

The Methodist



Adobe Stock | #551153138

Norwich Circuit Magazine
March 2024 issue 112

STAFF

Editor

Pauline Mann

Team Members

Joy Southam

Ann Waterhouse

Design

Pauline West

**Copy date for the June issue is
4th May**

Electronic copy to Pauline West
pauline.west8@gmail.com or 37
Tanager Close, Norwich, NR3 3QD.

The editor's address is Broadlands,
Mill Road, Surlingham, Norwich,
NR14 7AF; tel 01508 538442

Items in bold type should be read be-
fore the Circuit Meeting

CONTENTS

From the Superintendent	3
City of Sanctuary	4
Ukraine	6
Paul Robeson	7
Patron saints	8
Mrs Brenda Kelsey	11
Bite sized worship	12
Thoughts on Lent/Easter drama	14
Reflection	16
Music at Lent	18
Meet a Methodist	20
MWiB	22
Anne (Nancy) Wesley	23
Visit to Mumbles	24
JMA	26
Book chat	28
Clifford Dann	30
Lent and Easter services	31
News in brief	32
News from the churches	34
Diary dates	36

From the Superintendent



One of the passages of Scripture from which I have drawn much inspiration and encouragement over the years is Acts 2:42-47, along with the ‘echo’ of Acts 4:32-35.

Luke describes, for the benefit of those who read or heard his account in the growing church over the centuries which followed Pentecost, how the new experience of Christ’s presence among them through the Holy Spirit caused them to live with fervent worship and prayer, mutual love and generosity. These windows into the early church provide us with a picture of the natural, instinctive response to the power of the Holy Spirit in human lives, and gives to us a clear indication - some might say a blueprint - of how the church is called to witness today.

But we should not forget that ‘witnessing’ is not restricted to our actions or behaviours; that which we both do and say tells others about our faith and points to Christ, the Lord of our lives. This fusion of living and speaking for Christ is present throughout Acts. Immediately before the first description of the collective response of Jesus’ followers to the events of Pentecost, Peter makes the bold proclamation, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38, NIV)

Acts 4:32-33 also tells us that “...the believers were one in heart and mind...With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.”

It seems to me that we cannot escape the conclusion that being a Christian is not simply about ‘living a good life’, whatever that may mean.

Generosity, compassion, genuine worship, prayerfulness, Christian community and hospitality are all marks of our faith; but so are proclamation, witness, testimony and Christian conversation. We are called - and, according to the verse quoted above, empowered - both to live out and speak out our faith.

Matthew and Luke both begin their gospels by outlining, from different perspectives, the background to the birth of the Saviour. John reveals the awesome, eternal plan of salvation. Mark, however, launches straight in with Jesus’ proclamation, “The time has come. Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

(Mark 1:15, NIV)

That should tell us something!

May God bless you in your living and speaking for Jesus.

Andy

Norwich City of Sanctuary is your church part of it?

by Frances Middleton

Our city is full of places of sanctuary (spot the logo everywhere!) and soon another 12 are to be awarded their status. The movement is thriving, locally, and grows every day. Chapel Field Road Church has embarked on the process of becoming a church of sanctuary and its application soon goes before the steering committee. Several churches, of other denominations, including St Peter Mancroft, will be receiving their status at the Award Celebration soon, and others are well on their way through the application. Is yours? Have you discussed the possibility at your church council? If not, why not? It is a Methodist idea, actually. Revd Inderjit Bhogal, who set up C of S nationwide, is a retired Methodist minister and is still heart and soul behind his brilliant idea. And sadly, there is even more need now, for positive action on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees and indeed anyone who feels marginalised in our society. Welcome should be our *raison d'être*, and the world should see it in our churches.

Many small projects and hard-working people are bringing help and support to those left behind in our sometimes uncaring, community. One is the New Routes shop in St Augustines. This free (to those who have little) shop has recently relocated to Catherine Wheel Opening (right off St Augustine's as you go up) It is a huge benefit to its users....but of course, the shop is stocked by us who have plenty and to spare.....we hope! So, if you are clearing out, spring cleaning, down sizing, please bring your throw-outs to the Shop! Most needed are adults and children's clothes, plus toys, games, and household items, in reasonable condition. Do have a look in your spare rooms!

The reason for many families facing poverty and deprivation at present, is the government's severe rules around work and housing and benefits for those newly arrived in the UK. There are many in Norwich now, specially young men on their own, who cannot find housing or support. Once they receive their papers, and have to leave their hotel place (often within a week) there is often nowhere but the streets for them to be. This is an unacceptable situation and many people are working to provide help. The Shop is one. Please help it to continue.

The lack of housing is another crisis, and there are plans to set up a temporary home system, in the near future. If you have a spare room, and would like the

company of someone from another culture/country, please give this possibility a thought..... We hope a properly regimented scheme will come soon.

All this makes me proud that Norwich is doing so much to make our city warm and welcoming to everyone. Our churches should be a big part of this, shouldn't they? Think about what you can do to contribute.

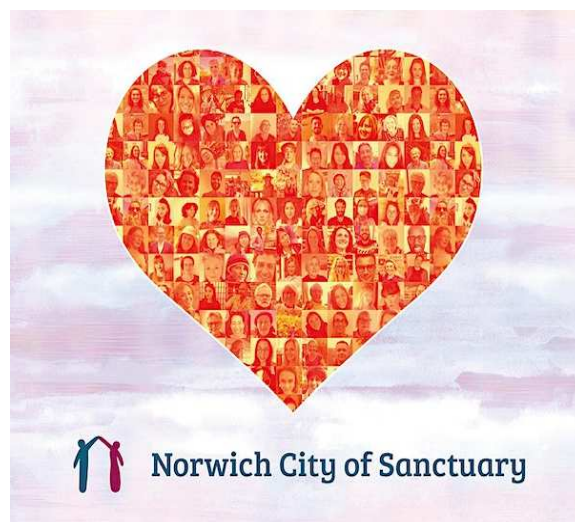
If you want more details about becoming a church of sanctuary or helping the Shop, give me a ring or an email. Thank you!

PS The Big Issue is just that in the lives of the sellers - a big issue, making a living and getting back into society again, from the margins.

Please buy a copy (or two - there are many opportunities in the city!)

It is indeed a hand up not a hand out, and too few people buy, Simon (outside Pret) tells me.

And it is a very good read for only four quid!



Ukraine

2022, Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24th February.

Three months later the Blackmore family welcomed to their King's Lynn home, Ira and her daughter Dasha (16), two of the 14 million displaced by the invasion of their homeland, Ukraine.

2023 - A year ago Abby Blackmore and her daughter Eloide wrote something of their experience for The Methodist, including the fact that Elodie 10, Arlo 7 and Ottilie 4, moved from their single bedrooms into one which allowed Ira and Dasha to have two rooms in their house.

