

Methodist Church Circuit

NTOUCH

December 2023/January 2024

Chair of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly District:

Revd. Loraine Mellor

Superintendent Minister:

Revd. Carole Holmes

Local Preacher:

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Mr. Mervyn Bird Mrs. Beryl Read

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Mrs. Leigh Kendrick Mrs. Sue Williams

St. Martin's: Mrs. Barbara Jones

St. Mary's:

Church Treasurer: Mrs. Sue Williams

Church Council Secretary: Mrs. Beryl Read **Hall Booking Secretary:** Mrs. Anne Gurr

Musicians: Mr. Philip Lethbridge

Mr. Mervyn Bird

St. Martin's:

Church Council Secretary: Mrs. Jackie Perkins

Church Treasurer: Mr. Alan Terry

Connexional Link Person: Mrs. Beryl Read **Safeguarding Officer:** Mrs. Barbara James

From the Manse

Welcome to this Christmas and New Year edition of In Touch. Writing this piece in mid-November, I'm reflecting on how guickly another calendar year seems to have flown by; indeed how quickly the period of my appointment to these beautiful islands is flying by.... I'm now into my third year on Scilly, and am again looking forward to all that is distinctive about the way Christmas is celebrated here. Highlights from my previous two years have included the evening of the Christmas market on St. Mary's, the wonderful community atmosphere, beach-walking on Christmas Day and some guiet time to enjoy the winter beauty of the islands. Our chapels are again preparing to host Carol services and details of these will be made available on local notice boards. The provisional dates are Sunday 17th December on St Mary's (6pm) and Friday 22nd December on St Martin's (afternoon, time to be confirmed). There'll be a Christmas Day service on St Mary's too, at 10.30am - a short and hopefully lively celebration. If there's a favourite carol that you would like included in these special services, please let me know. (I've not forgotten that the 'right' tune matters for some Christmas carols!) It's often said that Christmas is a time 'for children'. Certainly, the advertising industry is well aware of this, showcasing the latest range of the most-desirable toys and games. It's true of course, that children and young people are especially in mind at Christmas. School nativity plays feature prominently in the way the season is marked, retelling in song, music and drama a story of a baby's birth, albeit into conditions of poverty and in the midst of life-threatening danger. How heart-rending, and what a terrible indictment on humanity, that this year the land of Jesus' birth is arguably more divided, more dangerous than it was at that time. How urgently our world needs the peace we'll sing of in our carols and hear of in our retelling of the angels' message. Stories of hope and good news might seem scarce in our world at the current time.

Stories of hope nevertheless are present, making the defiant claim that an alternative to hatred and violence is possible. I read of one such inspirational story recently, of a restaurant in Berlin. The restaurant, Kanaan, is co-owned by two men, one Palestinian, one Israeli. Together since 2015 they have sought to demonstrate the

'better way' of collaboration and cooperation. The menu at Kanaan seeks to bring together the best elements of the cuisine of each culture. More than about the menu, the vision is to create community, finding ways to build bridges, bringing people of different cultures and beliefs together to recognise all that is good in one another. The co-owners admit that it's not easy, that it demands absolute determination and commitment. Maybe this Christmas-time, it's these present-day stories of hope that can best help, encourage and inspire us to seek the goodwill, reconciliation and peace of the Gospel story. Our prayers and support this Christmas must certainly continue to be with all who work to make the message of peace a present reality.

Looking ahead to the New Year, I extend on behalf of the Methodist Circuit here on Scilly, our prayers and warmest wishes to you, and those dear to you, for 2024.

May you know the peace of Christ ever with you.

Carole x



We are saddened to hear of the death of Beryl Read. It is not possible at such short notice to do adequate justice to all that Beryl has done for the community and Chapel so we will have a full obituary in our next edition of In Touch. In the meanwhile we send John and the family our heartfelt sympathy, prayers and love and will look forward to celebrating Beryl's life with them in a few weeks' time.



News from St. Martin's

St Martin's has now slipped into Winter mode and the wet and stormy weather over recent days has only emphasized that reality. However, in the raw beauty of the stormy weather we are reminded of the power and diversity of God's creation.

