

Isles of Scilly



Methodist Church Circuit

IN TOUCH

December 2020/January 2021

Chairman of the District: Revd. Stephen Wild M.A.

Superintendent Minister:

Revd. Michael Pullan B.Ed., B.D. 422406

Local Preachers:

Mr Len Michell-(*not taking services this quarter*) 422409

Mr Christopher Savill 423563

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: Mrs Heather Terry 422329

Church Stewards:

St. Mary's Mrs Claire Jenkins Mrs Jean Duncan
Mr Philip Lethbridge Mrs Leigh Kendrick
Mrs Sue Williams

St. Martin's Mrs Barbara Jones

St. Mary's

Treasurer: Mrs Sue Williams 422605

Church Council Secretary: Mrs Beryl Read 422977

Hall Booking Secretary: Mrs Anne Gurr 422224

Organist: Mr Len Michell 422409

Deputy Organist: Mr Philip Lethbridge 422404

St. Martin's

Church Council Secretary: Mrs Jackie Perkins 422814

Church Treasurer: Mr Alan Terry 422329

Connexional Link Person: Mrs Beryl Read 422977

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Barbara James 422674

From the Manse

Dear Friends

Given the year we are in drawing to a close a greeting. 'We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year' (sometimes sung!) would seem appropriate.



We need to reflect on what Christmas is and means to us. Taking headlines like '22 days to save Christmas!' (Dec 3-24?), 'Shopping for Christmas' – we could say that we 'spend' Christmas.

Given an extra bank holiday (Dec 28th) as Boxing Day is on a Saturday, we might say we 'observe' Christmas – a sort of national holiday.

Without wanting to prevent the above, if we said that this year is an extraordinary Christmas, it would reflect the strange times we are living through. In hindsight we might say that the first Christmas was extraordinary – more than just a baby in the hay! Mary (at the time) as one of the major players 'kept' all these things in her heart – presumably the visitation to her of the Angel Gabriel (Luke 1, vv. 26-38), her response, the meeting with Elizabeth, the journey to Bethlehem, the shepherds and the testimony and message when they came to see her baby.

In that sense we can keep Christmas (even if not able to collectively sing carols or worship together) and agree that it is more than just a baby in the hay and that we have known God's presence with and within us as we've journeyed in 2020.

If not, we could say of ourselves and the world in words from Band Aid in 1985 – 'do they know it's Christmas time at all?'

Lockdown restrictions over four months of the year have posed difficulties for many people across the age groups. If we stop and recall that the Creator of the Universe and beyond, of all that there is (as Charles Wesley wrote – 'Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensively made man') and that it's possible to know Him as we know His Son, Jesus, whose birth we celebrate, but who didn't remain in the manger, then Christmas takes on a new 'timeless' meaning and we could say that His coming was a real restriction (even if not lockdown) and borne out of God's love for this world – mind boggling!

Let's not shop for Christmas, but stop for it and marvel 'Wow!' at Christ's coming into the world, not just in Bethlehem 2000 years

ago, but into our hearts and lives today (if we let Him) to make a real difference to us and for us, and to help us make a difference in the world, wherever we are. And as an advert reminds us – it's a gift for today and forever!

Ann joins me in wishing you a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and a hopeful and helpful New Year.

Michael



News from St Martin's

Here we are again - just as we were enjoying a relatively 'new normal' we are back to lock down, when we can no longer meet in Chapel. At least we have had a few months of worship together, and were getting used to the odd humming of hymns behind our masks! Thanks to Michael for braving the elements to join us, and to Christopher and Jackie for leading worship when he was unable to. We have continued our support of young Yusra in Tanzania, through financial help and sending news. One can only imagine how difficult it must be to cope with the Pandemic in the poorer parts of the world. It was strange not being able to join together for Remembrance Sunday but I'm sure we all paid our respects to the many who gave their lives for their country, in our own way. Watching the one hundredth ceremony at the Cenotaph in London, where only a few were able to commemorate the fallen, was a sad reminder of the times we are living in.