2024. Abby Blackmore, the daughter of a Methodist minister, brings us up-to-date:

We celebrated another Christmas as a family of 7, this time with even more excitement in our hearts! The week before Christmas Ira signed a tenancy agreement for a nearby property and hopes to be moving with her daughter, Dasha, in February, once we have sourced all the items required to make a house a home. Ira now works on Saturdays at the International Cafe (linked to Gateway Church) in town as a teaching assistant to those learning English, and is also employed at a local primary school working as a one-to-one with a child with additional needs. I am incredibly proud of her and delighted that she will soon have a home of her own.

When my eldest daughter started high school last September it became necessary to move her back into her old bedroom. Dasha and Ira have been sharing a bedroom since then. They were incredibly kind about the decision but I imagine it is a bit of squash and I am pleased they will soon have a bit more space to live in! Dasha continues to study for A Levels at Springwood High School and hopes to study Graphic Design next academic year at Norwich University.

We all continue to attend Gateway Church which has quite a few Russian-speaking members of the congregation and now provides a translation service on Sunday mornings to ensure no one misses out.

We remain grateful for the support of our church and confident of the help and guidance they can offer Ira to obtain furniture for her new home, as they have already done for many Ukrainian refugees in our area.

Sharing our home with Ira and Dasha has been a huge blessing to our family. I

am grateful for their friendship and have learnt from the strength and determination Ira (and our other Ukrainian friends) has shown in her efforts to make a life for her family here - women really are amazing!

Our prayers are now focused on an opportunity for Ira's husband, Dima, to leave Ukraine legally and join his wife and daughter here in the UK, and that my children (aged 5, 8 and 11) will adapt back easily to being a family of 5 again. Ira is also understandably nervous about setting up a home for herself financially so we pray for confidence and kindness as we begin to sort out utility providers, insurance, university funding, etc. Ira and Dasha are moving 10 minutes around the corner so we will continue to support each other as life goes on. I look forward to having them round for meals and attending the many garden parties Ira is planning to host in her very own garden when the weather is warmer!

Abby Blackmore, King's Lynn. February 2024

Paul Robeson

The legendary singer, actor and political activist, Paul Robeson, was for most of the 1950s on the US Government extensive blacklist at the time of McCarthyism. Eventually his passport was restored and he could travel again to Europe and I was fortunate to hear one of his performances in the late 50s.

The Town Hall auditorium was full, but the large stage was simply occupied by Paul Robeson and his pianist Lawrence Brown. The memory of seeing and hearing this very tall, imposing, black, highly educated American, the son of a runaway slave who became a Presbyterian minister, sing, stays with me, especially when he sang, 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?' I think at that moment the whole audience were there with him, and trembled at the sight he was enabling them to see.

An amazing experience.

This was music and drama vividly highlighting the Good Friday experience.

Patron saints

by Joy Southam

The British Isles have four patron saints, three of which are celebrated with special days in the spring.

St David

St David was a 6th century Welsh bishop of Mynyw now St David's. His birth date is unknown, but it is thought to be c500 and he is thought to have died on March 1st c589. His mother is thought to be Non and his grandfather Ceredig ap Cunedda, king of Ceredigion.

Legend says his mother Non gave birth on a cliff-top in Pembrokeshire - during a fierce storm with a bolt of lightning from heaven said to have struck the rock, splitting it in two as David came into the world. Non was a nun and she was canonised like her son. He was baptised Dewidd and was known as Dewi.

His privileged background led to a monastic education and Dewi went on to become a missionary and a well-known preacher establishing monastic settlements and churches in Wales, south-west England and across the Channel in Brittany. He is also known to have visited Glastonbury to rededicate the abbey there.

On a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he is said to have brought back a piece of rock which is now to be seen in St David's cathedral in an altar.

Even by the standards of his day, Dewi and his monks led a remarkably simple life existing on a diet of leeks, bread, herbs, salt and water, doing all the work on their land themselves by hand.

He is credited with several miracles including curing his tutor's blindness and bringing a child back from the dead with his tears. He is associated with the leek but also with a white dove which landed on his shoulder while he was preaching and was seen at the time as affirmation by God, the land he was standing on having risen into a small hill so those at the back could see him.

His last recorded words to his followers before his death on March 1st came from his final Sunday sermon ;Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things

that you have heard and seen me do;

His shrine in St David's cathedral became both a centre of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages and a victim of Viking raids. Edward 1 is known to have prayed at his shrine

Dewi was recognised as a saint by the Pope in 1120.

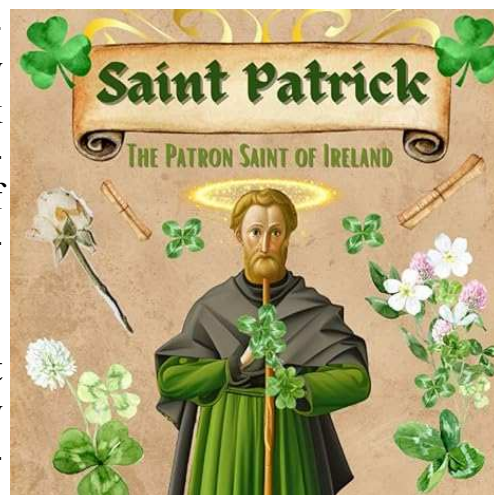


St Patrick

It is not known where Patrick was born although some sources say he was born in 387 AD in Scotland, in Kilpatrick but others say he was born at Banwen in Wales. He was captured by Irish pirates and taken to Ireland as a child slave aged about 16, escaping after six years there working as a shepherd in what is now County Antrim. He was not a believer at the time, although his father was, but he spent a lot of time praying whilst looking after the sheep – something he refers to in his Confessio.

According to legend, he stowed away on a ship which moored up close to where his family lived. Now a free man, he committed his life to God and entered the monastic system to study for the priesthood possibly doing so partly at St Martin's Abbey in Tours, France. After several years of studying, he was ready to become a missionary and returned to Ireland after a dream which he recorded: "I seemed to hear the voice of those beside the forest of Fadut ...and they were crying as if with one voice 'we beg you holy youth, that you shall come and shall walk again among us'." Some of his writings survive, namely the Confessio, which has a lot of biographical detail, and the Letter to Coroticus.

One of the most well-known legends is that Patrick used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity and the plant has long since been asso-



ciated with the country. Since then, it has become the flower of Ireland and has been worn on the headdress of the Irish Guards on St Patrick's Day since the time of Queen Victoria.

By the 7th century Patrick, had become the patron saint of Ireland with his day celebrated on the 17th of March, the day on which he is thought to have died.

