



Next Circuit Meeting: See details in ACTIVA8

Please note:

The next Faith and Fellowship Newsletter will be due to be delivered to Churches mid-February 2016. Please have your contributions (on A5 please and no borders and simple format) to Rob Gould: robnenevalley@yahoo.co.uk by the end of January 2016 Thank you.

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THE METHODIST CHURCH

NENE VALLEY CIRCUIT



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2015-FEBRUARY 2016

Dear Friends,

What came into existence was Life,

and the Life was Light to live by.

The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;

the darkness couldn't put it out. [John 1: 3-5, The Message]

As I sit to write this, I think back to a couple of days ago and the discussion we were having at JAM (Circuit Youth Fellowship). As it was coming up to Halloween, we looked at the history of that day, and thought about the darkness and the light in our world. There was a picture of a man with a shadow of a monster looming behind him, and we thought about the 'dark shadows' in our own lives – things we've done we're not so proud of and things which trouble us. But we also had another picture of people holding up signs so that when the light shone through them, the shadows showed the word 'love'; and with this we remembered that despite the 'dark shadows' our faith in Christ tells us that we need never be overwhelmed by the dark shadows – the light of Christ will always be stronger. Our faith is about the journey out of darkness into light. I think you'll agree that the writer John, at the beginning of his gospel, puts it more poetically than I could!

The period this newsletter will cover – December 2015 to February 2016 – includes two times in the life of the church when we think more closely about that journey from darkness into light. First Advent, and then Lent. In both Advent and Lent we might think about the dark shadows in our lives and the life of the world. It is only right that we do – a faith which turns a blind eye to the reality of so many people's lives would be a poor and shallow faith indeed.

2.

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trough is being used as a bed for the child.

It would appear that some form of mass hallucination took place in a field on a near by farm. Many visitors say they saw a bright light in the sky on the night of 24th/25th December and this was followed by some form of extra-terrestrial beings forming a choir and singing.

Northamptonshire Social Services say they will continue to monitor the situation over the holiday period and if conditions become worse they will apply for an Emergency Protection Order to remove the child into local authority care.

As soon as we have more details we will let you know.....

God works in a wonderful way - even though many could not believe the story 2000 years ago there were those who kept the Christmas Story alive and have continued to do so to this very day.

Have a happy and peaceful Christmas Season – David Hudson.

Our faith, our worship and our discipleship needs to be the sort which allows people to be honest about how they are; no need for 'brave faces' if we're not feeling like that. I'm not saying that I want everyone to be miserable and reflect only on what's going wrong; rather that our faith needs to ring true in all seasons and at all times. It's faith that is lived out authentically and honestly which will show something of Christ's light to those around us.

Christ, coming in human form, showed God's willingness to move into the dark places – oppression and violence of rulers, the poverty of those around, and life events making Jesus' family refugees. Christ came to be the Life-Light in our darkness; we are to reflect that light as well. We do this in the way we are – every day, not just Sunday mornings! It's in our interactions with other people, it's in the attitudes we express, and it's in the outreach and care of our fellowships. These things can reflect Christ's Life-Light. The very thing we celebrate at Christmas – the coming of Christ to be our light in the world – is our message of hope for our communities. Let's share the light which can overwhelm the dark shadows of this world.

Yours in Christ, Rev Liz

Private Devotions taken from Pilgrims on a Journey the Methodist Prayer

Handbook 2015-2016. A CHILD IS BORN.

DEC 20TH LK 1: 39=45 StF196/H&P97 Psalm 80
DEC 21ST LK 1: 26-38 StF187/H&P87 Psalm 89
DEC 22ND LK 1:46-56 StF60/H&P86 Psalm 1
DEC 23RD LK: 1:57-66 StF 157/H&P64 Psalm 25
DEC24TH LK 1:67-79 StF169/H&P81 Psalm 10
DEC25TH LK 2:1-20 StF195/H&P96 Psalm 110
DEC26TH ACTS 7:51-60 StF188/H&P246 Psalm 13

If you would like to contribute a prayer, a meditation or a religious themed poem to the next Faith and Fellowship newsletter please email the Editor on robnenevalley@yahoo.co.uk

Please pray for those in our churches who work in Sunday School or Junior Church or with uniformed organizations or provide clubs and activities for children and young people.

