



Borders Mission Circuit



The **Methodist** Church 



Luke 2:14

Circuit Magazine
Winter Edition 2024

Supers Scribblings



Super's Scribblings – Looking Back/Looking Forward

I don't know about you, but time seems to fly by with an ever-increasing velocity that gets faster and faster as each year passes. Some would say that this is due to old age creeping up on me – that time moves quicker the older you get – but it just appears that the modern world in which we live thrives on enabling change to happen with a great rapidity! Change is not always a bad thing, but sometimes it's nice to just be able to draw breath before something else comes along to make us consider what our next steps should be!

As we approach the end of yet another year, I take the time to reflect on what has happened over the past months. Back in March, after many months of conversations with the churches, the Circuit Leadership Team produced our 'Circuit 5 Year Plan'. Anyone who knows me, knows that I always work best when I have a plan to follow. So, for me, the production of this outline of what we are going to do over the next five years within the life of the Circuit, was most important. It gives us a structure to work within as we look to take the Circuit forward in our ministry for God.

But the hard work now begins for us all, to turn that plan into a reality – to see God at work in so many different places and situations. Rather than always concentrating on the nitty-gritty of church life, I would challenge us all to stop and consider what God is calling us to do. I think it is the Americans who coined the phrase '*blue sky thinking*', allowing our imaginations to run riot and come up with ideas for the future – and yes, some may be kind of '*whacky*' others may seem to be quite '*off the wall*' – but some may have great merit in enabling us to discern where God wants to take us – what his plan for us may look like. So let me encourage you to '*dream dreams*' and if you have any lightbulb moments of revelation let us know – every idea is worth exploring with God.

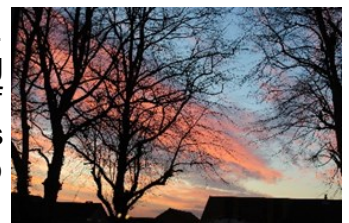
This year I was privileged to be given my time on sabbatical. I did a number of different things – photography courses to develop my ability to take photos, time spent away at Ampleforth Abbey and Scargill House, both in Yorkshire which gave me space to replenish my batteries and to have some time reflecting on what God was saying to me on my own spiritual journey. It has helped me to focus on the future as together we follow God into pastures new.

As we come to the end of another year, I would like to share a couple of photos with you that have made me think.



This picture was taken at Launde Abbey in Leicestershire. It is an image of Christ, arms outstretched. To me this picture shows Christ's overwhelming desire to be available to all of us. As a church we can learn so much about how what we do, can have an incredible impact on the lives of those who come into contact with Jesus through the life and work of our churches.

This second image was taken from our backdoor – a beautiful sunset sky. When I look at this picture, I am enthralled at the majesty of an all-creating God. He has the power to control all things if we allow him to do so. And if we did allow him to do so, how much better would our world be? Isn't this a lesson for us to learn – let's give God free reign to direct us as we go forward and we will know we will be in good hands!



We are heading towards Christmas – the celebration of Christ's birth. This year let's truly give thanks to God for this most wonderful gift and not lose sight of its significance amongst all the glitter and glitz of the season's revelry.

I wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas and New Year.

Rev Robert.

News From Around The Circuit.

Alfreton Wesley

A 1960s bride and her teenaged bridesmaid have been reunited after a 60-year gap - thanks to a chance meeting at Alfreton Wesley church.

Widow Doreen Sterland (86) hadn't recognised her former attendant, even though they sat only a few seats apart at morning services..

She only realised when another member of the congregation told her: "That's your bridesmaid over there."

Now the two have been busy swapping photos and memories of the big day.

Doreen (then Doreen Palethorp) was married to husband Stan at South Normanton Parish Church on September 6 1966 and her bridesmaid was 14-year-old Rosalind Fell (now Rosalind Helliwell).

The two had lost contact for a period of about 60 years, but Rosalind recognised Doreen when she started attending Sunday morning services at Wesley.

Doreen had been a Wesley member since her former church - South Normanton Bethel - closed some years ago.

Rosalind started attending Wesley services after becoming a member of the church's weekly Friendship Club.

Doreen said that it was a big surprise to discover that her former bridesmaid was sitting just a few seats away.

She said that another member of the congregation passed on the news.

"She said: 'That's your bridesmaid over there.'"

Doreen, who worked as a shorthand/typist with the Coal Board, has now brought photographs of the wedding day and the two have swapped memories of years gone by.

She said: "I got to know Rosalind's family because her mother and I were both Sunday school teachers at the parish church. But over the years, we lost touch."



Rosalind, who worked as a child minder and shop assistant, said that when she she started going to Sunday services, she recognised Doreen.

"Meeting her again has brought back lots of memories," she said.

* Doreen and Rosalind are pictured now and at Doreen's wedding.



Charity fund-raisers at Alfreton Wesley church are proving a tail-wagging success.



The monthly efforts are boosting the funds of local and national groups - and a four-legged friend recently went along to see how the money was raised.

Labrador retriever Sandy accompanied her owner Paula Hunt when the Guide Dogs charity was chosen to benefit from one of the events.

