

MEMO

Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Outburst

MARCH TO
MAY 2018



**On the third day
He rose again**

1 Corinthians 15:4

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

As I write this, it is nearly New Year and Christmas is over, leaving for us that reassurance that God so loves us that he became one of us through this outstanding miracle of the Incarnation.

When you read this you will be anticipating the experience of Easter, the serious time of Lent, the sadness of Good Friday and the Joy of Easter Sunday. This will be another reminder of God's amazing love for all of us.

In fact this 'Memo' and Plan cover some of the great times of our Christian year, as well as Easter, we have Ascension, and Pentecost and of course as part of our Methodist tradition; Aldersgate Sunday, celebrating the wonderful conversion experience of John Wesley and the subsequent founding of our Methodism. Our festivals are opportunities to think again of what God, through his Son, Jesus, has done for us. Although these festivals remind us of the events from the Past, they are reassurances of the present and the future, God's love is never ending and what a blessing this is for all of us.

I hope you will find this 'Memo' interesting and stimulating and that you may be encouraged to write something for our next edition. You will notice in this 'Memo' a number of contributions from the 'Parish

Pump' to which we subscribe. The reason for these contributions is mainly to fill in the spaces; we had hoped would be filled by you. This is a forum for all, an opportunity for us to share the lives of our churches and our own Faith journeys. So, please think of what you can share and email or post a contribution to the Circuit Office, thank you. Lastly, on a less than popular note, this 'Memo' does cost money to produce which is why a number of our churches ask for £1 for each edition. Does your church charge? If not, then how do they contribute to the cost of 'Memo?' We don't like to mention money and we are grateful for all the money sent in to us to go towards the costs. It was suggested we put £1 on the cover, but we disagreed with this suggestion as some churches ask for a contribution. Whatever method you use, thank you and please keep on giving.

Happy Easter to you all, may the resurrected Jesus fill our hearts this and every day.

Dave on behalf of Anne and Elaine,
the Communications Team.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF MEMO

**Please send all contributions to the
Communications Team
C/O the Circuit office,
Nunthorpe Methodist Church,
Connaught Road, Nunthorpe,
Middlesbrough TS7 0BS**

**Or email to mbrocircuit@gmail.com
4th April**



The Superintendent's Letter

Dear Easter People,

On Christmas Day 2017 I was thrilled to see in the Manse Garden a beautifully shaped, single yellow rose bud - those who know me well know that yellow roses are my favorite flowers. It reminded me of a quote from J M Barrie:

" God gave us memory so we might have roses in December."

The first signs of Spring have been evident for a while now and with those signs, for many, a new sense of hope. The cold, dark days of winter are behind us and the new life of Springtime is here. But just as the seasons remind us that we live in a pattern of birth and life and death and new life - so our Christian life has that same cycle of being born, of living and dying and rising.

Hope and Memory are so important to us as human beings - the loss of either is a tragedy - but for so many people throughout the world this is their experience. We need memory to remind us that Spring will come, that Love is stronger than hatred, that there is goodness at the heart of most people and that we all have something of the image of God within us. It's encouraging to see the help being given to those whose memory is fading and it's amazing to see the work being done in our area through 'Faithfully Ageing Better.' Perhaps there are things we can do to help those with memory loss and their loved ones, in our churches. Memory Clubs are springing up all over, with music, photographs and films all provided with human warmth, love and compassion. Perhaps we can offer those Wintertime roses of hope!

We see the suffering of women, men and children in various parts of the world, often their hopelessness is caused by civil unrest or war and its aftermath. Hundreds of thousands of people fleeing persecution and seeking safety, hoping for a better life somewhere - anywhere! Nurses, Doctors, Aid workers tell of the 'hopeless situations,' and yet, they go on working in places where even snowdrops and poppies struggle to grow - let alone roses! I wonder, do they ever see signs of Spring - signs of hope Roses, in the winter of their hell on earth? Is it not through the very touch of human love and care that they see the Love of God and the fragile and vulnerable signs of hope?

I know from speaking to many of those seeking asylum in this country that they DO hold on to hope, and that the hope they have, is often given to them by you and me and in the love, care and practical help we give. THANK YOU!

And what is our HOPE? Surely not simply a hope based on wishes, you know what I mean, 'I really hope 'Boro win 4-0 tonight.'

Or, 'Hopefully it will be dry enough to hang out the washing.'

Or even, 'We hope the surgery will give him a clean bill of health.'

NO - the HOPE Christians have, the hope which motivates them, the hope which stirs them into action on behalf of others is grounded in the Death and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ - when we can say: "In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Sure and Certain Hope comes when we allow God's Spirit to fill us and motivate us. For many, there may only be the memory of a rose in December. . . but maybe we can be the one who helps stir that memory for them.

