

Isles of Scilly



Methodist Church Circuit

IN TOUCH

December 2017/January 2018

Chairman of the District

Revd. Stephen Wild M.A.

Minister

Revd. Jane Willcock 422406

Local Preachers

Mr Len Michell,
Mr Gordon Bird, Mr Christopher Savill

Circuit Stewards

Mrs Christine Savill 423563
Mr Mervyn Bird 423117
Mrs Beryl Read 422977
Mr Len Michell 422409

Circuit Treasurer Mr Christopher Savill 423563

Gift Aid Secretary Mrs Stephanie Bird 423117

Circuit Meeting Secretary

Heather Terry

Church Stewards St. Mary's

Mrs Claire Jenkins Mrs June Lethbridge
Mr Philip Lethbridge Mrs Beryl Read
Mrs Sue Williams Mrs Leigh Kendrick

St. Martin's Mr Derek Perkins

St. Mary's

Treasurer Mrs Sue Williams 422605

Church Council Secretary Mrs Beryl Read 422977

Property Secretary

Organist Mr Len Michell 422409

St. Martin's

Church Council Secretary Mrs Jackie Perkins

Church Treasurer Mr Alan Terry

Connexional Link Person Mrs Beryl Read 422977

From the Manse

As I write this, John and I have just returned from six weeks on the mainland. When we left, autumn was just beginning, schools were only just getting into a new school year and there were still holiday-makers here and the bird watchers were just arriving.



While being on the mainland we've all had the school half-term, Halloween, bonfire night and the turning back of the clocks. Autumn is well and truly here and winter only a breath away.

I do want to thank the Rev Brian Mavers and Mrs Mary Mavers for coming over to hold the fort here. I know they've enjoyed their time and appreciated your welcome and kindness. They're looking forward to returning in February. So I thank you, too, for making their stay so happy.

One of the things we noticed most forcefully on returning home was the crowds and difficulty in getting into Truro, parking when you did get there and moving around when you had found a place to park in. Before we came back the 'pre-Christmas' pressure selling and panic buying had begun. From now on, of course, the pressure will rise, reaching its crescendo on December 24th with another spurt on December 31st! So how wonderful it was to return here and the crowds have left, the harbour cleared and the decorations in the shops are just enough to make us aware what time of year it is; enough to make us look forward and to prepare but without the pressure and the anxiety. Now it is that the beauty of the landscape is obvious and the haunting beauty of the year ending brings peace and a clarity we miss in the busy days of summer.

Now Advent will soon be here and the Christmas and New Year festivities claim attention. Already in what I've written I've looked back and looked forward to events which are Christian festivals – All Hallows Eve, with its partner All Souls Day when the church remembers not ghosts and scary ghouls, but those who have died; particularly those who've lived faithful, godly lives. Even bonfire night has overtones, sadly not of festival, but of a time of religious division which led to very unchristian behaviour.

Advent is a time for us to prepare – not just for presents, decorations and big meals, but for the coming of Christmas, for

the birth of the Christ Child. The coming of any baby needs preparation – clothes, bedding, toys and, most of all, loving hearts to welcome it. The coming of this baby asks us to prepare our hearts and minds to love, not only Him, but all God’s children, young and old, whatever their creed or colour; whatever their gender or nationality, because in Jesus we see the love of God FOR ALL.

Soon after Christmas, New Year arrives and it’s a time when we’re asked to make ‘resolutions’ in order to be ‘better people’. Well, I don’t bother because I know all my resolutions go out of the window very quickly! What I do is to ask Jesus to help me, not just at New Year but every day, to become more like Him. In the Methodist Church we have a special service at the beginning of the year where we remember God’s goodness to us and we promise to live more closely with Him in the year ahead.

So although it seems a bit early to say this, I do pray you will have a joyful Advent, a blessed Christmas and a truly Happy New Year.

There will be special services at both church and chapel which you will be very welcome to attend. Please look at the notice boards for details and join us.

Best wishes

Jane

Prompting

The boy forgot his lines in the Christmas drama presentation. His mother, sitting in the front row, tried to prompt him, gesturing and forming the words silently with her lips, but it didn't help. Her son's memory was blank.

Finally, she leaned forward and whispered the cue, ‘I am the angel Gabriel!’ The child beamed with acknowledgment, and in a loud, clear voice so that everyone in the audience could hear him say: ‘My Mummy is the angel Gabriel!’

News from St Martin's

We have had a time for reflection since most of our visitors have left the Islands and businesses have been tidying away for the winter, which seemed to come early when the tail end of a hurricane whipped through and then storm Brian.

