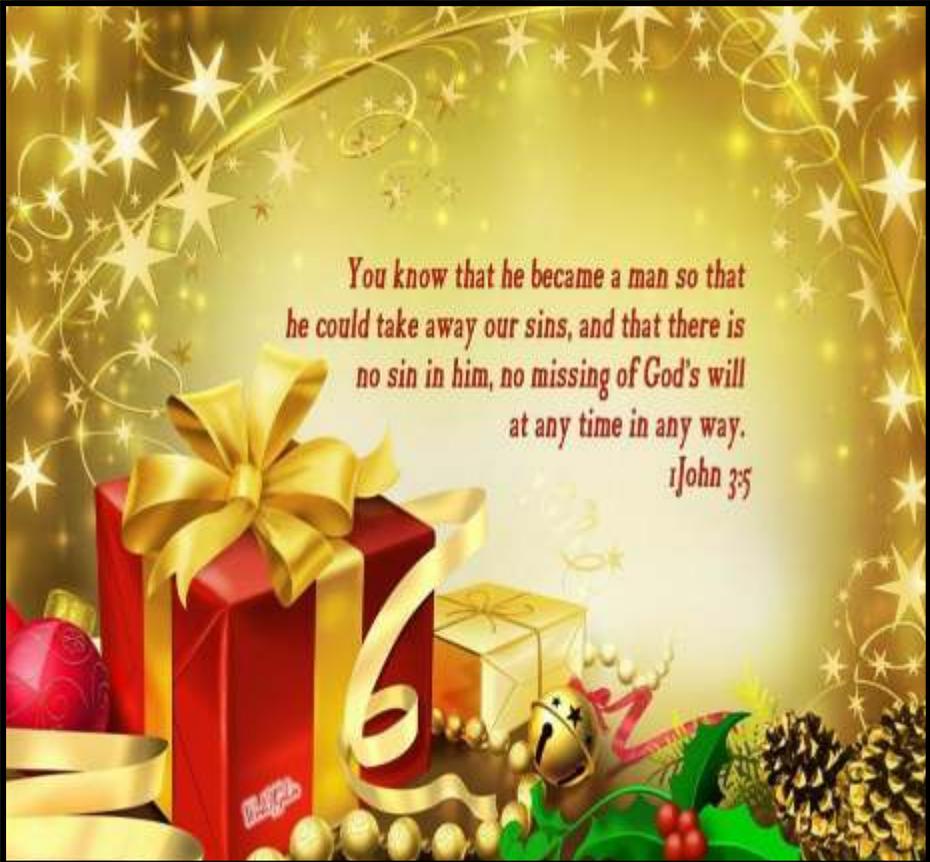


MEMO

Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Outburst

**DECEMBER TO
FEBRUARY 2015**



*You know that he became a man so that
he could take away our sins, and that there is
no sin in him, no missing of God's will
at any time in any way.*

1 John 3:5

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

As I write this piece it is still beautiful weather and Harvest Festivals are yet to come. When you read this 'Memo' it will be nearly Christmas, how the time flies. Another year nearly over, yet as Christians we believe that through all the changing seasons and times in our lives, God's love and care for us is never changing. At Christmas we will celebrate the assurance of this wonderful love, that God became one of us in Jesus to show his love for all of us. What a cause for celebration!!

'Memo' continues in to a New Year, and we hope it does provide you, the reader, with news from around our Circuit, with articles which maybe inspire, or reassure us that God's Spirit is active around our churches in all the amazing activities we read about in these pages.

Of course, there may be new readers, new people joining our churches and we welcome them, or even people who do not go to our churches, who may have picked up this 'Memo' and are reading it out of curiosity. We welcome all who seek God's love, to his church, and maybe there is a journey through this 'Memo'

So as we look forward to all the joy of this Christmas season, let us never lose sight of what it really means, God

is love!

And in the New Year, please keep on sending in your contributions telling us of the way you are serving God in your church and community.

All the very best for Christmas and the New Year

Dave Elliott

On behalf of Communications Team



.....
: **Advance Notice** :
:

Flower Festival
22nd -24TH MAY 2015

To celebrate 10 years of
the new Church building
at Normanby Methodist
Church. Please read the
next issue for further
details.

Celia Shires
:



The Superintendent's Letter

Hello dear friends,

May I thank you all on behalf of Una, Colin and myself for the wonderful Welcome Service to which so many of you came. Please continue to pray for us and for Huw, who often finds himself the only man in our Staff Meetings! We try to meet monthly as Ordained Staff and every other month with our Lay Staff; Julia Leung who is looking after the day to day care of the Chinese congregation. Ailsa Adamson who is our MAP Middlesbrough Project Manager and Hayley Liversidge who is the Families' Outreach Project Coordinator.