CIRCUIT SERVICES.

November ,29th 6pm at Earls Barton Circuit Advent Service.
February , 10th 7pm Ash Wednesday Service at Thrapston.

What would you think if you read this in your local paper on 27th December?

Concern has been expressed by many people in Northamptonshire over a baby born on the 25th December. The family were found living in squalid conditions in an out house at the back of a public house, owned by a well know brewery chain, in the small town of Higham Ferrers. It is understood the family moved into the pub yard when Northamptonshire Social Services stated they could not offer accommodation as the family had deliberately made themselves homeless by moving from their rented accommodation in Leicestershire.

The Local Authority claims they are monitoring the situation. Farming families from the surrounding area have been seen going to the pub yard and have brought gifts of food and clothing for the mother and child. As yet the carpenter has not needed to contact the local food bank in Rushden. Rob, one of the workers at the food bank stated they would help in any way they could if called on to do so.

Many in the small town claim the mother is in need of psychiatric help as she says the child has no earthly father and spirit voices informed her she was to have a baby just a few months ago. The boy friend, who claims he is definitely not the father of the baby, says he will stand by his girl friend and will bring up the child as his own.

The unhygienic conditions in the outhouse are the main concern for those living in the town. When not in use as a maternity unit animals are kept in the building. As no cot is available a food

Baked Alaska No, this is not Mary Berry saying - "Bake at 230 °C for 3 minutes until brown"- but about that crucial 2 C degrees rise in Global Warming above which there will be baked Alaskans, drowned Bangladeshis and man's ruination of planet earth. Yes, this "*Baked Alaska*" is a challenging presentation of the urgent need to tackle climate change and is devised by the Riding Lights Theatre Company, on behalf of the Lichfield Diocese, Christian Aid and Operation Noah. *Baked Alaska* will have been performed to thousands in 53 centres around the UK before the UN Conference on Climate Change in Paris in December. Four multi-talented members of Riding Lights Theatre gave a packed St Dionysius Church, Market Harborough, a sparkling evening to remember. With puppets, music, swift changes in costume and staging, we were asked to think: do our personal, national and international lifestyles address the issues of climate change? The writer of "*Baked Alaska*" says, "What I found is that this issue affects everything I believe about faith, politics, family, fairness and daily life, and nags me to do something, however small". Bishop Nicholas of Salisbury writes, "If we stand with the poorest, there is hope we can address the issues of climate change and speak up for love of this world which God made and loves". Methodist Conference has been challenged to withdraw any money it has invested in fossil fuels; these should be replaced by clean energy sources. Let dirty fuels join flat irons and floppy discs as history. **Grandad What were fossil fuels and flat irons?** Should we work towards the Nene Valley becoming an Eco-Circuit? For more information, see Christian Aid's *The BIG SHIFT* on www.christianaid.org.uk/climate Operation Noah on www.operationnoah.org **Riding Lights Theatre on www.ridinglights.org** John Hole.



RaisingOurKids.com

Colour in this Nativity Scene of the Holy Family with the Shepherds.

NEWS FROM WOLLASTON.

Saturday, November 21st Autumn Bazaar- usual stalls- tom bola and light lunches from 10.30am.

Friday, December 4th at 85 Hall Avenue, Rushden -Coffee and Mince Pies from 10am-12 noon and 2pm to 5pm.

Sunday, December 20th at 3pm at Wollaston Methodist Church The Circuit Choir presenting "A Journey of Promises".

News from Earls Barton

"ACTION FOR CHILDREN" Christmas Celebration Concert-Saturday, December 12th at 6.45pm. This is always a lovely occasion led by our local Folk Group "Musical Roots", and by the children of the Junior School. All proceeds are for 'Action for Children', and we would be delighted to see support from friends around the Nene Valley Circuit. Tickets are priced at £5.00 and are available from Jonathan Thompson 01604 811958 or Joy Drage 01604 811064.

