has it come to this?"

Give me 22 Methodist, 20 Catholic and 8 Baptists."

A very Happy Christmas and New Year to all the coffee and tea ladies.

What a wonderful job they do providing us with refreshments after every Sunday morning service (as well as those on duty on Friday and Saturday mornings).

We are all very grateful to them. **MANY THANKS.**

(Ed. Really sorry, but can't remember who handed me this note!)

BABIES & TODDLERS GROUP



After our appeal for more help we were delighted that Hazel Pennells and June Thompson were able to come to our assistance on one occasion when we were short-staffed in October. Since then Hazel has been assimilated into the team and we are delighted to welcome her aboard. Rita Safta has also been able to attend quite regularly in spite of her studies and it is always good to see her smiling face.

We are grateful to the church for the new tables which have been bought to replace those which were deemed unsafe.

As part of our planned Christmas festivities, we shall be inviting all the parents and carers to view the Nativity displays in the church, before closing for the Christmas period. Our last session will be on Wednesday, 9 December, and we will resume on Wednesday, 13 January 2016.

All good wishes to everyone for a very Happy Christmas and every blessing in the New Year.

Jill Richardson

School Visits

Staff at Little Ealing and Fielding Primary Schools have been delighted to accept our invitation to bring their pupils to visit the Nativities Festival. Rachel will lead the sessions but it is important to have 3 or 4 Kingsdown members to assist with simple things like ensuring the church is open and welcoming in good time for the sessions, answering questions from staff and adults and giving out invitation cards for our other Advent and Christmas services.

Other Visitors

In addition the Festival will be advertised as being open during Friday and Saturday mornings between 10.00am and noon. We need one person for each morning ready to welcome visitors, offer them tea/coffee invite them to our Christmas services and answer any questions. This could easily be someone who is already expecting to be at the coffee morning.

Kathleen Loveridge

Reflection

It was one of the youngest worshippers on 15 November who first suggested that in our intercessions we should pray for the people of Paris.

As I listened I remembered some of the primary school children whom I'd met in the previous fortnight. Many of them had written prayers or questions for God which revealed that they were not, as we sometimes pretend, too young to understand the horror of what is going on around the world.

'Why, God, did you make Christians and Jews and Muslims . . .?' because He must have known how some of them would fight each other. 'I want to remember one of my grandmas who is in Syria, and the other who lives in Palestine.' Can I begin to imagine what each member of her family goes through every evening as they watch the news reports?

'One day, when the fighting has stopped, I want to go back to my own country.' The expression on her face turned from longing to pleasure when I told her that I too had been to Yemen once and knew it was a beautiful country.

The privilege of hearing or reading these thoughts came as I helped out at the most recent Quiet Zones – the opportunities for spiritual expression provided, on behalf of all of us in the Circuit, through the imagination and creativity of Suva and Peter Catford and the resources supplied by Pitshanger Methodists.

You may not have taken the opportunity to explore the Zones – perhaps you thought they were nothing special, or that you'd be embarrassed and wouldn't know what to do, or that they were only for children. If that's the case, please try to find an opportunity when they are displayed next time to visit and see for yourself.

You will have your own response to, 'What question do you want to ask God?' And you could write your own ending to one of these sentences: 'I wish I hadn't . . .' or, 'I'm sorry I didn't . . .', and having looked thoughtfully at the words, wipe them out and know that your wrong doings can be just as easily forgiven. Or you might look carefully at your reflection in a mirror and be reminded that you are unique and precious, made in God's image. Or trace on the world map the different countries where you have friends or family, and send them a message or write a prayer for them.

I lost count of the number of places that were 'home' to the children of the two schools that visited the Zones in the first two weeks of November – Syria, Palestine, India, Latvia, France, Japan, the Philippines, Korea, Yemen, Somalia, South Africa . . .and many, many others.