Of course, my list of people who work alongside us, both in administration and pastoral care, looking after the property and the finances giving of their time, skill and energy, could go on and on. We are greatly blessed in this Circuit to have so many willing and devoted helpers of all ages. As we have seen in our recent Church Councils, there is much to do and it's wonderful to see God's people ready and willing to serve.

Each year, as the Seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany draw near, I find myself concentrating on one particular aspect or character. This year I'm finding myself challenged by something I heard at a Methodist Home's for the Aged Conference with the title. '**Surprised by Age**'. The leader shattered all the usual sentiment around Christmas being 'for the children', and said, 'Christmas isn't about Children, but the whole season is more to do with Old People!! I began to take more notice as I'm pushing 60 myself!!

She qualified this by running through the characters in turn: Elizabeth and Zechariah, the elderly parents of John the Baptist. It is traditionally accepted that Jesus earthly dad was on older man. When Mary and Joseph take the child Jesus to present him at the temple they are greeted by a very elderly man, Simeon and a old widow woman prophetess, called Anna. When we think of the Wise Astrologers from the east it is most probable their wisdom would come with the blessing of age. And so, I have to agree, the characters involved in Advent, Christmas and Epiphany do seem to have more to do with elderly people than with youth, apart, of course from the Maiden Mary and the Christ Child, Jesus. God chose and still chooses people of all ages to serve him and to

make him known. From Abraham and Sarah with which his Mission began to the baby in the manger through whom the Mission is fulfilled and through each one of us, his disciples of all ages. We are called to share the Good News that 'God Is With Us.' And care so deeply about his people, that we find ways of letting them know!

God Bless you all this Christmas and throughout 2015.

With Love,

Sue

CHRISTMAS AUSTRALIAN **STYLE**



(For those who don't know, Val was a member of this Circuit, and a valued member of the Communications Team, who emigrated to Australia in late 2013 to be with her family. This is her account of her first Australian Christmas)

Christmas really started for me at about 5.00 pm on Christmas Eve, where the church I attend was holding a special family service aimed at the children.

When I went into the church there was a table at the back of the church with animals, crib, figures etc. on it. At the front of the church was a large stable, about 4 feet long and 2 feet wide, which was empty. The service started with a carol, and then the children were invited to go forward and sit on the floor while the vicar's wife read from a children's bible the beginning of the Nativity story finishing at the arrival at the Inn. While the second carol was sung, the children all went to the back of the church where an adult handed each one an animal or figure which the children took to the young adults of the church who put them in place. This entailed several visits by the children before this was done. The exceptions were the 3 wise men who were left on the table. The children then sat again on the floor, as they were read the rest of the Christmas story, again from the children's Bible. Then, whilst singing the final carol, three of the children brought down the wise men, and added them to the scene. The whole service

was about 40 minutes, and was really lovely.

At 11.00pm I went to the service which was a real traditional Anglican service, with sung responses, and obviously communion, and this finished at about 12.15am on Christmas morning. A lovely way to round off Christmas Eve, and lovely to be walking to church when the temperature was still about 26 degrees Celsius.

Christmas morning I woke early, as I always do, about 5.00am, and after my morning routine, I had breakfast outside in the early sunshine – temperature not too hot, about 28. My first surprise was that at 6.30am the bin men came to empty bins, and the recycling people came about quarter of an hour later to empty those bins. On Christmas Day! Also buses and trains were running to a Sunday timetable, so those who wanted to visit friends could use them without having to bother about whether they wanted a drink or not.

At 7.00am I took a walk to the foreshore, where it was really beautiful, and I did catch sight of a couple of dolphins, and already some families were gathering on the beach. I walked home, and at 10.00am my younger daughter collected me and my other daughter and we went to them for Christmas dinner, which was eaten outside, and was surf and turf, cooked by my son in law on the barbecue, his prawns done in garlic were absolutely gorgeous, and there was lots of salad. The temperature was a lovely 30 degrees, not too hot, just perfect.

The children played in the garden with their new toys and were then allowed more than their usual amount of chocolate. It was a lovely relaxing Christmas day, and all of us were together for the first time in a long while.

