

MEMO

Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Outburst

**SEPTEMBER TO
NOVEMBER 2018**



FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

In many ways this has been a sad Quarter. We have lost two very special people in our Circuit; Arthur Smart and Stuart Nimmo. You will see in this 'Memo' tributes to both these gentlemen acknowledging the true examples of Christian living, they both so clearly showed in all they did. We thank God for their lives.

Other special people have also died, in two cases, parents have lost their children, we think of Keith and Christine Armstrong who sadly lost their son Christopher. We also remember Martyn and Pam Laverick with the sad loss of their daughter Kathryn. We hold them and all who mourn the loss of loved ones in our love and our prayers.

It does underline the fact that life is not always easy, yet as Christians we believe in the resurrection and the life of the world to come. As this Memo takes us to November, we look forward into the season of Advent and Christmas and we are reminded of God's amazing love for us all as he gave His Son Jesus to be our Saviour. He never stops loving us, no matter what life throws at us and we are called to be special people sharing that love with one another in

whatever ways we can. So we hope that this 'Memo' will bring you examples of ways in which we celebrate the Christian life. Maybe you have faith stories to tell, don't hold back, send us your story; it may offer hope and inspiration to others.

We also hope that you will send us details of your Christmas activities for inclusion in the next 'Memo' which will cover; December, January and February.

As always a sincere thank you to all who have contributed to this 'Memo' and of course, thank you to Elaine at the Circuit Office who does such a great job in collating it all.

God Bless;

Dave on behalf of
Anne and Elaine.

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
by 2nd October



The Superintendent's Letter

Dear Friends,

It doesn't seem long since we were going through Stationing to try to find a Presbyter (Minister) for our Circuit. We were so blessed to have our dear friend Stuart Nimmo heading up the process. It was something he really enjoyed doing, and even though he wasn't well he put a massive amount of energy into leading the Circuit Invitation Committee. I remember the delight we all felt when he said, with his usual smiling glee: 'Well we've had faith, we've hoped and now we've got CHARITY!!' (words to that effect)!

Rev Charity Hamilton, herself not so well, had read our Circuit Profile and realized what a wonderful Circuit we are and how she could see herself working with us as God's servant in this place. In the mean time, we had read about Charity and knew her many gifts and graces would be just right for the Middlesbrough and Eston Circuit. The MATCH, as they say, was 'made in heaven!' And I really mean this, because I truly believe Charity is part of God's purposes for our Circuit.

Most Methodist Ministers, as you know, take up their new appointments on 1st September, just as Christopher did last year and I did ten years ago.

Charity is well on the way to being well again following surgery but will need a little longer to be back to full health and so she will not start work in the Circuit until January.

Having spoken to our new Chair of District, Rev Richard Andrew, and Charity, we are planning her Welcome Service for 6th January 2019 at 6pm at Grove Hill. I wanted to let you all know this, so that you can make a special diary note to be at what I am sure will be a really wonderful service when, as well as welcoming Charity, we will be reminded of our Covenant Vows - what better way to offer ourselves in

devotion and commitment to God and to assure Charity of our willingness to work with her as she begins her ministry in this Circuit.

Of course, because Charity won't be with us until January, there will be extra work for Christopher and myself, but I am sure you will all pull together with us as we seek to serve Our Lord in this part of his Kingdom.

Thank you all so much for your continuing Love and Support.

'I am no longer my own but yours.
Your will, not mine be done in all things,
wherever you place me, in all that I do . . .'

Worship Book 288

So begins the Covenant prayer.

As we begin a new Methodist year together, may we resolve to make this year a year when we will share with one other person what it means to us to belong to God through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

With Sincere Love,
Sue



Circuit Services

*Songs of Praise at Avenue
14th October 6.00pm*

To celebrate Local Preachers' Sunday

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

The Reverend Richard Andrew has been appointed as Chair of Darlington Methodist District.

We look forward to him preaching in our Circuit during the next quarter.

Stuart Nimmo

It was with great sadness that we heard that our friend Stuart had passed away on June 10th surrounded by his family and his Minister.

I felt I wanted to put on paper some of my thoughts about this special person. Obviously many people will have different memories, but this is my account.

I first met Stuart when in the early 1970s we were both at the start of our teaching careers and both R.E. teachers. We also trained together to be Youth Leaders which involved weekends away at Whitby and these were times of laughter and learning and sharing. It was easy to see in those far off days that Stuart was a brilliant learner, a man of ideas and passion for whatever he was doing. He used his Youth training to good effect and made a difference to many young lives.