After our 15 November service at Kingsdown, Rekha Cheriyan and I shared our experiences as volunteers in the Zones during those two weeks. How profound were many of the children's questions; how responsive they were to the silence and stillness of the Zones (even when they'd been excited at being dressed up as super-heroes for 'Children in Need' day); how often staff and pupils said 'thank-you' for the experience and hoped they'd be able to come again next year.

There were happy, sad, sometimes disturbing, recollections of what the children said or wrote.

'I wish people didn't keep calling me bad names';

'I hope I can get into a good secondary school';

'God, did you make any other worlds like this one?';

'I wish I didn't keep doing things that upset my mum';

'Please God, look after my grandma now she's with you in heaven';

'God, would I have a better life if I was a boy?';

'God, I wish my parents would get back together again';

God, please punish my father;'

'It was a good feeling to sit quietly and just think.'

Comments from the adults included, 'this is such a wonderful experience for the children' and 'I need this today as much as they do'. And, talking of a boy at the extreme end of the autistic spectrum, 'we've never seen him so quiet for so long'. (And yet none of the classes was in the Quiet Zones for more than 20 minutes.) Over 1400 primary school pupils visited the Zones in that fortnight, as well as children and young people from Pitshanger church organisations, and a few adults. For many of the pupils it is likely to be the only time in the year when an adult has asked them to respond to serious spiritual questions and experiences.

And it matters so much! If the churches are not providing those opportunities, who will do it? And next year, when Suva and Peter have moved on, who will follow up and continue the work? When the question is asked, 'can we come next year?' who will respond? Or will the resources be left to moulder in a cupboard? And the children left to find their own answers to their big questions?

Making the Quiet Zones available needs lay volunteers. Only a little training and preparation is needed, but there are few church activities in which I have felt so privileged to be involved.

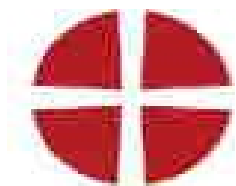
Kathleen Loveridge

Christmas Prayer 2015

Loving, giving Father,

Thank you for Jesus, Emmanuel. Thank you that he came at Christmas and is alive and just as relevant today as he was all those years ago, and will be forever. As many of us celebrate your coming to us, with our families, in warm, safe homes, in a democratic country, we pray for everyone who has left their homeland because of persecution, for everyone who is without shelter, or food, or family. Give us compassionate hearts, like yours, Lord. Help us, as Christ's body here on earth, to love and serve and make room for each other this Christmas. In Jesus' name. Amen

By Daphne Kitching



Statement from the Methodist Church in Britain

The President and the Vice-President of the Conference have issued the following statement about the attacks in Paris:

"We, and all the Methodist people, pray for all the victims of the attacks in Paris on Friday night. We hold in our prayers all those who seek to offer comfort and support in the days and weeks ahead."

The Revd Steven Wild, President of the Conference, and Dr Jill Barber, Vice-President of the Conference.

A POEM ABOUT ALZHEIMERS

Do not ask me to remember
Don't try to make me understand
Let me rest and know you're with me
Kiss my cheek and hold my hand.

I'm confused beyond your concept,
I am sad and sick and lost.
All I know is that I need you
To be with me at all cost.

Do not lose your patience with me
Do not scold or curse or cry.
I can't help the way I'm acting,
Can't be different though I try.

Just remember that I need you
That the best of me is gone.
Please don't fail to stand beside me,
Love me till my life is done.

Wishing everyone in the Church Family a Happy Christmas, God's blessings,
and a peaceful, joyous and abundant New Year 2016.

Love and regards.

Lita Requinton Stoll

Methodist Homes

I am very pleased to report that the book fair on
Saturday October 31st raised a total of £402 55p and
am very grateful for all the hard work that went into
it. Also the accompanying envelope appeal raised a total of £65 of which
£60 was Gift Aided. Again many thanks.