Plenty of seaweed for the fields and gardens though!

It was good to welcome Brian and Mary Mavericks to our chapel and thank them for their ministry. Many memories were shared and we look forward to their return later in the winter.

As always, we thank Chris Savill who has also held the reins, along with Len Michell who has not been in the best of health, so we send our best wishes and hope he is feeling stronger.

We are pleased that Keith Low has returned to St Mary's hospital, after a very difficult time. We wish him a good recovery and look forward to seeing him back on St Martin's.

We hope Jane and John have enjoyed their time on the mainland and return to us with recharged batteries ready for the challenges of leading us again.

Val Thomas



Camels

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

Action for Children Weekend

'Do what you can for us mister', was the cry heard from a young lad living under the arches of Waterloo Bridge in the 1860's, before he disappeared into the darkness. He was addressing a young Methodist minister called Thomas Bowman Stephenson, who had been moved by the fate of London street children. Rev Stephenson took up the challenge and founded the National Children's Home in 1868. Since then the charity has succeeded **by doing what's right, doing what's needed and doing what works for children.** Action for Children (AfC) now improves the lives of 390,000 children, teenagers, parents and carers every year!!

It was a pleasure for the Circuit to welcome Jamie Lee, the South West area regional fund raiser for AfC, over the weekend of September 24th. He outlined the present scope of AfC's work during services on St. Marys and St. Martins. At a Fellowship meeting on St. Mary's Jamie gave a more detailed account of the charity's history, emphasising how their focus has changed and evolved to meet the needs of vulnerable youngsters through the generations. He explained how the move to care for young people within loving family homes led to the name change, from NCH to AfC.

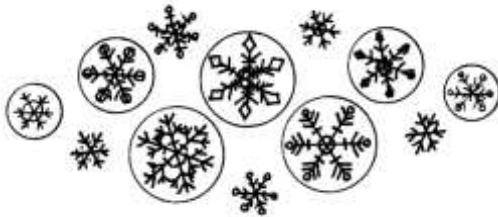


A highlight of Jamie's visit to Scilly was his presentation to Gwen Clarkson of a framed certificate and a medal, in recognition of her passionate and ceaseless fund raising for AfC since 1960. Fifty seven years of effort and Gwen is still raising money! God has

certainly blessed AfC through Gwen, and other highly committed people like her. The Fellowship evening concluded with some social time, when Jamie answered questions, food was shared and a special celebratory cake for Gwen was much enjoyed.

Before leaving on the Scillonian on the Monday, Jamie spoke with the secondary and primary pupils at the Five Islands Academy during their respective assemblies. It was definitely a busy weekend for him. Like so many who make their first visit to Scilly, Jamie was overwhelmed by the beauty of the Islands and hopes to return with his wife and family.

Heather



It has been a great relief to come home without the day's blackberry pick, because yet another friend has kindly taken them and given me a generous donation for the Methodist children's charity, Action for Children. My heartfelt thanks and God's blessing on you all!

Gwen Clarkson

Angels, explained by children

I only know the names of two angels, Hark and Harold. - Gregory, aged 5

Everybody's got it all wrong. Angels don't wear halos anymore. I forget why, but scientists are working on it. - Olive, aged 9

Report from Synod September 2017

Chris and I were both able to attend Synod as it conveniently fell at the beginning of our holiday!

Our Chair of District the Rev. Steve Wild oversaw the whole day which was well attended by representatives from all Circuits. All the new Ministers and Deacons were welcomed to the District and there was short administrative session prior to devotions.

The remainder of the morning session was led by Miss Jude Levermore, Head of Discipleship and Ministry, Methodist Church and was entitled "Do not be afraid"

Jude began her session with some stark statistics which I will share with you.

Christianity is now a minority in society – 71% of people aged 18 - 25 have no religion.

The Methodist Church loses 1000 members per month - most members are over 70yrs.

Nationally per 1000 people there are 3 members and 4 associated members - we give thanks that the ratio on Scilly is much higher.

The people who use the Church buildings are much younger.

This situation is creating anger and anxiety within the Church but those words from the Lord's Prayer "Thy will be done" must be prominent in our thoughts/plans as churches look to the future.

What is the Lord's will now the church is in decline?

She encouraged us individually and as a church to bless others by what we are good at, and gave an example of a church where the older generation made cakes for the play group held in the church and this brought blessings as the generations came together. As churches and individuals our task is to try and portray the image of God to others

Jude gave us an analogy of 4 ways in which the church changes to changes to culture.

The Garden – keep the message and method the same.