And Paula and her pet were greeted by a church full of smiling faces as they moved from table to table, meeting all the morning's customers.

Paula was only too happy to talk about the work of the guide dogs and Sandy was glad to offer a friendly paw as she met a host of new friends.

* Derbyshire secretary Paula is pictured with Sandy and retired minister the Rev Sue Wilkins.

Thousands of pounds have been raised since the coffee morning organisers decided on a list of worthy causes guaranteed to bring in the customers.

Charity groups ranging from blood bikers to the air ambulance have attracted supporters from various churches as well as the Wesley congregation and friends from the local area.



Toddler Nathaniel Lyons is walking on air - after raising hundreds of pounds for a top UK charity.

At just 15 months old, the youngster netted the cash by tackling a series of tricky challenges, in a giant project that could help to save babies' lives.

Young children who attend baby sensory and toddler sense classes throughout the UK have been taking part in the "Sensathon" to raise cash for Britain's leading pregnancy charity "Tommy's".

And Nathaniel's success has delighted his parents Hannah and Scott and his grandparents Alfreton Wesley's Rev Sue Wilkins and her husband John.

Retired minister Sue thanked all the people at Wesley who had supported the project and said that Nathaniel's parents had been very moved by the kindness of "our wonderful chapel folk."

Nathaniel raised a sum of £650 by tackling six challenges including bouncing on a beach ball, rowing to and fro, tracking moving objects and shaking a shaker.

The total was made up of £150 from sponsorship donations, £400 from a church coffee morning and a further £100 from a donation from Wesley's Tuesday Fellowship meeting,

Tommy's is the UK's leading pregnancy charity. It carries out research into the causes of miscarriage, stillbirth and premature birth, helping to halt the heartbreak and devastation of baby loss, and make pregnancy and birth safe.

The aim of the Sensathon is to raise £450,000 to help the charity's pregnancy information and support service for a whole year.

It would provide free expert advice, support and reassurance to thousands of people planning for or worried about pregnancy, including vital support through complications and baby loss.

Nathaniel enjoys going to the sensory classes. "He especially loves the music, the songs and the exercises," said Sue. "He is almost walking but not quite there. He also loves looking at books and has his own library card."

* Nathaniel is pictured with Sue and John and parents Hannah and Scott.



Female puzzle-fans at Alfreton Wesley church have put their menfolk to shame.

Since the church included a puzzle page in the monthly newsletter, women readers soon got down to solving the various brain teasers.

And they've walked away with the top prizes.

Latest winner Janet Fairfield, pictured receiving her prize from steward David Hopkinson, followed in the footsteps of her predecessor Jackie McNeill.

David congratulated Janet on her success and said: "It's time the men pulled their socks up."

Clay Cross

Celebrating 200 years of Methodism in Clay Cross



We commenced our year of celebration of 200 years since the first Methodist Church was opened in Clay Cross with a cream tea in the garden and continued with our Church Anniversary on 18th September. At this service a celebratory banner, made by the ladies was unveiled and dedicated.

A collection of materials illustrating the history of Methodism in Clay Cross was on display for many weeks following the Anniversary, for which many thanks are due to church members who lent photographs and other material.

At the time of writing, we are preparing for an evening singing some of Wesley's hymns and looking forward to carols in the garden just before Christmas.

Our celebrations will continue in early 2025 when Rev Andy Fyall, Chair of the Notts and Derby District, will preach on 9th March.

We extend a warm welcome to all the circuit to join us in any of our events.

12th Night Service

We will be holding our 12th Night Service again on 6th January 2025 and do hope that folk from around the circuit will come and join us. This service is a great way to draw the Christmas season to a close.

Bible Study

Having completed a series '*Not a Tame Lion*' around the film based on C S Lewis's book '*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*', we discovered that what is primarily a children's book and film does raise some deep questions that warranted exploration and discussion.

It was also noted that some of the cinematography in the film, particularly the scenes leading up to the death of Aslan, brought home the kind of suffering and humiliation Christ must have gone through on his way to Calvary. Also, the portrayal of Aslan, whilst at times 'a cuddly puss cat' was also a majestic lion whose roar shook the world, reminded us that our God, whilst loving, caring, tender and compassionate, is not a 'Tame God' but also a God of power and might.

We are now considering what to look at next.

This bible study is not limited to Clay Cross members so if anyone is interested in joining us, please do so. It is the third Tuesday of every month at 2.00pm.

Community Garden

Plans for the garden are still being developed and we have had a fruitful discussion with the new District Mission Enabler to consider how it may be part of a wider mission plan for the Church. In the meantime, the garden is being used for church events, when the weather permits.



Crich

The Heart of Organ Donation?



Community is a powerful thing...whether it's the Open Gardens, the fête, the Well Dressing or Transition Crich.

My wife Kate and I attend Healing Prayer meetings that Jim and Linda Gray organise the third Tuesday of each month and as well as being a room full of kindness it is also a community that helps to share large portions of positivity and prayers for others.

It's held at the Wesleyan Chapel on Chapel Lane and a couple of healing prayer sessions ago Jim announced that, due to the closure of the Methodist Church in Grassmoor, it had donated its organ to the Crich Wesleyan chapel. Jim then asked if I could share, via social media, that the Wesleyan chapel's existing organ might well be useful elsewhere and that, it would be free to anyone that could collect it.