Thanks

Thanks are expressed to Valerie Anslow for her time as Circuit Secretary and Worship Leaders and Local Preachers Secretary. The new Circuit Secretary replacing Valerie is Denise Moore and the new Worship Leaders and Local Preachers Secretary Nita Gould. We wish Valerie, Denise and Nita all the very best for the future.

News from Great Park Street Methodist Church

Too long absent from these pages GPS would like to share their Advent news with our circuit friends. On **Sunday 20th December** a group from GPS will be attending the annual Hillsong Christmas Concert at Wembley Arena. Hillsong brings together an exciting and thrilling mix of all things Christmas and Christian and those who went last year wanted to share this information with you to encourage others to consider going. Suitable for young and old and every age in between. For more information go to www.hillsong.org. Tickets are available online and are just £5.

If its something closer to home but still with a great sense of Christmas spirit you are after please join the GPS family and friends with Carols by Candlelight on **Tuesday 22nd December** at Park Junior School, 7.30pm, followed by coffee and mince pies.

On **Christmas Eve** at 4pm GPS will have their special service ideal for all the family. All are welcome; it will be fun, festive and probably a bit chaotic. All children (and adults!) can come dressed as their favourite nativity character if they choose. After the service hot drinks and mince pies will be served.

Christmas Day at 10am we will be celebrating with a family service at Kingsway. **PS We have been challenged and inspired by the recent circuit theme Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations and GPS is printing off several hundred leaflets and delivering to the communities we live in, we hope we hope and pray that we get many visitors to our Advent services this year. We hope that you may be able to join us too.**

News from Raunds

We have had a busy Autumn season with our Harvest Festival / All Age Worship / Junior Church Anniversary at the start of October and our goods were divided between the local food bank and White Chapel Mission.

We have also hosted a Beetle Drive Evening organised by our Brownie Leaders and money from this has been put into our "window" fund.

Work on our graveyard has been taking place by the cubs/scouts as part of one of their badges and also from the community pay back team and we are very grateful to both for their help in managing our outdoor space.

I have just got in from a VERY successful pizza and sausage lunch for our uniformed organisations and thanks go to Margaret for a wonderful service about light and dark and how we are ALL saints and to members of the church for their support of this radical hospitality event.

Coming up we continue to have our monthly lunches on the second Sunday and December's will be TICKET ONLY! (Contact Debbie for details).

We are also hosting the town's Civic Carol Service and will be supporting Whitechapel throughout 2016 – if anyone is interested in joining a team to go please contact Peter Whitney.

We would like to wish everyone in the circuit a very peaceful and Christ filled Christmas and a wonderful New Year.



The Wise Men Followed the Star

Colour in the Epiphany picture of the Journey of the Wise Men14

7.

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FIND: STABLE, STAR, JOSEPH, MARY, WISEMEN, GOLD, MYRRH, ANGELS, SHEPHERDS, BETHLEHEM, INN, JESUS. ONE OF THE GIFTS GIVEN BY THE WISEMEN IS NOT IN THE GRID ABOVE. LOOK AT MATTHEW CHAPTER 2 VERSE 11 TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS.

WONDERING

I wonder, might Joseph have fashioned a cradle employing his skills in the carpentry trade: like any new parent, awaiting the advent, creating a welcome with something home made.

I wonder, might Mary preparing little garments while fear and excitement disturbed her in turn? And did she imagine her own little stranger with one of these garments, the day he was born?

Elizabeth maybe allowed cousin Mary to hold John, her baby, soon after his birth:and did they both raise how wonderfully precious a God-given child is, a joy of our earth?

A new life expected can hold such potential, the hopes and the vision of things to attain. We pray that each Advent provokes us to wonder, to live for the coming of Love once again.

(by Lilian Butler and published in 2008. Used with permission)

A Gift for Jesus.

**If I'd brought a gift for Jesus it wouldn't be gold
Fancy giving a baby that or a child two years old.**

**If I'd brought a gift for Jesus it wouldn't be frankincense
A baby wouldn't understand it doesn't make much sense**

If I'd brought a gift for Jesus Myrrh wouldn't be the thing A baby needs a pretty toy that's what I'd tell the king.