Olwen Britton



1. RICHMOND PARK SPONSORED WALK

I hope you all read the article by Janet and saw the 'photo of Mark Sturge, Head of the Christian Aid London Unit and six Kingsdown friends, in the November Messenger? This was a sponsored walk and Janet, Julie, Lita and Violet collected £696.00 from many generous friends. Congratulations on a wonderful result and I'm so glad you all had such an enjoyable day. FIGHT POVERTY STEP BY STEP!

2. **Women have featured in many Christian Aid 2015 projects....**

Christian Aid Week - ETHIOPIA (remember LOKO?) - Richmond Park - MALI where women are involved in market gardens, and now the Christmas Appeal which will go to improving health care, particularly for pregnant women and young children in parts of NIGERIA where malaria is a predominant threat. CA partners are training local health volunteers to help prevent this life-threatening disease, which kills 250,000 children every year.

And now some GOOD NEWS about the CHRISTMAS APPEAL.

The UK Government will match every pound we raise this Christmas, so ever more lives can be saved. Donations made to the Christmas Appeal between 6 November 2015 and 5 February 2016 will be matched, pound for pound, up to a total of £5m.

CHRISTIAN AID is celebrating its 70th year

Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, now Head of Christian Aid, will lead a special Advent Service on 30 November in Winchester Cathedral to mark the end of our 70th anniversary year. In London, two Carol Services have been arranged.

The first Carol Service is on Thursday, 3 December, at 7 pm at St Luke's Church, Sydney Street, Chelsea, and we are invited to life our voices and join Huw Edwards and Christian Aid Chief Executive, Loretta Minghella. Tickets are free.

The other Carol Service - a Gospel Christmas - is on Saturday, 12 December at the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct - carols, gospel music and poetry. If you require further information or tickets for either service, I am willing to help.

If you would like to make a donation to the Christian Aid Christmas Appeal and are unable to attend a Carol Service, an envelope is available.

Ruby Warne

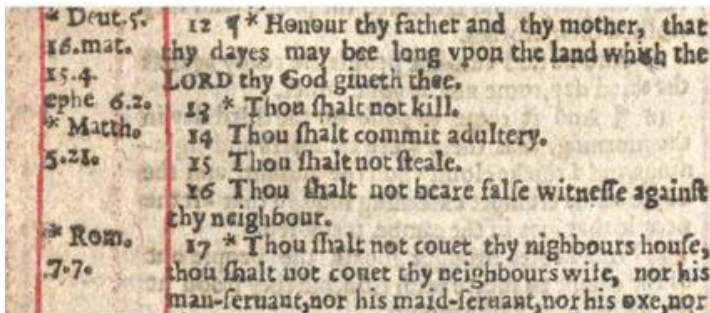
**PLEASE DON'T FORGET THE BOX IN THE
CHURCH FOYER - IT'S EMPTY!**

**MOBILE 'PHONES - POSTAGE STAMPS - SOCKS
AND SPECS**

ALL THESE ITEMS ARE STILL NEEDED.

Thou shalt commit adultery!

A 16th-Century Bible with a printing mistake telling readers to have affairs is set to be auctioned for up to £15,000. The King James is one of only nine remaining which says "Thou shalt commit adultery", missing out the word "not". It is not known whether the mistake was an accident or deliberate, but it is believed to have been purposeful in order to get the King's royal printers - commissioned with manufacturing Bibles at the time - into trouble.



The printers, Robert Barker and Martin Lucas, were fined the equivalent of £30,000 for the error, deprived of their printing license and thrown into prison.

Remembrance



Kingsdown
11 November 2015



A Christmas quiz

1. According to the 1st chapter of Matthew, 'Immanuel' is interpreted to mean ____ ____ ____.
2. The Moabite widow, Ruth, is mentioned by name only 12 times in the book named after her, and not again until Matthew 1:5. What makes this woman's life so significant to the birth of Jesus Christ?
3. An angel of the Lord told Joseph, Mary's betrothed, 'Do not _____ to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'
4. What caused Elizabeth's unborn baby to leap for joy in her womb, when she was visited by her relative Mary?
5. What was the angel's name who visited Mary to tell her she had been chosen to be the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ?
6. What does Bethlehem mean?
7. Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
8. What did the angels say to the shepherds?
9. What did the chief priests tell Herod that worried him so much?
10. Why was 'a voice heard in Ramah, weeping and great Mourning?'