I took some photos and shared it as far as I could, and a few days later someone called Andrea got in touch and said that he'd be more than happy to collect it.

It turns out that Andrea, originally from the Netherlands, is part of a transport company in Milton Keynes. He is also deeply involved in a charity called the Hedaru Life Savers Association (www.helisea.nl) a charity supporting those in need, particularly children and young people in Kilimanjaro.

He went on to explain that the old Wesleyan Chapel organ would be ideal for use in the church in Hedaru.

Suddenly, through the power of social media and, indirectly through the power of prayer (after all without the prayer meeting this connection could never have been made), an incredible good has come from a potentially discarded electric organ and a series of personal connections.

Andrea arranged for the organ to be collected and a few days later Abu and his helper arrived at the chapel to collect the organ.

It went with words and music for over 1000 hymns and a written history of the chapel.

We are all looking for to seeing photos of the organ in its new home hearing something of its journey.

Crich really is the Heart of Organ Donation

Well Dressing in Crich



Hello, I am Lizzie Parker from Crich Wesley Chapel. I would like to tell you about the village well dressings that I have been involved with. This year was our 7th year of well dressing in Crich, although the tradition of well dressing dates back to Celtic and Roman times. From May to September wells and springs are blessed to give thanks for fresh water.

The art of well dressing had disappeared and was nearly forgotten about until the plague came to Eyam in 1665. The villagers shut the village off and unfortunately many people lost their lives by containing the virus in this way. At that time the neighbouring village of Tissington did a well dressing to bless their clean water and give thanks that the plague had not come to their village.

Crich did their very first well dressing in 2015, thanks to Trish Howard who made it all happen in our village of Crich. There was no known record of well dressing in Crich before then. It has grown over the past 7 years, although we had to stop for several years due to Covid, a modern-day plague.

In 2024 we had 8 well dressings around the village. Four on the market place, above a spring fed trough, one outside St Mary's Church, which I worked on, as well as ones outside the Tramway Museum, Glebe Field Centre, infant school and the scout hut.

It has been great to be involved in this activity which brings the community together.



Swanwick

Zoom Worship

Covid restrictions and lockdowns brought difficulties and hindrances but some blessings. One was the origin of our Zoom worship at Swanwick which is on the **1st and 3rd Sundays at 6pm**. It evolved from surviving that unusual situation. Zoom worship gives so much to those who attend that it has become an intrinsic part of our mission and, perhaps, also signals new directions to follow.

There are many advantages to Zoom worship. Unlike streaming it is participative. We see, hear and talk to each other. We share doing readings and leading prayers. It's also an opportunity to do this for the first time in a less threatening situation than standing in front of a congregation.

Our three Ministers lead worship at least once each quarter and, often more than once. We share a simple home communion each quarter too and this works surprisingly well. Some local preachers support us by taking services for us. We use local arrangements to explore our spirituality and develop worship.

Our worship styles vary from traditional to reflective. The use of Youtube videos bring life to well known hymns and introduce us to new ones.

This is worship beyond geographical borders, so not restricted to Swanwick or the Borders Mission Circuit. Therefore it gives us the opportunity to develop.

It could suit anyone who finds physical access to a church building difficult, either temporarily or longer term.

It may also be a safe introduction to worship for someone who isn't confident to enter a church building.

We would like to see Zoom worship grow and believe it will if it is what God is calling us to do. We are exploring ways of making it attractive as we seek to welcome new people. Our District Learning Enabler is helping by meeting with us to share ideas and support our planning. Please pray for this endeavour and, if curious, you are very welcome to join us any 1st and 3rd Sunday evening.

Please contact Mary Murray (mary.murray@w3z.co.uk) for link details.

Mary, Peg and Margaret Swanwick

Zion South Wingfield



Would you like to visit a beautiful village,
meet friendly people,
have a drink and piece of home-made cake?
Then come and join us on the first Thursday of the month at
3.00pm.

Come to our Tea and Cake afternoon,
you will be warmly welcomed.
We look forward to seeing you at Zion Methodist Church,
Manor Road, South Wingfield

Sutton - St John's

Our Church Life goes on apace. The past few months have seen new faces in our congregation and good numbers have continued for our Worship.

Our Sunday at St. John's continues to be a very popular event with some eighty friends gathering for Tea and Songs of Praise.

We recently received three new members and four by transfer from the Church of North India. A great time of celebration and thanks! One of the highlights was the scriptures being read in Hindi and the sharing in the Lord's prayer in the various languages of those gathered.

Our Harvest Celebrations saw a full Church giving thanks for God's promise that "seed time and harvest shall not cease" It was a joy to see so many from the community joining us. With our Indian, Kenyan and Iranian friends it really did seem 'the world' was giving thanks. A two course Harvest Lunch was served in the hall afterwards to a crowd of appreciative members and friends.

Quite recently we were privileged to share in the baptism service of Jarin - Brace Johnson the son of our Kenyan family who joined us a short time ago. So much to give thanks for and give God all the glory!

PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH

Menu: Ham or Cheese - Salad Bar - Choice of Homemade Sweets - Tea/Coffee

All for just £7.00 per person There is also a Cake and Preserves Stall.

This is held on the second Thursday of the Month and served in the Hall
from 12 noon until 1.15.p.m.

Join us if you can, you are most welcome amongst us.

Let's Pray!

'Praying thoughts'

Dear friends across the Circuit,

Advent and Christmas are often busy times (perhaps too busy?) in Church life.

So I share with you below a small 'Three course menu' of *soul food*: Prayers, a meditation and a painting with questions to reflect on. All these 'soul food' items..come from very different sources and may be used in ordinary time as well as Christmas time.

Have a blessed and hopeful Advent & Christmas. Rev. Pete.

'Christmas rush'

"Ready for Christmas? What does that even mean?!"

You're joking! With all I've got to do, be lucky if I 'm ready by this time next year.

The tree, the decorations, enough food for the cat, not to mention us! I'll never be ready.

But.. I'm certainly ready for Christmas- that moment when the world seems hushed in silent expectation. The light in the stable draws us from chaos to the stillness of God at the Centre, and love is born. I'm longing for that."

(By Ann Lewin in *Waiting for the Kingfisher*, Inspire, 2009)

A prayer by Susanna Wesley:

"Help me, Lord, to remember that religion is not to be confined to the church or closet, nor only exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am in your presence. So may my every word have a moral content.. and may all things.. afford me an opportunity of exercising some virtue and daily learning and growing toward your likeness. Amen."

From the book 'In their words: The story of early Methodism', by Gary Best, 2018)

A prayer (by Anji Dowson-Ampleforth Abbey) used at the recent 'Parables' Circuit Autumn Quiet Days. **The prayer is based in part on the painting below:**



'The Lost Drachma'
(Luke 15:8-10)
by James Tissot. 1886.

“LOST & FOUND”

Almighty God,

You sent your Son onto the earth to save sinners; To search for the lost one and bring back the stray; To search for the wandering sheep of his pasture. We thank you that we are of value and cherished.

May we always remember that you welcome all who turn to you in repentance and in time of need.

But let us remember those for whom a single coin is valued as a means of providing for those whom they love. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Questions for reflection:

Maybe *LOST things/people* are simply everyday scenarios, yet how much more is the significance when God *SEEKS* us?

Think about something that you have searched frantically for and the joy you felt when you found it. Imagine what our Churches would be like if that *JOY* was expressed more often?

Everyday Christmas

(Mal 4:2, Mt 1:23)

Light a candle,
Look into the light,
Pray.

*Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings*

As the flame rises,
Smooth, bright,
Know the comfort of Christ
In the carol speaking
Afresh.
Bringing Jesus
Into heart and prayer.

Emmanuel, God with us.
Light of the world,
Out of the stable
Into our situations.

Because of Jesus
Christmas is everyday.

The Lord is here.
Hallelujah.

By Daphne Kitching



An Advent Reflection

By John Whitehead.

How many of you can remember that famous statement by Donald Rumsfeld, the former United States Secretary of Defence. It was made at the beginning of the Gulf War.

He said, "*THERE ARE KNOWN KNOWNS - these are things we know that we know. And there are KNOWN UNKNOWNNS - that is to say, there are things we know we don't know. But there are also UNKNOWN UNKNOWNNS - these are the things we don't know we don't know.*"

Rumsfeld's statement was based on an old ARABIC proverb which goes like this:

‘HE THAT KNOWS NOT AND KNOWS NOT THAT HE KNOWS NOT - IS A FOOL.
HE THAT KNOWS NOT AND KNOWS THAT HE KNOWS NOT - IS A PUPIL – TEACH HIM.
HE THAT KNOWS AND KNOWS NOT THAT HE KNOWS IS ASLEEP - WAKE HIM.
HE THAT KNOWS AND KNOWS THAT HE KNOWS IS A TEACHER - FOLLOW HIM.

The Christian season of Advent is a time when we think of preparing for Christ's coming! Coming not only as a human baby in Bethlehem but as the Risen One who states he will return as Lord and King and judge over all.

I want to share a brief reflection on what it might mean to know how to be ready for either of those events or even both!

So thinking about those words of Donald Rumsfeld – ‘What do we know and what do we not!’

First of all, we KNOW that Jesus came.

Christians have celebrated that fact for probably, as long as there's been a church.

Granted, these days those celebrations have become less to do with the coming of the Saviour of the world and more about an excess of food and drink and hangovers ... and a reason for a holiday in winter.

But whilst there's a church and those who keep faith there will always be a Celebration of the coming of Christ.

And we do right to prepare again for that celebration of the Christ who came and who still comes wherever there are hearts and lives open to receive him - including yours and mine!

Doubtless at some time during this Christmas we will sing the words of the Carol that says,

*How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in!*

Yet even so, there are some things about our faith that we do not know. They are a mystery to Us.

Yet the words of the hymn says it all so well.

One of my mother's favourite hymns was 'I cannot tell why he whom angels worship' - she would often remark that it said all there was to say about the Christian faith. 'I cannot tell' is simply another way of saying, 'I do not know', yet, although the hymn is full of the things we don't know, it equally responds to them with the things of faith that WE DO.

