



Methodist Church Circuit

IN TOUCH

January/ February 2017

Thoughts from the Manse

Isaiah 40; 27-31

The Creator of the ends of the earth....does not grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strength to the powerless.



I am writing this greeting at the beginning of December when everywhere there are signs of preparation for Christmas – decorations, lights, busyness. You will be reading it when Christmas is over, New Year is here – decorations are tired, and so are we! What do we look forward to now?

There will, of course, be those who have great things to look forward to – births, marriages, new opportunities. 2017 is a time of promise. In fact I often tell children that there's no need to take down the Christmas decorations until Candlemas (this year on February 2nd) which is when the Christmas season ends. Parents love me!! So it should be possible to hold onto the joy and the promise of the Christmas gift of God Himself living with us, not just for a short season but on into the darkness of January, February; into Springtime and Summer, the reality of God's love lighting up every day.

However, we are such impatient people that we tend to always have our sights set on the next event, the next year, the next season rather than living in, and enjoying the moment, the here-and-now.

There will, of course, be those who don't want to look forward because the future seems to hold dread and not promise. There are times, too, for most, if not all of us, when we would rather turn the clock back and return to what looks to us to have been a golden age – when we were younger, or fitter, or had a family, or.....

The writer I quoted at the start of this piece, Isaiah, gives us all a word of encouragement; a word which allows us to live in the here-and-now; in the present moment with absolute security and peace. The Creator of all things, says Isaiah, sees all of history – past, present and future – and it, and you are held in the amazing love which never gives up, never needs a break; you are known and loved daily – and for eternity.

So, as I wish you all a happy New Year, I pray that you will know the power of God in whatever it may bring, the contentment of God in each moment and the love of God enabling you to encourage others.

Jane X

News from St Martin's

Since Val Thomas last wrote the notes for the November/December In Touch, Jane, Len, Mary and Christopher have led worship. St Martin's folk are grateful for a weekly service (weather permitting!) and recognise the additional time and energy needed for preaching "overseas". For Christopher little travel time but the challenge of leading worship with people you know very well in everyday life.

Mary's last service on St Martin's, before her forthcoming move to Cambridge, was marked with expressions of thanks and two small gifts. Gladys's book "Times Remembered" will serve as a reminder of our Island. We all wish Mary well as she moves to be closer to a couple of her sons.

A good congregation, including representatives from the Army, Fire Service and Coastguard, gathered at the Anglican Church for a united Remembrance Day Service. Jane led worship and gave the address, whilst Perran played the keyboard. At the War memorial just outside, Carl Bray (Coastguard) laid a wreath. It was heart-warming to hear Jake and Issy Williams read a sensitive poem, which they and other children attending St Martin's School Base had written together. A copy of the poem was then placed next to the wreath.

When Uncle Rodney Ashford, Christine and I heard the names Thomas and Frederick Ashford read from the Roll of Honour, they held a little more significance than in earlier years. The two brothers who died in the First World War were uncles of Rodney and great uncles of Christine and me. A few weeks back Christine and Christopher visited the Flanders battle fields and war graves, where they located Thomas's resting place, Since the hundredth anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme, I have been

in e-mail contact with a lady in New Zealand who is an authority on the New Zealand Tunnelling Company Engineers and their involvement in trench warfare. Thomas Ashford had emigrated and was a member of this group, losing his life on July 2nd 1916, day two of the battle.

Our Chapel meeting was held prior to the afternoon service on November 20th. Christopher outlined all the repairs and external and internal decoration that had been completed by Tony Goddard during the early autumn. Tony also fitted a rail across the front of the balcony for insurance purposes. Revd Willcock bought a request to the meeting from Revd Canon Perran Gay about joint worship with the Anglican members during the winter. It was agreed that some united worship would be planned for the coming months.

Finally, on behalf of the congregation at St Martin's, I would like to wish all readers of In Touch a healthy and peaceful 2017. During the times ahead, may we be moved to respond to the plight of the deprived, displaced and marginalised as generously as we can with financial aid and prayers.