As I write, we have news of what seems to be a successful vaccine having been developed - so it is with hope that we look ahead - and maybe that wish for a healthy and happy Christmas will come true? Keep safe, and keep the faith

Val Thomas

Good News.....A New Birth – A New Year

This December/January edition of 'In Touch' reminds us of two facts. As Christians, in December we celebrate a NEW BIRTH. The mystery of the incarnation, that is – God's coming to earth in human form as Jesus Christ. Only God can reveal this to us. After Peter's declaration – "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus said, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you." (Matt. 16 vs. 16 & 17). In other words, it is only by God's grace and the opening of our 'inner' eyes that we can recognise who Jesus is. A NEW BIRTH comes to give us NEW LIFE!

Then there is the NEW YEAR. We all have hope for a new vaccine to cure Coronavirus, to lift our spirits and give us hope of a cure for this dreadful disease.

One thing we can be sure of – we can go into the NEW YEAR with certain hope of God's unchanging presence. Old, yet ever new! If we, by God's grace, are a member of Zion's city, we have this assurance of His word. "Lo, I am with you always" – God is in control! He is preparing a 'NEW HEAVEN' and a 'NEW EARTH' wherein dwells righteousness.' (2 Peter 3 v. 13). God will make 'All things NEW.'

Let us then put all our trust in Him – the God of our salvation.

Pauline Jackson Cocking



There are copies of the FRIENDSHIP BOOK 2021 and the FIRESIDE BOOK 2021 for sale at £7 each (normally £8.99) in the Wesley Room as well as a Traidcraft Christmas catalogue and a small selection of cards. Further copies can be obtained if they are sold!

Follow the Star

Jesus' welcoming committee included Eastern scholars who learned about His birth through their study of astrology. I can't help thinking that the arrival of these people at Bethlehem is a link between a very early form of science (albeit mixed in with their own form of religion) and Christian faith. What better way to discover God than to explore the world and follow the evidence wherever it leads? But what exactly was the star of Bethlehem? Scientists have investigated this question over the centuries, coming up with a variety of answers.

First, there is the idea of a supernova: the massively bright explosion caused by a dying star. On rare occasions a supernova can be seen from Earth with the naked eye, remaining visible for several months. We now know that Herod the Great died around 4BC, so the actual date of Jesus' birth must be a little earlier. The supernovae that might match this timing were one in the Andromeda galaxy between March 8BC and September 7BC, and another in the constellation of Capricorn in the Spring of 5BC.

Next, comes a planetary conjunction. The alignment most commonly associated with the star of Bethlehem was between Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces in 7BC, but not everyone is sure whether this would be extraordinary enough to be the 'star' mentioned in the Bible.

Finally, the bright astronomical object that drew the Magi could have been a comet. This idea came from Sir Colin Humphreys, Professor of Materials Science at Cambridge University, and Oxford astronomer WG Waddington, who found that a comet was recorded by Chinese astronomers between March and May, 5BC. Humphreys then speculated that the 'no room at the inn' scenario came about because Jesus was born during Passover, and the Magi visited Jesus in May or June.

People interpret the biblical account of Jesus' birth in all sorts of ways, but there's very little argument from serious historians that Jesus of Nazareth actually existed. Whatever the true explanation for the 'star of Bethlehem' may be, there's plenty of evidence that an astronomical event could have happened at the time of His birth.

I think it makes perfect sense that if God was going to enter His own creation and take on the form of one of His own creatures, it should be marked by a very significant physical event.

Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz

The Story is still the same!

'Christmas may look different, but the story is still the same!' That's the message for Christmas in 2020. Coronavirus will make our celebrations this year look very different from usual. However, the message of the baby born in Bethlehem is still relevant!

In one nativity play, the highlight was to illuminate Jesus, with a light in the manger, when all the other lights were turned off. At the appropriate time, all the lights went out, including the manger one. The silence was broken when one of the shepherds loudly whispered: 'Hey, you turned off Jesus.' Of course, nobody can turn off Jesus this Christmas!