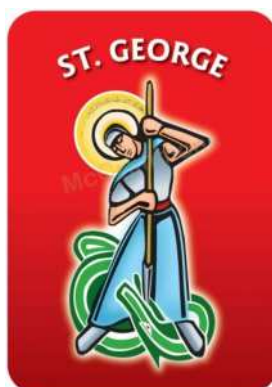
St George

Although almost certainly the earliest of the patron saints I have written about, little is known about the patron saint of England, Portugal, Ethiopia and Georgia. Tradition suggests that he was a Roman soldier born in Cappadocia, who was tortured and beheaded during Diocletian's persecution of Christians in 303 and actually died in Lydda [Lod in Israel] where his mother had moved after his father's death. He may well have died on April 23 rd .

The most well-known legend about George is that he rescued a Libyan princess by slaying a dragon in return for her father converting to Christianity – a story remarkably like that of the Greek hero Perseus. George also features in Muslim stories.

Known of in England by the 8th Century, Crusaders returned with stories about him, and he was recognised as patron of the Order of the Garter by Edward 111, but The St. George Cross only became the symbol of England during the reign of Henry V111. Just when George became the patron saint of England is not known but certainly by the time of Elizabeth1st, he was clearly seen as really important to the country as Shakespeare concludes Henry V's famous speech at Agincourt with the words "Cry; God for Harry, England, and Saint George!"

He was canonised in 494 by Pope Gelasius and in 1415 his saint's day was set as April 23 rd by the church.



MRS BRENDA KELSEY, an appreciation

by Kevin Parfitt

It would have been in the late 1950's that I first encountered Miss B Alexander as a local preacher on the Beccles, Bungay and Loddon circuit at Brooke Chapel. Brenda was living with her mother in Woodton and had begun her teaching career (I believe) at the Primary School there. She soon progressed to teach RE at the Loddon Secondary Modern School till her retirement.

I have much to thank Brenda for, as when I started Local Preacher training Brenda took me under her wing as I started those first tentative steps as one of Mr Wesley's itinerant preachers. Brenda and her Mum were always so hospitable and generous with their time for me as we discussed forthcoming services and what my input could be from reading a lesson first then taking prayers to being asked to help with the sermon, this was preached at Bungay MC I do not remember any of the content but still can recall the feeling of trepidation looking at the sea of faces expectantly waiting for some wise words of which they could approve, perhaps something useful was said as I was allowed to continue with a note to preach and then progress to on trial.

It was some time later that our paths crossed again as Brooke MC had joined up with the Norwich Circuit and Miss Alexander was now Mrs B Richardson married to Bob one of those unique characters of preachers also blessed with a fine singing voice. Brenda was now back at the Chapel behind the Pulpit delivering her crafted and researched services, often I seem to remember from a neat blue folder. (None of the recycled cereal packets that some of you may remember a certain preacher used to use.)

Sadly Bob and Brenda were only able to enjoy 18 months together until Bob's death, but how wonderful to hear at Brenda's thanksgiving service of the circumstances that brought Brenda and Bob Kelsey together at Chapel Field Road and how they both found happiness with each other. I understand that although Brenda didn't embrace the computer/internet age she was an avid telephone user, we used to chat from time to time talking of old friends or Bungay days, these conversations would often be up to 45minutes which I learnt was a fairly normal length of discourse with Brenda, there wasn't any way to finish these conversations early until Brenda had said all that she needed to say. It was a great thrill and well deserved for Brenda to receive her long service Preaching Certificate, and many thanks to you Brenda for encouraging this Local Preacher to give it a go.

Bless you Brenda, you good and faithful servant.

Bite-Sized Worsip



by Derek Grimshaw

I was very fortunate to be gifted with a sabbatical during the spring of 2023 and one of the great joys of being free from leading worship every Sunday was the freedom to attend services in other churches. Colleague ministers may well agree that it is very special to be able to share communion with my wife, instead of me presiding all the time. Easter Day was special as we attended communion in Grassington. We ventured back into the Norwich Circuit on several occasions, and it has been a great joy catching up with old friends and reawakening some very happy memories of our time in the circuit.

Visiting Hethersett, I was reminded of an experience way back in the summer of 2006. I was approached by Liz Thetford and Chris Skinner, who had a concept for “Bite Sized Worship” the idea was to have a short act of worship, about twenty minutes, half an hour in duration. I remember getting excited at the prospect, Chris was sure that it was a winner, and so was Liz.

We threw everything at the idea, launched a mail shot, we were in the paper, I featured on Radio Norfolk and we had a planning group who worked hard at trying to make the thing a reality, Vicky Brown pulled together a band, Liz worked at PR and Chris made sure that we had donuts and Danish Pastries (food tended to be a feature of worship for Chris) and we launched on Sunday 3rd September 2006.

The time wasn't right and after a run of maybe half a dozen services, we called it a day. I confess to feeling disappointed and deflated, we went on and tried other styles of worship, but I still believed that Chris was onto something, I still believed that it was a good idea and was a method of reaching people outside the core of Church activities. When Chris sadly died when he was far too young and still with so much to offer, the idea of Bite Sized Church still lay on my heart.

When the pandemic hit down in the spring of 2020, the leadership team in the Ipswich Circuit recognised that during a time when we couldn't worship in per-

son, there needed to be a different approach and we shifted to an online presence developing like a lot of Churches, printed and digital services. As we gained confidence, we looked at different options for worship, and I mentioned Chris's idea and our Hethersett experiment. I stood back and a small group of people launched "Bite Sized Church" a short service which is still being published three years later on our Circuit Website www.methodistic.org.uk every Wednesday morning at 10 am, it also features on social media. Sadly, Chris Skinner never lived to see his idea come to fruition, and I hope that somehow, he knows that it was the right thing to do after all, we know that Bite Sized Church is appreciated weekly by hundreds of people around the country and around the world. Chris was absolutely right, the concept works, and we hear positive comments regularly from individuals and Church groups who use the services. I will always be indebted to the people of Hethersett, who had the courage to give it a go, invest time, imagination, and energy. The time, and maybe our interpretation of Chris's idea weren't right, but God is using the concept today. If you have ten minutes one Wednesday, have a quick look at Bite Sized Church, it all started in Norwich.

Thank you,
Derek Grimshaw.

We are grateful to Derek for sharing this interesting item with the circuit, which can be regarded as a legacy from Chris Skinner whose death at the age of 59 in 2017 was a great loss to his family but also to Norwich circuit and his profession. The circuit is blessed at this time as Chris's widow, Sue, is the Senior Circuit Steward.

The Revd Derek Grimshaw is expecting to move to the Central Norfolk circuit this summer and will be living in Dereham.

His first appointment was to the Norwich circuit in 2005 when the family moved from Bradford into the Manse at Hethersett. In 2013 he moved to Ipswich as the superintendent minister and now, eleven years later, he is re-crossing the border to Norfolk.