Heather Terry

New Year Prayer

Lord of the Years,

At the start of this New Year we ask for your presence, protection and guidance for every minute of every day of every month ahead. Thank you that we do not go into this New Year alone. Thank you for loving us so much that you gave us Jesus to lead us to you. May we commit ourselves afresh to serve you, to love you and to share your love with those who don't yet know you. May we make a difference for your Kingdom in 2017. In Jesus name.

Amen

By Daphne Kitching

Action for Children Income

Since reporting the Action for Children (AfC) Income last Autumn, I have been able to send a total of £624.92 to our special Methodist charity. This sum is just over £68 less than last year, but there was only one Book Sale/Coffee Morning. It does not include the St. Mary's Chapel Christmas collections, which Sue Williams sends separately. A breakdown of the total income is listed below.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed in any way. Again we must commend Gwen for her enthusiasm and determination in organising, with the help of Mary and Charlie Gibbs, a Grand Book Sale and her sale of blackberries.

Please can I ask Chapel folk to again save any unwanted paperbacks until next Spring, when I will gladly receive them for my roadside book box.

You will note from the list below that I sold £62.25 worth of children's books. A sincere thankyou to the unknown person who left two boxes of high quality books in St. Mary's Chapel hall very early on in 2016. I actually priced them and only had to reduce a few to clear the entire selection. For the first time in three years, I found euros in the box this year!

Finally I pass on the gratitude of AfC, who always send a letter of appreciation and thanks after I have banked cash.

Book Sale/Coffee Morning	£107.70
Sale of blackberries	£186.00
Roadside Book Box Donations	£162.20
Roadside Children's Book Sales	£62.25
Individual AfC collection boxes	£53.90
Copper Collection (Chapel/at home)	£38.87
Donations	£13.00
TOTAL	£624.92

The above figures include some money raised by Gwen with her blackberry sales in the Autumn of 2015. This year she has raised an incredible £110!

Thank you again,

Heather Terry

Farewell to Mary

As you will all no doubt know by now, Mary Ratcliffe will be leaving us shortly to go and live in Cambridge near two of her sons. Mary has so many roles in our church life that it is difficult to list them all. As well as the more formal roles such as Local Preacher, Property Secretary and editor of In Touch, she is also involved with the Church Facebook page, the Prayer Chain, the Wednesdays 'At Home' and the 'Knitting Together' group – the list goes on and on. She is also always there to give support, good advice and encouragement to anyone who needs it. She is a wonderful example to us all of Christian love in action.

Mary will be sorely missed in our Church life but we give her our love and very best wishes for happiness in her new life.

Action for Children

We start our fund raising for the Methodist Children's Charity by holding a Coffee Morning in our Methodist Hall here on St Mary's on Thursday 26th January from 10am until noon. We do ask for lots of contributions to the food stall – cakes, biscuits etc, and other items will be on sale also.

We hope that you will all come along and support us in this effort and we look forward to welcoming you to the event.

*Gwen Clarkson
Representative*

Not all free!

The nursery school teacher was teaching her class about living in a democracy. She said: 'One of the things we should be happy about is that, in this country, we are all free'. One little boy stood up in protest. 'No', he said indignantly, 'I'm not free. I'm four.'

Where did the Wise Men come from?

January 6th is Epiphany when the Wise Men visited the infant Jesus but where did they come from? Magi from the East – it isn't a lot to go on. The Magi had originally been a religious caste among the Persians. Their devotion to astrology, divination and the interpretation of dreams led to an extension in the meaning of the word, and by the first century the Magi in Matthew's gospel could have been astrologers from outside of Persia. Some scholars believe they might have come from what was then Arabia Felix, or as we would say today, southern Arabia.

Certainly in the first century astrology was practised there, and it was the region where the Queen of Sheba had lived. She of course had visited Solomon and would have heard the prophecies about how one day a Messiah would be born to the Israelites and become their king.

Matthew's gospel (chapter 2) is clear that the Magi asked Herod: 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.' So it is possible that in southern Arabia the Queen of Sheba's story of how a Messiah would one day be sent to the Israelites had survived. Certainly there are a number of other early legends that connect southern Arabia with Solomon's Israel.