He was a dedicated teacher and very much respected by his colleagues and the students he taught. We met on a number of occasions for R.E. events and he was great company, a sense of humour, a creative mind, an amazing memory for facts and a love of our subject.

Stuart was in on computers from the early days, he did try to convert me but I think he realised he was on to a no hoper!! I couldn't fault his enthusiasm. He went on to be a real expert in I.T. and again made a difference to so many people's lives, young and not so young, by giving them the ability to use the 'new' technology.

It was a great honour for Stuart to be selected to help to design, open and manage the Eston CLC a centre for learning, for both young and old. He made this his own and his desire to create a place of learning and a place of care was evident to all who used the Centre. I was speaking to a couple of his colleagues who worked for him and they spoke with such affection and admiration for all he had done, and for the kind, caring, manager that he was.

Upon his retirement Stuart continued to be involved in all kinds of schemes which helped to make a difference to so many peoples' lives.

He was a gifted Preacher whose services were full of faith and knowledge. He gave us so much to think about at our Preachers' meetings. He held Senior posts in the Circuit and brought great energy and passion to all he did.

In the days of his illness, I visited him, and he inspired me, rather than the other way round. He spoke still of his ideas, his faith, and his memories. I asked if he ever asked the question 'why me?' to which he replied; 'why not me' He spoke of his faith which was still as strong as ever, of the fact

he was going to be with God, and he meant it.

His funeral was a testimony to this special man, who spent his life making a difference. I will miss him.

Dave Elliott

Arthur Smart

I first met Arthur in 1971 when he returned to Middlesbrough as Math's Advisor. He had previously taught at Acklam Hall when I'm sure I played cricket against him whilst I was teaching at Stainsby Boys School. During his time as Math's Advisor and then School Advisor he was highly regarded for his sympathetic approach and total honesty and integrity. He was always made welcome into any school he attended being very aware of the needs of teachers but his priority was the wellbeing of the pupils. He led many courses which were always worthwhile and conducted with his friendly sense of humour.

I realized later that we both attended Trinity Church where he became totally involved. His knowledge at Church Council meetings kept the meeting in touch with reality and he could always see a positive outcome in discussions. He was a member of the choir, House group, Ramblers and recently helping with Foodbank. He also organized the Rota for cleaning of the Church. We are privileged and grateful for the contribution he made, usually in his quiet, unassuming manner.

Arthur was a dedicated family man, and Brenda, Allison and Graham were popular members of our congregation. I know he used to watch rugby with Graham on the other side of the world, thanks to our modern technology.

Arthur and I became good friends (better after we both retired) and spent many Saturdays while walking, guessing the rugby results and on Sundays explaining why we were "robbed" when our favourite team was beaten. We had the same dislike of certain commentators and referees too but his knowledge of the game (he was a county standard referee) certainly made me see many games in a different light.

Arthur was also a very good leader at our house group, and many was the time when Jean would get up early to make 'cheese scones' for him.

I feel honoured and privileged to have known Arthur for nearly fifty years. A true Christian, gentle man.

Bill Reeve

We plough the fields...

H&P 352 StF 130

Who does not love singing the evocative "We plough the fields and scatter.."?



We only get to sing it once a year, in late September but maybe it calls back comforting memories of our childhood when we probably sang it in school as well as in Church or Chapel. There, in Autumn, we were surrounded by an unusual sensory overload: the harvest display! Various foods, fruit and vegetables were artfully arranged against a pristine white tablecloth; the more avant garde might find an alternative material. Purple and green grapes, long bright orange carrots fresh from an allotment with their green feathery leaves, earth crusted potatoes, sleek brown eggs; these colours and textures competed with the pungent smells of tomatoes and cucumber garnered from someone's greenhouse and picked flowers too, whose scents filled the air. Don't forget the bread! A baker would have been commissioned to create a showpiece signature loaf like a charger with sheaves of corn and maybe a little mouse to amuse the children. There'd be a bottle of milk and, in the coal mining, south Wales valleys we would also see, stark and black, a large piece of coal, an important harvest that was quarried and mined at a cost, as blue scars on the faces and hands of the ex-miner elders evidenced.

My nostalgic rather sentimental view of harvest is reflected in the words of this hymn... a translation from 18th century German. In 1782, it wasn't nostalgic: it reflected reality. For rural peasants who sang all 17 verses [!] to the rousing melody *Wir Pflugen* which means straight forwardly "We plough", probably did plough fields. Three of the verses were translated into English and in 1868 it was included in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, quickly becoming a popular hymn for children and harvest. In Middlesbrough and Eston Circuit I doubt any of us have done much ploughing, although we may have scattered a few seeds in our time. In the first verse we singers are addressing each other, focusing on God's providential gifts of seasonal weather with that lovely phrase "the warmth to swell the grain". The second verse describes an anthropomorphic Father-God who "paints" flowers, "lights" the evening star, feeds the birds, and gives "us" his children their daily bread. All are sound scriptural references yet in this modern industrial age maybe they come across as twee and unrealistic.