With my Love to you all,

Sue

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM The CONNEXION affecting all members.

'On the 25th May 2018, the new General Data Protection Regulation ('GDPR') will come into force. Its aim is to bring the current data protection legislation into the modern digital era as well as harmonise the various data protection laws of member states within the European Union.

One of the changes introduced by GDPR surrounds consent, where by the time the next Circuit directory is produced, it will be necessary to obtain written consent from individuals to their personal data being included in the directory.

TMCP have produced an article on their website which provides more information: <http://tmcp.org.uk/news-hub/local-church-circuit-and-district-directories-data-collection> Please keep referring to the TMCP website as more help and guidance will be added before the introduction of the GDPR. www.tmcp.org.uk'

As Circuit Stewards we can assure you we will be keeping up to date with any advice issued by TMCP regarding Church and Circuit Directories and will make sure Church Stewards are informed about what they have to do. However all members and adherents whose names, addresses and phone numbers are held by churches can expect this year, and in future years to be asked for their consent to this personal data being collected and stored.

Circuit Leadership Team

What a busy year lies ahead!

As some of you know I have been called to the South East Northumbria Ecumenical Area (SENEA) to serve in three Methodist Churches from September 2018 (Conference approval pending!!) I will have charge of three churches, two in Cramlington and one in Bedlington. Patricia (the Yorkshire Terrier puppy) and I have already been and sampled the ball worthiness of Blythe sands. As yet I have no new address as the Area are searching for a house suitable to become the Manse – a search that I am hoping I can be a part of as I am only an hour down the road.

So part of the busyness facing me this year is the packing up and sorting out the Middlesbrough Manse ready for moving in August – quite a daunting job as I am determined to leave with a lot less than I arrived with so watch out MAP for household items and watch out for listings of books seeking a new home – I am certain even the local charity shops will be ‘blessed’ by my removal one way or another!

The other main part of the busyness of this year will be my Sabbatical which starts in May and continues through to July. Rev Sue and I share Sabbatical ‘due’ dates so I deferred to allow for her Sabbatical last year and to cover the loss of Huw northward.

The theme for my Sabbatical is based around the ideas of dispersed communities. I have already started preparing to make a patchwork quilt using the patterns which we are told were used to help guide runaway slaves from the USA into safety in Canada (1 pattern made 15 to go!!). This will be professionally quilted and then embellished by hand and I am hoping to have the completed quilt with me before I finish in Middlesbrough and Eston. Alongside this I plan to visit the slavery museum in Liverpool (and take in the visiting Terracotta Army whilst I’m there)

The second theme strand is to listen to the stories of ‘my’ refugees – how they got here, why they came, what it felt like – I have never explored these stories fully and look forward to hearing them from people I have grown to know and love.

My third strand concerns my own family history. The McLean clan used to own the island of Mull, had to sell some to the McDonalds to offset debts and then were sent to the mainland during the Highland clearances – I too have a dispersed family history – and the last 10 days of my sabbatical will take me to the Outer Hebrides (including St Kilda – 42 miles from the mainland) to look at communities that have been dispersed for economic reasons.

In between all of this I have three weddings booked and a couple of new babes to welcome to the world as well as friends clamouring for visits so I best get my travel mode overhauled and good to go.

I am anticipating an exciting and worthwhile year ahead with much to accomplish, much to enjoy and many things to share. Please pray that I have the energy and skill set to keep it all moving forward and in some semblance of order!

Una



St David's Day – time for daffodils

1st March is St David's Day, and it's time for the Welsh to wear daffodils or leeks. Shakespeare called this custom 'an honourable tradition begun upon an honourable request' - but nobody knows the reason. Why should anyone have ever 'requested' that the Welsh wear leeks or daffodils to honour their patron saint? It's a mystery!

We do know that David - or Dafydd - of Pembrokeshire was a monk and bishop of the 6th century. In the 12th century he was made patron of Wales, and he has the honour of being the only Welsh saint to be canonised and culted in the Western Church. Tradition has it that he was austere with himself, and generous with others - living on water and vegetables (leeks, perhaps?!) and devoting himself to works of mercy. He was much loved.

In art, St David is usually depicted in Episcopal vestments, standing on a mound with a dove at his shoulder, in memory of his share at an important Synod for the Welsh Church, the Synod of Brevi.

The Parish Pump

The Ten Commandments

This rhyming version of the Ten Commandments, published, it is thought, by Isaac Watts in 1709, was still going strong some years ago.

Thou shalt have no gods but Me.
Before no idol bow thy knee.
Take not the name of God in vain,
Nor dare the Sabbath Day profane.
Give both thy parents honour due,
Take heed that thou no murder do.
Abstain from words and deeds unclean,
Nor steal, though thou art poor and mean.
Nor make a wilful lie, nor love it,
What is thy neighbour's, do not covet.

