

The Methodist Church



Circuit Chat

Welcome to the January 2024 edition of
Circuit Chat!

Happy New Year

Around the world there are many different traditions associated with celebrating the new year. Some are unusual, some weird and some familiar to us.

“Auld lang Syne” which is sung all over the world, originated in Scotland and is associated with “Hogmanay” a party which begins on December 30th and ends on New year day.

There are many variations of Hogmanay celebrations throughout the country, but the most common tradition is that of “first footing,” which involves being the first to visit friends and neighbours, often with a symbolic gift in your hand.



One of the most important New Year’s Eve traditions is the redding of the house. This is essentially a deep clean around your home, from the cabinets to the front door. One spot that’s focused on is the fireplace—all old ashes are cleaned out so everyone in the house can start the year off fresh.

Many of us will be having, or already had our covenant services where members renew their Covenant commitment to God through their discipleship as a

“Methodist”. One of Charles Wesley’s Hymn for the new year and Epiphany “Come let us anew”, speaks of never standing still and continually using our God given gifts until we have completed the work we are called to do.

So however you have celebrated letting in the new year may you know that God walks from the old year into the new with you.

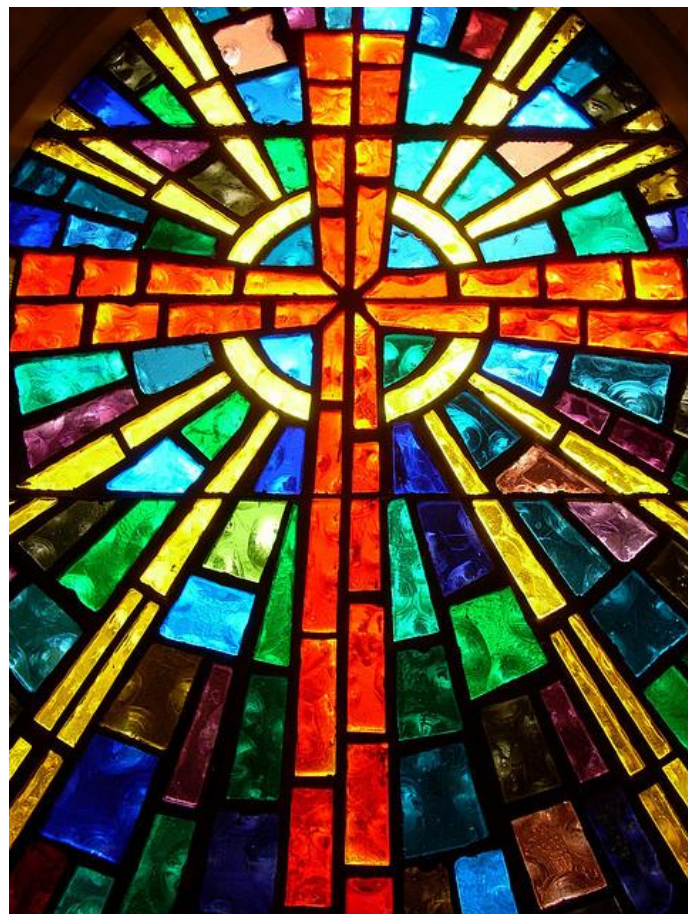


**Loving God,
As we leave another year behind,
we know you have been there to
share our tears of joy and sorrow.
Through your love, grace, and strength
we have weathered the storms of life.
Whatever the new year may bring,
let us pray for peace where there is war,
Love where there is hate,
Reconciliation and hope,
Healing and good health.
You walk from the old to the new with us.
May the Christ child in the manger not
Be packed away with the decorations
But ablaze in our hearts in 2024.
Amen**

Rev'd Angela Potheary

A covenant with God

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'



The Methodist Covenant Prayer

South Anston

Its been a busy time at South Anston beginning on the 5th December when church was decorated with trees and lights. Representatives from various organisations contributed in coming along to join our celebration of The Light of the World. There was a great camaraderie, laughter and a really joyful spirit.



On Sunday 10th we held our annual Christingle led by Judy Smith and uniformed organisations took part.

Anston Male voice choir treated us to a Christmas concert on the 16th December and we were delighted top raise £1180 for church funds.