John Betjeman parodied the patterns of this harvest hymn with his angry poem: *We spray the fields and scatter* where, as opposed to humble peasants, rich farmers sing, of their "concrete sheds" and

"Jaguar" cars in the yard.

Another poet, the Quaker Clive Sansom, also used its framework with his poem: *We squirt the fields and scatter*. He rages about misuse of phosphates and after listing all that is wrong with modern corporate farming, continuing in the voice of agribusiness, he concludes that for these scientific farmers, God is "an Equation" unlike Mattias Claudius' peasants who sing of their "Father".

Writers like these, whose poems a Google search will find, remind us that praising harvest these days, is not that simple. Abundance at a cost to the planet, or through exploitation of third world growers of unseasonal airlifted supplies of avocados, asparagus and green beans is perhaps not something for which we should be thanking God, thoughtlessly, selfishly. So today's experiences of harvest festivals have become a bit different. An attractive aesthetic display might not be our main concern; instead as schools do these days, we are rightly encouraged to troop up offering bulging bags of tins and long-life packets for the food bank or cash to buy necessities for desperate people waiting for delayed benefit payments. Or we might have a service based on Christian Aid hi-lighting parts of the world where the weather and climate has not been so providential. As in the Bible temple sacrifices were shared meals, so today the thanksgiving element of harvest rightly takes equal place to sacrificial giving of food bounty to be redistributed.

The third verse emphasises this with its references to the "gifts we offer" and it is where we, the singers, at last address God. "We thank you then, O Father". The food we offer is a response to God's gifts, in that lovely line, when sung with effective phrasing "our life...our health...our food". Newer hymns, like Brian Wren's StF 126 may rightly widen our acknowledgement of God's harvests: "science and skill... oil... iron... copper... coal..." especially ending with "mercy and love...that all may be led to freedom and justice, and **all may be fed.**" ... but I must confess I still like singing, "We plough the fields and scatter" even though I've never ploughed a field in my life!

Ruth Lewis

No men

An elderly woman died last month. Having never married, she decided to request that there be no male pallbearers.

In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, 'They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, so I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead

The Parish Pump

We Value our Churches

Half of us would regard the closure of our nearest church as a significant loss to our community. One third of us would join a campaign to keep our local church open, and one third of us would also consider giving money to keep our local church going.

So says Ecclesiastical Insurance, following a survey by One Poll. It also found that more than half of us see our local church as part of the community's history, and one third of us see it as part of the very fabric of our community, providing vital services to its people.

As a spokesman from Ecclesiastical explained: "The value and reach of churches' work is on a scale that would be almost impossible to replace.... Our research provides a timely insight into how relevant churches remain today."

The Parish Pump

Amen ...

How often do we say this word? Certainly after every prayer it is the customary conclusion, a final flourish denoting 'the end' or, to give our assent or agreement to another person's prayer on our behalf.

But do we really know what it means? Amen is a very old word used in both Hebrew and Greek, after a statement, to signify made true, confirmed, established; and after a prayer to signify 'let it be so' (or this is what we need, this is what we desire, this is what we earnestly request) for ourselves and others.

In Isaiah 65:16 the God of Truth is literally the God of the Amen, that is the God who is truth, who speaks truth, who vindicates truth and the taking of whose name as an attestation of truth is the most solemn sanction under which man can speak or act – as solemn as taking an oath in a Court of Law. Accordingly Jesus calls himself 'the Amen', the faithful and true witness (Revelation 3:14) This term, applied to a person as a name, denotes he is the truth personified, the true one. The promises of God (Corinthians 1:20) are in Jesus, amen (truly spoken) and Amen (truly fulfilled) The double Amen translated as Verily, Verily (John 3:3) is the strongest guarantee of the truth of his teaching that the son of God could utter.

Vera Pearson

UNITY

On Sunday 24th June probably the hottest Sunday of the year, 18 people from local Churches gathered at Flatts Lane to take part in an act of Unity. We set off at 4pm to walk up “Piggy Hill” to the top of the hills to a vantage point looking over our local area. It was a lovely day with clear views to Durham. The River Tees glistened as it snaked it’s way to the sea. At 5pm x we started to pray, quietly, for our local area. At the same time, people who couldn’t manage the walk had gathered at the Baptist Church in South Bank, and also began to pray. All our prayers were personal, but included prayers for schools, police force, councillors, youth clubs, employment, families and homes as well as our Churches and congregations. We then wandered down and joined our friends at the Church for a short act of worship. As we walked we chatted about our lives and concerns. On reflecting on the afternoon later the following thoughts came to me.