CANNOT TELL soon turns to BUT THIS I KNOW!

And it's all because 'the dear Christ has entered in' - but can you relate to someone else how that happened - No - but you know that it did.

Putting it simply - it's like my old Sunday School Superintendent used to say, *"there are some things that are better felt than told!"*

And that's faith and we keep working at it and living it out.

SO JESUS CAME - AND JESUS IS COMING AGAIN.

And they're two of what I would call Donald Rumsfeld's 'KNOWN – KNOWNS'.

Christians can faithfully believe that just as surely as there was a time when God created the earth - just as surely there was a time when humans messed it all up. And just as surely as Jesus Christ walked this earth - just as surely as he lived and died and was raised to life again, SO HE WILL COME AGAIN.

But what we don't know is exactly when - it's at a time we DO NOT KNOW.

And to those who tell us they do - I suggest we give them a wide berth.

If even Jesus doesn't know - as Matthew in his gospel tells us - who does other than God?

And that's enough for me.

Sure, we don't know but we're asked to watch and wait faithfully and be ready for whenever it may be.

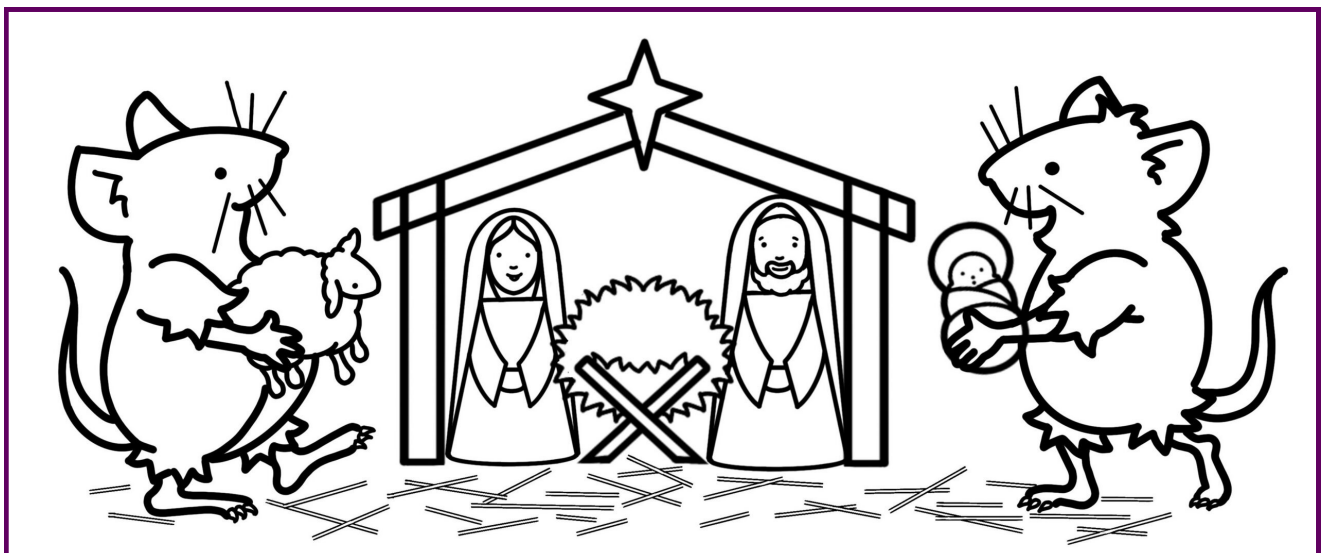
Christ's coming will put an end to things as they are.

It will be Gods 'Enough is enough!'

You see, it's the final outcome of things that determines the meaning of all that goes before it.

So this Advent are we really prepared and ready to celebrate:

THAT JESUS CAME,
THAT JESUS STILL COMES,
THAT JESUS WILL COME AGAIN
TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM.
THIS IS OUR HOPE.
AMEN.



A day - or night - in the life of a Chaplain at Kingsmill Hospital



Psalm 119:105 *"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."*

It's the middle of the night and all in our house are asleep and then like a bolt of lightning or clanging gong, my 'on-call' chaplain phone rings, it is a loud ring (as Pete can testify!). The sound wakes the whole house, but I dare not have it on a quiet ring-mode in case it doesn't wake me up. I try to answer it as quickly as I can, to turn on the lamp, to grab my pen and to try to not sound like I'm asleep. In the split second that I answer the phone I am already listening for any clues as to who is ringing me at this hour and why. Are there for instance beeps in the background? If so, I know it might be Accident & Emergency or Critical Care. If its quieter it might be a ward ringing for a patient who is end of life care and needing a chaplain.

The higher the emergency the less information I am likely to get. I quickly get dressed, pick up my packed lunch and drive to the hospital, I may not make it back home tonight, so I go prepared for the whole day. I also go with my heart in my mouth and my prayer is always that whatever faces me that God will go before me. It is often St Patricks Breastplate I find myself praying

*Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

I also take comfort from the words in Philippians 4:13 *"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."*

I know whoever has requested or agreed to the chaplaincy support will usually be in a difficult and bewildering place, my chaplain colleague always says that we rarely get called to the good stuff!