Thoughts on Lent/Easter drama

by Joanna and Robert Wells. Chapel Field Road

Before we moved to Norfolk in 1987, we were both heavily involved in the Maidenhead Players, the drama group of the Maidenhead Christian Council. We produced and took part in plays through all seasons of the Church year, and four that stand out in the Lent and Easter season are the following.

Christ in the Concrete City by Philip Turner.

This is a play about the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ from three points of view. First, it's the story of something that happened. Secondly, the Passion is one of universal significance, speaking timelessly to all humankind. Thirdly, the crucifixion and resurrection are events of personal significance, speaking to the individual in the secret places of their own soul. We were privileged to present a dramatized reading of this play a few years ago in Chapel Field Road Methodist Church. This was an opportunity to share the impact of this particular reflection of the Easter story with many more people.

One Friday in Eternity by Revd Edmund Banyard (formerly URC minister in Diss). This is a play with songs focussed on the crucifixion of Jesus.

A dance/drama on the Easter theme devised by the Maidenhead Players for performance in Westminster Abbey, commissioned by RADIUS the religious drama society of Great Britain. As a Christian drama group, we were honoured to be asked to present a creative piece in this awe-inspiring setting. To run, dance, sing, shout and 'over-turn tables' in a significant place of worship was a moving and humbling experience.

Godspell a musical by Stephen Schwarz with book by John-Michael Tebelak

A series of parables based on St Matthew's gospel leading to the Last Supper and Crucifixion. To be part of this ground-breaking interpretation of Easter was an exhilarating experience. For the first time, as young people, we could make it real and relevant: a story of and for our time and told in a dramatic and powerful way. Incidentally, drama in worship has long been an interest of Robert's and was a study for his master's degree in theology. It tries to raise awareness

of the intrinsic dramatic elements in a service of worship, both performative and participatory. The ritual and discipline of the event provide a background for these elements. It is not simply the use of sketches, although sometimes these can be helpful in interpreting the Gospel.

(Joanna studied Drama at Goldsmiths College in London
Robert was Head of Drama in an Oxfordshire secondary school)

PRAYERS FOR HOLY WEEK:

PALM SUNDAY

"Ride on, ride on in majesty!

In lowly pomp ride on to die."

Lord, as we consider your 'triumphant' entry into Jerusalem for your passion, let us shout our Alleluias, and keep alert as we make this pilgrimage with you this Holy Week.

GOOD FRIDAY

"It is God himself who dies!

God in man shall set us free:

God as man - and only he.

Let him claim us as his own;

we will serve as best we can

such a God and such a man!"

EASTER DAY

"He arose! He arose! Alleluia! Christ arose!"

Risen Lord, we would be Easter People, and be your messengers of hope.

Give us courage Lord to live and speak your word of peace.

Alleluia! Christ arose!

Reflection

‘The call to awake’

“Awake, awake to love and work, The lark is in the sky”
(H&P 631, not in StF)

These hymn words are a call to awake, are they also a resurrection call to us today?

Reflection

The dawn chorus breaks the stillness of the night in notes of new day rejoicing.
As it was, so it still is.

The sun’s rays extend until the morning light has chased away all darkness.
As it was, so it still is.

The chill of night ebbs as the sun rises to warm the cold air.
As it was, so it still is.

The fragrance of the flowers now permeates the night dulled senses.
As it was, so it still is.

The stone of night has rolled away to reveal a once occupied, now empty space.
As it was, so it still is.

The folded back linen, the wrappings of night, meet the fresh air of day.
As it was, so it still is.

The soul awakes; warms, emerges in light, in fragrance and in songs of rejoicing.

As it was, so it still is.

Alleluia, the Lord is risen.

An account of resurrection or an account of waking from sleep? We ‘rise’ each day called to ‘love and work’. God’s work for us is telling of his love for everyone. The hymn words state “so let the love of Jesus come and set our souls ablaze”. By having ‘souls ablaze’ we can “give and give and give again” (final verse). Let us feel the joy of the resurrection of Jesus and as we ‘awake’ to each new day, the call

to ‘love and work’ through the power of the risen Christ. Amen

Pauline Wrenn





Music at Lent



It is years since I have had any experience of singing what I would describe as Lenten Music; it is something that hasn't been a practice in my neck of the circuit over the decades. I suppose the two big Lenten works that have been staples of Easter singing are the Edwardian 'From Olivet to Calvary' and the Victorian 'The Crucifixion'; both of which are out of favour although I hear The Crucifixion is being looked at with more interest and may well be making a comeback. With that in mind I looked again at the work.

I have sung The Crucifixion many times (and once the tenor solos!) - a meditation on the Passion with music by Stainer. In a performance (and during rehearsals) it is possible to be aware of the great sadness of the story- the poignant question from Jesus 'Could ye not watch with me one brief hour?' when his followers slept during his agony. The text maybe worth a read as another interpretation of the Easter story- I think scores can be found easily - just speak to a singer who is bound to have a dusty old score tucked away somewhere.

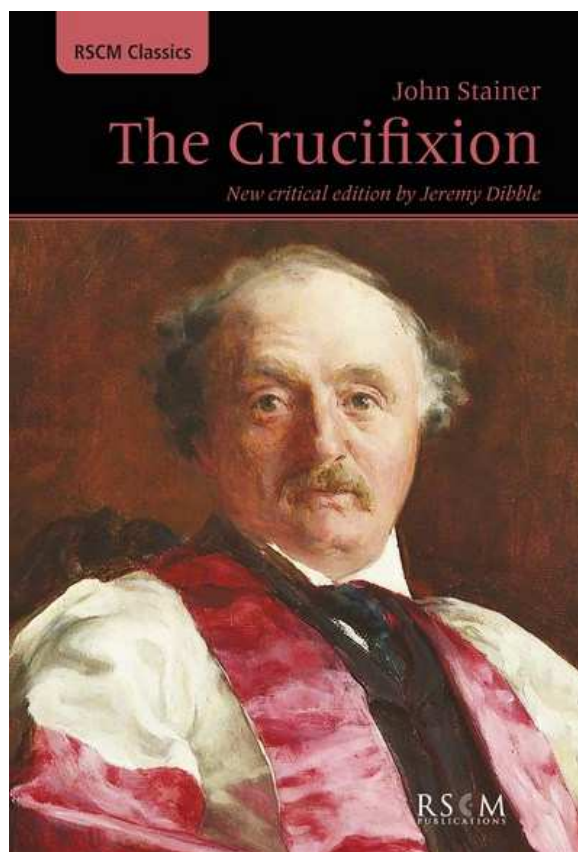
I think my most profound experience of being strangely moved by something sung at Easter is recording Messiah during lockdown with The Self Isolation Choir, now called Choir of the Earth. Messiah at Home was an incredible shared experience, bringing together scores of people from around the world to create a unique performance of, arguably, the greatest choral work in history and in so doing, taking a stand against the fear and loneliness of isolation. Every note was recorded by individuals in their own homes, using a mixture of phones, tablets, video cameras and microphones before being digitally combined in the studio. The result is an amazing testament to the passion, hard work and tenacity of everyone involved.