1. Does God care if we say the traditional version of the Lords Prayer or the modern version?
2. Does God care if our songs of worship are written by Charles Wesley or Graham Kendrick?
3. Does God care if our clergy are called Ministers, Priests, Pastors, Vicars or Captains?
4. Does God care if our clergy wears robes, a suit, jeans or a uniform

I really don’t think he does. These divisions are man made. The thing that was so evident for each of us who spent time together, was our love Of God and His love for us. The clergy from our local Churches at Normanby and surrounding area are meeting often and I really hope and pray that more events such as this Walk of Unity will take place. There is so much more that unites us than divides us, and to spend time with fellow Christians, whatever background, talking so openly about our faith was a joy and a blessing.

Sandra Daniels
Normanby

Careful!

There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. ‘Is there anything breakable in here?’ asked the postal clerk.

The lady thought for a moment, and replied: ‘Only the ten Commandments.’

The Parish Pump

LINTHORPE ROAD RESOURCE CENTRE

Hello all,

My name is Amanda Bolderson, I am the Project and Funding Co-ordinator for Linthorpe Road Resource Centre.



I am looking to set up projects under the umbrella of "The Good Samaritan Project". These will include a Job Club, Lunch Club, and Games afternoon, plus other projects such as a 1940's Afternoon Tea event on the 18th September 2018 between 1.00pm and 4.00pm.

I will be needing volunteers, if anyone would like to help, please contact me on 01642 225396

Thank you

The event on the 2nd June was to mark my retirement as Circuit Treasurer after 20 years service. The event was linked to my 80th Birthday celebration which was held at the same time.

The whole thing was an astonishing success, in that it was attended by over 130 people.

May I express my gratitude particularly to Sue, who was the main driving force behind the event. Also to Kay who was largely responsible for the organisation of the event, together with the splendid cake which had been made by her daughter Sarah.

May I also thank the Circuit Stewards, who working with the Church Stewards made available the room and facilities.

Thank you all again for the wonderful afternoon.

Ron Preece

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 21st September 2.00pm at Marton

Speaker: Rev Sue Greenwood (Bring & Buy Stall).

Thursday 4th October 2.00pm at Marton

Circuit Network Committee

Friday 26th October 2.00pm at Normanby

Speaker: To be arranged. Dedication of Sunshine Bags (Bring & Buy Stall)

MWiB Darlington District events

Monday 22nd October. Autumn District Day at Blackhall Methodist Church.
More details later.

Friday 30th November. Advent service at Shildon Methodist Church.
Coffee from 10.30am. The service will commence at 11am with a soup lunch
to follow.

Advance notice

Minsteracres Overnighter on **Friday/Saturday 22nd/23rd March 2019.**
Facilitator Deacon Denise Creed.

Please note that all ladies are welcome at ALL these events,

Kath Smithies

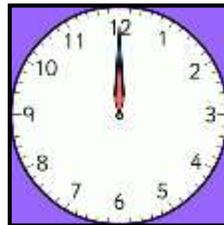
Circuit Methodist Women in Britain Secretary

Circuit Directory

**The new Circuit Directory has been delayed, it
will be published and available in January. When
we have updated all the details and information
in line with General Data Protection Regulation
(GDPR)**

British Summer Time ends on Sunday 28th October

*Don't forget to put your clocks
back one hour*



**The truth is that we are all
going to die, but no-one wants
to talk about it.**

GraveTalk is a chance to talk about life, death and grief,
think about your funeral, ask questions and air your
thoughts. For people of all faiths and none.

**There will be tea and cake, there will be talk, there
will be questions**

Join us :

Tuesday 11th September, 1.30pm

Nunthorpe Methodist Church, Connaught Rd, TS7 0BP

Wednesday 14th November, 7pm

St Barnabas Church, Linthorpe, TS5 8EU

For further information please contact Maddy Fisher
by email: maddy.fisher@togethermc.org or by phone: 07532 744924



SUMMER & BEYOND WITH TRINITY FAMILY FRIENDLY CENTRE (tffc)

TFFC is actively involved in the Together Middlesbrough initiative which reduces food poverty among children. We open our doors to children in need in the area, offering much needed support to parents who are in need during the school holidays. Families receiving free school meals and low incomes are given a meal and a few hours of activities.