O God we come to you

God of the displaced, who created space for all,
God of the refugee, who carved a place for all,
God of the poverty-stricken strangled by the cost
of living,
God of the marginalised and the ignored,
You are God of the moon and the sun,
the stars and all of creation.
We come to you.



When our world loses meaning, O God we come to you.

When our faith becomes institutionalised and we lose our direction, O God we come to you.



When our service through the Church is repetitive and draining, O God we come to depend on you.

When our hope is stifled by our fear of the world's wars and greed, O God we come and we trust you.

When our vision becomes

blurred by the tears of pain, anxiety, lack and loss, Lord God we come to you.

Turn our eyes to see in your ways.



When our vision becomes blurred by the tears of pain, anxiety, lack and loss, Lord God we come to you.



Open our ears to hear your understanding of life. Breathe your hopefulness into our hearts, so that our hands and feet and heads may think and act only for you, as you help us to come to you. Amen.

Property Stewards

The Methodist Church has produced a Property Stewards' Handbook! This handbook is design to be an across-the-board information resource for property stewards at a church, circuit and district level.

It includes the Top 10 Essentials of being a property steward as well as other useful information and links.

You can download a copy here. We don't recommend printing this out as the file contains a lot of links to other useful sites and will (hopefully) be updated on a regular basis

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/.../property-stewards/>

Wales Kiveton Methodist Church at the Heart of the Community



What a December we have had with our community. Unfortunately, three funerals but an amazing “celebration of people’s lives”. Jean McLoughlin, a Methodist stalwart, followed by Cliff Beech, her partner of many years and then Mavis Barr, a Church Member and wonderful lady. It was lovely to be able to share the day with Mavis’ daughter Linda and her family.

We have also had a wonderful Christingle with Philip McDonald. It was beautiful to see the children’s faces as they held their lit Christingles.

Our own Christmas Social was another amazing event when we listened to lots of Christmas music and enjoyed delicious cakes and coffee and lots of lovely chats! We also used the event to bring items to donate to the Kiveton Food Bank, something WKMC does regularly.



Our best event however was an amazing “Soup and Songs” session for Xmas in conjunction with Lost Chord. Over 60 people attended the session and we had the pleasure of hearing over 30 Wales Primary School children who came across to Church to sing carols to all present for half an hour. It was beautiful to see and hear and is something we have been trying

to pull together for many years now.

A Wales Christmas Spectacular took place at Wales Kiveton Methodist Church over three evenings from 21st to 23rd December, and the concert performances by Wales Community Theatre Players were packed out.



The candlelit ambience with multiple twinkling Christmas trees adorning the church was enhanced further with a professional lighting system and polished singing of musical numbers from hit shows such as Elf and A Christmas Carol. Also featured were songs from films like Polar Express, White Christmas and Nativity to name a few, and some traditional favourites that provided enthusiastic audience participation!



What a great sight to see Wales Kiveton Methodist Church hosting a trio of wonderful seasonal concerts with hardly a seat to spare and over 120 at each performance. Included in the performers was Tom Ingle from BBC Look North, who is now an established member of WCTP.

— For those who didn't get to see it then you missed a treat!

Paul & Martin



Faithful God,

we trust in your promise that the darkness so often contains treasures:
maybe not of our choosing, or initially inviting;
maybe lacking the shine and allure of other more obvious treasure.

May we have the wisdom to dig deep,
to slow our days, to sift our diaries,
to make the space to spot the hidden,
to explore and appreciate all that you have for us.

Help us to see life afresh through your eyes,
to appreciate its darkness and light, its dirt and beauty,
and to be so much more deeply aware
of the treasury of your overflowing love. *Amen.*



Diary of Christmas Festivities at North Anston

Our Christmas festivities started on the afternoon of Saturday 2nd December when we held our fundraiser "Christmas Allsorts". As the title suggests the afternoon was filled with games, quizzes, anagrams and logos all with a Christmas theme. Halfway through the afternoon a well-earned cuppa and cakes were served and the raffle was

drawn, then to finish we had a wonderful time of carol singing.

Snow had fallen overnight so sadly our First Sunday in Advent service had to be cancelled.



On Monday 4th, the snow disappeared as quickly as it came and so, in the afternoon we were able to hold the WI Carol Service, then on Tuesday 5th the Shoebox Drop-in had their bring and share lunch followed by a Carol Service.