In the second part of The Messiah the tenor gets the plum parts and sings Behold And See If There Be Any Sorrow Like Unto His Sorrow and He Was Cut Off From The Land Of The Living- depicting the deep grief of Christ as he, seemingly abandoned, approaches his crucifixion but then declares But Thou Did Not Leave His Soul In Hell...nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption... and so affirming The Resurrection. A good tenor can move people to tears!

As we approach Easter it would repay anyone with some time to find a rendi-

tion of The Messiah on YouTube and sit and listen, in a quiet place, to Part Two of the Messiah, yes, even those who declare loudly that they do not like choral music.

Hilary Harding, Wymondham



Meet a Methodist

Pauline West

What are your earliest memories of church?

I was baptised in Cardiff but don't remember that!

My first memory aged 2 is of my auntie's wedding which was held in a large Victorian church, Buxton Road, in Huddersfield. My mother and I, as bridesmaids, sat one side of the church but my father who was Best Man was on the other side. Children often know things when adults don't realise they know. I knew that there were times when all the adults sat very still with their eyes closed. I was bored and this seemed a good time to go and see what my father was doing. So I crept past my mother, down the aisle across the church and just reached dad when they all opened their eyes. My mother was furious.!

An important memory was when I was 4, mum was busy looking after Ian and couldn't go to church very often. So I went on my own to a little church in West Malvern clutching the offertory envelope. I sat behind the harmonium with the ladies who played it. They looked after me, found the hymns for me and generally made a fuss of me.

One week they were not there and I sat by myself in a pew but finding the hymns on my own was hard. Afterwards the Minister came and spoke to me and I told him how difficult it was to find the hymns. I could do it up to 100 but more than that it was muddled. He said if he had known he would have chosen some that were easier to find. Mum couldn't believe it when I told her. Apparently many retired ministers came back into circuit during the war to help out. He had been Principle of one of the theological colleges.

What are your later memories?

After Cardiff, Swanage, Yorkshire and Malvern we came to rest in Cambridge. As I got older I enjoyed helping at various events. A lot of fundraising went on to repair war damage and update premises. I liked running about with my tray clearing tables and serving teas etc.

We had to go to Sunday School during the morning service and again in the afternoon. Most of the teachers were uninspiring with no idea how to interest children and young people. I enjoyed studying for the scripture exam. Later on I did help in the Sunday School at Hills Road and then



at Castle Street.

I longed not to go to Sunday School but unless there was something else I couldn't leave. I discovered Crusaders, I don't how. But I was allowed to go and I loved it – it was a turning point in my life. Attendance was obligatory - ten weeks without missing for a badge and then I think it was 100 to earn a Bible. Two holiday weeks were allowed every year otherwise girls would be back to the beginning again with the counting! We sang choruses, led prayers, had talks and Bible drill which involved being given a verse and finding it as quickly as possible. In the summer we went to summer camps.

Is there someone who greatly influenced your life?

Yes, Miss Gage and Marjorie whose surname I have forgotten. They were the leaders of Crusaders. See previous paragraph.

Have you a favourite hymn?

As a Local Preacher that is difficult to answer as is the question about a favourite Bible Passage. I will do the two together.

'This this is the God we adore' STF 67 is special to both Richard and myself. We had it at our wedding and all special times since. Luckily it has survived several prunings for new hymn books.

Isaiah 6 and 'I have heard my peoples cry . . . who will go' STF 663. Very special especially when I was asked to be District Women's Network President. It was a call and I needed the reassurance that I was called.

Which Christians dead or alive would you like to invite for a meal?

Without a doubt Julian of Norwich and Margery Kemp of Kings Lynn. I would love to hear them talking together – such different personalities.

How would you sum up your faith?

One thing I am very sure of is that the way we treat children is very important. I was cared for and loved in that little chapel and that has never left me. Church is a place of love and if children experience it even if they leave they have memories to bring them back later.

'This this is the God we adore' sums everything up.

Sawston Chapel where I
took my first service
'on trial'





Forthcoming events

Swanwick 19 - 21 April.

Revd Jenny Pathmarajah is a long-standing friend and supporter of Methodist Women in Britain and is very excited to be leading this weekend. . Jenny leaves the comfort of the piano stool this weekend and promises us an enlightening and challenging journey as we discover the power of words in the church and our faith. Becca Byass lives in Nottingham and works as an Engagement officer for All We Can (Methodist Relief and Development).

Friday 19th to Sunday 21st April 2024 at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick Cost £185 full board; Zoom only option £40; Booking opens on 15th January 2024 on our website: mwib.org.uk More info needed? Contact swanwick.mwib@gmail.com or 0300 030 9873

District Days

Spring 2024 – Thursday, 16th May at Diss. Speaker – Madeleine Reed (Helen Kim Scholar)

Autumn 2024 – Saturday, 5th October at Histon. Speaker – Revd Jenny Pathmarajah

Easter Offering service 26th May
3pm at Framingham Earl

Theme this year is 'Let justice roll'

Hope to see many of you at these events.

Pauline West
Secretary



Our work for justice is never 'done'. *Let Justice Roll* calls us to take a fresh stand for justice in different situations across our world.

Anne (Nancy) Wesley

by Joy Southam

Anne, or Nancy as the family knew her, was born on 17th March 1701. Sadly, at seven months, her twin brother died. There is limited evidence of Anne's childhood. However, there is an account of how she went up to the garret during the haunting of 1716-1717. She was in her teens when "Ol' Jeffery," the friendly Epworth ghost, began to act up in the parsonage. Her father thought that perhaps the ghost could be frightened away by noise, so he sent Anne into the attic to blow a horn. She was terrified but completed the task to no avail.

She served as a governess in Thorne for a time but returned home when her mistress died. It was while she was in Thorne that she was courted by a well-educated man John Lambert, a successful land surveyor. For once her father approved the match and the couple were married on December 2nd, 1725, at Holy Trinity Church Finningley. The Wesley family went into debt to provide her a generous dowry – the only one of the sisters to receive one from her immediate family.

Nancy found that she could now live comfortably and was able to host parties in her home. Hers was a happy marriage. Nancy quickly fell pregnant, and her son John was born in September 1726. John Wesley danced at their son's baptism. He was the godfather. When her husband's finances deteriorated, Nancy and family moved in with her parents but soon, moved to London so that John might find employment. John's finances improved and it is thought that Uncle Matthew had helped the couple.