To many people this makes sense: that the ancient stories of a Messiah, linked to later astrological study, prompted these alert and god-fearing men to the realisation that something very stupendous was happening in Israel. They realised that after all these centuries, the King of the Jews, the Messiah, was about to be born.

One more interesting thing that gives weight to the theory that the Magi came from southern Arabia is this: if you study any map of Palestine as it was during biblical times, you will find that the old Arabian caravan routes all entered Palestine 'from the East'.



What, oh what, is that person's name?!

Do your New Year Resolutions include the forlorn hope that you will be better at remembering people's names in 2017?

Many of us – and not only those of the older generation – have difficulty remembering names. It's not just TV personalities and so on, but people we meet in the street. We know exactly who they are, we see them every week in church or the supermarket, we know what job they do and which school their children go to. But as for their name – it's a blank.

Help is at hand, however. Not to solve the problem, but at least to name it. 'Nominal asphasia' is the clinical name for the inability to remember a name, even when we can remember everything else about someone. It was a great relief to me to find it had a name. Up till then I thought it was the first symptom of dementia, or just plain stupidity.

There is also the strange truth that the cure for asphasia comes spontaneously, often in the middle of the night, when that elusive identity pops unbidden into our memory. We must be sure, of course, to put the light on and write it down, because it will be gone again with the morning light.

David Winter

Knitted Teddies

Several lovely ladies in our St Mary's Methodist chapel regularly knit teddies and last autumn we had a good supply of them – for which many thanks!!

Sadly we learned that they could not go to Uganda last year as Mrs Kate Rees who takes them had been very unwell and could not make the journey.

We have one or two other outlets for the teddies – so please do not stop making them.

A boxful of a dozen of them have gone to the Methodist chapel in Camborne to be distributed to poor families in the area, hopefully as lovely Christmas presents!

Gwen Clarkson

A visit to The Leprosy Mission's Anandaban Hospital, Lele, Nepal

Many of you may remember that about a year ago monies were raised for a self-care unit at The Leprosy Mission's Anandaban Leprosy Hospital in Lele, Kathmandu, Nepal. Altogether we raised £1150, 40% more than the hospital was asking. As I had occasion to go back to Nepal to visit friends, I asked the TLM's permission to visit Anandaban to see what had been done about the unit and they readily consented. Lele lies to the extreme south of the Kathmandu Valley, right on its edge in fact, - in a wooded forested area quite high up and commanding fantastic views over the fertile fields to the 7,000-foot hills just below the High Himalaya. According to my Nepalese ornithology friend, the area is excellent for birding, and, I suspect, with few tourists getting there, must be amply rewarding. As for the hospital, it lies on a slope surrounded by spectacular floral gardens. A truly botanical paradise with wonderful displays of bougainvillea descending down and over trees, tall canna lilies and trim flower borders. With the views, birds, trees, and flowers any patient would feel instantly better!

Dr Napit, the Medical Director, was on hand immediately. The red and white coloured entrance and steps leading up to it seemed to make the hospital small, trim and orderly, but this proved to be deceptive as there are many buildings within the grounds. The day started with a prayer meeting. Staff drifted in and out, the language was Nepali but it did give one an air of quiet confidence and reassurance. After all, the TLM is built on prayer! After this Dr Napit took me and four Australian visitors to see the reconstructive unit, and there we met a few patients who had undergone hand, foot and eye surgery to correct deformities. Visits to the two operating theatres, the Research Unit researching into the causes and possible cure of the disease and paid for by USA supporters followed, together with a brief visit to the Outpatient's Dept. Anandaban takes in other patients besides those with leprosy and one of Dr Napit's aims is to enlarge the hospital's activities so as to attract doctors from other fields of medicine besides leprosy. The administrative centre was packed to the full with paper case files, - not much computer technology here! - whilst in another area we saw sandals and prosthetic

limbs being made for patients. We even saw the spick and span hospital kitchen!