We are very excited about opening our Unity Community Café in September and hope to implement a 'Pay It Forward' scheme. This will ensure that those who are in poverty will also be welcomed to the TFFC table. The scheme will work by paying customers paying for their meals or drinks, which would then 'Pay It Forward' for someone who cannot afford to eat/drink in a café. A small group of students from Acklam Grange school, who have been closely involved in preparing the café, are hoping to do work experience in the future at TFFC. This relationship with the school has opened the door for a local evangelist to go into the school and share the love of Christ, who is the centre of everything we do.

I am part of 'Big Kids Ministry' which is a local project which is targeting ages 7 – 10 years creating a fun, supportive atmosphere to help strengthen the faith of those children who are ready to explore. I am also working in partnership with 3 other churches in our area. I believe unity is the key as when we are working together we can achieve much more than being a lone soldier. 'Big Kids' have a lot of exciting ideas to engage children and help them grow in their faith. 'Big Kids' will be meeting every Monday as well as having monthly outreach around local churches on the 3rd Friday of the month.

We are currently working with Scripture Union providing 'Guardians of Ancora' outreach every Thursday which teaches kids Biblical truths using a gaming tool on a tablet. This is proving to be most effective, the children are hooked and after sessions are given a quiz. In September we are starting a new project using exercise as a tool to share the gospel and get the inactive active. This is something that I feel will be an effective way to build relationships, which creates a safe space to share God's love. It will be fun using the trampoline exercise called Boogie Bounce. The programme also aims to target young girls/women who through disadvantage do not engage in exercise.

We also have started a TFFC Gardening Club every Monday creating an outdoor space for children and an allotment area where we aim to grow our own fruit and vegetables for our Unity Café.

Sharon Sewell
Children and Families Worker

HARVEST FESTIVAL



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!

Euodia and Syntyche

Euodia and Syntyche were
Paul's good friends
Who for the gospel did
contend;
But all we know about them
now
Is that these ladies had a
row!

So, if YOU have a heated
spat
It's wise to check who knows
of that;
A row's a cause of bitter tears
Remembered for two
thousand years!

by Nigel Beeton

Prayer in a storm

Faithful Father,
Storms come! No matter who
we are, no matter what we
have done or not done, storms
come. Please protect us.
Reassure us that you are with
us in any and every storm; that
you will never leave us or
forsake us. May we know the
peace of your presence
whatever our circumstances
today. Alone we would sink and
give up. With you we will be
strengthened to stay afloat. We
will be encouraged to face each
day, confident that you are
above all things - and that we
belong to you.
Thank you Father, in Jesus
name. Amen.

Daphne Kitching

Lesson in Lying

A minister told his
congregation, "Next week I
plan to preach about the sin of
lying. To help you understand
my sermon, I want you all to
read Mark 17."

The following Sunday, as he
prepared to deliver his sermon,
the minister asked for a show
of hands. He wanted to know
how many had read Mark 17.
Every hand went up. The
minister smiled and said, "Mark
has only 16 chapters. I will
now proceed with my sermon
on the sin of lying."

THANK YOU

I preached at Marton this morning and wanted to say thank you to the organist and the readers. I also noticed the lovely flower decoration and asked who had created it. One lady pointed at Pat Martin who was too modest to put up her hand, but eventually she admitted to it and so was able to be thanked.

I did the same at Grove Hill in the second service this morning. I am not suggesting that every preacher should end their services with a vote of thanks, as it may well detract from the atmosphere of their service.

It did strike me this morning that I love preaching and that I really do feel called to this ministry. But I also have to remember as we all do, that so many other people are involved in worship.

It is easy to take people for granted, so maybe we need to thank God for all who witness in various ways, and maybe occasionally say thank you to those who do the work.

At Grove Hill we have cleaning teams, Sue and I are one of them, we feel the work we do is special to all the activities of the church but especially to worship. Equally those who maintain the outsides of our churches are important because of the impression the condition of our churches gives and says to so many who pass by. What about those flower arrangers, it is a real skill, and how sad it would be if our churches were not bright with flowers to enhance our praise to God. The hymn says 'Think of a world without any flowers' we wouldn't want that.

Where would we be without music in our worship? We Methodists are 'Born in song' We have our talented and faithful team of organists and pianists who serve us week by week, and provide so much for our worship. Some churches depend on a team and some on one person. Colin at Grove Hill has played for 70 years!!

In churches fortunate enough to have children we are blessed with faithful leaders who make such an impression on these young people and in some ways may determine their future in church. We are so grateful to all of them, again who give faithful service.