Answers on p 29.

Time for a Smile

A man applied for a better job and at the interview the manager asked, 'Any references?' Thinking this would sound impressive, the applicant replied, "Yes, one from the minister of my church and one from the Sunday School Superintendent." The manager then asked, "Do you have any from people who know you on weekdays?"



CLIMATE CHANGE TAKE ACTION NOW!

The latest reports show that climate change is real and threatens not only food security and world economies but the things we love most. Our families, hobbies, safety, and well-being. For the love of all of these things we're calling for action on climate change.

Climate change is already affecting the lives of millions around the world, jeopardising livelihoods and displacing entire communities. People living in poverty are often the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Testimonies from the margins

In Burundi, one of the poorest countries in the world, increasingly unpredictable weather and flooding is damaging precious crops and destroying homes and livelihoods. "The climate change here is a reality." says Innocent Mahwikizi, programme co-ordinator of All We Can's partner UCEDD.

All We Can partner GADIB in Togo is working to find sustainable farming solutions to chronic food insecurity in the villages of the Savanes region, the poorest in the country. They recently reported that "the weak and poor distribution of rainfall during the last few years has had negative effect on the agricultural production." One failed harvest can push families into crisis.

All We Can and our partner organisations are supporting communities on the front line of climate change, helping them to adapt and become more resilient. But more needs to be done by decision makers to help prevent and tackle climate change.

Speak out

Ahead of the UN summit on climate change in Paris in December 2015, All We Can and over 100 other organisations in The Climate Coalition are calling on political leaders to take climate change more seriously than ever. Unless politicians know this is something we all care about, they won't have the mandate to act.

With your words, actions and stories, we can press politicians to start giving climate change the attention it deserves. Join us.

Send a message to the British Prime Minister to let him know you are concerned about climate change and its impact on poor communities, and to call on him to act.

Go to the web page to complete and send a message or request a printed action card from All We Can to send to your MP.

<http://www.allwecan.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change-its-time-for-action>



Have you bought your EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS for Christmas?

Catalogues in the Church Foyer or go on line to:

<http://www.allwecan.org.uk/extraordinary-gifts/extraordinary-gifts>

One of the gifts is a 'Grant for Life' - £113

which could pay for grants for three women in Tanzania to set up their own businesses, this can be the lifeline needed to help women better support their families.

In the picture we can see Adelina Wangaely who set up a small poultry farming business with a grant she received from BEST (an AWC partner)



Christmas:

Why the world was ready for Christmas

Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was? The Bible tells us that "when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son..." The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the 'time had fully come' for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire's sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into 'enemy territory' or needing a 'passport'. For the first time ever, it was possible for 'common' people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19th century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of him to be able to travel, had indeed 'fully come'.



"I'm sorry Michael – even if you HAVE changed your ring-tone to 'Away In-A-Manger', it's still ALL mobiles OFF!"

Christmas:

Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!).

And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.



These days, it is good that Father Christmas uses reindeer and doesn't have to pay for petrol.

In order to get round all the children in the world on Christmas Eve, he will have to travel 221 million miles at an average speed of 1279 miles a second, 6,395 times the speed of sound.

For all those of us who are exhausted just rushing around getting ready for Christmas, that is a sobering thought.

An indescribable gift

A man recalled the time when he punished his 5-year-old daughter for playing with a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and he became even more upset when the child used the gold paper to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree.

On Christmas morning the child said, "This is for you, Daddy!" The father was embarrassed by his earlier reaction but he was not happy when he found the box was empty! "Don't you know," he said, "when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside?"