Val Northcombe

**“Anyone who believes that men are the equal
of women has never seen a man trying to
wrap a Christmas present”.**

Unknown quote



THE CHAGUNDA COMMUNITY PROJECT



The re-launch has begun! Items to pack in a container and send out to the village of Chagunda in the south of Malawi are beginning to come in and we're very grateful for that. I was delighted to be told that the Circuit Meeting was happy to support our project and I plan to keep you all updated with what's happening as often as I can

Copies of the timetable of what we'll be collecting each month up to January 2015 should be on your Church notice board but just as a reminder, please see the list below. If you need any clarification, please don't hesitate to contact me on 01642-882673.

Sept 2014	Fabric, sewing aids, manual sewing machines
October 2014	Wool, knitting needles, knitting patterns
November 2014	Hand tools (saws, axes, hammers, screws, nails, screwdrivers, etc.)
December 2014	Stationery – pens (no felt tip please), pencils, paper, exercise books, rulers, set squares, erasers, pencil sharpeners, etc.
January 2015	Blankets

As I write this, Lucia, the Malawian lady I met in Middlesbrough more than 12 years ago, and who inspired us to want to help her people in Chagunda, is visiting her family and is due back in the UK early in October. I asked her to find out what things would be the most useful for the villagers, so the list for next year will contain some of those things and will be in the next MEMO. Don't worry if you come across some items that were listed in a previous month – we'll still take them!

I would still welcome a representative from each Church just to act as a go between. So please, if you can be that person, please give me a ring.

Thank you

Linda Harkins



"One kind word can warm three winter months."
Japanese Proverb

Christmas Memories.

The approach of Christmas brings back many memories – some bringing back bad times, some good, but most of all, the hope that the future will hold promises of God's help in this troubled world.

My memories are varied, but 1944 was a turning point in my life – for the better. I was serving in the R.A.F. in defence of India against the Japanese. Fortunately the allies were gaining the upper hand but we still had no land connection from Imphal and Kohima.

The prospect of Christmas day with our dinner served as usual with de-hydrated potatoes, and meat of dubious origin was not very tempting.

Several of our unit thought that perhaps we should contribute a little each to buy goods, and could maybe borrow a plane to go to Calcutta, then we could really enjoy our Christmas dinner. So, tongue in cheek the C.O. was approached and he agreed! So it was arranged and a feast fit for a King was provided.

During the meal the mail arrived and one of our number had a letter from his fiancée which enclosed the names and addresses of her work-mates who were willing to be pen friends and correspond on a regular basis.



Well I was fortunate, and by chance I suppose, found a soul mate for life. 66 years later we are still together and boast 2 daughters, 2 grand-daughters and 3 great grandchildren.

When we were first married we lived in the town and attended Gilkes Street Methodist church. When we moved to Acklam we took our membership to Trinity, and assisted in opening a Sunday School in the Cemetery Chapel.

Unfortunately due to health reasons we had to move into Nunthorpe Oaks, and our membership has now been transferred to Nunthorpe Church.

“God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform”

Best wishes, have a memorable Christmas!

John Thomas

**CAN
YOU
HELP**



Justice Football Club United (JFCU) which is supported by MAP, plays in a Sunday league. Most of our players are unwaged and have no access to transport, and we're looking for anyone who would consider picking up a few of our players after the match to drop them off in town. If we get enough volunteers we could make up a rota so it wouldn't be every week. The matches usually finish at about 12.15pm.

Linda Harkins

“Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas”.

Calvin Coolidge
30th President of the
United States.

A.C.T.S Theatre Company
presents

SLEEPING BEAUTY

AT
TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
(STAINSBY ROAD, MIDDLESBROUGH)

ON
TUESDAY 6TH JAN TO FRIDAY 9TH JAN AT 7PM
AND SATURDAY 10TH JAN AT 2.00PM AND
6.00PM

TICKET PRICES: ADULTS £6, CONCESSIONS £4
FAMILY TICKET (2 ADULTS, 2 CHILD, OR
COMB) £16

AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR ALL THE
FAMILY!

CONTACT LINDA ON 882673 TO BOOK YOUR
TICKETS.

PREPARE TO BE ENTERTAINED!!

THE CHOSEN CHARITIES WE ARE SUPPORTING
THIS YEAR ARE
DAISY CHAIN AND 4LOUIS, AS WELL AS THE
MALAWI PROJECT AND THE JAMES COOK DEPT
OF NEUROSCIENCES



“I want a smaller carrot”

Autun Cathedral France

The Dream of the Three Kings

by Gislebertus

[1125 - 1135.]