Wednesday 6th was our Meet and Make. Since this group started in May some of the ladies had knitted angels so the afternoon was spent packing them ready to place them out in the community. Saturday 9th it was Messy Place and we had the second part of the celebration story.



Crafts included a nativity storyteller, a table decoration and gift tags, followed by party food and games. Sunday 10th was our Christingle Café Church with some wonderful Christingles being made. Sunday 17th in the morning it was our Action 4 Children Nativity Service and in the evening we had a United

Carol Service with South Anston. On Tuesday 19th we met for our Community Carol Sing. Starting from Church and following the same route as last year we walked then stopped to sing meeting people along the way.

About halfway round we stopped at Woodlands Care Home, where we visit monthly during the year. Invited in we sang carols to the residents.

What a joy to see them and have them join in the singing. On leaving we wished them a Happy Christmas and handed out gifts of felt angels also made by the Meet and Make ladies. On our way once more we continued to stop and sing finally making our way back to Church where we were welcomed with tea, coffee, hot chocolate, mince pies and cake. We sat in the warmth reflecting on what a wonderful evening it had been, thankful that the weather had been kind to us yet again.

On Christmas Eve we had a wonderful afternoon Crib Service with communion and children taking part. Christmas Day had arrived at last and we joined members of South Anston for a service to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus which, after all, is what all

our festivities were about.

Sue Boyles





Throughout January, All We Can supporters will be doing all the *something* they can to raise money for our transformative partnerships around the world. Whether it's running, baking, or singing, participants are able to choose their own challenge because, just like All We Can's partners, they are the experts in their own context.

Featuring games, videos, and discussion, this free online event is a chance to celebrate the start of a new All We Can year, and learn how to maximise the potential of your All We Canuary fundraising.

- If you are already an enthusiastic participant wanting some fundraising tips and practical information, we've got you covered.
- If you haven't yet taken the plunge and signed up but want to find out more, come along and get some inspiration!
- If you won't be participating in All We Canuary this time around, you are still more than welcome to join us and learn more about All We Can's campaign for the coming year.

Each year, we use stories from a particular country to demonstrate the amazing work of All We Can's partners and All We Can's particular approach to

development that is paying dividends around the world. In 2024, these stories will be from Liberia in a campaign entitled 'Charity Begins at Home: Trusting Communities to Lead.'

As part of this event, we will learn about the history of Liberia and talk to Jeremiah Burgess, the Director of All We Can's local partner – SHIFSD.

A glimpse into the life of Sue Boyles from North Anston Methodist Church



I live and attend church in North Anston where I am Treasurer and Steward. I also help with Messy Place, Meet and Make and our Social Outreach Group. We moved to North Anston in 1979 when my husband Phil (who was in the RAF at the time) was posted from Odiham to Finningley. I was born and raised in Attercliffe, Sheffield, near to where the Arena is now. From an early age I attended Sunday School, Girls Life Brigade and Youth Club until my late teens. Maths has always been my favourite subject, so I have worked in a Chartered Accountants, a bank, a Quantity Surveyors and a University and when I became a Granny I also included child care which I absolutely love and would rate it “my best job ever”.

What’s your favourite holiday destination and why?

I don’t really have a favourite holiday destination as I love visiting and exploring new destinations. One holiday that was on my bucket list and I was lucky enough to visit was the Grand Canyon National Park. I had a flight over the canyon in a helicopter which was breathtaking, a couple of nights on a ranch horse riding and spending time by the campfire – this was where I made my first s’more!

What’s your favourite music and book?

I like a wide variety of music and grew up as a fan of Cliff Richard and the Beatles. I also enjoyed singing with The Wells Singers for over 25 years with our repertoire including popular and Christian songs. I loved our visits to Beamish and singing the old hymns in the Chapel.

Tell us something about you that we don't know!

I attended Sunday school at Carbrook Central Methodist Hall and when I was 6 years old, I was chosen to be Primary Sunday School Queen. On the occasion when I was crowned, I was given a New Testament bible which was my very first bible. It has been well used and is one of my most treasured possessions.

What do you do to relax?