The little girl replied, sheepishly, "Oh, Daddy, it's not empty! I blew kisses into it until it was full!" The father was crushed and put his arms around his little girl, and told her how sorry he was.

Some time later, the child lost her life in an accident. The father kept that gold box by his bed for the rest of his life and whenever he felt low he would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of his child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given a gold box filled with God's unconditional love. There is no more precious possession.

From ACE Forum

Patriotism is not enough

This year marks the centenary of Edith Cavell's execution and on 4th December 2015 it is 150 years since she was born. Many remember her patriotism. But Edith said patriotism was not enough. Many saw her as a hero and a martyr; some even think she was a spy. But Edith asked to be remembered '... only as a nurse who tried to do her duty'.

Dozens of authors have written about this Norfolk-born nurse, but none answers the question: 'How could she be so calm and confident facing death?'

But now a new book, *Edith Cavell - Faith Before The Firing Squad* by Catherine Butcher (Monarch, £8.99), traces the roots of her confidence, her love for others expressed in practical, selfless service to friend and foe alike, as well as her courage helping fugitives from war to find freedom.

Easysearch and Easyfundraising

It's now about 5 years since I registered Kingsdown with Easyfundraising. For those of you who don't remember, Easysearch is an internet 'search engine' that donates about ½p for every search made. Easyfundraising gets donations from a wide range of internet sales websites every time you purchase.

You have to register to use Easyfundraising and currently 9 people have done so (although one of those has moved on and one doesn't actually attend the church). I'm sure there's more than 7 of us at Kingsdown making internet purchases from the likes of Amazon and others....

At the time of writing, the total raised for Kingsdown was £320, of which half is via searches and half via Easyfundraising.

There are lots of retailers linked to Easyfundraising. You can find Amazon, John Lewis, M&S, Argos as well as insurance companies, utilities, travel companies and many more.

I made Easysearch our 'home page' when I first registered Kingsdown (it's also the 'home page on the Circuit Office computer). This makes it easy to remember to use Easysearch when I want to find out about something. Easyfundraising takes a little more effort as you have to log in before heading to the website you wish to purchase from. It's not much more effort however, and raising a little money this way for the 'price' of a few clicks with the mouse is pretty much a no-brainer.

To find Easysearch go to <http://kingsdownmc.easysearch.org.uk/>, and to find Easyfundraising just click the tab labelled 'Easyfundraising' when you're there. It's dead simple!

Gerald Barton

**Cherish your yesterdays, dream your tomorrows,
but live your todays.**

*So many refugees,
So many homeless people,
So much conflict and despair and pain,
In a world without answers.*

*But God so loved this world
That he created Christmas
And came, in Jesus.
Jesus, born into poverty,
Jesus, who was homeless,
Who was a refugee,
Who shares our conflict and despair and pain,
Who takes it all and transforms it
By his life-giving death and resurrection
Into possibilities of peace and hope and joy,
Into life in all its fullness.
Jesus who came out of the stable
And lives.
God's answer.
Hallelujah.*

By Daphne Kitching



What do you mean ?

'they need another 30
copies of The Messenger
this month?.'

On the Feast of Stephen - by David Winter

Everyone knows that it was on the feast of Stephen that 'good king Wenceslas looked on'. After all, it's in a Christmas carol - but why? There's nothing about Christmas in it: a splendid young page who rustled up some flesh, wine and logs, an old man out in the snow ('deep and crisp and even') and a kindly monarch. But Christmas?

The clue is in 'the feast of Stephen', which falls on 26th December, or 'Boxing Day', as we know it. That, too, has nothing to do with Christmas, beyond the fact that in the past people put a contribution in tradesmen's boxes as a kind of Christmas present for their services during the year.

The Stephen whose feast day falls on the day after Christmas was the first Christian martyr. (You can read his story in the book of Acts). He was a member of the church in Jerusalem in its very early days, and found himself involved with six others in administering the allocation of food to those in need.