This is also the time of year when many locals take their holidays and we hope all have had a relaxing, enjoyable and refreshing break. Our regular contributor to In Touch, Val Thomas, is currently away and has asked me to write these notes.

As always, we aim to worship weekly but occasionally it is not possible due to weather or if too many of us are away and both have happened recently! We are blessed to have Jackie and Chris to lead worship and each of us are willing to contribute in some way to their services which is good.

Last month Carole chaired our annual meeting which ran very smoothly with us all chipping in our thoughts etc and we are all very mindful of the significant decisions the Circuit has to take in the near future. We continue to pray and put our trust in the Lord as these decisions are made.

We are grateful that the quinquennial inspection of the Chapel did not highlight any significant issues with the building and that our finances are sound. We all agreed to keep St. Martin's contribution to the Circuit the same as last year.

What I found especially encouraging from our Treasurers report was that as a Chapel we contributed £866.80 to various charities throughout the year. Of course, some of this was raised at special services etc. Extra to this £141.39 was raised for Action for Children through their charity boxes which we have at home. In giving and sharing in any way we do the Lord's will.

Winter also means for us that we hold our services on Friday afternoons instead of Sundays due to no boating being available on Sundays! Fortunately, all our regular congregation can make Fridays but it does prohibit those working or children joining us. However, it also means Carole is able to come across most weeks as there isn't a clash of service times with St. Mary's and it is always good to see her and have her lead worship.

As Advent and Christmas fast approaches all of us at St. Martin's Chapel send our good wishes and prayers to our friends on St. Mary's and further afield.

Christine

Jesus came to older folk

Lest we're tempted to think that Christmas is 'for the children' alone, the words of this poem from The Wild Goose Worship Group remind us that 'it was to older folk that Jesus came'.

The introduction to the poem also makes the point that the Magi, the Wise Men 'would not have been reputed to be wise unless they were old'!

It was to older folk that Jesus came, that they might know their place and learn his name, and upset notions of whom God may choose to change the world or celebrate good news.

And this they understand who have been told of Sarah who conceived when she was old; and Hannah who found joy despite her tears; and Naomi, who blessed her later years.

With Zechariah, zealous for routine, ensuring what's to come is what has been, that they may disclaim an angel's message too declaring God intends to make things new.

Like Simeon, resigned to failing power, old age, might yet become the finest hour for those who risk false claims that they're deranged by saying God wants all things to be changed.

It is not in the manger Christ must stay, forever lying helpless in the hay; it is by older folk Jesus is blessed, who see God's restlessness in him expressed.

(Cloth for the Cradle, 1997, Wild Goose Publications)



Sign on door of music shop: Gone Chopin, have Liszt, Bach in a Minuet. – *Anon*

St. Mary's Chapel Action for Children Income 2022/23

Once again, it's the time of year when I report on the Action for Children income, so I'm pleased to say that I have banked £726-18. This money does not include the sum raised over the Christmas period, but is itemised below.

The damp summer weather reduced the number of days Alan and I could put the roadside book and produce box out, so the income from that is less than last year. However, donations were considerably more, thanks to money given in lieu of accommodation. The total is $\pounds 61$ more than last year, so a sincere thankyou to all who have supported the fund-raising in any way. Sadly, there are so many children and young people requiring Action for Children's help, with increasing numbers living in poverty.

Please continue to save your paperbacks for me to sell next year. It is really encouraging how I have a steady supply throughout the season, and not just from folk connected with the Chapel. Special recognition must be given to John and Jane Willcock, who arrived with a suitcase full when they met Alan and me in Penzance earlier in the year. They knew we were travelling on the Scillonian, rather than Skybus!

Heather Terry

Donation £198
Books £402-15
Produce £9-85
Home League of Light collection boxes £116-18

TOTAL £726-18

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Fund Raising for the Island Haven

I would like to thank all those readers of In Touch who bought copies of my memoir 'Down Elbow Lane'. It is good to report that, so far, I have been able to give the treasurer of the Island Haven fund £2490. As the Museum has now closed, the book can be bought at the Makery instead or direct from me.