I love spending time with family, walking and enjoying the beautiful countryside. I also enjoy baking, crafting and going to the theatre especially if it's a musical.

What does being a Christian/going to Church mean to you?

Knowing the love of God and that he is always with me. At Church hearing and being inspired by our Ministers and local preachers and being part of our Church family, enjoying the love and fellowship we share.

What do you find the most difficult things about being a Christian now?

Being a good disciple in today's world and trying to encourage people to come and be part of our Church family.

What would be your message for the World in 10 words or less?

Always look for the good in everyone.



SHOEBOXES @ THE CROSSING

At the end of October, we packed 100 shoeboxes for the 'Link to Hope' charity which takes them to Ukraine and other countries where they are much appreciated and they are for families and not just children.



Thanks to funding which we have obtained from Foresters Financial we have, for the second year, been able to fill 100 boxes and on Saturday 28 October a team of volunteers assembled at The Crossing to pack them and wrap them and deliver them to a collection point in Worksop for onward delivery to other countries.

Thanks go to Sylvia, Iris and Kath for organising this and for the volunteers who came to help packing them.

The photos show the items ready to be packed and the helpers who enjoyed the whole process. Though it was still October the Christmas spirit was all around us that day and on the Sunday, Rev Felicity blessed the boxes, those who packed them, those who will transport them and

most especially those who will receive them.

Bob Heathcote





Date for your Diary

On Saturday the 18th May 2024 2.30pm
at The Crossing there is to be an Organ Concert in
celebration of Dave Jordan's life by

Keith Hearnshaw

(who played at Dave's funeral).

No tickets, donations to The Crossing,
light refreshments will be served.



Action for Children Post box @ The Grove

Thanks to all who supported the Christmas
card post box at The Grove and for your
generous donations which raised £113 for
our Methodist Children's Charity.
Happy New Year to you all. *Doris Maw*



Mission To Seafarers

I am delighted with the response to the special appeal in September from the
Seafarers for knitted hats. To date I have posted 91 colourful hats made by the
usual knitters from local churches and new helpers from The Grove's Thursday
Lunches diners. Isn't it just wonderful to receive such help?

The Mission to Seafarers always send a letter of grateful
thanks which, in turn, is appreciated.



**Thank you to all
who knit.**

Doris Maw



Other events at the Grove included the **Star Festival** on the 26th and 27th November.



As the work is still ongoing in church there had to be a change of plan, and everything took place in Chapelgate Hall which we were all a bit concerned about. We need not have worried as we had two busy & joyous days. Several groups came and entertained at different times, there was nonstop food from the kitchen, craft stall and the tombola and a wonderful atmosphere and we raised over £1200 raised for church. It has made us realise that sometimes change does have its benefits!



On Sunday the 10th December we had our annual Messy Church Christingle which was done as café style church. It was great to see some new faces and Julie entertained us all with her "Dogtingle" ... a naughty dog who was accused of stealing Julie's Christingle and as punishment dressed as a Christingle! However, on putting all her things away, the Christingle was found and so forgiveness was necessary!! Not only the young people were laughing!!



On the 17th December was the pop-up nativity and basically, it's a case of seeing who comes and then parts are given. This years Bible society play was Festive Fred and children and adults taking parts all in a vert light-hearted fashion! Philip (Macdonald) made an excellent Joseph and slightly amused he was asked to take part when its usually him giving out the parts!





Other events over the Christmas period included singing carols in the local museum, and joining in with the carol services in the Market Place and at Ranby Prison.

We decided to mark the turn of the year with a Watchnight Service at The Grove – meeting at 10:00 p.m. we shared a ‘faith supper’ and used some Table Talk cards to guide our conversation around topics like ‘what was your worst fashion buy of the last year?’ or ‘what book/film did you most enjoy during the last twelve months?’ Some questions were more serious and enabled us to think about the joys and regrets of 2023.

At around 11:30 p.m. we moved into a time of worship with a mixture of recorded and live music, prayers and bible study. Bea Hopkins encouraged us to look at two passages that she remembered her Mother preaching on – 2 Kings 6:1-7 and Luke 13:6-9. We were reflecting on the significance of these stories as we entered the New Year and could hear fireworks going off all around us. We then shared communion together as the first act of 2024.

We concluded with this prayer:

Let us look for Christ wherever we go.