The Parish Pump

Nunthorpe Film Club +

Welcoming children in the Modern World

In March we will have been running Film Club+ at Nunthorpe Methodist Church for a year. The club (free to enter) runs once a month, during term time, for children aged 8 years or older. We screen a movie (licensed through our membership of intofilm.org) on the big screen while offering games such as table tennis, table football, air hockey and magnetic darts together with a busy craft table, all in another room. By far the most popular aspect of Film Club+ is the tuck shop – selling freshly made popcorn, fizzy pop and a wide variety of the most sugary and additive filled sweets imaginable. I expect the local dentists are glad the club only happens once a month!

In Nunthorpe we are blessed to have a healthy number of children who regularly attend our CoGs (Children of God Squad) on Sunday mornings which is led by talented and committed leaders. We wanted to offer these children their own social space and time in the church in the same way that we open the doors to oldest and youngest members through events such as the Luncheon Club and most recently, the Toddler Group. Sure enough, our CoGs came along and loved it!

What I could not have predicted, however, was how this club would open the doors to children and families from the much wider community. Our CoGs invited their friends, who, in turn, invited *their* friends. We have, on average, 20 children attend each club night, although we can never be sure how many will come. The night that 32 children turned up was a busy one! Each time we host a club we register new members. The response from children and parents has been extremely positive. They regularly report to me about how popular the club, express gratitude to the leaders and one gave me a donation the other night; “For the work of the church, to say thank you.” Over Christmas I received a text message asking what services were on over the Christmas period so, of course, I told them.

I’m not suggesting that Film Club+ will lead to increased church membership or a huge religious conversion in our local area, but the fact our church is open to people who have never been before is an opportunity I will not let pass. Alongside my fellow Film Club+ leaders, who generously give up their time on a Friday night each month, we will continue to open the doors, welcome and engage all who come in a friendly and positive way. By doing this, maybe, we are practising Hebrews 13:2.

Our first film, back in March, was Paddington. It is a wonderful film about the Brown family who take a big risk by opening their home to Paddington, a small bear seeking refuge. He, in turn, teaches those who meet him the importance of kindness and hospitality to all. We, at Film Club+, are a bit like the Brown family. Each month we take the risk and open the door. We are richly rewarded. We engage with young people who will always remember that our church welcomed them, offering free films, games and the best sweets and popcorn in town! Good times.

For more information about Film Club+ please contact: jenniemcneal@gmail.com

Ash Wednesday: a good time to admit you are sorry

Have you done something which haunts you? Which makes you feel restless and defensive, every time you think of it? Why not deal with it this month, and put it behind you? Whatever your mistake has been, consider what the Bible has to say to you:

'I have not come to call the virtuous but sinners to repentance' (said Jesus). (Luke 5.32)

'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55.7)

'Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.' (Joel 2:12-13)

God is inviting you to come to him this Ash Wednesday. What a wonderful offer! Make the most of it, and remember how the Prodigal son was welcomed back by his compassionate father.

The Parish Pump

Circuit Easter Offering Service 2018

This will be held on Sunday April 29th at Normanby Methodist Church at 6.00pm. The service is prepared by Methodist Women in Britain on behalf of the World Mission Fund. In this act of worship, we shall dedicate our Easter offering and hear stories of how the World Mission Fund supports God's mission in different parts of the world. Everyone is invited to share in this service, men and women.

Kath Smithies

ADVENT SONGS OF PRAISE.

Some time ago I was approached by a friend at Trinity who suggested that our 'Songs of Praise' services should be at the churches who have evening services. A good idea, except there are only now two evening churches; Trinity and Stainton, so we already have the 'Big Sing' at Stainton every year and therefore what a good idea to accept the invitation of Trinity to worship there at Advent. Maybe we go back to Avenue for our next 'Songs of Praise?'

So it was that on December 3rd a good company of friends turned up at Trinity to share in a celebration and meditation of this special festival, which is not Christmas, but has its own very real message.

The singing was great, thank you to Geoff Foxall for his spirited accompaniment at the organ, and the congregation for their sincere praise. Ruth Lewis and Rev Sue gave us things to think about regarding working for God's Kingdom. Bernie Nixon told us of the exciting events at Trinity which are part of the building of the Kingdom.

Trinity folk were so hospitable and did everything they could to make us welcome and yes; it was a good idea to accept their invitation. At this point Ron and I have not met to look at the next Songs of Praise, although I have an idea! Watch this space.

Dave and Ron

Thoughts and Prayers

As most of you know we will have a new minister in the circuit in September, subject to Conference approval. Rev Charity Hamilton will take over the Grove Hill, Linthorpe Road and Trinity section when Una moves further north. What you may not know is that Charity includes us, the Circuit, in her prayers every Thursday. Perhaps it is timely that we could hold her in **our** prayers as she prepares to join us and all the 'busyness' within the section.