The Park – keep the message but change the methods.

The Glen – change the message but not the method.

The Meadow – change both.

She said these are all very similar and there is no right answer but the important thing is to listen to God and to listen to people outside as well as inside the church. The example of sailing was given when it is necessary to tack to move in the right direction

and although scary/terrifying, churches sometimes need to tack to do Gods will. Jude promoted the use of story and testimony and asked for churches to be 10% braver and prepared to take risks and not to be afraid! I believe Jude's thoughts to us raised more questions than answers which is good!

It was good to catch up with some familiar faces over lunch and to get to know others!

The afternoon session was taken up by further administration and discussions before closing at 2.30pm in time for us to catch our train to London!

Christine Savill

Action for Children Income 2016/17

Since last reporting the AfC income a year ago, I have been able to send **£644 - 82** to this special Methodist charity. The total is a little more than last year, and does not include the money sent from St. Mary's Chapel Christmas collections. A breakdown of the total is listed below.

Gwen and I thank everyone who has supported the fund raising efforts. Action for Children really need a sustained income to carry on their essential work, and are appreciative of our efforts.

If anyone would like a home collection box please let me know. Again, could I please ask you to save unwanted paperback books until next spring, when I will gladly receive them for the roadside box. Thank you.

Heather

Roadside book and vegetable box	£265 - 03
Coffee Morning	£167 - 00
Gwen's sale of blackberries	£ 91 - 40
Home collection boxes	£ 57 - 78
AfC Sunday pew envelopes	£ 30 - 00
Copper coin collection	£ 28 - 61
Donation	£ 5 - 00
TOTAL	£ 644 - 82

The man who married Mary

The traditional Nativity scene on our Christmas cards has Mary with the Holy Babe. Around her are the shepherds and Magi. We may also see stable animals, angels and a star! While Joseph is often included, his presence seems to be of minor importance. After all, we praise God for Jesus with our familiar Christmas carols, mentioning angels, shepherds, Wise men and Mary but the name of Joseph is absent! Why is Joseph given a low profile? For he is a man to be remembered.

Joseph was a resident of Nazareth. He worked as a carpenter and his skills would have included making furniture, repairing buildings and crafting agricultural tools. Although Joseph had an honourable profession, he would not have been a man of great wealth.

The gospel writers Matthew and Luke give Joseph a few brief mentions. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary go to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate the Baby to God. Afterwards, they flee into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod and much later return to Nazareth. Twelve years later, Mary and Joseph go with Jesus to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Here they lose Jesus, and find Him in the Temple talking with religious leaders!

Apart from these verses, the New Testament is silent about the rest of Joseph's life. However, we do know that Joseph was father to other children by Mary. His four sons are named and they had at least two daughters. (See Matthew 13:55)

And we also know that Joseph was someone who quietly and humbly took on the awesome role in caring for the early life of the Son of God. Joseph would have taught Jesus many things – not just the skills of a labourer, but the lore of the countryside which was evident in our Lord's teaching. Jesus grew up within a loving family and described God as 'Father', knowing also the good fatherly qualities of Joseph.

In the Christmas story, Joseph is placed into a situation that brought him misunderstanding and suspicion. But Joseph

remained faithful in the knowledge that as long as God had spoken, the opinion of others mattered little. Before Jesus began His ministry it is believed that Joseph died. It is likely Jesus took on many of his father's responsibilities before He left home.

In the eyes of the world, Joseph was a nobody. He was not a man of valour, fame and fortune. But he was the one who had parental responsibility for the greatest person who has ever lived!

It is sad that we often equate ordinariness with ineffectiveness. Down the ages, God has used many ordinary people to accomplish great things. God continues to use ordinary people. Like Joseph, we need to know that doing God's will is the most important thing in life. May we, this Christmas, respond to God's call to us and please Him in all that we do.

By Lester Amann

A New Year's Resolution?

The year has gone, what have we done
To share the love that Jesus gives?
He's touched our lives, made us anew
This is the Lord's most precious gift.

The will of God is plainly shown
That all be saved and come to Him,
With arms outstretched to welcome us
As upon the cross when He took our sin.

So many lives in darkness held,
Poor blinded eyes that cannot see,
But prayer can take the scales away
So they may know God's liberty.

Why not resolve this year to pray
That God would send the gentle Dove?
To bring salvation to each heart
So they can know His Calvary love.

By Megan Carter

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

Prompting

The boy forgot his lines in the Christmas drama presentation. His mother, sitting in the front row, tried to prompt him, gesturing and forming the words silently with her lips, but it didn't help. Her son's memory was blank.