The angels announced, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.' (Luke 2: 10,11). The birth of this baby brings great joy and good news for everyone! As the king of the universe, He has come as our Saviour. In an uncertain world, He offers joy and hope, because He holds this pandemic in His hands. This is a real cause for joy!

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests.' (Luke 2:14). We may feel anything but peace amid the anxieties over our current circumstances. How can a Jewish infant born to a peasant family in first century Palestine bring peace to our lives today? Jesus established peace with God through His death on the cross. Trusting the Prince of Peace for our lives brings God's peace amid the huge uncertainties we face. As the carol says, 'Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.'



This Christmas, when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern.
Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as opening our hearts.
Janice Maeditere

Action for Children

Information from Nick Jones, the Managing Director of Fundraising, Communication and Policy at the Annual District Advocates Conference on 22nd October may be of interest to those holding League of Light boxes or who support AFC in other ways.

In March 2020 368,000 children were being helped and supported through 503 services.

£780,000 was raised in an appeal to help 5,000 struggling families. (Secret Santa Appeal money from 2019 was also used). This appeal is continuing this year.

4/10 families in many areas are struggling to feed their children.

League of Light boxes are available from Mrs Heather Terry. The offering from the Christmas morning service on St Mary's (assuming we are open) is for Action for Children.

Action for Children Income 2019/20

Sadly the money I have been able to send to Action for Children in the past twelve months is much reduced. As I explained in the last In Touch, I did not attempt to sell books at the roadside because of the risk of Covid 19 transmission. Last year donations for books amounted to £332, so a figure in that order is a significant drop. Also, with the Chapel being closed, there hasn't been a small income from the coin trail. However I am grateful to those who run the Cameo Coffee Mornings, those who hold home collection boxes and Alan for their efforts. The total of **£280-45** is in addition to the money collected at the Christmas services, which Sue Williams sends separately.

We trust that next year will be a better one for all charities.

Thank you,

Heather

Home collection boxes	£126-25
Cameo Coffee Morning	£102-10
Donations for Alan's allotment produce	£ 52-10
TOTAL	£280-45

Christmas Card List

I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book
And every year when Christmas comes, I go and take a look
And that is when I realise that these names are a part
Not only of the book they're written in, but of my heart.
For each name stands for SOMEONE who has crossed my path
sometime,
And in that meeting they've become the rhythm in each rhyme.
And while this sounds fantastic for me to make this claim,
I really feel that I'm composed of each remembered name.
And while you may not be aware of any special 'link',
Just meeting you has changed my life a lot more than you think,
For once I've met somebody, the years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word or a friendly face.
So never think my Christmas cards are just mere routine
Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between.
For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you,
It's because you are on the list of folks I am indebted to.
For I am but the total of the many folks I've met,
And you happen to be one of those I prefer not to forget.
And whether I have known you for many years or few,
In some way you have had a part in shaping things I do.
And every year when Christmas comes, I realise anew,
The best gifts life can offer is meeting folks like you.
And may the Spirit of Christmas that forever endures
Leave its richest blessings in the hearts of you and yours.

Author unknown

*Words of Terry Waite (imprisoned for 1269 days) about the situation
we find ourselves in, in lockdown due to Covid.*

Stop complaining.
Change your mindset.
You're not stuck at home, you're safe at home.
Keep your own dignity – get out of your PJs.
Form a structure for the day.
Be grateful for what you have – shelter, home, possessions.
Read and be creative.

St Kevin of Glendalough and the blackbird



In the months of lockdown and restrictions, many of us have used the time to look afresh at the world of Nature and have learnt to value it once again.

When we look at the life of the 6th century Irish hermit saint, Kevin of Glendalough, we see someone who had that special relationship with the birds and animals. An otter, the wolf and a wild boar were his co-hermits. We are told

that during Lent as he was kneeling in prayer in his cell, he held his arm out of the window. A blackbird mistook the arm for the branch of a tree and built its nest in the saint's hand. The saint waited until the eggs were laid and hatched and the fledglings had flown.