You remember the story of how Three Kings or Magi or Wise Men, travelled to find the new King, and how an angel warned them in a dream not to return to Herod, but go home by a different route. [Matthew 2: 2-12] But how do you imagine them sleeping? Probably not sharing a bed and blanket as they do in this sculpture at the top of a high column in Autun Cathedral, France.

The stone mason, a man called Gislebertus, whose name we know because he signed his works, chipped away and created this delightful scene which, possibly unintentionally, conveys a Christmas message to the modern world. Kings, or even wise men, wouldn't share beds today; they would have a hotel suite I expect. In the medieval world, kings might move between castles yet inns offered ordinary men space in a bed, not a bed room; travellers would expect to share if inns were busy. As well as this Gislebertus had to fit the scene on top of a column which was holding the roof up. He was constrained by the space available. So the kings share a bed and blanket, and wear their crowns in bed, just to show they are kings. In 1125 when it was made, they would have been painted in bright colours, so that the peasants below could see the story for themselves, for most won't have been able to read the story for themselves.

Today the Kings' humbling through sharing a bed is a challenge to those who value their wealth, status and privileges. Following Jesus means a shake-up in your life. At Christmas time families who get together might re-arrange sleeping spaces; when I was little my Grandma always slept with me at Christmas! It is a time for sharing.

With one hand the angel points to the star the Kings must follow and with the other delicately touches one of the Kings whose arm is outside the blanket. God's message comes gently here to those who have already begun to change. The arrival of any baby turns a house upside down; in Jesus' kingdom "the first will be last" [Matt20:16], Gislebertus shows Kings spending an uncomfortable night, their sleep disturbed as they begin the journey home, changed men.

Ruth Lewis



Widening our support for asylum-seekers

It's been a happy and successful year at MAP. The most important thing is that we have been able to provide support to more vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees than ever before.

In addition, we have continued to widen the types of support we offer, and it has been really satisfying to see even more people, from different sections of different communities, starting to access our services. Across the year we had just over 8,000 asylum-seeker visitors to our various services. Some of our services, like the Wednesday Avenue drop-in, remain as popular as ever. Others have grown, with visitors to the Welcome drop-in on Thursdays rising fourfold over the year, and the numbers attending the Friday English class tripling.

The Welcome project deserves a particular mention. We launched this in September 2014, and it has proved very popular. The housing provider tells us when new asylum-seekers arrive in Middlesbrough, and in addition the service is publicised and well known across the town. During the year our specially trained volunteers have given tailored one-to-one help to 182 individuals, showing them around Middlesbrough and signposting to other services. As one user commented "I found good friends here, and I feel comfortable when I go out with them". The service is currently based at the Community Cafe on Thursdays, where in addition to new arrivals we see lively and mixed crowd of friends, who call in for a chat and a catch up as they pass.

As ever, we are looking for ways to move forwards. Responding to suggestions made by clients earlier this year, we plan to open a Parent & Child session at Avenue Methodist Church on Saturday mornings. We have received funding from Northern Rock Foundation to allow us to go ahead with this. We are working with Teesside University Early Childhood Studies team, and with a teacher from Linthorpe CP School, and will be up and running by mid-November 2014. Needless to say, we are also developing our volunteer team, looking for people available 9am to 1pm on Saturday mornings, and interested in working with children and young people. I would encourage anyone with an interest in this, or maybe someone who would like to use their skills in dance, music, writing or their other creativity to help others, to get in touch with me on 07970192841 or MAPMbro@gmail.com and I'd be happy to discuss this with them further.

For now though, I should just say thank you from MAP to all of you for your continued support for the project. It is greatly appreciated.

Ailsa Adamson, Project Manager, MAP Middlesbrough.

MAP

Valuing the vulnerable victims of life's vicissitudes
Opportunities for service
Listening and learning together
United in universal friendship
Nurturing newcomers
Tea and empathy
Exchanging experiences
Exploring new possibilities
Relating to others to relieve worry and stress
Imaginative intervention and innovation on behalf of immigrants
Needs Met
=**G**od's will done

Vera Pearson

NORMANBY

Normanby Methodist Church was pleased to welcome the Worshipful the Mayor of Redcar and Cleveland Council Councillor Carole Simms for her Civic Service. Carole has her council surgeries at the Church every month, and has made many friends here. She was pleased to suggest our church for the Civic Service.