Charles Wesley visited them there and expressed some concern about John's drinking habits - Lambert had renewed his friendship with Hetty's husband. Under Charles' influence the couple became Methodists having heard the gospel of forgiveness.

When John Wesley became ill in 1741, Anne, who lived nearby, cared for him at the Foundery. Anne was at her mother's bedside with her sisters when their mother died in 1742.

Little more is known about her. The last record of Nancy is a letter from Patty Wesley to John in autumn 1746. This states that the Lamberts had moved to Wroot, but does not explain why they had to leave London. There are no death or burial records for Nancy.

Visit to Mumbles

by Megan Davis

In March one year the Methodist Recorder published an account of the transformation of the Methodist Church in Mumbles, South Wales which was the inspiration for Anthony's proposal for Park Lane to alter the building rather than closing it. We had wanted to visit it since reading the account and on the last Sunday in May we had the opportunity to break our journey to a holiday venue in Pembrokeshire.

We arrived in pouring rain and I jumped out of the car and dashed into the church leaving Anthony to deal with the approaching traffic warden. Inside I was met by what seemed like a reception committee. Everywhere I looked I was met by smiling faces and hands held out to shake my hand. I was asked if I had come far. I told them we lived in Norwich and had read about their church last year and we had been looking forward to seeing it ever since. They told me we were very lucky as their Minister, Howard Long, was preaching that morning and that they also sung well!

We eventually took our seats in the church upstairs and immediately the lady on my left welcomed me and also told me how lucky we were that Howard was preaching. She told me that at the beginning quite a few people were against the redevelopment but now everyone was thrilled with it and their congregation was around the 150 mark every Sunday. This went up when they had their summer visitors. The congregation was of all ages, children, young families, middle aged and elderly. The Minister came in and the service started. I was prepared for fine singing but when the lady next to me started singing I literally jumped as she had a beautiful voice with the power of an opera singer! During the sermon the Minister told how shortly after he arrived in Mumbles there was a photo of the church in the local paper with the heading "The end of an Era" as the congregation had been dwindling for some time. He said he looked at it and thought "Oh no its not!" and so began the vision that has today turned into a beautiful light church which is a joy to enter. He told of the many talents the members discovered they had as they worked to raise the money for it but said whatever we do it is no good if it does not come from the heart, not the head, but the heart. (With a thump on his heart!) At the end of the service when I real-

ised I had not looked at my watch once, I turned to the lady on my left and told her how fortunate they were. She replied “Yes we are. He makes you want to come and when you leave you are so very glad you came”. We then had coffee and everyone was so anxious for us to meet their Minister. We were introduced, explained to him why we were there and he told us he would give us a tour of the church after he had spoken to the members of his congregation. He then told us how they had achieved their goal. They were turned down by Manchester at first but he went to Manchester to speak to them and they were finally given permission to go ahead. He is a big person in every sense of the word and one gets the impression he would have kept on until they finally gave in.

We eventually left after being told to come again and went out to find it was still raining as it can rain, only in Wales! It didn't matter because for over an hour we had enjoyed wonderful singing, a sermon straight from the heart and shared in the inspiration that congregation receives every week. What a wonderful start to our holiday



J M A

by Pauline West

Do you remember running about after Sunday services with a collecting box asking people for pennies for missionary work and later when you were older having a book and people promised so much a week. You marked their gifts off in your book.

At the end of the year all children who had collected £5 or more received a medal and subsequent years a bar to add to the medal.

If you were one of these children you might be interested to read the following.



To commemorate the fiftieth year of the Junior Missionary Collectors Distinguished Service Order medal, members of the J.M.A presented a motor launch for use by the Revd Ephraim Alphonse in Panama.

He was a West Indian missionary sent by the Methodists of Jamaica, to work amongst the Valiente Indians of Panama. His work among the Valiente Indians consists of visiting the villagers in isolated coves and lagoons, preaching the Gospel, helping the villagers, taking sick people to hospital, and transporting materials needed for building churches, etc. Revd. Ephraim Alphonse learned the language of those Valiente Indians, and was the first person to write it down. He translated part of the Bible for them to read.

But getting about was difficult as the only boat available to him was old and unreliable and frequently needed repairs. People in remote areas were often disappointed when he could not visit and lead worship and help them.

The only mode of transport was by boat, but the launch used, the 27 ft. Cusapin, was old and unreliable and frequently broke down, so that long journeys often had to be postponed, and people in the remote villages disappointed.

A scheme was launched and announced in the At Home and Abroad issue

dated October 1952. Each Junior Missionary Collector was asked to subscribe 4d in view of raising a total of £1,000. This money was used to convert a life-boat decommissioned from the P & O liner Chitral and given to JMA by the Company.

72,000 British children contributed. They managed to raise £1,136 - approximately £27,195 today. The boat was refurbished and equipped following the instructions of Revd Alphonse and on the 14th November 1953 it was officially named in a ceremony held at Kingston-on-Thames.

After it had been named at Kingston-on-Thames, the boat was taken to Liverpool and shipped to Panama where she arrived in December 1953 to the great delight of Revd Alphonse.

In January 1954, Revd Alphonse was writing to Miss Margaret Shaw, who had coordinated the JMC's effort at MS: "I cannot describe how well suited the Golden Jubilee is for our work. ...] I am really at a loss to know who to thank and what to say that will be most effective."



Book chat

Godforsaken. The Cross - The Greatest Hope of All. Stephen Cottrell.

Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York, has been a very hands-on- priest, bishop and now Archbishop, but also a writer on evangelism. spirituality and discipleship, and I'm ready for Lent with a copy of Godforsaken. I can see it will be a serious read but it is lightened and illuminated with pertinent easy-to-understand illustrations. It is a complete unit with an Introduction, seven chapters each with challenging questions for discussion making it also suitable for groupstudy, and finally an Afterword.

We know, sometimes from personal experience, that human beings can suffer great desolation at times, but to think that God's Son, the Saviour of the World, the Lamb of God, Mary's Boy Child, experienced it too and cried out against this feeling, is rather overwhelming. Jesus calls out from the cross 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani; My God, my God, why have you forsaken me', straight from a Psalm attributed to King David which Jesus, like any boy growing up in a Jewish home, would have known.

As it says on the cover 'This is a beautiful and compelling exploration of the dark, suffering side of the Passion - and how Jesus' words lead us to the greatest hope of all. I am looking forward to reading it.