Chaplaincy has been likened to being projected onto centre stage mid show with a full audience watching, a cast surrounding you, but you've got no script. You need to work out who everyone is and what you are supposed to do in that split second. Of course we don't always get it right, but we try our best to respond to whatever need faces us and to be appropriate.

We are called to those of faith, any faith and those who would say they were not religious, the lonely, the bereaved, those in distress, those with low mood, those who have been in hospital a long time, those with no visitors and those who have received bad news. We need to journey with them all in whatever they are facing. Our team is called the Department of Spiritual and Pastoral Care, and that is what we offer, we will respond as needed, sometimes its pastoral care, sometimes spiritual care, sometimes religious care. If we need to call in other Faith leaders, we will. Everyone has hopes, ways in which they understand the world and life and in a moment their world can change, and they may need someone to be with them in those times to help make sense of what has happened and how they begin to cope and navigate it.

Responding to out of hours emergencies is only a part of what we do. Mostly we are present across the trust (Sherwood Forest Hospitals - Kingsmill Hospital, Mansfield Community Hospital & Newark Hospital) to support patients, relatives, staff and visitors to the hospital during office hours. We are a small team of just 3.5 whole time equivalent, there are 5 of us all working part time. It is a varied job. I think the whole team would say we find it a privilege to journey with those we encounter in the most difficult days of their life. I often feel we stand on holy ground. As a deacon within the Methodist Church I feel chaplaincy is a true expression of my calling 'to support the weak, bind up the broken and seek the lost.'

On top of the above we also organise events across the trust to mark world events, in August we held a peace vigil following the unrest around the country. We mark some of the religious occasions through the year of all faiths including Diwali, Eid, Christmas and Easter as we have staff, visitors and patients of all faiths and from all over the world. We are often asked to organise memorial services for members of staff who have sadly died, and we offer memorial services for the Adult Critical Care Unit and for those who have sadly experienced Baby and Child loss. We arrange funerals of those who have no next of kin and journey alongside those who have sadly experienced pregnancy loss and baby loss, working with them to arrange the funeral. We can help patients to access what they might need and don't have in hospital with them, for example we have Religious texts, Quran cubes for listening to Quran, rosary beads, bedside communion and we often give out holding hearts and holding crosses. We are called for emergency Baptisms, naming and blessings of poorly babies. We respond to requests to get married, for those who are unlikely to leave the hospital, mostly this is helping to facilitate the local Registrar coming in to take a wedding.

If you find yourself or a relative or friend in any hospital and feel a chaplaincy visit might be helpful, please simply ask the hospital staff to call the chaplain or ring in and request a visit. Here at Sherwood Forest Hospitals we respond to all requests and as mentioned we visit anyone, not just those of faith. The Faith Centres at each of our hospitals are an area of quiet space, a sanctuary and an oasis of calm, in what are very busy NHS hospital buildings.

Deacon Samantha Taylor
The Faith Centre, King's Mill Hospital
Tel - 01623 622 515 ext 3047
Email - sfh-tr.spiritualandpastoralcare@nhs.net

Smile Lines

Christmas gifts

Grandfather was talking to his granddaughter, "When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange."

The little girl clapped her hands in joy. "Brilliant! I'd love a new computer and a mobile!"

Runs over

A father gave his daughter a young puppy for Christmas. An hour later, he found her in the kitchen, looking sadly at a puddle in the centre of the floor. "Look Dad," she said, "My pup runneth over!"

Sums up Christmas

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: 'Peace on Earth'; 'Goodwill to Men'; and 'Batteries not included'.

A MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE

By Margaret Lee



“You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you.....” Isaiah ch 55 v 12a

I had thought my big hill walking days were long since past until a warm weekend this last September which saw an annual gathering of my scattered family, in Keswick in the Lake District. More intrepid members planned a walk up Barrow which stands at nearly 1500ft in the Newlands Valley and above the little village of Braithwaite. Compared to its majestic neighbours, Skiddaw and Blencathra, across the valley, it is a modest hill. Nonetheless it presented a challenge to me with my aching joints and muscles. I didn't have spare capacity for deep thinking at the time but on reflection afterwards I realised I had walked a sermon that day.

Mountains are a common location in various parts of the Bible from Moses on Mount Sinai to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and, later, the Mount of Olives. Mountain top experiences are a symbol of the best joys and wonders in the Christian journey. Indeed, I experienced a magnificent view that day, looking down to Derwentwater and across to Keswick, even seeing Bassenthwaite over to the back of us and it made the effort involved well worth it.

It **was** an effort too and needed lots of energy expending on it, much as our Christian journey does also. I think God gifts us mountain top experiences but not too often and not in a way which makes us take them for granted.