Let us never stop seeking,
believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness
which the darkness shall not overcome.

And may the love of the Creator

the joy of the Spirit

and the peace of the Christ-child

be with you this New Year, and evermore.

Let the people say...Amen!

<https://worshipwords.co.uk/new-year-blessing-cara-heafey-uk/>

CARLTON

Christmas Craft Market and Fayre



As we no longer have enough 'fit and able' people to organise large fundraising events, we were delighted when Bev, our Brownie Guider, and a lady from the village, offered to organise and run a Christmas Craft Fayre and Market to raise money for us. They were helped by some of our other youth leaders and church friends. We welcomed 16 local craft people who brought a wide range of beautiful things, including paintings, jewellery, soaps, ornaments, cakes, cards, knitted items, and a variety of Christmas themed wreaths and decorations etc. Upstairs there were games, stalls, tombola and a raffle with prizes from local businesses. Hot drinks and mince pies were available too. There was a real buzz about the place with people saying, "it's got a real villagey feel to it", "it's like Christmas Fayres in the old days", "will you be doing it again?", and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. It was wonderful event, and our faithful doormen recorded almost 300 visitors.

Boys' Brigade

The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association year began in September with a visit to Carlton Woods. We collected leaves, cones, twigs and other items to be used to make crafts from natural materials on the second week. We also hunted for animals' homes, such as bird's nests, rabbit holes and squirrel's dreys. We also had an evening at the Carlton Youth Centre and used their equipment for activities and even had tug of war in the garden.

In October we celebrated our 40th Anniversary, as reported in the last edition of Circuit Chat. As well as the celebration on the Sunday, and the party for all current members on Tuesday 3 October, we had an Adventure Day in Hesley Wood on Saturday 30 September along with other Companies in the Sheffield Battalion. I think some of the parents had their hearts in their mouths as they watched their children wielding an axe to burst balloons!!!



A Youth Harvest Festival attended by the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and BBGA members was held on Thursday 12 October. Rev Mark Orr from St John's Parish Church gave a talk by about 'The Fruits of the Spirit', then everyone made harvest crafts. The gifts which were brought went to the Bassetlaw Food Bank, along with those brought to our Harvest Festival on the Sunday.

A Group from the BBGA and friends were treated to a guided tour of St John's Parish church on the final meeting before half term. Rev Mark Orr described many of the church's features and demonstrated the ceremonial robes used in worship. A very interesting visit.

Bonfire Night was during half term and Remembrance Sunday was coming up, so we discovered the meaning of both these events at our next meeting. We also had sparklers in the backyard. On the Friday following we joined the Ramsden Primary School Remembrance event at the village War Memorial.



In the run up to Christmas we watched the Christmas Story and made Santa and other decorations for the BBGA tree. We made special cards to go with the hyacinths, which were planted and decorated by the girls' groups for distribution to some members of the Church community.

An Open and Enrolment Evening was held at the end of November, when we welcomed Pastor Richard Hylton-Mais from the Renewed Life Community Church, which now worships in our building every Sunday evening. Pastor Richard presented Membership and Service Awards to all members. In addition, George was promoted from Anchors to Juniors.

We had a Christmas Party at the Carlton Youth Centre which included using the Bouncing Castle for the younger ones!

Finally, we joined again with the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides for a Christingle Celebration led by our minister Rev Meg Burton. After reading the story of Jesus' Christmas Party (about the grumpy innkeeper), Rev Meg explained the meaning of the Christingles as they were made by the youngsters. When they were lit, we sang, by candlelight, 'Away in a Manger', accompanied by Andrei and George on the piano.



Helen Hindmarch and Eddie Croot



Growth of the Grove project update



As 2023 ended and the New Year arrived it's been an interesting time for the team at Grove St to reflect on all that was done during 2023 but also renew our focus on the work that is still to be done.