It was sad to see a few wards damaged by large earthquake cracks, but encouraged to see that new buildings were being speedily erected and are now about to be roofed. Previously, with the damage, six corrugated iron-tunnel-like makeshift wards were erected through the generosity of UNICEF, but when we were there only one was standing, and on inspecting the inside we were surprised to see how light, airy, clean and orderly everything was. A visit to a reactions ward proved interesting – in younger patients especially, reactions to the drugs can occur but even here patients were given sympathetic treatment in an efficient quiet manner.

Last of all came what for me was the highlight – the self-care unit. This lies on a forested slope just below the main buildings in a quiet peaceful spot almost in a world of its own. Here patients are taught to care for ulcerated feet and damaged hands through self-care cleaning and exercises. A hostel in the fashion of a Nepalese village two-storied longhouse has been built so as to make patients feel at home in a village setting, with beds and mosquito nets provided. A long verandah and open middle space is where patients undertake their self-care and there are plenty of diagrams and instructions in English and Nepali on the walls. Beyond, a corrugated iron kitchen has been erected complete with suitable utensils to prevent burnt hands, and patients are encouraged to cook their own meals. Beyond the kitchen lies a buffalo house and two buffaloes for fresh milk. Just below on the slope patients have started a vegetable garden and work with appropriate tools to grow their own fresh vegetables. The provision of biogas and a biogas kitchen stove, a water pump, and an outside toilet completes the unit. Kashi, a former patient, is in charge of the whole unit, and is clearly proud of it, judging by the way he kept showing me the kitchen, tools, and other facilities. Although he couldn't speak English we seemed to understand one another. When I described the unit to my ornithology friend later, he was both surprised and pleased. He said our money had gone a long way and we had done a good job in providing a unit for what after all are the 'poorest of the poor'.

So there you have it – straight from a Nepalese and I can only endorse what he said as I have seen the unit with my own eyes. So congratulations to everyone all round. You really have made a

difference and brought light and life to many. Your generosity has brought hope and may God bless you richly for what you have all done for indeed the 'poorest of the poor' in our midst. As a final note I saw the TLM's Patan clinic for diagnosing leprosy. This was rebuilt when the earthquake totally damaged the old one and it is from this clinic that patients are finally sent to Anandaban for treatment. Even after Adandaban treatment does not stop. Hospital staff go round the villages to check up on patients so that there is no let up in fighting the disease. And as a final positive note it is nice to report that leprosy in Nepal is starting to decline overall at last. With the TLM around and supporters like you, it has just got to!

Thank you so much.
Julie May Watts

As most of you know Julie collects used postage stamps to raise funds for The Leprosy Mission. You can help by saving yours and giving them to her.

Birthday Greetings

We send our love and best wishes to Sue Bavin, Gordon Bird, Stephanie Bird, John Goody, Layla Guy, Martin Parker, Anthea Roberts, William Thomas, Nathan Thomas and Liz Turner who have birthdays in January and to Keith Guy, Barbara James, Jacky Pritchard, Beryl Read, Phillip Roberts, Jake Sandford, Emily Smith and Ryan Thomas who's birthdays are in February.

*Happy Birthday to you
To Jesus be true
God bless you and keep you
Happy Birthday to you!*



The Legend of the Snowdrop

The flower called 'Snowdrop' appears in February and is a symbol of hope. According to legend, the snowdrop became the symbol of hope when Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden of Eden. When Eve was about to give up hope that the cold winters would never end, an angel appeared and transformed some of the snowflakes into snowdrop flowers, proving that the winters do eventually give way to the spring.

There is an old rhyme which says:

'The snowdrop, in purest white array, first rears her head on Candlemas Day'.

The name 'snowdrop' does not mean 'drop of snow', it means drop as in eardrop – the old word for earring.

Snowdrops are also known as Candlemas Bells.

The Latin name for the snowdrop is *Galanthus*, which means 'milk flower'.

With thanks to Trinity Methodist Church, Royton.

Women's World Day of Prayer

The service this year will be held on Friday March 3rd in the Methodist Church at 2pm. The service has been written by the women of The Philippines and is titled 'Am I being unfair to you?'