Choose between chocolate and cheese



Here is a desperate choice: if you had to give up one forever, which would it be? After a great deal of heart-searching, it seems we are split nearly down the middle, with 50 per cent of us letting chocolate go, and 47 per cent letting cheese go. So – cheese wins! As one senior food analyst explains, 'Cheese is a menu staple in the vast majority of homes.'

But although the survey, by Mintel the consumer analysts, found that we love cheese best, that does not mean we don't love chocolate: in fact, we are buying more of it each year. This coming year we are forecast to get through nearly half a million tons of chocolate, and 785 million tons of cheese (most of it cheddar).

The Parish Pump

Local Preachers.

It is a real privilege being LP Secretary as I have always considered my ministry as a Preacher to be one of the most important and special things in my life. Of course sometimes being Secretary is demanding, when we have Preachers who are unwell and can't fulfil their appointments. However whenever this happens, I only have to put out an email and my good friends will offer their help and take those services.

It is always a joy to attend our Preachers' meetings, especially with Rev Sue in the 'Chair' It is good that we can study together, share in discussions as well as deal with the business which always includes news on our Preachers.

One of the highlights in my time as Secretary has been the celebration of Preachers completing their demanding course and becoming 'Fully Accredited' This time it is Kate Dykes who will be celebrating on Easter Sunday and I hope as many of you as possible will make it to Grove Hill at 6pm for her service.

One of the final parts of the course is where Kate was interviewed by Rev Sue in the presence of all the Preachers, on one of Wesley's sermons. She came through with 'flying colours' but the sermon she had chosen was on 'Almost Persuaded'. Kate was able to share her thoughts on this sermon and we were all challenged about the need for us to preach that our congregations may be 'fully persuaded' by the message we bring to them. We should be preaching for conversions, for those who go through the motions week by week but in some cases are looking for something special, to have a 'warmed heart' experience to be 'fully persuaded' We also thought about whether we should be looking for people to give testimonies, to share their journey with God in the past week for example. It was a very interesting meeting and we rejoiced together at Kate's arrival as a Fully Accredited Preacher subject to the approval of the Circuit meeting.

Being a Preacher is a joy and a challenge, I love it!! However there are some weeks when I am very busy and have to make time to prepare, although in retirement that doesn't happen as often as it used to do. I do find it good to have time to prepare throughout the week, and still to feel nervous in the Vestry before the service, that reminds me of the special task I am about to do.

It is also good to be challenged about a service by members of the congregation, I look forward to preaching at Trinity as there is always conversation about the service, especially with my good friend Bill Reeve who will challenge and make me think.

I have also gained a great deal from Discussion services especially at evening services. What a privilege to hear people's thoughts and their sharing of their faith.

So if you feel that God may be calling you to this special ministry, then do something, pray about it, speak to your Minister, maybe you would like to talk to a Local Preacher, we will always be glad to share our experiences with you.

We also thank God for the great ministry of our Worship Leaders; this has often been a starting point for future Preachers.

Thank you to all our Preachers for their ministry amongst us, whether they be Lay or Ordained.

Dave Elliott.

EASTER EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT (not on the Plan)



Eston Grange

Good Friday Meditation at 7.00pm

Friday 11th May Church Anniversary Meal at 5-30pm

Grove Hill

Saturday 24th March Easter Egg Tombola and Fair 10.00-12.00 noon

Linthorpe Road

Maundy Thursday Service at Noon including Communion

Maundy Thursday Communion Service at 7.15pm with soup, bread and cheese (bring your own bowl, plate, beaker and cutlery, to book a place please ring 01642 813089)

Normanby

17 – 18th March Gift Weekend

Saturday 24th March Easter Fair, usual stalls and Easter Egg Tombola 10.00am -12 noon

Good Friday Service at 10.30am followed by Ecumenical Walk of Witness

Nunthorpe

Good Friday service will be at 10.00am preceded at 9.00am by the walk with the Cross from Marton.

Ormesby

Maundy Thursday Service at 7.00pm

Stainton

Maundy Thursday Holy Communion at 7.00pm United Service

Trinity

Monday 26th March - Thursday 29th March at 6.30pm ‘Sacred Space’ - a quiet time of reflection and worship led by members of the church family

Good Friday Service at 11.00am – a time for reflection



Circuit Services

*Grove Hill Methodist Church
1st April at 6.00pm
Local Preachers' Celebration*

*Normanby Methodist Church
MWTB Sunday 29th April at 6.00pm
Easter Offering*

Palms

It was Palm Sunday, but because of a sore throat, young James stayed home from church with his grannie. When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm fronds. Johnny asked them what they were for. "People held them over Jesus' head as He walked by," his father told him.