The apostles, who were the leaders of the church, felt that it wasn't appropriate for them to abandon preaching and 'serve tables', so they selected these seven to do the job for them. Stephen, however, quickly revealed hidden gifts as an

eloquent spokesman for the Christian cause.

The Temple authorities, who had already had trouble with the apostles, were soon alerted to this new and hitherto unknown evangelist. They decided to make an example of him, thus firing a warning shot, as it were, across the bows of the apostles themselves. So they arrested Stephen and accused him of speaking against the two central elements of their religion - the 'holy place' (the Temple) and 'the customs Moses handed down to us' (the Law). It's always dangerous to criticise a monument or a custom!

Given the right to defend himself, Stephen instead launched into an eloquent and at times biting account of Jewish history, culminating in the accusation that they had committed the worst possible sin by killing the Messiah. Inflamed by his words, his hearers abandoned any pretence of legal impartiality, rushing towards him and dragging him out of the city to a place where they began to stone him to death. Stephen, the rank and file Christian, died under a hail of rocks for claiming that Mary's Son was the promised Messiah.

That, I suspect, is the reason why the first martyr is honoured on the

day after we celebrate the birth of the Saviour.

we celebrate, that the bitter shadow of a cross is never far away from this story.

It's a bit like the myrrh in the gifts of the Wise Men - a reminder, as

These jokes are sure to make you groan.... think Christmas crackers!

What did the snowman and his wife hang over their baby's crib?
A snow mobile.

What's brown and sneaks round the kitchen?
Mince spies.

What did the pack of Walkers say to the Skips?
Merry Crispmas.

Knock Knock
Who's there?
Snow
Snow who?
Snow business like show business

What do you call a snowman with a suntan?
A puddle.

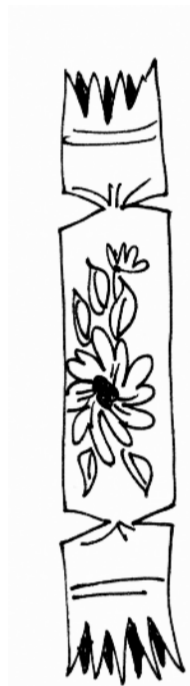
Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?
A mince spy!

What carol is heard in the desert?
Camel ye faithful!

How do sheep greet each other at Christmas?
A merry Christmas to ewe!

Why are Christmas trees like bad knitters?
They both drop needles.

Why did the children call St. Nick "Santa Caus"?
Because there was No-ël.



Very Clever NEW Credit Card Scam!

Please take heed. It is a new one, and easy to be taken in by this scam.

The following is a recounting of the incident from the victim

Beware of people bearing gifts.

Wednesday a week ago, I had a phone call from someone saying that he was from some outfit called: "Express Couriers," (*The name could be any courier Company*). He asked if I was going to be home because there was a package for me that required a signature.

The caller said that the delivery would arrive at my home in roughly an hour. Sure enough, about an hour later, a uniformed delivery man turned up with a beautiful basket of flowers and a bottle of wine. I was very surprised since there was no special occasion or holiday, and I certainly didn't expect anything like it. Intrigued, I inquired as to who the sender was.

The courier replied, "I don't know, I'm only delivering the package." Apparently, a card was being sent separately... (The card has never arrived!) There was also a consignment note with the gift.

He then went on to explain that because the gift contained alcohol, there was a £3.50 "delivery/verification charge," providing proof

that he had actually delivered the package to an adult (*of legal drinking age*), and not just left it on the doorstep where it could be stolen or taken by anyone, especially a minor.

This sounded logical and I offered to pay him cash. He then said that the delivery company required payment to be by credit or debit card only, so that everything is properly accounted for, and this would help in keeping a legal record of the transaction. He added couriers don't carry cash to avoid loss or likely targets for robbery.