Heather

Biblical cooking

If you can prepare this dish without looking up the references in the Bible, you should be on Mastermind! It is suggested the Authorised Version is used. (You can find it online at www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/)

Ingredients:

```
1/2 lb of Judges 5:25 (end);
1
2
        1/2 lb of Jeremiah 6:20;
3
        1 tablespoon of 1 Samuel 14:25;
4
        3 of Jeremiah 17:11:
5
        1/2 lb of 1 Samuel 30:12;
6
        1/2 lb of Nahum 3:12 (chopped);
        2 oz of Numbers 17:8 (blanched and chopped);
7
8
        1 lb of 1 Kings 4:22;
9
        2 Chronicles 9:9:
        a pinch of Leviticus 2:13;
10
11
        1 teaspoonful of Amos 4:5
12
        3 tablespoons of Judges 4:19
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Preparation: Mix 8, 9, 10 and 11, and put them aside. Beat 1, 2 and 3 to a cream. Still beating add 4, one at a time. Then add 5, 6 and 7 and beat again. Then add 12. Bake in a low oven for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours

This recipe quiz was found in Becket News, No 57, January 2014, Bulletin of the Hamburg Anglican Church. (The answers can be found on page 11.)

Conscientious

A minister walked into his church office and found his eager young assistant minister had emptied a huge box of various teaching resources that had been sent to the church, including a Noah's Ark for the very young children. The assistant had most of the animals lined up along the desk, and he was searching for more. 'Whatever are you doing?' asked the minister in bewilderment.

The assistant minister looked up eagerly. 'The box clearly said: 'Do not use if seal is broken'. So - I'm looking for the seal.'

Winter Solstice (21st December)

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

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

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

The early church father Tertullian did not approve of Christmas decorations. 'Let those who have no light in themselves light candles!... You are the light of the world, you are the tree ever green....' But by the time of St Gregory and St Augustine, four centuries later, this had changed. Pope Gregory instructed Augustine not to worry about harmless outward customs, as long as the right God be worshipped through them. And so many Anglo-Saxon customs were never discarded, but simply endowed with a new significance. By 1598 one John Stow of London wrote how: 'Against the feast of Christmas, every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the yeare afforded to be greene.'

The story of mince pies

Did you know that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape – cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.

No Room? On the Contrary

This year one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests' and continues:

Yet with the woes of sin and strife, The world has suffered long; Beneath the angel strain have rolled, Two thousand years of wrong; And man, at war with man, hears not The love song which they bring: O hush the noise, you men of strife, And hear the angels sing.

The angels' goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God's all-embracing and eternal welcome. Heaven's doors are ever open: it is home for everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city: 'On no day will its gates ever be shut... the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it.'

Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God's kingdom is home for every race: 'I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.' He reassured those anxious about the future: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms...'

No room? Don't you believe it!

Thought for Food

John Paton brought Christianity to the people of the Pacific Islands. He taught them about the love of God and faith. Years later some Communists arrived and told the people they had been listening to mere fables and lies. 'There is no God.'

'Well, you should thank the God that you do not believe in,' the Chief retorted. 'For if you had arrived before John Paton, we would have eaten you!'

What's in a (Christmas) Name?

What do your family call him, that cheerful 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 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 may be 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 6^{th} December, and the lucky children in Belgium and the Netherlands get their presents then.

Think happy thoughts to help your immune system

A stressed mind can put your body at risk. If you constantly think about negative things, and dwell on stressful events in your life, you could weaken your immune system and make yourself more susceptible to illness.

A recent study has found that simply thinking about negative events, even if they are only imagined, can increase the levels of inflammation in your body. This inflammation, associated with the body's response to trauma and infection, can weaken the immune system and has been linked to a number of conditions such as heart disease, cancer and dementia.

St Paul urged a better way of coping with the threats in our lives: 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.' (Phil. 4:6)

The Everlasting Turkey

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.

On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door, The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.