Finally, she leaned forward and whispered the cue, 'I am the angel Gabriel!' The child beamed with acknowledgment, and in a loud, clear voice so that everyone in the audience could hear him say: 'My Mummy is the angel Gabriel!'

Women's World Day of Prayer 2018

The date for the interdenominational Women's World Day of Prayer in **2018 is Friday March 2nd**. I trust that we can again mark this very special day, here in the Islands. I know that next year's diaries and calendars are unlikely to be in your homes yet, but please make a note of the date! The Christian ladies of Surinam have prepared the order of service, which is called 'All God's Creation is Very Good', and is concerned with the care of our planet. The planning and preparation meeting for this act of worship will be held in the **Wesley Room at the Manse on Friday February 16th at 2.00pm**.



The service will take place in the Anglican Parish Church, probably starting at 2.00pm.

I will circulate this information again nearer the time.

Finally, on behalf of the ladies who have attended Women's World Day of Prayer services in the past, I would like to thank Claire (Jenkins) for undertaking the organisation over a good number of years. I trust I can be a worthy successor.

Heather Terry

The name of God....

A little boy arrived at the gate of heaven. There he met an angel. 'Before you come in, can you tell me God's name?' said the angel. 'Oh, that's easy,' the little boy replied, 'His name is Harold.' 'What makes you think His name is Harold?' the angel asked incredulously. The little boy explained: 'Because at Christmas we sing "Hark while Harold's angels sing..." and also, when we pray, we say: "Our Father in Heaven, Harold be Thy Name..."'

Rohingya Refugee Crisis Appeal

All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain are calling for support for this urgent appeal for refugees displaced by the recent violence in Myanmar. Over the past few months, more than half a million people have fled violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State. The majority of those fleeing are Rohingya women and children.

Since violence flared up in Myanmar in late August, an estimated 519,000 Rohingya have sought shelter and safety in Bangladesh. Many are currently living in temporary, unsanitary structures constructed out of plastic sheeting and bamboo in informal camps and settlements.

Refugees are arriving in Bangladesh exhausted and traumatized, and camps and local host communities are struggling to respond to the scale of this disaster.

All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain are calling for generous support for this urgent appeal to assist those seeking refuge in Bangladesh. People are in desperate need of water, food, shelter and access to medical care.

Food insecurity is one of the primary areas of concern, while providing health care, access to safe water and mitigating the threat of disease is critical. Heavy rains in recent days have made an already precarious situation worse for refugees trying to seek shelter in sub-standard housing and makeshift camps. All We Can's partner is responding to this emergency and is calling for urgent funds to help reach people suffering because of this crisis.

Many bring with them accounts of brutality and report having seen and suffered atrocities that have left them traumatised. Meeting the needs of these refugees who have suffered so much is critical. To donate, visit www.allwecan.org/rohingya

Would you like to write a prayer for the next Methodist Prayer Handbook?

The theme for next year's Methodist Prayer Handbook will be 'a world transformed by God's love', inspired by the One Mission Statement of the Methodist Church in Britain (see www.methodist.org.uk/onemission).

The theme runs like this: through Christ, in the power of the Spirit, we share God's mission, both to renew the created order and to transform lives, communities and nations. Christians and their neighbours are not only subjects of change but agents of change. Individually and collectively we are both challenged and changed by God's transforming love. The gospel of resurrection celebrates the way all things change shape, bringing to birth a new people and a new society and, on a cosmic scale, all things returning to the perfection of God from whom they took their origins.

Would you like to contribute a prayer along these lines? The editor also welcomes prayers for the general pages at the front of the Handbook on the following themes: the integrity of creation, the comforting presence of God, justice, adoration and thanksgiving, confession, times of life and times of day.

Prayers should not exceed 120 words or 12 lines. Shorter prayers and prayers for specific themes or countries are more likely to be used.

When submitting prayers, please give your postal address (so that you can be sent a complimentary copy if your prayer is used), your full name and how you would like to be described (e.g. Jane Jones, local preacher, Townton).

The deadline for submission is 12 January 2018. Prayers should be emailed to prayerhandbook@methodistchurch.org.uk in the body of an email, not as an attachment. For full details please visit <http://methodist.org.uk/prayerhandbook>.

Epiphany

On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origen, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

Birthday Greetings

This time we send our greetings to those who have birthdays in December: Louis Asten, Keith Grossett, Pauline Jackson Cocking, Gladys Perkins, Josh Smith, Merryn Smith.