There are people who week by week stand on the door and welcome people to worship, that may be a decider to someone visiting us as to whether they come back!! Front line staff are so vital

in conveying the caring, loving ethos of our churches.

As a Preacher I so value the Vestry steward, this morning I had such care and prayer from John Hinton and from Kate Dykes, what a difference they make to preachers, all of whom are nervous before we take a service, no matter how many years we have been preaching.

There are the people who take the collection, the people who count it and bank it. We need to be careful with our money as individuals and especially as a church.

There are those people who prepare notice sheets and church websites, who proclaim the good news. We used to have wayside pulpits, but now it tends to be on the website or the notice sheet. What about the coffee makers at the end of the service, it is so good to be able to stay and chat, and again for a new comer, have a chance to get to know us.

Last, but by no means least, we all have a responsibility to be prepared for worship and the best way is to be prepared through prayer. We, as preachers, do appreciate the fact that people pray for us. Prayer is vital in all the life of our church.

So I may feel blessed to be called to Preach, but my part is just a small part of the teams of people who enable worship and fellowship to take place, and I want to say a very sincere thank you to them all.

Dave Elliott

A poster for an autumn event at Stainton Methodist Church. The background is a vibrant, abstract pattern of yellow, orange, and red, resembling autumn leaves or a sunset. The text is centered and uses a mix of bold, serif and stylized fonts. The event details include the date, time, and location, along with a note about stalls and refreshments.

Stainton Methodist Church
Autumn Event
Saturday, 13th October
Stainton Memorial Hall
2.00pm
Stalls and Refreshments.



A History of ADVENT

The word 'advent' comes from the Latin 'adventus' meaning arrival or coming, particularly of something having great importance.

According to some sources, Advent began sometime after the 4th century as a time of preparation for Epiphany. Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of Christ by remembering the visit of the wise men and, in some traditions, the Baptism of Jesus. At this time new Christians were baptized and received into faith, and so the early church created a 40-day period of fasting and repentance.

Later, in the 6th century, St. Gregory the Great was the first to associate the Advent season with the coming of Christ. Originally it was not the coming of the Christ-child that was anticipated, but the Second Coming of Christ. By the Middle Ages, the church had extended the celebration of Advent to include the coming of Christ through his birth, his future coming at the end of time, and his being among us through the Holy Spirit. In Western Christianity, Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, or the Sunday which falls closest to November 30, and lasts through to Christmas Eve. When Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, it is the last or fourth Sunday of Advent. For Eastern Orthodox churches which use the Julian calendar, Advent begins earlier, on November 15, and lasts 40 days rather than four weeks. Advent is also known as the Nativity Fast in Orthodox Christianity.

Symbols are often used during Advent. These include a wreath or crown; a Jesse Tree; Alpha and Omega; using symbolic colours – purple, pink and white (red is often used too). Lighting an Advent wreath is a custom that began with Lutherans and Catholics in 16th-century Germany. Today many people will associate Advent with candles and calendars, going back to the 19th Century when German Protestant Christians counted down to Christmas by marking 24 chalk lines on a door and rubbing one off every day in December.

Paper calendars were first popular in Germany in the early 1900s and during World War II, the production of Advent calendars stopped due to a shortage of cardboard.

however, many calendars are themed around toys, television programmes and sports clubs, and some have alcohol, posh toiletries/ cosmetics or chocolate under each window. Did you know that Advent Calendar chocolate tastes different to normal chocolate because it's designed to melt faster so you savour the taste more? You can even get Advent Calendars for your pets with dog or cat treats in them! The world's largest Advent Calendar was made in 2007 at St Pancras Train Station in London. It was 71m tall and 23m wide and celebrated the refurbishment of the station. The most expensive Advent Calendar ever was made in 2010 by a jeweller in Belgium. It was made of 24 glass tubes each containing some diamonds and silver! It was worth about £2.1 million!

So, by all means enjoy the chocolate, the smellies and the alcohol but let's not forget that celebrating Advent also involves spending time in spiritual preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas.

Anne Smith

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP.

I have written before in 'Memo' about the Men's Fellowship which meets at Grove Hill. It is made up of people from; Marton, Normanby, Linthorpe Road, Alnwick, and St Peter's Church Stockton. It is a mix of denominations; mainly Methodist, but with one Roman Catholic and one retired Anglican Vicar.

We meet on the last Thursday of each month at 7-30pm. Although in July we go to Whitby for a walk and for Fish and Chips and in August usually to the 'Bay Horse' for a meal.

On September 27th our speaker will be Rev Bill Braviner, Vicar of St Peter's Stockton, talking about his ministry to the disabled.