There were many dignitaries from other councils in the area, and clergy from other churches. Rev. Huw Sperring combined the service with our Overseas Mission Sunday, and we had a great 'count' for the first Sunday in October! He was assisted in the service by The Reverend Bruce Harrison, Mayor's Chaplain, who gave the address, based on The Good Samaritan. Marske Fishermen's Choir and Students from Topline Choir based at Normanby Primary School led by Chris Nixon on the organ, added their voices to the ceremony. Bible Readings were made by the Mayor and two members of Normanby, Celia Shires and Cynthia Womack, and Prayers of Intercession were led by Judith Bone.

The Mayor's Charity Fund is in aid of 'The Multiple Sclerosis Society' and 'Headway.'

Celia Shires



Come
Celebrate
Christmas
with us!

EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT (Not on the Plan)

AVENUE COMMUNITY PROJECT

Saturday 13th December - MAP's Nativity For All at 4.00pm Everyone is invited to come along and enjoy a multicultural experience.

ESTON GRANGE

Friday 28th November - Christmas meal at 12.30pm

Tuesday 16th December - Advent Bible study at 10.00am

Wednesday 24th December - Christmas Eve Communion Service at 7.00pm

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day Family Service at 10.30am

GROVE HILL

Saturday 29th November - Autumn Fair 10.00am - 12.00 noon

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day Family Service at 11.00am

LINTHORPE ROAD

Sunday 21st December - Carols by Candlelight, United Service with Trinity and Grove Hill at 6.30pm

MARTON

Monday 21st December - Open Air Carol Service Churches Together

Wednesday 24th December - Christmas Eve Carol Service 6.30pm

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day Service 10.00am

NORMANBY

Saturday 6th December - Christmas Fair 10.00am - 12.00 noon all welcome

Saturday 13th December - Chocolate tombola 10.00am - 12.00 noon

Monday 22nd December - Carol Singing at 6.30pm meet at Church

Wednesday 24th December - Christmas Eve Communion at 7.00pm at Eston Grange

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Morning service 9.30am

Sunday 4th January - Sectional Covenant Service 4.00pm followed by faith tea.

NUNTHORPE

Tuesday 2nd December - Churches Together Coffee Morning with a book stall from Stockton Baptist Tabernacle 10.00am - 12.00 noon

Saturday 6th December - Christmas Fayre 1.00pm - 4.00pm

Tuesday 9th December - Short Christmas Service before Coffee 10.00am
Wednesday 24th December - Christmas Eve Carol Service 6.30pm
Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day Family Celebration 9.30am led Rev Sue Greenwood

ORMESBY

Saturday 6th December - 10.00 am Christmas Coffee Morning
Tuesday 9th December - Advent Bible study meeting at 10.00am
Wednesday 10th December - 7.30pm Wives Candlelit Supper
Sunday 21st December - 11.00am Carol Service followed by Christmas Lunch.

STANTON

Friday 12th December - 7.00pm Stanton Music Listeners' Group, Christmas Music Evening presented by Mr Peter French
Wednesday 17th December - 7.00pm Carol Service and mince pies
Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day Service at 10.30am led by Rev Sue Greenwood

TRINITY

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day Family Service at 9.30am



With Epiphany in mind...

I was telling my three boys the story of the Nativity and how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus. Clearly giving it a lot of thought, my six-year-old observed, "Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought nappies."

The Flame Project

Christians in Middlesbrough & Eston sharing the good news with hundreds of young families in new and different ways

Isn't this just what Methodism is all about and has always been about? Sharing the gospel with the everyday people who may know very little about God. Yet they are searching for God and not even necessarily realising it. However as with the early roots of Methodism, being relevant to the culture of the day and meeting people where they are is extremely important. This is exactly what the FLAME Project seeks to do with the help of many volunteers.

As I write, the summer holidays have finished and a new Academic year has begun. Looking back, the summer holiday clubs at Ormesby and Grove Hill went very well with excellent attendance and wonderful atmospheres. For the first time we offered a lunchtime meal to the children at Grove Hill which was much appreciated. Also it was great to be working alongside the Chinese congregation with their summer Kids Club. As always it was a pleasure to work with MAP to provide children's activities for their families.

Now the work of seeing children get to know about the Christian faith, thus having an opportunity to meet with God, goes on. There are four school clubs, the two church clubs and the Girl's Brigade's N:investigate and N:gage groups at Ormesby.

Messy church continues to develop at Grove Hill, Eston Grange, Normanby and Trinity. All of them have events coming up regularly. It is not unusual for parents to comment. "Could you do this every week?" It is great that they have enjoyed going to church so much as to say that. The puppet team will have put on their first major church performance in November at Trinity Parade and Praise Service as well as at a service in the Chinese congregation.