"Wouldn't you know it," James fumed, "the one Sunday I don't go, and He shows up."

The Parish Pump

LINTHORPE ROAD RESOURCE CENTRE

The hours of the Resource Centre have changed.

From 1st January 2018 the office hours will be:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

10 am till 12.30pm, 1pm till 4.30pm.

Please note the office will be closed all day Thursday.

Tulips

Tulips are turning out to be my favourite spring flower both in the garden and in the house as cut flowers. I had the good fortune to be able to read about The Turkish Tulips Exhibition at the Bowes Museum in 2017 and what a fascinating read it turned out to be. Tulips first appeared in the wild, remote and desolate mountains of central Asia across the borders of northwest China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. They grew as hardy, ground hugging plants along side the Silk Road and no doubt merchants took some of the bulbs with them on their travels. Wild tulips flourished in ancient Turkey as nomadic tribes settled and established the Ottoman Empire and in the 12th century they were celebrated in Iran through miniature paintings and poetry by Omar Khyyam and Rumi, a Sufi philosopher and poet.



Some Tulip facts

The tulip acquired its name by accident when a Turkish translator likened it to a turban (tublent) taken to be the flower's name and which was written down in Latin (tulipa) and the name stuck!

Tulips were originally blood red in colour and many stories were told to explain their beauty which was often synonymous with perfection or eternity

Tulips were given evocative names such as The Light of Paradise and The Matchless pearl (synonymous with the Garden of Eden and The Pearl of Great Price perhaps) and was considered the holiest of flowers, in Arabic script it meant the Flower of God

The Tulip Revolution took place in Kyrgyzstan in 2005

Tulips were first recorded in Western Europe in 1559 and 'Tulipmania' happened in Holland between 1636-37

They are a national flower in Hungary and feature in a lot of folk art and crafts

Tulip flowers make an excellent poultice for insect bites, bee stings, burns and rashes

The first tulip in England was reported in 1578

Each spring the Keukenhof Gardens in Lisse, Netherlands hold a magnificent display of tulips

Anne Smith

Palm Sunday Prayer



...one last time - which member of the Junior Church put bubble mixture in the organ-blower?!

Windy

Three elderly ministers, all hard of hearing, were playing golf one sunny spring morning. The Methodist minister observed, 'Windy, isn't it?' 'No', the Baptist pastor said, 'It's Thursday.' The Anglican vicar agreed: 'So am I! Let's go and get a pint.'



**British Summer
Time starts on
Sunday 25th
March**

*Don't forget to put
your clocks
forward one hour.*

Loving Father,

People didn't recognise Jesus as your son, on that first Palm Sunday, even though you had told them what to expect. They wanted him to be their hero, to do things their way, to meet their expectations. To be a king of their own creation. Perhaps we still do.

Help us to look beyond what we think is best, to see that the values of your Kingdom are very different from the values of this world. Help us to proclaim you as our King, to commit ourselves to building for your Kingdom to come - and then to trust you and get on with it. In Jesus name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

Letter to God

A Sunday School teacher invited her children to write a letter to God. They were to bring their letter back the following Sunday. One little boy wrote, "Dear God, We had a really good time at church today. Wish you could have been there."

The Parish Pump

When I survey the wondrous cross

Isaac Watts

[Singing the Faith 287 and Hymns and Psalms &P 180];

When I was a little girl my father used to tease me about how well I had done in being born the day before 5th of April, rather than the week after, like my younger brother. Apparently because of that, he could claim tax relief for me for the preceding year! With my brother, no such luck. Of course that's why April and indeed Easter used to be popular for weddings, there was unearned money to be claimed when you sent in your tax returns. It was in 1752 that the British treasury made the decision to end the fiscal year in April, thus making the time near Holy Week and the Passion, a time when you measure up your financial and worldly profit, gain and loss. Too late for Isaac Watts [1674-1748] to have it in mind when he wrote in 1709 the words to what has been called the greatest hymn in the English language: *When I survey the wondrous cross*. But Watt's hymn is an assessment too, of spiritual and eternal profit and loss, gains and gifts, in the face of the cross.

Apparently, as a teenager Isaac Watts complained about the monotonous hymns, mostly versions of the psalms, sung in church. Things don't change do they! His father challenged the lad to do better and the writer of some of our greatest hymns evolved. Indeed *Joy to the World* [H&P 77] is Watts' updated version of Psalm 98. A child genius, he was learning Latin by age 4, Greek at 9, French (which he took up to be able to talk to his refugee Huguenot neighbours) at 11, and Hebrew at 13. As an adult he was a pastor, a prolific publisher of sermons, essays on psychology, astronomy, philosophy and a text book on logic to name but a few. Despite his towering intellect he was only 5 foot tall, pale and often ill; he never married. Yet his 600 hymns a small fraction of which can be found in H&P and StF contain his enduring monument. He wanted his hymns to be "within the reach of an ordinary Christian." They certainly are.