**No, I would bring a cuddly toy or a pillow soft as snow
Or maybe I'd just bring myself to say I love him so.**

(by Lilian Butler in 2003. Used with permission)

The Editor writes: I don't know when your annual Covenant Service has been planned for. It provides each individual with the opportunity to recognize that in the service, God's readiness to enfold each individual in his generous love is emphasized. That enfolding in His generous love is not dependent upon our deserving. Each person's response, also in love, springs with penitent joy from thankful recognition of God's grace.

The Covenant Service is not just about a transaction between the individual and God, but the act of the whole faith community. If your church does not have a Covenant Service planned, please find another church in the Nene Valley Circuit, and attend that church's Covenant Service ,so you are participating as both an individual and as a member of the faith community.

The Collect:

God of grace, through the mediation of your Son, you call us into a new covenant. Help us therefore to draw near with faith and join ourselves in a perpetual covenant with you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Covenant Service can be found in the Methodist Worship Book pages 281-291.

Look at Luke Chapter 2 and see if you can put in the missing words.

Joseph took Mary, his wife to _____ with him. Mary was obviously pregnant at the time. And while they were in the village of _____, the time came for her _____ to be _____. Mary gave birth and she wrapped him in a _____ and laid him in a _____ because there was no room at the village _____. That night some _____ were in the fields outside Bethlehem guarding their _____. Suddenly, an angel appeared. The _____ were very _____. “ Don't be _____ “ said the angel, “the Saviour , the _____ has been born in a stable, lying in a _____.” Suddenly other _____ joined the angel singing “Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace to human beings on earth”. The shepherds went to Bethlehem and found the _____ with Mary and Joseph. The shepherds told everyone what they had seen.

NEWS FROM IRTHLINGBOROUGH. As mentioned in the previous newsletter our second Community Cinema event took place in August when the The Lego Movie was on offer. Our young mums once again pulled out all the stops for the children, organizing a Lego competition and also refreshments complete with edible Lego decorated cakes. Carnival Day in September was again busy as we were open for refreshments from 10am-4pm. Visitors were very keen to create a cross using text under the watchful eye of one of our members, Jamie Poole, who is a professional artist. (Check out his Facebook page). Also in September we were very pleased to welcome back Rev. Peter Green and his wife Helen to celebrate our Chapel Anniversary. Following the service, fifty plus folk enjoyed a roast turkey lunch. Many congratulations to the catering staff.

Moving on to October, we once again combined the coffee morning with our annual Cake Bake. We were also pleased to welcome again members of the Yelden church with their harvest produce. A total of £200 was given to one of the local cancer charities. The following day was our Harvest Festival, led by Brian Draper, with donations given, being split between the Irthlingborough Food Bank and the Rushden Night Shelter.

October was a very busy month as on the 14th October we held our third Community Cinema Event. This time the film was The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. Forty five people came along and enjoyed the film and a cup of tea. Following the monthly lunch on October 21st the first meeting of a new group took place. Being an off-shoot of our Little Fishes group it is aptly named Peas in a Pod..

This is a meeting for parents who have experienced multiple births. In total there were fifty- one at the first meeting, 18 adults and 33 children.

On Sunday November 1st, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of our Little Fishes group for pre school children and their parents/carers; as this is being written it hasn't happened yet. No doubt this will be a service 'with a difference'. November does promise to be a little quieter with just the monthly coffee morning and lunch. Although if it is noise and organized chaos you are looking for, please feel free to call in any Thursday morning between 9 - 11am, (term time). You will be surrounded by babies, toddlers and mums all enjoying themselves in equal measure.

Diary Dates. Saturday 5th December Christmas Coffee Morning from 10am And Gift Stall.

Sunday 6 th December	Nativity Service	10.30am
Sunday 20 th December	Carol Service	10.30am
Thursday 24 th December	Holy Communion	4pm
Sunday 17 th January '16	Covenant Service	10.30am

NB. There is not a monthly lunch in either December or January. There is not a monthly coffee morning in January. Please visit our **Facebook Page** or website at **Irthlingboroughmethodistchurch.co.uk**