The Grove Hill ladies cooking group particularly aimed at those outside the church will have had some taster cookery demonstrations done by Environmental City in November.

The school's work, taking assemblies, RE lessons, chaplaincy work etc continues to thrive. Inevitably at this time of year thoughts turn to Christmas activities such as several Christingle services which hundreds of people who don't normally go to church attend.

So the work of FLAME is constantly evolving and seeing how it can best be the Christian influence in the local communities it serves. It is always exciting to see God at work through the project as non church going people look at the gospel often for the first time.

Please continue to pray for this vital ministry. My grateful thanks to all those who volunteer without whom this just would not happen.

God bless,

Hayley



CIRCUIT FIVE YEAR PLAN

The Circuit Leadership Team has begun to consider the shape, future direction and possibilities for outreach for the Circuit over the next 5 years.

Of course, the Circuit is largely its churches and any discussions about the direction of the Circuit need to be informed by the plans of the individual churches. Accordingly, the leadership team has asked that each church should have their own discussions so that everyone has the opportunity to say how they see their church altering, developing and reaching out over the next 5 years. Churches also need to identify any opportunities or obstacles to those aspirations and ways in which the Circuit can assist.

In the spirit of caring deeply and sharing openly, representatives of the Circuit Leadership Team want to meet with a small group from each church to discuss their thoughts. These meetings will be held during January & February (giving good time for churches to have their internal discussions) and possible dates will be circulated shortly.

After all the meetings have been held, the Circuit Leadership Team will then be able to take all these into account as they discuss the 5 Year Plan.

Circuit Leadership Team

Trinity Church Nostalgia

The Church, Flowers, Tchaikovsky and the Choir are in this case a common theme.

In the 1990s I used to record the evening service at Trinity Methodist so that anyone indisposed could listen. To this end I purchased some good quality (expensive!) microphones and set about the task of getting a good balanced sound. If you gather that the person leading has a sound reinforcement system, the fans of the heaters give a steady whirr and everything else occurs naturally at different points in the church - then it was not an easy task.

There was a special service where the choir would perform Tchaikovsky's Legend 2, often called "The Crown of Roses". Rather than have a fuzzy distant choir I decided with Pauline's (our Choir director) permission I would make a special recording at the practice.

The Choir at that time were a well matched ensemble and on our day could produce pleasing results. In this case Pauline drilled us with precision so that the score had a sufficient Russian sound and the precise dynamics of the score (hairpins) were observed. When she felt happy enough Pauline smiled and said "Right Michael, you can start the tape".

We did just two takes with no corrections. One was with Celia on the organ, and the second "a cappella". I was able to replay it, whereupon, Frank Bowman suggested we played the tape on Sunday and mimed. That tape has a special place in representing the music of Trinity Methodist Church.

I was recently thinking that it would be nice for anyone to have access to the recording and to show the skill of Pauline Rowe's direction. I tried, unsuccessfully, to get a YouTube video made and ended up (with my son's help) doing it myself. To accompany the music I have put in a slide show taken from the Flower Festival held around the turn of the Century. The slides have a slight match to the words of the motet.

So if you want to see what Trinity looked like, with pews, in 2000

and hear the Choir caught on the wing you can access it anytime from YouTube. You might recognise a friend, even spot Pauline herself. What you need to do is search under “Trinity Methodist Church Choir, Middlesbrough” Look for the 3 segment window and the Marilyn Starford name tag. Incidentally, there are many Trinity Methodists with Choirs - so please put the search in full.

The video is dedicated to Pauline Rowe who was a musical powerhouse for the Church.

Mike Starford.

6th January - Epiphany



On 6th 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 they called kings - by a church father, Tertullian. Another church father, Origin, 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, magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

Taken from the Parish Pump



Circuit Service

Avenue Methodist Church

Epiphany Songs of Praise

**Sunday 1st February
at 4.00pm**

Methodist Women in Britain

Incorporating **Women's Network**
and British unit of the World Federation
of Methodist and Uniting Church Women



Circuit Network Meetings

Friday 12 December 2pm Trinity Christmas meeting
January No meeting
Friday 27 February 2pm Normanby Speaker Mrs Celia Shires.

MWiB Darlington District events

Friday 5 December. Advent service at Guisborough Methodist Church.
Coffee from 10am for Service at 11am followed by soup lunch at 12.30pm.

Friday/Saturday 13/14 March 2015.