What makes *When I survey* so powerful? First, for me the words. They put the individual singer/believer right there at the passion on Calvary: "*I...me...my...*" and it's all happening NOW, conveyed by the word beginning verse 3, "See..." When we sing it we are put in the position of being there, looking at the Prince of Glory on the cross, weighing up our worldly gains, at first in the

manner of a tax return, but in the light of the cross. A vivid word picture of the suffering Christ's blood, his "sorrow and love" *flowing*; "crimson, like a robe" *spreading* conveys a sense of immediacy and movement here and now, rather than the past which lends power as we sing. Watts concludes for us, that the richness of Christ's suffering means that the riches of the globe, "*the whole realm of nature*" a vast mind-blowing concept, is "*too small*" and that that this *divine* and *amazing* love demands the *soul* and the *life* and the *all* of the individual singer/believer. Now a theological question: is the *whole realm* an "*offering*" to appease an angry God, as in StF, or as Watts originally wrote, a "*present*" as in H&P? These two words do not mean the same thing, for an offering, implies the possibility of rejection and suggests an act of duty. A present is given in love without fear of rejection. You decide.

Music makes a hymn. A familiar version we sing is *Rockingham* and you could view Kings College Cambridge choir singing this on youtube with this link www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9eCUqz_x5A

Being Welsh, a favourite of mine is *Morte Cristi* as sung on a CD *Hearts and Voices Raising* which is from a festival of massed Anglo Welsh choirs. In this version, at first the accompaniment is by piano, but in the climactic last verse the organ comes in and swells. I love it. You could download it on itunes. Or view another version without the organ with this link www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHPaMS0DpEI

A particularly lovely version is the folk tune *O Waly Waly*, the second tune given in *Singing the Faith*. Its simplicity is haunting and I must warn you of a searing experience if you look on youtube for a version sung by Kathryn Scott a Christian song writer and worship leader from Northern Ireland. The link is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZtxF92rwQ> There her lovely single voice is heard against a backdrop of scenes from Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of The Christ*. It is incredibly moving and brings home powerfully what we owe our Saviour. Such love and grace does indeed demand a response: my soul, my life, my all.

Ruth Lewis

Methodist Women in Britain



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

Circuit Network Meetings

March 23rd 2pm Trinity
Speaker To be arranged Bring/Buy Stall

April and May No Afternoon meetings

Circuit Network Evening Event

Wednesday May 23rd 7pm at Eston Grange
Musical Entertainment from "Sounds of Silver" followed by a faith supper.
There will be a Chocolate Tombola and a collection for this year's District
Project (supporting Mission Partners in Haiti)

Circuit Easter Offering Service

This will be held at Normanby on Sunday evening **April 29th at 6pm** and is
an open service for **everyone** in the Circuit to attend. The service will
include the Dedication of the Easter Offering. Please come and give it your
support.

MWiB Darlington District Events

Friday/Saturday March 9th/10th
Minsteracres Overnighter. Advance booking only.

Monday March 26th. Easter Quiet Day at St Andrew's Methodist Church
Stockton TS19 8JX led by Rev Ruth Parry. Coffee from 10am, start
10.30am. Please bring a packed lunch, drinks provided.

Friday May 18th
Summer Afternoon meeting at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church DL14
6EN. Service at 2pm. Speaker Rev Sue Richardson. Afternoon tea to
follow the service.

All ladies in the Church are welcome at all these events.

Kath Smithies
Circuit Methodist Women in Britain (Network) Secretary

Playgroup at Nunthorpe Methodist Church

Our play group started in September and we have now completed a full term which seems to have flown by. We have a regular group of about 22 children each week aged from 0-4years accompanied by parents, grandparents and childminders. Parents have made friendships and children are invited to each other's birthday parties. At Christmas time we included the nativity story and a song in our programme through December.

The offers of help from friends and church family have been wonderful: helpers have made new friends and a role that they love to do and retired colleagues have refreshed their treasured skills.

We try and give the children a variety of experiences and even at his tender age some preparation for nursery. There is large play apparatus with bikes and cars and a small trampoline, a home corner with dolls and prams, dressing up clothes and other toys and a sensory play area for the very youngest of our visitors.

Our story time session this term is very popular and involves excitement with splashes of water! Next half term our theme and story will be eggs and Eastertime.

There are some simple craft activities with gluing and sticking and paint: all the messy play that a parent may be reluctant to try at home. Our picture painting this week was a winter scene and included some shiny snowflakes to stick on. One little boy complained on the way out that his "cornflakes" were falling off!