Caught in Between by Riah Abu El-Assal (Bishop of Jerusalem.1997- 2007)
Published 1999

This book, also part of my Lenten reading, records some of the Bishop's personal story - he was born in Nazareth and later became its Vicar - but it is also the story of his people the Arab Palestinian Christian Israelis. He has been likened to Desmond Tutu in his pursuit of freedom for his people in the spirit of peace and reconciliation, often sailing close to the wind and being a thorn in the flesh of politicians. Every day of his life seems to have been a struggle as he sought and worked towards God's purpose for his people.

St Luke's Gospel tells us that Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Today the world is weeping with him as it considers the conflict and hurt in the states of Israel and

Palestine, the Holy Land.

Joy and Humility, An alternative look at Meditation and Exploration.

I was given this delightful slim volume at Christmas, but I think its very title conveys much of the Easter Story and it could be a perfect 'Easter egg' gift for adults and cheaper than many an Easter egg!

It is a selection of quotations by Liz Meynell and is beautifully illustrated by her Artwork. I love the range of the writers of the texts, many of whom I know but others are completely unknown. One-line quotes, whole-page quotes. It is a wonderful selection, beautifully presented and it deserves to be flying off the shelves.

A modern quotation is, like many of the others, food for further thought. 'We all have a cross to bear - just make sure that others don't trip over it.'

It costs £5 with all proceeds going to Franciscan Aid, and can be obtained from lizmeynell@gmail.com Plus £2.40 if posted,

Ann Waterhouse

Prayer written by David Hardman, our new Methodist Liaison Officer
In Jerusalem

Eternal God, on his cross your son cried out 'My God, My God why have you forsaken me?'

As we watch the news and witness death, violence, destruction and displacement we too are tempted to cry out 'why have you abandoned the land in which you once walked?'

Yet, we know you did not abandon your son,
and you do not abandon the world, so we pray for those
who continue the violence that they may stop.
for all who suffer that they may know your love
and in our resurrection faith, continue to pray for justice
that peace may be given the chance to flourish in the holy land,
in Jesus' name, Amen

Clifford Dann Architect 1899 - 1979

Clifford Dann was born in Lowestoft the son of a Barford carpenter and local preacher. His family moved to Norwich when he was three years old. They became members of Queens Road Methodist Church and in time Clifford became a local preacher too. He served for fifty years. At Queens Road Clifford became stage director for the Q Players and designed costumes and sets for many plays. It was at Queens Road that Clifford married Constance Hall. When it closed they moved to Bowthorpe Road.

After attending City of Norwich School Clifford trained with Cecil Upcher. He commenced teaching architecture at the Norwich School of Art in 1930 and continued until 1949 when a full time tutor was found.

Clifford was commissioned to design a church at Trunch. The stone laying took place on 10th June 1937 when it was agreed to buy the land. There wasn't a penny in hand so it was a venture of faith. During the war many churches were damaged and Clifford designed replacements including St Anne's in Colman Road and one on Plumstead Road. Two others were at Aldborough, now a community hall, and at Aslacton.

In 1941 Dereham Road Church was badly damaged so the site at Bowthorpe Road was bought. Clifford drew up plans for a new church in 1945 as a temporary building. The church was finally bought in 1974 which was a dream come true for Clifford as his membership was there. The stained glass window had a scallop shell surrounded by a cup, bread and a dove.

Clifford designed twenty one churches in all. Among them were Diss, Downham Market, Horsey, Potter Heigham, Salhouse, North Lynn, Costessey, Jessopp Road, and Wisbech. Other churches called on his services when they needed extra space. These included Rosebery Road, Mile Cross, Barford, Chapel Field Road and Shotesham.

In between designing churches Clifford also designed, among other buildings, a bakery and houses. If you go past Kimberley Green you will see thatched council houses which he designed.

We acknowledge the help and information given by Clifford's daughter in law, Margaret and grandson Andrew.

Chapel Field Road and Shotesham.

Lent and Easter Services

Lent Courses

Bowthorpe Church Centre: For full details of their Lent services with the theme, 'Approaching the Cross' see the Circuit Website.

Chapel Field Road: Four weeks on Wednesdays starting on 14th February at 14.00

Palm Sunday March 24th

14.30 Sprowston Churches: Easter Garden Festival No service at 19.00

For more information see the Circuit Website

Maundy Thursday March 28th

18.30 Sprowston: 'Bread and Spreads' service led by Martin Callam

19.00 Chapel Field Road: Service led by Revd Matthew Olanrewaju

19.30 Bowthorpe Church Centre: Service led by Revd Mark Elvin

Good Friday March 29th

10.30 Bowthorpe Church Centre: Service led by Revd Mark Elvin

10.30 Chapel Field Road: Ecumenical Service followed by Hot Cross Buns led by Revd Matthew Olanrewaju

10.30 Sprowston: Service led by Revd Andy Burrows

12.00 to 15.00 Bowthorpe Church Centre: Prayer Walk around the Parish and Silent Prayer in the church

18.00 Brooke: Meditation led by Revd Matthew Olanrewaju

Drayton and Taverham Churches together Time and venue of service to be confirmed

Easter Sunday March 31st

06.30 Bowthorpe Church Centre: Sunrise Service followed by Breakfast led by Revd Mark Elvin

08.00 Chapel Field Road: Communion Service led by Revd Mary Sachikonye

08.00 Framingham Earl: Communion Service followed by breakfast led by Revd Matthew Olanrewaju

All other Sunday services as in the plan.

News in brief

CHURCH FLOWERS AT EASTER

Each year dedicated teams of church flower arrangers rise to meet the challenge and opportunity of doing the Easter flowers, and down the years I have visited various local churches and been rewarded by some beautiful and meaningful displays. If you are out and about after Easter Weekend why not pop into churches you pass by and enjoy these offerings done to the Glory of God to celebrate Easter.

But not only flowers... the congregation of St. Faith's Gaywood, an Anglican and Methodist partnership in King's Lynn have created a striking installation of hundreds of origami peace doves which now hangs above the Chancel steps and will continue throughout Lent until Easter when the hanging will be adorned with thorns. Each dove was prayerfully hand made by a member of the church family in the hope the peace doves will encourage prayers for peace.

Revd Robert Roberts is the Methodist minister in the partnership.

He was formerly in the Norwich Circuit with responsibility for the Rosebery Road section

MONIDONKS.

At Christmas and Palm Sunday we sing with happiness of donkeys, and any day can be made happier by seeing well-cared-for donkeys. Last July the EDP carried the story of Sarah McPherson of Hempnall and her Miniature Donkeys for Well-being, founded in memory of her late mother Pat. Since 2017 the Minidonks have made more than 800 well-being visits to people with life-limiting conditions, special needs, care homes and mental health challenges. They are usually busy on Palm Sunday but this year has got off to a slow start because of a pending hip operation for one of the donkeys and visits are on hold at the moment. The organisation is supported by both individuals and companies. <https://www.minidonks.org.uk/product/dinky-donk-maude-mascot/>

FUNERALS 2020s.