Looking back at 2023 with our great team of contractors we have successfully completed :

- The installation of a brand-new heating system in both the Church Sanctuary and the Vestibule space. There were supplier issues and delays but the works finally came to a conclusion in September, we now have a brand new gas fired boiler system for the Sanctuary and an overhead electrical heating system in the vestibule. It was great to have this completed ahead of the colder temperatures in Autumn and Winter.
- The external frontage of the Church has been completely revamped with cleaning and repairs to the stonework, brand new front doors and roof repairs and cleaning on the church towers. The old adage 'there's always something with buildings' has definitely applied and we now have further work to do on the roof space following the work last year. Overall though it's been fantastic to see the transformation of the Church frontage.
- The redecoration of the vestibule area has been great, and it is lovely to see all works to the vestibule completed and this area is already back in use with our user groups.
- At the rear of the Church building, we have the Chapelgate entrance and this also has been completely revamped over Summer 2023. We now have a new entrance and new doors to Chapelgate Hall and the adjoining flat.
- A brand-new Audio-Visual system has successfully been installed in Chapelgate Hall to improve and enhance the existing AV system.
- Finally (and after much discussion and debate!) the new chairs (for use in the revamped Sanctuary) have arrived and are now being carefully stored until we're able to reopen the Sanctuary.

So, as you can see, we've been very busy! It's been a very interesting (and fraught and frantic at times!) period but we have been delighted at all the work that has been undertaken, the improvements that have occurred and we are excited at the new opportunities these property improvements will bring to our Church life and ministry in Retford. We give thanks to God for all that has been achieved and all that is still to come.

But we aren't done yet! Throughout the second half of 2023 we have been working with our Architect and the Connexion to finalise the reordering scheme – this will see the revamp of the internal Sanctuary space. We now have a completed project plan and works on the ground will start in early January.

This scheme will see:

- Removal of several pews at the front of the church.
- Levelling of the floor at the front of the church.
- Converting the Communion rail into a moveable structure.
- Fitting of a new carpet and pew cushions.
- Installation of a new Audio-Visual system with a bespoke sound desk made out of the old pews.
- Decorating of the Sanctuary
- Additionally, we have ongoing works with the roof to undertake further repairs.

There's a lot of work to do there but (subject to the usual caveats) our contractors have a plan to complete all these works by the end of March 2024. We hope that friends from around the Circuit will join us for a Service of Celebration on the morning of Sunday 5th May.

Plans are already underway for a whole variety of special events to relaunch this versatile space for worship and community events, Watch this space for more details!

We continue to upload photos to the Church – more details here <https://www.the-grove.org.uk/index.php/2023-restoration-pictures>

We are grateful to the grant making bodies and individual donors who have supported this work and will be arranging an event to acknowledge their generosity and thank them fully.

If you have any questions or queries about the project please don't hesitate to get in touch. In the meantime continued prayer for this phase of the works and the success of the project would be most appreciated.

Richard Dearden
Circuit Operations Manager



Presidential Reflections for Sheffield District – Gill Newton

January 2024



The month of December began with a visit to the Birmingham and Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury districts shared with the Vice President. Arriving at the Chair's manse in Wolverhampton at midday on Friday 1st December, we were treated to an hour of glassmaking, which is the Chair, Rachel Parkinson's creative hobby, before we shared lunch with her and Revd Novette Headley, Chair of the Birmingham district.

After lunch we travelled to the Black Country Living Museum where we met with several wonderful Methodist volunteers from the local Circuits who share stories of the Providence Chapel and the Gospel Car and who also facilitate lessons within the Baby Clinic, set up as it would have been in 1961. They have the opportunity to speak with thousands of visitors to the Museum each year, about the contribution that the Methodist communities made to the local area in the 19th and 20th centuries.

We returned to the manse for more glassmaking before heading to Kingswindsford Methodist Church in Dudley. There we joined the worship group "Into The Light" for their regular rehearsal for worship and enjoyed sharing in the singing as well as the conversation that followed before enjoying a wonderful meal and then travelling back to Wolverhampton in the icy conditions!

On Saturday 2nd December, we travelled to the Whixall Marina in the Shropshire and Marches Circuit where we saw the Methodist Mobile Outreach (MeMO) trailer in action. A good number of people from the circuit had gathered, together with some of those from the community who live on the boats within the marina to sing carols and make Christingles. It was good to talk with Deacon Carys Woodley, Revd Julia Skitt and her husband Andy Skitt who facilitate the travels of the MeMO trailer and to hear about the plans they have for this exciting initiative.