Refreshments of fruit and juice are available and tea and coffee for parents. We sometimes have a pet corner when two Guinea pigs come to visit. Their names are Mike and Buzz, named before it was discovered that they were ladies!

The morning ends with nursery rhymes and songs and games with a large colourful parachute and everyone joins in. We are looking forward to springtime when we will be able to include outside play in our "Noah's Playground". We have loved meeting the children and the families in our area and the whole morning is a real treat.

Julie O'Key

Ladies Circle
Coffee Morning at
Trinity Methodist Church
on Saturday 10th March
10.30am—12.00 noon



Nightstop 2018



Community Volunteers are needed to help change the lives of homeless and destitute people

Nightstop North East, a project run by homelessness charity Depaul UK, is looking to the Methodist Church in our Circuit, for volunteers who are willing to help make a difference to the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Middlesbrough and the surrounding areas. The project helps people who are in an immediate housing crisis by providing safe accommodation in the homes of volunteer '**hosts**' on a night by night basis. Nightstop needs volunteers to act as **hosts** or as **drivers**.

The volunteer **host** role involves offering a spare room in the volunteer's home for a night or two whilst the Nightstop staff work with the local homelessness team and other organisations to help the person find more permanent accommodation. Hosts receive full training, can access 24 hour support and are paid an expenses allowance for every night they provide a bed for someone in need.

The **driver** role requires people with a full clean driving licence and their own vehicle who will receive a mileage allowance to transport the Nightstop guest to their accommodation, mostly in the early evenings.

Might you be able to help change a vulnerable person's life? To find more about becoming a host in Teesside, call 01642 249 782, text 07769688505 or email nightstopne@depaulcharity.org.uk

Visit our website to find more: <https://uk.depaulcharity.org/nightstop-north-east-and-cumbria>



Looking into the future.



The New Year is a time for reflection, and for a renewed commitment to the year ahead.

Last year at MAP we were focussing on the start-up of the new Ariadne Partnership. This is a Lottery-funded partnership between MAP, British Red Cross, Open Door NE and Justice First aimed at working more closely together, in order to make it easier for those seeking asylum to get help from any relevant organisation whenever they need it during their asylum journey. A few months into the project the partnership already has several hundred service-users across the area, and has enabled the start of a new Justice First drop-in at MAP every Friday morning.

Ariadne saw the appointment of a new part-time worker at MAP, Hamid Yazdanfar, to support the work of the partnership. Hamid is an Iranian refugee who brings many skills to MAP, and is a welcome addition to the team.

Besides Ariadne, the normal weekly work of MAP continued: Avenue clothing drop-in, Thursday Welcome drop-in, and Friday Come & Chat English chat plus Keep Fit, Tai Chi, Football, Games afternoon and a new Reading Group, led by local author Jonathan Tulloch.

Looking forward into the New Year it is clear that our commitment to those newly arriving in the area will be a key focus. After nearly 2 years of relatively quiet dispersal, with low numbers of new arrivals, we saw a return to a much more “normal” pattern from November 2017. We are now again regularly seeing groups of new individuals arriving into Middlesbrough. The Welcome service is busy meeting, greeting and helping to orientate people and Avenue drop-in is again seeing a week by week demand for the basics of everyday clothing, and core household items like bedding and bed linen.

The one constant in MAP, however, is the commitment of the volunteer team. All of our services are delivered by volunteers, who give hours of time and years of experience to help others, week in and week out. A highlight of the year was the chance to celebrate the 90th birthday of one of our longest serving volunteers at Come & Chat, Stan Finch, in November. Stan was one of the very first volunteers to get Come & Chat started, and is a much loved and popular teacher amongst his students. We obviously brought a cake and small gift along for him on his special day, but what was really touching was the spontaneity of the good wishes which poured out of the students attending the class, when they heard what the occasion was. We sang Happy Birthday, but then little by little the room got to its feet, and a throng pressed around Stan shaking his hand, thanking him, and in many cases, singing a little burst of Happy Birthday in their own language! It was an unprompted outpouring of appreciation and love, which shows just how much Stan, and the efforts of all MAP volunteers, are valued by those they help. A moving testament, and an inspiration for the year ahead!

Ailsa Adamson

‘Searching for God’ by George Basil Hume

Book Review

You do not need to be a Roman Catholic nor a member of any other religious denomination, you do not even need to be a Christian, to gain some enlightenment and encouragement from this book. All you need is to be a seeker after truth and have a willingness to learn what an erudite scholar and devout, but down-to-earth Christian has to say about his personal discoveries on his pilgrimage both as a man and as a Benedictine monk.

The book is composed of a series of lectures or ‘fatherly chats’ and advice to his fellow brothers as they prepare to make their vows of devotion to God and service to their fellow men at various stages of their training, right up to their final vows.