At the end of November I 'attended' two funerals.

The first was that of a Yorkshire friend which I attended some time after the funeral when a recording of it landed in the email box. By coincidence three hours later I found myself watching live on YouTube, the funeral service of Rosalynn Carter, the wife of former President Jimmy Carter. Born into Christian homes,

these two intelligent and educated women, lived their entire lives in their home areas, which they served on political and social fronts, and by the wonders of electronic means I was able to share in their funeral services and I am thankful. In recent years it has become fairly normal for Orders of Service to be printed and made available for the congregation attending funerals and often for those who were not able to be at the service, who would be glad to know of the hymns, the family contributions to the service, and see a photograph of the person who has died.

READ ALL ABOUT IT:

METHODIST RECORDER

Like newspapers generally, the MR carries few births, deaths and marriage notices these days as people turn to social media to post personal news, further and faster daily, but thankfully the Recorder seems to carry more news items of personal anniversaries rather than announcements these days, and in January one edition carried news of a 107th; 105th birthday. and 69th wedding anniversary. Lovely accounts of good long lives and they all quoted their personal secret of their longevity. I wonder what your secret would be?

Front page headline subjects in January included: Churches step in with 'Warm Welcome' in cold weather.

Concern that religion at the BBC is being 'airbrushed' out of picture. Government's Rwanda new bill. And Inhumane and morally bankrupt'. Ex-President. The need for the Government to tackle the growing levels of harmful gambling.

'networknorfolk'

The online Christian community website shares information on a variety of subjects across the denominations twice a week. Last issue to hand at time of writing included: News of the Convention of Anglican and RC Bishops (40) held in Norwich;

The relationship between Science and Religion;

Necton Parish Church about to hold a fund-raising concert, for urgent building work, by the string quartet Chaos Collective, including Dvorak's string Quartet no 12;

Various job possibilities include - The Julian of Norwich Partnership seeking a Chair of Trustees, the Bishop of Norwich a new Press Officer, and the Magdalene Group are looking for a Training Officer;

As well as these regular on-line postings, The Good News for Norwich and Norfolk is a printed tabloid newspaper available in local churches four times a year.

News from the churches

Bowthorpe church

Our asylum seeker neighbours in the hotel at Bowthorpe were moved on in early February. It was sad to say farewell to those who had become part of church life. They have been such a blessing. The shared lunch of homemade soups and cakes on their last Sunday was both bitter and sweet. We are thankful that several are now housed locally, although most have been sent long distances away from here.



Four new baptisms by immersion took place in January: three people who had completed the recent Alpha Course, and one more from among the BMB (Believers of Muslim Background).

Our MP has looked in at one of the church Friday Food Hubs where cost-of-living skills workshops and mentoring also take place.

A Lent course is scheduled, and Easter services and activities are now being planned. These include a good Friday prayer walk around Bowthorpe, with space for silent prayer inside the church at the same time, from 12 noon to 3pm. Easter Sunday will begin early with a sunrise service at 6.30am in the ruin of St. Michael and All Angels followed by breakfast.

Sally Simpson

Chapel Field Road

Chapel Field Road has, in the last five months, been greatly saddened by the deaths of three of its stalwart and tireless workers - Sandra, wife of Geoff Brown, Kathie, wife of Michael Garratt, and Anita wife of David Ingham, all in their 70s. It would be hard to measure their contribution to the life of the church and the service of the Lord, they have left a huge gap, but the legacy of their work goes on. Another sad blow in early February has been the death of Reg Howlett. Reverend Matthew writes 'A very valuable member of our congregation and has been for a very long time. Reginald died just a few weeks short of his hundredth birthday.' For decades he was the superintendent of the Sunday School, and at the time of his death was still living in the family home and driving, and on the Sunday before his death he shared in the zoomed service from his church. As we mourn their deaths, we remember too those who belonged to other circuit churches who have died recently. May they all rest in peace.



Framingham Earl

At the time of writing we are looking forward to our Lent lunches which move around the various churches in Poringland and Framingham Earl. They are usually well attended and provide a short period of worship followed by a simple soup lunch and great fellowship. We also take part in the Walk of Witness on Good Friday which is starting from our Church this year.



We hold a regular Coffee Stop on Monday mornings (except for Bank Holidays) from 10.30 - 12.00 - please do drop in if you are passing. Some of these are special ones to raise money for specific charities like the Big C one held in February. We also support Sparrow Orphanage, Mozambique and Rucksacks for Refugees.

A few of us plus Revd Matthew attended the Churches Together service for the Week of Christian Unity in January.

We enjoy a monthly Wednesday Fellowship when we hear a variety of interesting talks or share food like a strawberry tea.

Some of our congregation carry out regular litter picking to help improve the local environment.

Susan Eldridge and Hazel Allen

Rosebery Road

At the time of writing we are looking forward to an afternoon of fellowship and fun at the Church Party.

The Crib Festival was again very successful both financially and with the number of visitors we had over the two weekends.

The monthly Bible Book Club=led by Rev Mary resumed in January with a small group looking at Ephesians.

Joy Southam



Thorpe Marriott Church

Before Christmas we were invited to sing carols in the Otter Public House by Mark, the landlord, and his wife Carole. We raised £91 from some very generous customers for the East Anglian Air Ambulance.



The Revd Marc Palmer, Vicar of Drayton, led our Gift Service for the Night Shelter and Women's Refuge and Revd Mary Cousins conducted our 32nd Anniversary Service.

Our Whist Club and Craft afternoons are continuing to be very popular.

Pat Dorrington

Norwich Circuit Magazine

Diary Dates

Monday 4th March	2.15pm	MWiB Committee Chapel Field Road
Tuesday 5th March	7.30pm	Local Preachers' Meeting Bowthorpe Road
Tuesday 19th March	7.30pm	Circuit Meeting Mile Cross
Saturday 18th May	2.00pm	MWiB Garden Party see below

**You are invited to a Garden Party at Epworth Old Rectory
on Saturday 18th May 2024, 2pm to 5pm**

Guest speakers: Dr Ruth Slatter & Dr Hannah Worthen talking about
their research work

using the Women's Collection held at Epworth Old Rectory.

There will be opportunity to view the latest Women's Collection exhibi-
tion; share and record your
experiences and memories of life as a woman in the Methodist Church;
talk to Ruth and Hannah

and to Anya, Visits and Collections manager EOR.
Afternoon tea will be served.

We end the day with worship led by Revd Angy Long,
Chair of the Lincolnshire District.

Details of cost and how to book will be in our next newsletter and on our
website from March

Why not book in a local b & b and come and make a weekend of this
it looks very interesting