My husband, who by this time was standing beside me, pulled out his credit card, and 'John,' the "delivery man," asked him to swipe the card on a small mobile card machine with a small screen and keypad. Frank, my husband, was asked to enter his PIN number and a receipt was printed out. He was given a copy of the transaction. He guy said everything was in order, and wished us good day.

To our horrible surprise, between Thursday and the following Monday, £4,000 had been charged and

withdrawn from our debit account at various ATM machines.

Apparently the "mobile credit card machine," which the deliveryman carried now had all the info necessary to create a "dummy" card with all our card details including the PIN number.

Upon finding out about the illegal transactions on our card, we immediately notified the bank which issued us a new card, and our credit/debit account was closed.

WARNING: Be wary of accepting any "surprise gift or package," which you neither expected nor personally ordered, especially if it involves any kind of payment as a condition of receiving the gift or package. Also, never accept anything if you do not personally know or there is no proper identification of who the sender is.

Above all, the only time you should give out any personal credit/debit card information is when you yourself initiated the purchase or transaction!

A Gift of Christmas



The popular booklet that celebrates and reflects on the story of Christmas.

Containing Bible passages, excerpts from Christmas Hymns and other quotations, it is an engaging resource for churches to use in their communities. It is designed to give away as a 'Gift' and is a great way to share the meaning of the Christmas story with friends, neighbours or even passers-by.

It is also ideal for small-group and personal reflection.

Order from Methodist Publishing, at £5 for 50 booklets (plus postage & packing).

Download a PowerPoint presentation of A Gift of Christmas (Ppt)
Download a Pdf of A Gift of Christmas Download the ebook for Kindle

From:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/advent-and-christmas>

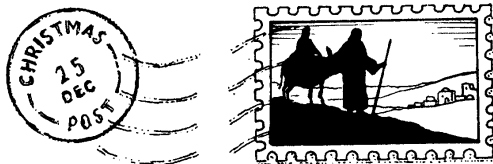
"A man at work, making something which he feels will exist because he is working at it and wills it, is exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as of his body. Memory and imagination help him as he works."

William Morris

Christmas starts with Christ

A campaign under this heading has been launched in an attempt to 'bring the message of Christmas to those who have forgotten it.' The aim is to spread the true meaning of Christmas through a national poster campaign. A recent survey by ComRes on behalf of the campaign showed that more than half of the UK population (53%) do not consider celebrating the birth of Jesus through religious services an important part of Christmas. The campaign 'wants to unite Christians across the country behind the message of Christmas starts with Christ and provide them with the tools to spread this truth in a meaningful way.'

For those who want to find out more and perhaps request a free resource pack, the website is: **christmasstartswithchrist.com**



**THE EALING CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARD SHOP
CHURCH OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR, EALING BROADWAY
OPEN MONDAY-SATURDAY 10.00-5.00 UNTIL SATURDAY
19TH DECEMBER**

(100% of card price goes to the charities represented)



**Methodist Parliamentary
Covenant Service
12 January 17.30
St Mary Undercroft Chapel**

A wonderful opportunity to worship in the beautiful St Mary Undercroft Chapel at the heart of our national life, led by the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins. All are welcome, but please contact Ollie McEwen (ollie.mcewen@mchw.org.uk) with your name and address for security purposes



The Unofficial Bible for Minecrafters

Stories from the Bible told block by block

Since 2009 Minecraft has taken the gaming world by storm and is particularly popular with children. Now, young fans of this phenomenon can follow the adventures of God's people in [The Unofficial Bible for Minecrafters](#)* – a virtual-world style book of Bible stories.



Bible characters and stories have been recreated with the famous virtual blocks to produce vibrant and complex 3D worlds that are sure to be a hit with all those kids (and grown-ups) who love the game.

The images in the book have been combined with text boxes and speech bubbles to explain the stories. The dialogue includes in-game humour and, although the text is light, it explains biblical events thoroughly for the ages 7–11 years.