Serious stuff, yes, but also very humble and understanding of the human condition and of how difficult it is to make and keep promises.

Basil Hume was of the mind that Christ became not just man but all men, and as man is religious by nature so God is part of our makeup. Even though everyone may not know or consciously respond to Christ or Christian values Hume intimates that we are not only a potential Christian but, in time, a hidden Christian; that we are not alone in dark times as God’s glory seeps into our sensibilities and God’s beauty will speak to us in one form or another

A realist, the author is totally aware of the problems that beset all of us whether we are Christian, seeker or non-believer. Compassionate, he appreciates that what is suited to one person is not necessarily suited to another. He also reminds us that all things should be tempered so that the strong have something to aim at while the weak do not shrink away in alarm or fear,

Don’t worry if you don’t understand the few Latin terms – they are all translated for you. You never know, you may even get some laughs or smiles from his gentle touches of humour.

Read and enjoy

Just, “A Pilgrim”

(and thanks to Trinity and other churches who supply books for those unable to get to public libraries now)

Vera Pearson

Men and women

Three men were hiking through a forest when they came upon a large raging river. Needing to get on the other side, the first man prayed, "God, please give me the strength to cross the river." Poof! God gave him big arms and strong legs and he was able to swim across in about two hours, having almost drowned twice.

After witnessing that, the second man prayed, "God, please give me strength and the tools to cross the river." Poof! God gave him a rowboat and strong arms and strong legs and he was able to row across in about an hour after almost capsizing once.

Seeing what happened to the first two men, the third man prayed, "God, please give me the strength, the tools and the intelligence to cross the river." Poof! He was turned into a woman. She checked the map, went one hundred yards up stream and walked across the bridge.

The Parish Pump

EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Saturday 3rd March, Big Coffee Morning at Normanby, 10.00am to 11.30am

Saturday 10th March, Ladies Circle Coffee Morning at Trinity 1030am to 12.00 noon

Saturday 24th March, Easter Fair at Normanby, 10.00am to 12.00 noon

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

Saturday 7th April, Big Coffee Morning at Normanby, 10.00am to 11.30am

Tuesday 24th April, 10.00am to 12 noon Coffee Morning at Avenue Community Project, all welcome.

Saturday 5th May, Big Coffee Morning at Normanby, 10.00am to 11.30am

Tuesday 29th May, 10.00am to 12 noon Coffee Morning at Avenue Community Project, all welcome.

PRAYER DIARY

March 4th We pray for our Circuit and for Rev Sue Greenwood that she may continue to be richly blessed in her ministry among us in the Circuit and in her own churches. Pray for Nunthorpe.

March 11th On this Mothering Sunday we think of all mothers, especially our own mothers for their example and love. Pray for mums who find it difficult, especially those on their own and those in difficult relationships. We thank God for family life and for the families of our churches. Pray today for Rev Una McLean and for Grove Hill

March 18^h We thank God for the ministry of our Preachers and pray that the meeting last week may have been enriching for all who were present, as we learn together and support each other. Pray for Rev Christopher Wood-Archer and for Normanby.

March 25th On this Palm Sunday we remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem knowing what was to happen. We pray for all who are persecuted for their faith and for ourselves when we are faced with challenges to our faith. Pray for Rev Len Karn and for Marton.

April 1st On this glorious Easter Day we pray we may be fully persuaded by the resurrection of Jesus, to follow him and embrace his presence into our lives. We pray for the Circuit Service and for Kate as we celebrate her becoming a fully accredited Local Preacher. Pray for Rev Laurence Law and the Chinese church.

April 8th We pray for those who are unwell at this time. Pray for those who care for them and for Rev Sarah Ramsden in her ministry.

April 15th We pray for our Circuit Leadership team as they make important decisions about the life of our churches. Pray for Ormesby.

April 22nd We pray for the work of our churches in our communities, offering support and friendship and healing. Pray for Alisa Adamson and the MAP team. Pray for Trinity.

April 29th We pray for the administrative work that is done for our Circuit. Pray for Elaine at the Circuit Office and the staff at Linthorpe Road Resource Centre and for Linthorpe Road church.

May 6th We think this week about Ascension Day and pray that through our worship and our individual study we may learn more about this special day. Pray for Eston Grange.

May 13th We pray today for our Methodist Connexion, for the President of Conference and for those who represent our church at national and international level that we may be a church with a message to challenge and inspire. Pray for Stainton.

May 20th On this Pentecost Sunday we celebrate the Birthday of the Church and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit amongst us. We pray too on Thursday, as we celebrate the conversion experience of John Wesley, that our hearts may be warmed and that we will be renewed by the Spirit.

May 27th We pray for all who work with children and young people in our Circuit, We pray too for young people facing important examinations. Pray today for Rev Ruth Gee and the Darlington District.