The meetings usually have a speaker and we always finish with a light snack together, and a chance to continue conversation around the table.

So if you would like to join us, you will be very welcome. I will send a programme to you if you want to have that information. We will always be delighted to see and meet new members.

Dave Elliott



Once again Trinity was involved in Feast of Fun this year. The first one of the year was held over three days during the first week of the Easter Holidays. There were children from far and wide, aged 2 – 10 yrs. We started with a

rather yummy buffet lunch and then went on to do a range of things every session. Mr Codd, from Whinney Banks School, came each day to do some sport-related activities. They were able to use the all-weather pitch at the Acklam Green centre which the kids really enjoyed even on a mizzly afternoon. The not so sporty engaged in a range of 'crafty' things. There's nothing better than colouring, glue and glitter!



In July/August the activities were based on a Detective theme. This was like a junior version of NCIS or CSI! Just like the professionals (and the TV programmes) there were clues, investigations, video evidence, 'crime' scenes, working in groups and much, much more. Great fun was had by all and of course this could not have taken place without the help of Together Middlesbrough and a team of enthusiastic volunteers of all ages

Anne Smith



Nunthorpe Methodist Church's Christmas fayre

**On Saturday 24th November
10.00am - 1.00pm**

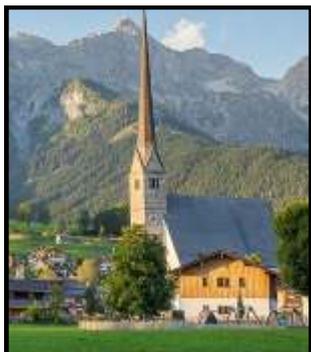
Bric-a-brac, Books, Christmas Gifts, Cards, Cakes,
Father Christmas, Tombola, Jams & Pickles
and more ...

Trinity Ramblers Coffee Morning

*On Saturday 3rd November
10.00am - 12 noon*



Mince Pies Music and Mirth £1.50



Oberammergau 2020

**Arthur Harbottle, Methodist Minister
in Redcar, is taking a group to
Oberammergau in 2020 to see the
Passion Play.**

A visit to the Passion Play is combined with a holiday among the sparkling lakes and majestic mountains of Austria - giving the opportunity of holidaying together with the common purpose of attending the Passion Play.

We will travel together as a group, with an itinerary of included coach excursions and walks. We begin with five nights in Austria in the village of Maria Alm, near Salzburg and then travel to Oberammergau for a two night stay at the end of our holiday with top grade tickets for a performance of the Passion Play.

The play is an intense emotional experience and this holiday is an opportunity to share this unique event with like-minded people. Our aim is to encourage a real feeling of sharing as we participate together in this landmark Christian event.

If you would like more information or an application form,
contact Arthur direct on 01287 651340
or arthur.harbottle@methodist.org.uk



Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

(or 'The Cost of the Bible')

Most of the things given to us, and those which we inherit, have a history but we do not always realise their true value or the cost to those who created and donated them to us. This is perhaps because we do not always realise their personal history, where they started from and what sacrifices they had to make to reach their goals so that we, their descendants, might benefit and have greater opportunities more even than they could ever dream of.

The same applies to our Bible, which we often take for granted today. There were many people who were involved in its scholarship, its translation into different languages, dissemination, protection, promulgation and preservation. The books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew.

The Pentateuch (the five books of the Law) were in two editions, the Samaritan and the Hebrew – the former written in ancient Hebrew character and preserved by the Samaritans, distinct since the Babylonian captivity. Some parts of Ezra (67 verses) and Daniel (200 verses) were written in the Chaldaea language because the Jews, while in Babylon, had become more familiar with it than Hebrew.

The Septuagint was a translation made for the benefit of the Jews who were living, in vast numbers, in Egypt and who were only familiar with the Greek language. This was translated at the instruction of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, reputedly by 72 elders (about 286BC) which was how the Greek version acquires its name (in round numbers Septuagint from Septuaginta = 70) It is also called the Alexandrian Version because it was compiled in Alexandria which was the metropolis of Egypt. It is possible that 72 people were employed in its translation but it is more possible that it acquired the name Septuagint from having received the approbation of the Jewish Sanhedrin (the Jewish Governing Council) which consisted of 72 persons. Some maintain it had been executed at different times but it is more probable that this version was made during the reign of Ptolmagus and his son Philadelphus. The Septuagint version, which is the most ancient in existence, was highly esteemed by the Jews and it was the one in use during the time of Jesus. It is also the one out of which all the citations in the New Testament are taken, the ordinary and canonical translation used by the Christians in the earliest times, and is the one used by the Greek and Eastern churches.