Minsteracres Overnighter at the Retreat Centre, Consett, Co Durham.
Facilitator: Rev Pat Brookes.

Commences with coffee at 10.30am Friday and ends with tea and biscuits
at 4pm Saturday. (Please note change of days from previous years which
were Saturday/Sunday). Booking forms will be available through your
Church Network Secretary.

You do not have to be a member of a group to attend these events.

All ladies are welcome. Your Church notice board will have more details
of all Methodist Women in Britain events.

Kath Smithies

Circuit Network Secretary

MORE news from Methodist Women in Britain

The District Project for 2013/14 has raised £9,000. This will be included in
the money being raised through Methodist Women in Britain to support
Dalit Women in India. The amount raised by the ladies in this Circuit was
£860. Grateful thanks to all who supported this Project.

District Project for 2014/15

This year the chosen Charity is “Riding for the Disabled”, a National Charity, and we shall be supporting two Centres, The Unicorn Centre at Hemlington and The Wear Valley Centre at Escomb near Bishop Auckland.

The aim of the Centre is to provide riding for people with disabilities in an inclusive, safe and supportive environment that will allow each individual to achieve their full potential. To provide this service depends on a committed group of staff and volunteers.

The Unicorn Centre was opened in 1998 and now has a lovely new purpose built facility which offers riding therapy and learning and training opportunities for over 200 disabled adults and children from the Tees Valley each week. There are 150 volunteers who assist with riding lessons each week. At present they have 21 horses. Each session takes 6 riders which needs 18 volunteers, 1 to lead and 1 on each side of the rider.

There is a small fee for riders but other than that it relies entirely on ongoing fundraising and donations to subsidise the cost of lessons. This activity has a positive impact on the lives of riders, from the very young to adults. It gives all its riders the opportunity to reach personal ambitions, to develop life skills and often to combat social isolation.

Claire Pitt is the manager of the Unicorn Centre and is willing to come and talk. Please give this very worthwhile Project your full support in the coming year.

Kath Smithies



...I am so sorry Vicar - but with all the snow this week no-one has managed to get to church....

Genesis 18:22

“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

Village Landmark.



Sorting through some family photos recently I came across one of an old building in the centre of my Lancashire home village. It had been built as a Methodist church within thirty-seven years of John Wesley's death. Since then it had served as a Church hall, Sunday school, Day school and most recently as pleasant residential apartments.

Its walls housed many memories of significant steps in my young life. It was there I had my first experience of church life in the form of the infant department of the Sunday school. I was taken by my grandparents who also attended their own classes with other adults. I attended Day school as a junior there for a while and later on at seventeen made my first foray into public speaking at a church meeting. It was a learning experience for all ages and also catered for all sorts of social functions from sitting on forms at trestle tables and eating ham and tongue sandwiches at funeral teas, to Saturday evening film shows. Looking back over its history and wide range of activities, it provided a setting in which I felt nurtured and encouraged.

I was reminded of this experience when researching the background to the life of Jesus. There was a building rather like that in most villages of his day in Palestine. In the city of Jerusalem there were an estimated 480. These buildings were the focal point in every community. They were used as a school, a religious centre, a meeting hall and a court. They had a name, synagogue, it meant 'place of assembly'.

Like most village boys Jesus would have attended school there from the age of five to eighteen. He would have worshipped there at least once a week with his family. As an

adult he would have been involved in a small group in the study of their ancient writings and then listened to and questioned their teacher as they tried to understand what they had read. There are frequent references to him spending time in these village 'meeting places' in the Galilee region once he began his public work. **(1)** What better place if his purpose was to get people to think about the big issues of their lives. Here was the ideal forum, for the exchange of ideas, the questioning of religious belief, the passing on of information.

In the forty years after his death his followers continued to attend the 'meeting places' in the scattered rural communities of Palestine or in the city of Jerusalem. We can imagine them searching their ancient writings, in these 'meeting place' groups, for some understanding of the life of Jesus and sharing these insights with their fellow Jews who weren't followers.

Within the first five years after Jesus' death, Paul took this process beyond Jerusalem as he began travelling the Roman Empire eager to tell others about Jesus. Inevitably he made for the Jewish 'meeting place', in whatever town he was in. **(2)** In this setting for questioning and exchange, the stories about Jesus and the experiences of his close friends, would be scrutinised, mulled over and repeated. It was one of the regular places in which the stories about Jesus might be nurtured and understanding encouraged. But as time went on the Jewish leaders, in many such centres around the Empire, became increasingly hostile. As a result the 'storytellers' began talking more to interested foreigners in public spaces and in the homes of those who had already responded to them. **(3)**

(1) Mark 1v21. Mark 1v39. Mark 3v1. Mark 6v2.