And in January: Sue Bavin, Gordon Bird, Stephanie Bird, John Goody, Layla Guy, Martin Parker, Anthea Roberts, William Thomas, Nathan Thomas, Liz Turner.

We wish them every blessing and a very happy day.

Mouse Makes

Colour in one star a day as you countdown to Christmas

"I bring you **good news** that will bring great **joy** to all people. The **Saviour** has been born today! ...
 Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased".
from Luke 2 vs. 10,11,14

CHRISTMAS

B A B Y T H O L Y J U D E A R T H
 B J P E A C E S O N O F L O C K P U S
 R O F I E L D E G A S H E P H E R D S
 I Y O N B O R N O Z E G M A R Y A A A
 N M R N A T O Z O A P A A L I R I V V
 G O D S C H I L D R H L N A S O S I I
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 O G U A R D I B E T H L E H E M Z S U
 R S L S H E E P W H Y E R L O R D O R
 Y N N A N G E L S B H E A V E N A M E

MARY • JOSEPH • NAZARETH • GALILEE • JUDEA • BETHLEHEM • DAVID
 HOLY • CHILD • BABY • SON • NAME • JESUS • MANGER • ROOM • INN
 SHEPHERDS • FIELD • GUARD • FLOCK • SHEEP • ANGELS • SHONE • BRING
 GOOD NEWS • JOY • SAVIOUR • BORN • CHRIST • LORD • LIGHT
 PRAISE • GLORY • GOD • PEACE • EARTH • HEAVEN • CHRISTMAS

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This is the Circuit magazine but it needs your contributions to make sure everyone knows what is happening. Please send your contributions to the editor by 15th of the month.

In Touch can be read on line. Just go to our Circuit website www.scillymethodists.co.uk and click on the link to the newsletter. Back numbers of In Touch can also be accessed. If you would prefer to read In Touch in this way please let us know and we can save the cost of a paper copy.

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Some material in this magazine was obtained from [www.parishpump.co.uk](http://www.parishpump.co.uk). We thank them for providing material for magazine editors to use.

## Services for January

At the time this edition of In Touch was put together the preaching plan for January was not known. Please look at Church notice boards and the weekly notices to get information about the services.



## PRAYER CHAIN

Please contact Revd. Jane Willcock (422406) who will pass on the prayer request to the first name in each of the groups.

**Meryn & Stephanie Bird**                      **423117**  
Sue Williams                                      422605

**Claire Jenkins**                                      **423546**  
Margaret Snowball                              422896  
Gordon Bird                                        422550  
Sonia Crompton                                  422854

**Barbara Hasler**                                      **422208**  
Len & Sylvia Michell                              422409  
Pamela Thomas                                  423115  
June Lethbridge                                  422404

**Beryl Read**                                              **422977**  
Gwen Clarkson                                      423106

*For the Prayer Chain to be effective it is essential that requests are forwarded to the person in the column beneath your name. If that person is not available, please, ring the next person on the list.*

*If anyone else would like to join in this special ministry, please, contact Revd. Jane Willcock on 422406.*

*We thank God that we can be channels of his grace.*

# SERVICES FOR DECEMBER

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## St Mary's

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|      |         |                                               |
|------|---------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 3rd  | 10.30am | Rev Jane Willcock<br><i>Holy Communion</i>    |
|      | 6.00pm  | Advent Carol Service<br>Parish Church         |
| 10th | 9.15am  | Rev Jane Willcock                             |
|      | 11.00am | Gordon Bird                                   |
| 17th | 9.15am  | Len Michell                                   |
|      | 11.00am | Stewards                                      |
|      | 6.00pm  | Walking Nativity and Carols<br>By Candlelight |
| 24th | 10.30am | Rev Jane Willcock                             |
|      | 4.00pm  | Christingle Service<br>Parish Church          |
| 25th | 10.30am | Rev Jane Willcock                             |
| 31st | 9.15am  | Rev Jane Willcock                             |
|      | 11.00am | Rev Jane Willcock<br>Songs of Praise          |

## St Martin's

|      |         |                                      |
|------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 3rd  | 11.00am | Beryl Read                           |
| 10th | 3.00pm  | Rev Jane Willcock & Canon Perran Gay |
| 17th | 2.00pm  | Rev Jane Willcock (Carol Service)    |
| 24th | 11.00am | Christopher Savill                   |
| 31st | 3.00pm  | Rev Jane Willcock                    |

## Park House

|     |        |                             |
|-----|--------|-----------------------------|
| 3rd | 4.00pm | Rev Jane Willcock<br>Carols |
|-----|--------|-----------------------------|