The Vulgate was a very ancient version of the Bible translated from the Greek Septuagint into Latin. It was called the Itala or Italic version in use in the time of Jerome (340 – 420) a noted 5th Century theologian who died in Bethlehem.

About the close of 4th century Jerome began a translation from the Hebrew text which he gradually completed. It, at last, gained the approval of Pope Gregory I and has been in use since the 7th century. So the present Vulgate, declared and authenticated by the Council of Trent in the 1500s is the ancient Italic version, revised and improved by the corrections of Jerome and others, and was the only one allowed by Rome

But how many of us today read Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek or Latin? So the teachings of the Bible would have been the prerogative of a few and not universal if some 'visionaries' had not realised that for the message to spread people needed the Bible in their own language, and they needed to be taught to read. This was not easy when scrolls were written on papyrus, vellum and parchment as manuscripts so were few in number and only available in Monasteries, Churches and at Universities. The general worshippers would have had to rely on illustrations of Bible stories, painted as murals in the churches, later in stained glass windows, sculpted in stone or what the priest told them! There was no opportunity to think, verify, question or discuss. Perhaps this is what is meant by having a 'simple faith' but has life ever been simple?

Vera Pearson

EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Saturday 1st September, Big Coffee Morning at Normanby, 10.00am to 11.30am

Tuesday 18th September, 1940's Afternoon tea at Linthorpe Road Resource Centre 1.00pm till 4.00pm

Tuesday 25th September, 10am to 12 noon fee Morning Cofat Avenue Community Project, all welcome.

Saturday 6th October, Big Coffee Morning at Normanby, 10.00am to 11.30am

Saturday 13th October, Autumn Fayre at Stainton (see page 17)

Tuesday 30th October, 10.00am to 12 noon Coffee Morning at Avenue Community Project, all welcome.

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

Saturday 3rd November Ramblers' Coffee Morning at Trinity (see page 21)

Saturday 24th November Christmas Fayre at Nunthorpe Methodist Church (see page 20)

Tuesday 27th November, 10.00am to 12 noon Coffee Morning at Avenue Community Project, all welcome.

PRAYER DIARY

September 2nd Pray for Rev Sue Greenwood as she continues to manage her extra pastoral care and for all her Ministry. Pray for Stainton. Please pray for the Preachers' meeting this week.

September 9th We think today of children returning to school and of their teachers and also Governors. Pray today for Rev Christopher Wood Archer and Normanby.

September 16th We pray for the Circuit Leadership Team and for all who attend Circuit Meeting, that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit in their decision making. Pray today for Rev Len Karn and his new wife. Pray for Eston Grange.

September 23rd We pray today for the work of the Linthorpe Road Resource Centre. Pray for Elaine and the Circuit Office. Pray for Nunthorpe.

September 30th We pray for all the Harvest Festival celebrations as we acknowledge all the good gifts God gives to us, whilst also thinking of those not so fortunate as we are. Pray for Rev Laurence Law and the Chinese Church

October 7th We pray for all the various meetings in our churches, we think especially of Church Council meetings and their influence on the life and mission of the church. Pray for Rev Charity Hamilton, as she looks forward to joining us in the near future. Pray for Grove Hill.

October 14th We pray for those who are ill at this time, those in hospital and those who care for them. Pray for the Songs of Praise service at Avenue today. Pray for Rev Sarah Ramsden

and her ministry at James Cook hospital and the Hospice.

October 21st We pray today for those who work with the young people in our churches, in Sunday School, in Uniformed Organisations, Youth Clubs and outreach. Pray for Sharon Sewell and Trinity.

October 28th We pray today for those who feel isolated by Society, that as a church we may always have a welcome for all. Pray for Ailsa Adamson and her team at MAP and for Ormesby.

November 4th We pray today for all those people facing the pain of bereavement, the loss of a loved one. Be with them that the knowledge of the Resurrection may give them hope. Pray for The Avenue Community Project.

November 11th On this day, we remember, all who gave their lives in so many wars, that we may have freedom. Pray for those who fight against evil today, that they may be kept safe. Help us never to forget. Pray today for all Remembrance Services in and out of church. Pray for Linthorpe Road.

November 18th Pray today for Peace in our World and in our Communities. Help us to work for peace and to remember it begins with us. Pray for the Methodist Live at Home Scheme. Pray for Marton

November 25th Our thoughts turn to Advent and we pray for ourselves as we enter this special time of our Church year. Pray for Rev Richard Andrew our new Chair of District and for the Darlington District.