We enjoyed lunch in the Marina Café where we also had opportunity to speak to representatives of the Borderlands Chaplaincy and Butty Van initiatives who are doing incredible and necessary work in supporting those involved in the farming industry.

From there we went to Welsh End where the congregation had discovered a "hidden treasure" of a piece of land adjoining the church which they did not know they owned. It is now being transformed from an overgrown plot into an attractive site

which will form the base for Forest Church which the Circuit has been holding at a range of sites until now.

In the evening we went to Walsall Central Hall where the Circuit was hosting a production of Journey Of The Magi by the Springs Dance company. This event was being provided free by the district for local families and it was great to see a good audience of mixed ages taking the opportunity to attend.

On Sunday morning, I rose early for an interview on Radio York at 7.15 a.m. about the Methodist Church's encouragement to congregations to leave the second Advent Candle unlit as an act of solidarity and remembrance for all those whose lives have been impacted by the atrocities in Israel/Palestine.

Later in the morning we travelled to Berkswich, in Staffordshire where there was much more snow than in Wolverhampton. Rachel Parkinson and I were pleased to attend the Early Communion Service which was followed by a hearty cooked breakfast in the church hall. After that, it was my joy to preach at the morning service which was ably led by Revd David Bintliff and in which other congregational members participated. It was believed to be the first time that a President of the Conference had visited the Circuit!

We returned to the manse in Wolverhampton for lunch and for much of the afternoon before travelling to Kings Park, Northampton where the District Chairs were gathering for Stationing Matching Group 2 over the coming few days. A train strike meant that there was no way for me to return home on Sunday, so I had the opportunity to meet up with Leslie in Northampton for the evening and then travelled home by train from Northampton to York on Monday morning!

On Tuesday 5th, it was my joy to be invited to join with the Sheffield District staff team for the annual Christmas lunch in Sheffield City Centre. It was great to be in their company again, to catch up with some of the news from around the district and to hear about all that they so wonderfully continue to offer to the life of the district.

I then had a couple of quiet days at home in which to get some Christmas shopping done before participating in several meetings via zoom on Friday 8th and being interviewed by Radio Derby on the morning of Sunday 10th.

On Monday 11th I was due to attend a reception at the Opera House, in Covent Garden, London, hosted by Action For Children, but unfortunately, the two hour train journey from York to London took 4 ¼ hours due to overhead line problems near Peterborough, so I arrived in London well after the event had started and so simply stayed the night in the hotel and travelled home again on Tuesday morning!

On Wednesday 13th I travelled to London again, this time more successfully, and was privileged to attend a reception at Lancaster House, St James' Palace, hosted by Lord David Cameron, the recently appointed Foreign Secretary. Along with some other clergy, I did manage to introduce myself to David and shake him by the hand,

but we didn't have opportunity to engage him in conversation before he was whisked away to make his speech!

The next day, I travelled from London to Cambridge to join the District Chairs in their gathering at Jesus College and was pleased to be invited to lead the opening prayers in Jesus College Chapel at lunchtime on Thursday. Over the next 24 hours we enjoyed several sessions led by university professors and a tour of Wesley College Cambridge as well as a great Christmas meal at Gonville and Caius College and communion in the Jesus College chapel before leaving at Friday lunchtime.

From there I drove to Cornwall to spend a pre-Christmas weekend with all my Cornish family, delivering their Christmas gifts, and returned home to York on Monday 18th.

On the evening of Tuesday 19th, I was pleased to attend the annual gathering of the Yorkshire and the North East URC Moderators and Methodist District Chairs took place in York. We attended evensong together at York Minster and then enjoyed a meal together at the Dean Court Hotel.

The next day, it was my privilege to have been invited by Chaplain, Jack Key, to preach at the Carol Service at HMP Lindholme in Doncaster. I was accompanied by Michael Ivatt of the Connexional Media Team, so you may have already seen a report of this visit elsewhere! It was wonderful to be led in our carol singing by members of the Salvation Army Band and it was moving to have a congregation of prisoners, prison staff and chaplains together. Some of the prisoners formed a choir and some of them also contributed readings during the worship. I was impressed to see the depth of relationships that has been established between the chaplains and the prisoners and it was wonderful to have time to chat with many of those attending over a cup of tea and a mince pie after worship.