At just £12.99 it makes a unique Christmas gift for any Minecraft fan. You can get it today from the [Bible Society shop](#)

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products>

along with all of our other Christmas gifts and activities including [My Advent Activity Pack](#), [Christian Music – A Global History](#), the [leather edition ESV Bible](#) and much more.

Answers to the quiz

1. God with us – Matt 1:23
2. Her child is in Christ's lineage – Matt 1:5
3. 'Be afraid/fear' Matt 1:20
4. Mary's greeting/ the Holy Spirit
5. Gabriel – Luke 1:26
6. The House of Bread. It was the city of David – Luke 2:4
7. To be registered in a Roman census Luke 2:1-5
8. 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy....' Luke 2:10
9. 'But you Bethlehem, in the land of Judea... out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' Matt 2:6
10. Massacre of the Innocents by Herod – Matt 2:18

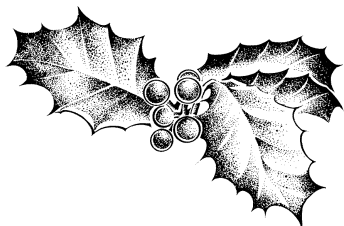


HOLLY

We sing about the Holly and the Ivy and prickly green leaves and red berries are everywhere in Christmas decorations.

In Scandinavian countries the holly is even known as the Christ-thorn and it seems that the name of the holly actually came from the word holly .

The holly reminds us of the death of Jesus the sharp prickles on the leaves are like the crown on thorns that Jesus was forced to wear on the cross. The red berries remind us of the drops of blood that came where the thorns hurt his head.



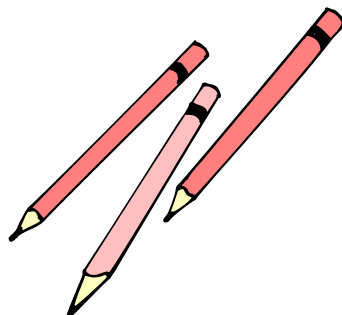
Holly is an evergreen, which means that it does not lose its leaves in the autumn, but keeps them all year round. And because its leaves are always green it is a symbol of eternal life.

SHARP PRESENTS

A quick way to make little presents for all your class and friends.

You will need nice pencils, glue (spray glue is best) and Christmas wrapping paper with a small pattern on it. Choose round pencils rather than the hexagonal type.

Cut a strip of wrapping paper wide enough to wrap around the pencil and as long as the pencil. Put glue on the back of the paper and wrap it around the pencil. When the glue has dried; trim away any excess paper with small scissors.



**What did the werewolf write
on his Christmas cards?**
Best vicious of the season.

**What do
elves sing to
Santa?**
Freeze a Jolly
Good Fellow!



EVENTS AT KINGSDOWN

DECEMBER

- Mon 8.00 pm Guides (most Mondays throughout the month)
- Tue 1 2.00 pm Kingsdown Club - A Talk by Janet Smith
Kingsdown Church Council Meeting
- Wed 2 1 pm Babies & Toddlers commences (weekly) (term time only)
- Thu 3 3.30 pm - 5.30 pm CBSI UK Bible Studies in the Foyer
- Fri 4 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 (most
Fridays throughout month)
- Sat 5 10.00 am to 12 noon Coffee & Chat - everyone welcome
- Sun 6 4.00 pm **Acton Hill**: Iris Axon Concert Series
Kaleidoscope Wind Ensemble -Tickets £5.00
- Tue 9 Liz & Steve Palmer's Home Group
- Sat 12 7.00 pm Ealing Choral Society Christmas Concert
St Barnabas, Pitshanger Lane in support of Ealing Churches
Winter Night Shelter
- Tue 15 2.00 pm Kingsdown Club -The Christmas Tea Party when
Dave Entertains



JANUARY

- Sun 6 6.30 pm Circuit Service at Ealing Green

Next Book Fair date is Saturday, 13 February

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.