The service is open to all (not just women) so note the date in your diaries and come and join in.

February

The Romans and the Celts regarded February as the start of Spring. February, along with January was introduced into the Roman calendar by Numa Pompilius when the calendar was extended from ten months to twelve. The word February comes from the '*februa*' which means cleansing or purification and reflects the rituals undertaken before Spring.

The Anglo-Saxons called February '*Sol-monath*' (*cake month*) because cakes were offered to the gods during that month. February was also known to the Saxons as '*sprout-kale*' from the sprouting of cabbage or kale.

Having only 28 days (except in leap years which occur every four years when the month has 29 days) February was known in Welsh as '*y mis bach*' – the little month.

In Shakespeare's time about 400 years ago, the second month of the year was called '*Feverell*'. In Isaac Newton's time 100 years later it had become '*Februeer*' but the modern name, February, is only about a hundred years old.

There are several special days in February, the first being Candlemas (the Christian festival of lights) which is on February 2nd. This ancient festival marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox. In olden times many people used to say that the Christmas season lasted for 40 days – until the 2nd of February.

How did this date come to be called Candlemas: it was the day of the year when all the candles that would be used in the church during the coming year were brought into the church and a blessing was said over them – so it was the Festival Day (or Mass) of the Candles.

Candles were important in those days, not only because there was no electricity. Some people thought they gave protection against plague, illness and famine. For Christians they were, and still are, a reminder of something even more important. Before Jesus came to earth it was as if everyone was 'in the dark'. Then came Jesus with His message that He is, with His followers, always ready to help and comfort people, as if He is a guiding light to them in the darkness. Christians often talk of Jesus as '*the Light of the World*' and candles are lit during church services to remind Christians of this.

There are several beliefs and sayings connected with the weather in February. For instance, it is said that if the weather is fine and frosty at the close of January and the beginning of February, there is more winter ahead than behind. Also: 'When the cat lies in the sun in February she will creep behind the stove in March'; 'Of all the months of the year curse a fair February'; 'If it thunders in February it will frost in April'; 'If February gives much snow a fine summer it doth foreshow'.

One of the strangest things ever to happen in England took place during the night of 8th February 1855. During the night a heavy snowfall blanketed the countryside and small villages of south Devon. In their houses people huddled together beneath their bedclothes on a night of intense cold. Slowly the first light of dawn came to reveal a bleak frozen landscape – and the footprints. To the astonishment of all, when people left their houses they found thousands of mysterious footprints. These were in the shape of a cloven hoof but they were all in single file. More puzzling was the fact that they covered a distance of more than one hundred miles and went through fields, gardens, towns and even over rooftops. At first people were intrigued but then became very frightened. News swept quickly over the country and many people believed the footprints belonged to the devil. The London newspapers published the story and experts came to investigate the footprints before the snow melted.

But, no-one has ever offered any satisfactory solution to the mystery!

With thanks to Trinity Methodist Church, Royton.

Making plans for 2017?

You can never plan the future by the past. - Edmund Burke

What we look for does not come to pass. God finds a way for what none foresaw. - Euripodes Alcestis

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in his way. - Psalm 37:23

Editorial Team

We are delighted that Barbara James will be joining the Editorial Team to take Mary's place when she leaves. We look forward to Barbara's contributions to In Touch.

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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.

Some material in this magazine was obtained from www.parishpump.co.uk. We thank them for providing material for magazine editors to use.

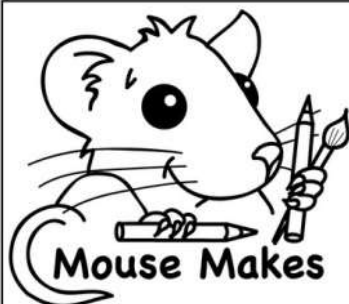
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### Err....

A thought for all church councils as the New Year begins: 'To err is human, but to really foul things up requires a committee'.

### Come in

The choir was practising the anthem. The choirmaster said to the trebles: 'Now don't forget, when the tenors reach 'The Gates of Hell', you come in.'