One of the earliest depictions of this story is a marginal drawing in *The History of Ireland* by Gerald of Wales in the early 13th century and now in the British Library. He visited Ireland several times and was entranced by the marvels he saw and the tales he heard. To accompany the story of St Kevin, an unknown artist drew the saint sat in his cell, cradling the blackbird gently in his left hand. Seamus Heaney captured the story in a poem in which he wondered if the saint was self-forgetful in all those months or perhaps in agony. The poet praises St Kevin because he sought no reward, but offered time and patience to care for this sign of new life.

So much has happened to us during this year for good and ill, and we wonder what the new year will bring. Perhaps St Kevin can inspire us to journey with faith and hope, and to travel through the months ahead with a renewed concern for the created order around. The Gaelic name Kevin means loved. Like him, we pray

that we will love and cherish this planet, and care for the wonder and beauty of birds like the blackbird and all the animals. Then we can rejoice with him in the wonder of Creation that displays the handiwork of God the Creator.

Rev. Michael Burgess



I am made for....

Membership

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun. 2 Corinthians 5: 17

Maturity

Just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow down deep into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Colossians 2: 7

Ministry

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2: 10

Mission

Just as You sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. John 17: 18

Magnification

O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together. Psalm 34: 3



Angels on high

The young minister was tense as he announced a Christmas carol for his first live-streamed church service. 'Our next hymn,' he said, 'is "Angels We Have Heard Get High".'

Let's hear it for the Christmas card!

A folded piece of Christmas cheer
Came through the post today!
I love it when those cards appear
I love the things they say!

And at this busy Christmas time
I'm always glad to see
The Christmas scene or Christmas rhyme
That you have sent to me.

The trouble that good people take
Is really, really kind –
Some people even sit and make
A card for me to find!

And in our virtual world of text
And pictures on a screen
These bits and bytes leave me perplexed
If you know what I mean?

And so I think that it is fine
To see your kind regard
I can admire this Christmas time

Your real Christmas card!

By Nigel Beeton



God's Medicine Bottle

In the light of Covid, flu, etc, illness is very much in the forefront of our thinking/living and whilst a vaccine is nearer, it's worth considering taking God's word as medicine for our physical health. A bottle of medicine is often hard for us to swallow, be it due to its taste or our temperament. Usually we need to follow the directions on the bottle.

So with God's word:

In Proverbs 4, vv20-22 we are to

1. 'be attentive to my words – to pay close attention.
2. to bend your ear to my sayings (to bend the ear (incline is used in scripture). This can't be done without bending the head down – an attitude indicating humility/reachability.
3. Don't let them out of your sight – to focus both eyes on them. Our spiritual focus is sometimes blurred.
4. Keep them in your heart' – this anticipates the modern psychology of education by 3000 years. The ear gate and the eye gate are the means of reaching the heart (the centre of personality).

To be effective some medicines must be released into the bloodstream. God's medicine needs to be released in the heart to give life and healing (Proverbs 4: 23).

The advice ends profoundly with 'out of our heart flows the springs of life'.

May this lockdown period, Covid era and beyond see us taking God's word and experiencing real healing.

Christmas Worship this year

There will be no walking nativity on 20th December at 6pm.

There will be no Christingle service on December 24th

The following services will be conditional on the current Coronavirus restrictions

United Midnight Communion at the Parish Church 11.30pm on Christmas Eve.

United Morning Worship at the Methodist Church 10am on Christmas Day.



"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."

A Prayer for those affected by the Covid Pandemic

Dear God, the virus did not respect borders, it spread from place to place and person to person. It has brought grief, fear, hardship, suffering and isolation.

Dear God, your love does not respect borders. It flows from place to place and person to person. It brings comfort, hope, justice, wholeness and community.

Dear God, we pray for all those around the world whose lives have been impacted by Covid, that they may know Jesus' love for them.

From Prayer Manual 2020/21 Day 12 (Conrad Wells)

Birthdays



We wish the following very many happy returns on their birthdays and hope that they will be able to celebrate in their usual ways.

December

Pauline Jackson Cocking, Gladys Perkins, Josh Smith, Merryn Smith.