It's often assumed that going up a hill is a straightforward up. However, in the process of going up we can sometimes, for short spells of time, find ourselves walking downhill, as was my experience this day. It reminds me how a sudden doubt, anxiety or misfortune in our Christian journey can sometimes get in the way and confuse us, so we're not quite sure where we are. Then there are the false summits as there are on Barrow. Just as I was feeling the need to eat my sandwich I saw what appeared to be the top, and our goal, just a short distance ahead. (It seems an unwritten rule in hillwalking circles that one doesn't eat one's lunch until sitting on the top!) I soon discovered that I had a misplaced optimism and, in fact, the actual top was hidden behind what I was looking at and was still another half an hour's walk away with a lot more up. At this point I felt like the small child in the back of the car who continually asks: "Are we nearly there?" Our Christian life can feel like that too. We can sometimes feel we've arrived and finished what we've been called to do. However, God may have other ideas and sets another goal before us, built on what we've achieved already.

My sandwich did taste good when I finally got to eat it, looking down on that panoramic view. However, wonderful as it was, our peace was disturbed by a volley of gunfire in woods way across the valley on the other side of the lake. We had seen lots of pheasants in the fields before we started the ascent so we could guess what was happening. On this occasion the hills were alive with something other than music! Our Christian lives can never become too cosy as long as we read the newspapers or watch the TV news and realise how God's beautiful creation is being abused, and the people in it are being hurt.

Whilst thinking through what to write, I came across a card which has a picture of a mountain (somewhat higher than Barrow) and words which convey how our footsteps, climbing our own symbolic mountains, should rest in the peace and guidance that God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit offer us:

“Your strength may get you to the mountain but God's will take you to the top.”



And finally, **“Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” Ephesians 6 v 10**

A Note From Peg

Hi, my name is Peg Dawson. I've recently become a local preacher with the Borders Mission Circuit, and someone suggested I write a piece for the circuit magazine, to introduce myself.

I was born and brought up in Nottinghamshire. I'm happy to have come back home to Notts, previously I've lived in, Lincoln, where we joined Cathedral worship, and in the Norfolk Broads, where I joined an evangelical church.

I was lucky to grow up as a Christian. I've spent many happy hours in different churches. My faith is very important to me. And I felt God's call to training about 30 years ago, I trained as a Lay Minister with the Church of England. But I've always been ecumenically minded, and when we moved back home, to Notts I joined the local Baptist Church, because that was the only one I could get into with the wheelchair. I chose to train with the CofE because I felt called to train for a specialist lay ministry, mine is Witness and Evangelism, and I'm still both fascinated and involved with the journeys people make into faith, and how our spirituality develops and grows. My additional training in as a Spiritual Director, a ministry I continue to develop as it sits alongside Witness and Evangelism, both let me use my creative skills in some excitingly visual ways.

In the time of Covid, I joined in Zoom worship with Swanwick Methodist Church, and later that prompted me to ask if I could become a member, which in a roundabout fashion brought me back into preaching, and leading worship. I thought that part of my life was over, because I'm now using a wheelchair all the time, I can't stand up to lead or preach, and not all churches are comfortable with someone that cannot stand. I'm finding myself happy to find that God has some different ideas about that.

I've used the wheelchair for about 30 years. We only came back to Notts so that I could have major surgery with bone grafts, etc. After that, I was involved in a road traffic accident, where I was hit when in my wheelchair, by a bright pink mini. The repairs that were needed were all on the same leg that's caused a great amount of pain since my childhood, but God intended that accident for good, as the repairs have strengthened my leg, and it withstands more now than I ever imagined was possible. Even if it did take me and God over 3 years to work on my continuing recovery.

My faith in God likewise builds as the years pass. Our (now grown up) daughter is autistic, but what I've found is that while we've faced difficult situations, each has shown me that God knows what He is about, that God has a plan for each of us, and that whatever the pain, God means it all for good.

My hobbies when I have time, include reading, prayer, spirituality, lots of being creative with art and stitching and anything else that puts a twinkle in my eye, I love singing and belong to Amber Valley Voices choir - I'm in the altos. I also love anything with words, writing, crosswords, etc and I love walking the dog - all our dogs have learned to walk beautifully alongside me in the motorised scooter.

My favourite Bible verse is the prayer in Ephesians 3.16-20. May God root and establish us in love, so that we can grasp how wide and long and deep and high is the love of Christ, love that surpasses knowledge. To Him who can do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine, to Him be glory for ever. Amen

REGULAR EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT

ALFRETON WESLEY

- Monday - Treble Clef Ladies Choir practices. 7.30pm. The choir is always pleased to welcome new faces - or, to be correct, new voices. Just turn up.
- Tuesday - 2.00pm. Tuesday Fellowship. This was formerly the ladies' fellowship, but the menfolk were keen to join, so the meeting is now open for anyone. There's a varied programme of speakers and other activities.
- Friday - Friendship Club. Aimed mainly at the older generation, this meeting offers chair-based exercises and crafts and other activities. Also the chance to meet lots of new friends. 11.00am to 1.00pm.
- 1st Saturday of each month - Wesley Film Club. First Saturday of every month. 2.00pm. Films range from black-and-white rom-coms to up-to-the minute musicals and comedies. Admission free, but a requested £2 donation towards refreshments.
- 3rd Saturday of each month - 10.00am to 12 noon. Coffee, teas, biscuits, cakes. Bring and buy stall. Proceeds go to a wide variety of charities and worthy causes, ranging from children's hospice to the Bible Society. Come and enjoy a coffee and chat.