On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried, But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.

On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died. The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince When he sat down at table – and was offered turkey mince.

On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter, For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.

On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto, He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.

On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew, Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting, And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.

On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips, The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

In 1866 an American preacher, Phillips Brooks, visited the Holy Land and, of course, visited Bethlehem. As he looked out at the landscape at night the lines of a poem came to him - 'O Little Town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie. Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, a silent star goes by.'

Two years later, back in Boston, he came back to the poem and completed it. His organist Lewis Redner added the music and it was performed by the children's choir in Trinity Church, Boston. Very quickly it was included in hymnals as a seasonal favourite.

But one child who wasn't yet born, would find special meaning in Brooks' song. Helen Keller the famous educator who was born blind and deaf met Brooks years later. He was the one who explained the gospel to her for the first time.

Through her teacher and translator, Anne Sullivan, she told Brooks 'I've always known there was a God but until now I've never known His name'.

The carol's third verse, though written years before Brooks met Keller, captures perfectly the joy of salvation arriving to a deaf and blind child whose ears could not hear His coming, but whose heart had long recognized His presence.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given. So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

The tune that we sing the carol to in this country is a traditional folk song called 'The Ploughboys Dream'. It was arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1906.



Answers to Bible cooking clues: 1 butter; 2 sugar; 3 honey; 4 eggs; 5 raisins; 6 figs; 7 almonds; 8 flour; 9 spices; 10 salt; 11 leaven may be taken as baking powder or as yeast; 12 milk

Getting ready for Christmas...

In this season of endless parties, socialising and constant hospitality, please remember:

- $\sim\,$ No woman ever yet shot her husband while he was washing the dishes.
- ~ Light travels faster than sound. That's why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
- ~ Everyone has a photographic memory. But sadly, some don't have film.
- ~ Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves, for they will never cease to be amused.
- ~ Many people's ambition: to be weighed and found wanting.
- ~ Seen it all, done it all, can't remember most of it.



World Day of Prayer 2024

The World Day of Prayer worship will be held on Friday 1st March 2024, so if you are interested please note that date. Further details about time, venue and planning will follow in the New Year.

The service has been planned by the Christian women of Palestine. It is called 'I beg you bear with one another in love'; so heart rending in view of the present conflict in the Middle East. We must continue to pray for an end to all acts of aggression and for those who suffer as a result of war. All would be most welcome on March 1st .

Thank you

Heather Terry

Beatrix Potter

It was 80 years ago this month, on 22nd December 1943, that Beatrix Potter, the children's writer and illustrator, died. Her animal characters such as Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin, Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, and Jemima Puddle-Duck brought her worldwide fame – and made her loved by children right round the world.

Helen Beatrix Potter (28 July 1866 – 22 December 1943) had enjoyed an upper-middle-class childhood, but it was also solitary. Instead of access to childhood friends, she was given numerous pets and spent holidays in Scotland and the Lake District, where she learned to love landscape, flora and fauna.

Beatrix Potter was in her thirties when she first self-published *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1902. Its immense success meant that she began writing and illustrating children's books full-time. In all, Potter wrote more than 60 books. Her best-known ones were her 23 children's books. Her books went on to sell more than 250 million copies. When in 1903 Peter Rabbit was made into a patented stuffed toy, he became the first fictional character to have this honour.

Potter used the sales of her books and a legacy from an aunt in 1905 to buy Hill Top Farm in Near Sawrey, a village in the Lake District. Over the following decades, she bought many additional farms, in order to preserve the unique hill country landscape from developers. In 1913, when she was 47, Beatrix married William Heelis, a local solicitor in Hawkshead. By now she was also a prize-winning breeder of Herdwick sheep and a farmer.

In 1943, when she was 77, Potter died of pneumonia and heart disease at her home in Near Sawrey. She left most of her property to the National Trust, which means that she deserves the credit for so much of the land that now makes up the Lake District National Park.