(2) Acts 13v5.. Acts 17v10.

(3) Acts 17v17. Acts 18v4. Acts 18v19.

Len Karn

Fresh e✝pressions

Although we haven't met up yet to plan our next six months of events, as a group we still meet regularly at the pub quiz, held in the Apple Tree on a Tuesday evening. We try to meet on the first Tuesday in every month. The quiz begins about 8.30pm and is a lot of fun. We do quite well but would always welcome other people to come along, especially if you know a lot about football or music as there always seems to be a lot of questions on those topics.

Look out for further details of games evenings, walks and meals out as a group in the next edition of Memo.

Hope to see you soon, God bless, Liz (on behalf of Fresh Expressions).

**If you are interested in coming along, please email
liz.milburn@gmail.com
or give me a ring on 01642 592238/07752 503196.**

As another whole year stretches out before us...

**Jesus,
Heir of the promise, hope of the years,
You are here.**

**Help us Lord,
To know that you are *there*, too,
Before us as you are behind us,
Already in the new moment,
The new day, the new year.**

**Help us Lord
To delight in your company,
To walk your safe way,
To shine your clear light of hope for the year.**

By Daphne Kitching
inspired by Galatians 3:29, Matthew 28:20

Taken from the Parish Pump

EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Saturday 3rd January, Big Coffee Morning at Normanby,
10.00am to 12 noon

Tuesday 27th January, 10am to 12 noon Coffee Morning at
Avenue Community Project, all welcome.

Saturday 7th February, Big Coffee Morning at Normanby,
10.00am to 12 noon

Tuesday 24th February, 10am to 12 noon Coffee Morning at
Avenue Community Project, all welcome.

From the Editors

It has been heartening to receive articles from new Contributors. Many thanks, and we hope that this will inspire others to put pen to paper or fingers to keyboards.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF MEMO

Please send all contributions to the Communications Team
by 3rd January 2015

C/O the Circuit office, Nunthorpe Methodist Church,
Connaught Road, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough TS7 0BS

Or email to mbrocircuit@gmail.com

CIRCUIT OFFICE



THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FROM 12.00 NOON ON
TUESDAY 23RD DECEMBER
AND RE-OPEN ON TUESDAY 5TH JANUARY 2015 AT 9.30AM

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR.
ELAINE

PRAYER DIARY

December 6th. On this day we pray for all our services during Advent and for our own reflections on this special time of the year. Pray for Rev Sue Greenwood and for Stainton

December 14th. On this day we pray for all our Preachers and Worship Leaders in their preparation and in the services they will lead. Pray for Rev Huw Sperring and for Ormesby

December 21st. On this day we pray for all the Carol services and Nativity plays going on around our Circuit and for those who will be visiting our churches maybe for the first time. Pray for Rev Una McLean and for Trinity

December 28th. On this day we remember that we have celebrated the great miracle of the Incarnation, God becoming human to show his love for us. We thank God for all that this Christmas has meant to us. Pray for Rev Lawrence Law and the Chinese congregations.

January 4th. On this first Sunday of a new year, we thank God for all that is past and trust him for all that's to come. Pray for Rev Len Karn and for Grove Hill

January 11th. We pray for all those people who are ill at this time, those who are housebound and those in hospital, and for all who care. Pray for Rev Sarah Ramsden and her ministry at James Cook

University Hospital

January 18th. We pray today for God's blessing upon all who are sad at the loss of a loved one, coping with being on their own and for those who care for them. Pray for Elaine at the Circuit Office and for Nunthorpe church.

January 25th. We pray today for all the many meetings which take place in our Circuit that God's Spirit may guide the decision making. Pray for Jackie and her staff at the Circuit Resource Centre and for Linthorpe Road.

February 1st. We pray today for the Epiphany Songs of Praise that this may be a time of enlightenment. Pray for Ailsa and the MAP project and for Eston Grange.

February 8th. We pray today for all who are having problems at work, those seeking more fulfilling employment and those who are unemployed. Pray for Normanby

February 15th. We pray today for all who come to our churches to be married, for those in happy relationships and those facing family problems. Pray for Hayley Liversidge and for Marton.

February 22nd. We pray that as we enter the season of Lent, this may be a time of preparation as we seek to understand more about our faith. Pray for Rev Ruth Gee and for the Darlington District.