Also, our church is well-known for its dramatic and musical activities, staging regular plays and choir items. The pandemic has brought our popular shows to a halt, but these could be revived if enough interest is shown.

For more information about any of our church activities, ring David Hopkinson on 01773 833627

CLAY CROSS

- 2nd Monday of each month - Prayer Meeting
11.00am - 12.00pm
- 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month - 3C's Craft Club
Chat, Cake & Craft
From 2.00pm
- 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month - Soup & Sweet Club
12.00pm
- 3rd Tuesday of each month - Bible Study
2.00pm
Led by Mike Render

BIRCHWOOD

- 2nd Wednesday of each month - Coffee Morning 10.00am until 12.00 noon.

CRICH

- Monday - 9.00am - Prayer Meeting
- Friday - 9.30am - Pop Along for children - 0-3 years accompanied by an adult (term time only)
- 3rd Sunday of each month - 9.30am - Family Café Church
- 3rd Tuesday of the month - 2.00pm - Healing Prayer Service
- Alternate Wednesdays - 2.00pm - Muddle Along - Knitting and Craft
- 2nd Friday in the month - 2.00pm - Come Along - Singalong
For people coping with dementia, their carers and friends. Local musicians entertain, followed by tea, cakes and chat.

NEWTON

- Monday - Keep Fit - 7.45pm
- Thursday - Coffee & Chat 9.30am until 11.30am
Fellowship 11.30am
- 1st Saturday of each month - Coffee Morning with English Breakfasts and Hot sandwiches 10.00am until 12.00pm
- 2nd Wednesday of each month - Afternoon Teas 2.00pm until 4.00pm

SOUTH WINGFIELD ZION

- 1st Thursday of the month - 3.00pm - Tea and Cake afternoon
A warm welcome awaits you
- 2nd and 4th Tuesday - Ladies' Fellowship 2.00pm (excl Jan, Feb and Aug)
- 2nd Wednesday - Local History Group 7.30pm (Please contact Christine Walden email chrissiewalden@hotmail.co.uk)
- 3rd Tuesday - 12 noon, Friendship Lunch - Contact Dorothy 01773 830707 to book
- 3rd Wednesday - 2.00pm Prayer Meeting/Bible Study (Please contact Christine for location details email chrissiewalden@hotmail.co.uk)

SUTTON - ST JOHN'S

- 2nd Thursday of each month - Ploughman's Lunch
Served in the Hall from 12 noon - 1.30pm
Jacket potato, Ham/Cheese, Salad Bar and Homemade Sweets
All for just £7.00.
- 3rd Sunday of each month - Sunday at St John's
Tea and Songs of Praise
Starting at 4.30pm

- 4th Wednesday of each month - Monthly Praise and Fellowship Meetings
 Meet for light refreshments from 7.00pm
 Meeting commences at 7.30pm
- 22nd January 2025 - Rev. Neil Draper
 26th February 2025 - Rev Stuart Ellis
 26th March 2025 - Rev Sue Wilkins
 23th April 2025 - TBA
 28th May 2025 - Rev Andy Fyall
 25th June 2025 - Rev Helen Penfold
 There are no meetings during December, July
 and August,
 Come and share with us.

SWANWICK

- 2nd Tuesday of each month - Amber Friendship Club
 Afternoon Tea
 2.30pm to 4.30pm
 For more information telephone 01773 609942 or
 just come along.

- 4th Tuesday of each month - Luncheon Club
 12 noon to 2.00pm
 For more details please contact
 Gill on 01773 607860

Zoom Services

- Tuesday - Light Touch Bible Study - 7.30pm
 1st & 3rd Sunday - Evening Worship - 6.00pm

If you're struggling to get out and about, especially with the darker nights coming, then please feel free to join us at any of these events. Contact Mary on 07958 168295 or by email on mary.murray@w3z.co.uk

We are also streaming our morning services that can be accessed via YouTube. Just put Swanwick Methodist Church in the search and we should be there. You can either view while the service is taking place or later on. Either way, if for some reason, you can't make it to your own Church, this is a good alternative and as good as Songs of Praise! In fact maybe better because you will recognise some faces there. Watch it while enjoying a cuppa on a nice comfy settee. Pets welcome too.



**All items to Amanda Hurley
by email please to:-**

**ajhurley007@outlook.com
or by post to:-**

**Borders Mission Circuit
Clay Cross Methodist Church
High Street
Clay Cross
Chesterfield S45 9EE
Telephone No. 01246 866160**



We've got online carol-singers again!

Editor: Amanda Hurley
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PLEASE NOTE:

Ministers' usual day off

Rev Robert Hurley - Friday

Rev Simon Rose - Monday

Rev Peter Taylor - Friday

Please only contact Ministers on their day off
in the case of an emergency.

The Circuit Office is usually open
Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
9.00 am - 1.00 pm

If you intend visiting the office, please give me
a call so I can ensure I'm there.

These arrangements are subject to change to
accommodate unexpected events and
evening meetings.

Circuit Website.

Please send your posters, notices, adverts
etc. for the website to:-

ajhurley007@outlook.com

www.bordersmissioncircuit.org.uk

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