Birthday greetings

We send greetings to all who have a birthday in December or January and hope they have a lovely day.



Here is a poem written by a Grandson to his Grandma.

The computer swallowed Grandma, Yes, honestly, it's true. She pressed 'control' and 'enter' And disappeared from view. It devoured her completely, The thought just makes me squirm, She must have caught a virus Or been eaten by a worm! I've searched through the recycle bin And files of every kind, I've even used the internet But nothing did I find. In desperation, I asked Mr Google My searches to refine, The reply from him was negative, Not a thing was found 'online'. So, if inside your 'in box' My Grandma you should see, Please 'copy', 'scan' and 'paste' her And send her back to me!!

With thanks to Trinity Methodist Church, Royton.

With parties and family visiting over Christmas in mind:

The times we find ourselves having to wait on others may be the perfect opportunities to train ourselves to wait on the Lord. – *Joni Eareckson Tada*

Happiness is more than a grin on one's face, it is the glory in one's heart. – *R Parlette*

He that gives his heart will not deny his money. - Anon

There are only two families in the world, the Haves and the Havenots. – *Miguel de Cervantes*

Creatures in church

I don't mean whether dogs should or shouldn't be allowed in the building or how to deal with an infestation of woodworm or bats – but rather how creatures are used to decorate the interior of church buildings, giving hidden symbolisms.

What animals, birds or insects have you noticed when you visit churches? You will often find them carved in stone or wood as well as within paintings and pictures. It's not that the craftsmen are wanting to include their pets, but rather each creature brings its own natural meaning.

Bees and their hives are a great example.

The bee is symbolic of tireless activity. It represents a good work ethic and being diligent at a task. Because the worker bees do not mate, they symbolize virginity and chastity. (Though I'm never sure how that relates to the queen bee!)

Because the bee appears to die in the winter and reappear in the early summer, it symbolizes rebirth. The bees' hard work is connected to the beehive, which symbolizes order. The bee represents the Christian and the beehive symbolizes the church.

Have a look at the 'creatures' used in a church next time you visit a church. What do they 'say'? What aspects of their way of being, speak to you of the glory of God?

Revd. Dr Jo White

As Charity Trustees, the Circuit Meeting and Church Councils seek prayerfully to act responsibly and with all due care in utilising the resources over which we have stewardship. In common with other charities, groups and individuals, we are increasingly aware that rising costs are having a major impact in all areas of life and work. Old buildings especially bring particular challenges of costly maintenance.

If you feel able to contribute financially to support the work of The Isles of Scilly Methodist Circuit, St Mary's Methodist Church or St Martin's Methodist Church, please contact The Minister for details of the various ways to do this.

The Manse, Church Street, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, TR21 0JT or telephone 01720 422406.

Editorial Team

Jean Duncan, Anne Gurr and Barbara James are the editorial team of In Touch. Articles for inclusion in this Circuit magazine can be given to them personally or emailed to iosmethodist.mag@gmail.com Please support the editors by contributing reflections, stories, news etc. We welcome articles from our mainland readers as well as from Scilly.

In Touch can also be read online at www.scillymethodists.co.uk Thanks to www.parishpump.co.uk for the use of their material. The material in this magazine is from a variety of sources. The opinions and beliefs expressed in individual articles do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of The Methodist Church, the local editorial team or the minister.



...the good news is - I've found a way of heating the church on unwanted chip-fat!...

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Our Privacy Notice explains how local Churches, Circuits and Districts within the Methodist Church in Great Britain collect, use and protect your personnel information.

The Managing Trustees' Privacy Notice is published on the notice boards in the chapel buildings on St. Mary's and St. Martin's and is available to view online at:-

https://www.tmcp.org.uk/about/dataprotection/managing-trustees-privacy-notice

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Prayer Requests

As always, please do feel able to ask Revd. Carole if you would appreciate pastoral contact or the prayers of the Church.

Provisional Plan of Services

(please see local notice boards for confirmation of arrangements)

St Mary's

December

3rd at 10.30

10th at 10.30

17th at 10.30 Holy Communion

17th at 6pm Community Carol Service

24th at 10.30

25th at 10.30 Short Christmas celebration

31st to be confirmed

January

7th to be confirmed 14th at 10.30 Covenant Service

21st at 10.30

28th at 10.30

St Martin's

December

all times to be confirmed, according to tides and boats

Friday 1st - 2.45

Friday 8th - 2.45

Friday 15th - 2.45

Friday 22nd - 2.45 carols

Friday 29th - 2.45

January

5th - to be confirmed

12th - 2.45 Covenant Service

19th - 2.45

26th - 2.45