January

Stephanie Bird, Jean Goody, Martin Parker, Anthea Roberts, William Thomas, Nathan Thomas, Liz Turner.

Children's Birthdays

December

Louis Asten, Ellen Clark, Megan Woodcock.

January

Layla Guy, Bella Plowman, Jade Thomas.



Lines from Invocation of Peace

Deep peace, pure white of the moon to you;
Deep peace, pure green of the grass to you;
Deep peace, pure brown of the earth to you;
Deep peace, pure grey of the dew to you,
Deep peace, pure blue of the sky to you!
Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

By Fiona Macleod (19th century Celtic visionary and romantic)

Editorial Team

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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.

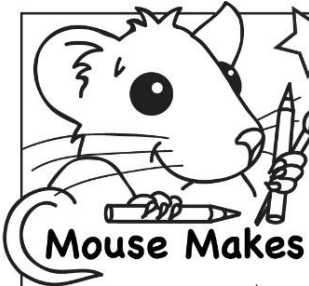


### Something to make you smile!

**Nativity.** No Nativity this year because the '3' wise men face a travel ban, the shepherds have been furloughed, the inn keeper has shut under tier 3 regulations and had a slump in bookings and Mary and Joseph can only travel for essential journeys!

**Christmas?!** Santa won't be working as he would be breaking the rule of 6 with Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Donner and Blitzen. As for Rudolf, with that red nose he should be isolating and taking a test!





# Mouse Makes

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**  
Read the Christmas story in Luke 1:1 - 2:21

"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



A picture to colour for Christmas. Colour in one star each day as you count down to Christmas!

## **JANUARY SERVICES**

(May be subject to change)

### **St Mary's – all at 10.30am**

|             |                                               |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>3rd</b>  | Rev Michael Pullan                            |
| <b>10th</b> | Rev Michael Pullan<br><i>Covenant Service</i> |
| <b>17th</b> | Rev Michael Pullan                            |
| <b>24th</b> | Canon Perran Gay                              |
| <b>31st</b> | Mrs Beryl Read                                |

### **St Martin's**

|             |                |                                               |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>3rd</b>  | <b>3.00pm</b>  | Rev Michael Pullan                            |
| <b>10th</b> | <b>3.00pm</b>  | Rev Michael Pullan<br><i>Covenant Service</i> |
| <b>17th</b> | <b>3.00pm</b>  | Rev Michael Pullan                            |
| <b>24th</b> | <b>3.00pm</b>  | Canon Perran Gay and<br>Rev Michael Pullan    |
| <b>31st</b> | <b>11.00am</b> | Rev Michael Pullan                            |



## PRAYER CHAIN

Please contact Rev Michael Pullan (422406) who will then pass on the prayer request to the first name in each of the groups.

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

**Claire Jenkins**                                      **423546**  
Margaret Snowball                                      422896  
Sonia Crompton                                              422854

**Len & Sylvia Michell**                              **422409**  
Pam 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 Rev. Michael Pullan on 422406.*

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

## **DECEMBER SERVICES**

(If we are open)

### **St Mary's**

|             |                |                                             |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>6th</b>  | <b>10.30am</b> | Mrs Beryl Read                              |
| <b>13th</b> | <b>10.30am</b> | Rev Michael Pullan                          |
| <b>20th</b> | <b>10.30am</b> | Rev Michael Pullan                          |
| <b>25th</b> | <b>10.00am</b> | Rev Michael Pullan<br><i>United Service</i> |
| <b>27th</b> | <b>10.30am</b> | Local arrangement                           |

### **St Martin's**

|             |                |                                                                                        |
|-------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>6th</b>  | <b>11.00am</b> | Rev Michael Pullan                                                                     |
| <b>13th</b> | <b>3.00pm</b>  | Rev Michael Pullan and<br>Canon Perran Gay<br><i>United service at Anglican church</i> |
| <b>20th</b> | <b>2.00pm</b>  | Rev Michael Pullan<br><i>Carol Service</i>                                             |
| <b>27th</b> | <b>11.00am</b> | Mr Christopher Savill                                                                  |