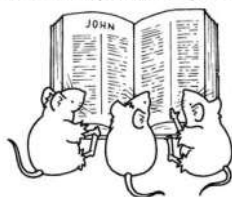


"Oh, Teach us  
to live well!  
Teach us to live  
wisely and well!"

from Psalm 90:12 MSG



"Trust in the Lord with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.



Seek his will in all  
you do, and He  
will show you which  
path to take.

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Always be full of joy.  
Never stop praying.

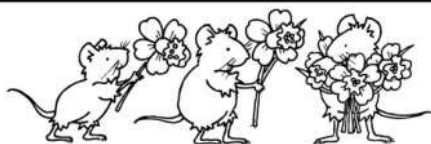


Whatever happens,  
always be thankful."

1 Thessalonians 5:17

"Be kind and loving to each other,  
and forgive each other  
just as God forgave you in Christ."

Ephesians 4:32



"The Lord has told you... what he wants  
from you: to do what is right to  
other people, love being kind to others  
and live humbly obeying your God."

Micah 6:8



Cut out these Scripture  
verse cards to remind  
you this new year of how  
God wants us to live.



## **FEBRUARY SERVICES**

### **St Mary's**

|             |                                                     |                                                                                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>5th</b>  | <b>9.15 am</b><br><b>11.00 am</b>                   | Sonia Crompton & Kim Watson<br>Barbara Hasler                                               |
| <b>12th</b> | <b>10.30 am</b>                                     | John Willcock & Rev Jane Willcock<br><i>Holy Communion</i>                                  |
| <b>19th</b> | <b>9.15 am</b><br><b>11.00 am</b><br><b>6.00 pm</b> | Beryl Read & Len Michell<br>Rev Jane Willcock<br>Rev Jane Willcock<br><i>Holy Communion</i> |
| <b>26th</b> | <b>9.15 am</b><br><b>11.00 am</b>                   | Kim Watson & Gordon Bird<br>Rev Jane Willcock<br><i>Holy Communion</i>                      |

### **St Martin's**

|             |                 |                                                               |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>5th</b>  | <b>11.00 am</b> | Gordon Bird                                                   |
| <b>12th</b> | <b>3.00 pm</b>  | Rev Jane Willcock<br><i>Holy Communion</i>                    |
| <b>19th</b> | <b>3.00 pm</b>  | <b>United Service</b><br>Rev Jane Willcock & Canon Perran Gay |
| <b>26th</b> | <b>11.00 am</b> | Len Michell                                                   |

### **Park House**

|            |                |             |
|------------|----------------|-------------|
| <b>5th</b> | <b>4.00 pm</b> | Len Michell |
|------------|----------------|-------------|

## JANUARY SERVICES

### St Mary's

|      |          |                                                                         |
|------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st  | 11.00 am | Rev Jane Willcock                                                       |
| 8th  | 9.15 am  | John Willcock & Rev Jane Willcock<br><i>Holy Communion</i>              |
|      | 11.00 am | United Service at Parish Church<br>Rev Jane Willcock & Canon Perran Gay |
| 15th | 11.00 am | <b>Covenant Service</b><br>Rev Jane Willcock & Canon Perran Gay         |
|      | 6.00 pm  | Rev Jane Willcock                                                       |
| 22nd | 9.15 am  | Beryl Read & Rev Jane Willcock                                          |
|      | 11.00 am | Gordon Bird                                                             |
| 29th | 9.15 am  | Mervyn Bird & Gordon Bird                                               |
|      | 11.00 am | Len Michell                                                             |

### St Martin's

|      |          |                                                                 |
|------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st  | -----    | No Service                                                      |
| 8th  | 3.00 pm  | Rev Jane Willcock                                               |
| 15th | 3.00 pm  | <b>Covenant Service</b><br>Rev Jane Willcock & Canon Perran Gay |
| 22nd | 11.00 am | Rev Jane Willcock                                               |
| 29th | 3.00 pm  | Parish Church<br>Canon Perran Gay                               |