On 23rd and 24th December it was lovely to be free to accompany Leslie to the Nine Lessons and Carols services at Ripon Cathedral and York Minster respectively with Leslie reading one of the lessons in Ripon.

For the remainder of December, I have enjoyed a quiet, but wonderful Christmas at home in York with Leslie and Laura. I trust that you have all had a blessed Christmas and I wish you all a peaceful and hope-filled New Year.

If you want to read more about anything in which I've been involved this year so far, then why not follow this link to the blog of the President and Vice President?
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-president-and-vice-president-of-the-conference/the-blog-of-the-president-and-vice-president-of-conference/>.
Alternatively look at the Facebook page of The President and the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference for lots of photos!

Gill Newton

Advent Knit Along



I would not profess to being a proficient knitter, but I decided to do the knitting challenge sent out by Victoria Methodist Bristol for Advent 2022, Lent 2023 and then recently Advent 2023 and to follow the daily reflections and create a knitted item.

For Advent 2023 we knew we were knitting a mat for the Christmas dinner table but as usual, no picture to what it was going to look like. The challenge was set, and time set aside daily to knit and follow the daily reflections. The reflection and pattern definition Noel Latin verb to be born. When we wish someone a joyous noel, we are

following the example of the angels announcing the good news of Christ's birth. This is just what the pattern design said.... Noel.

Helen Page



If you wish to join the next project, you can check out on Facebook Victoria Methodist Bristol

Thank you

Thank you once again to everyone who has contributed to the January edition of our Circuit Chat Newsletter.

The next one will be out in March and the deadline for articles etc. is the 28th February.

Please send to di.welchman@trinitycircuit.net

Thought for each day of the month.

1st	Thank you for a New Year and new opportunities.
2nd	We pray for the ongoing situation in Jerusalem, lives lost, homes destroyed and for global support for this catastrophic conflict.
3rd	We think about our Churches and congregations at The Crossing, Carlton and S. Anston.
4th	We continue to pray for the devastation caused by the earthquake in Japan for all who have lost their lives, homes and livelihoods.
5th	This new year is a fresh canvas to paint the next chapter of our own stories.
6th	Holiness does not mean being perfect, it means being real, honest and authentic.
7th	Lord, we give thanks for our Local preachers and Worship leaders as they faithfully deliver your gospel each week.
8th	We continue to pray for the life saving work of All We Can serving the world's most marginalized communities.
9th	We give thanks for all the groups who meet in our churches, both church groups or vital bookings. May they find a sense of peace in our buildings.
10th	Thank you for all the people who came through our churches over the Christmas period, may they have seen a glimpse of God's love.
11th	Lord we remember everyone who is sick at this time in mind, body and spirit. May they know you love them and they are never alone.
12th	Remind us that often the best answer is just to listen.
13th	A smile cost nothing, make sure you keep smiling today.
14th	Lord teach us that some things have to end for better things to begin.
15th	We give thanks for people we know who have died and mourn and thank you for the marks they made on our lives.
16th	Pray and listen to the spirit blowing through our churches.
17th	We remember our Churches and congregations at Whitwell, Wales & in The Leverton's
18th	Consult Jesus about your plans for today!
19th	Lord Jesus Christ, we give you our fears today and know that we are in safe hands.
20th	Remember our Churches and congregations at Hallcroft, North Anston & Carlton.
21st	Avoid words that are full of hatred, anger or resentment and distrust. Only speak kind words.
22nd	We continue to pray for people we know in Care Homes. May their lives still feel fulfilled and we remember the staff who look after them day by day.
23rd	We remember everyone who has been affected by the floods over the past few months. Thank you for all the agencies who have worked tirelessly and continue to do so.
24th	Thank you for the congregation at North Wheatley as they adjust to worshipping in one building.
25th	May we be given wisdom to make the best choices today.
26th	We remember our Churches & congregations at The Grove & Dinnington
27th	Lord as we look out of the window may we be thankful for our neighbours.
28th	We pray for all who are sick, in hospital or undergoing treatment.
29th	Let your spirit and power breath through us afresh today.
30th	Remember to always pray. It's the most powerful tool against worry, doubt & fear.
31st	We as always, reflect on the past month giving thanks for each day & rejoicing in your never-ending faithfulness and love.



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