



In this month's edition

Page

3	"The Christmas Story"
4	Link to Hope Shoeboxes
5	Christingle - Pizza, Praise & Mince Pies
6	Day of Refreshment
7	Christmas Lunches
8	Christmas Letter from Rachel
10	Saturday Coffee Morning
11	Action for Children
12	Project Band Christmas Concert Christian Aid
13	Bible Reflections Review
14-15	Advent & Christmas Services
16	Sunday Roast Dates for 2020 JOY Dates for 2020
17	Methodist Buzz
20	West Berks Foodbank
21	CTNA
23	"Renewal & Rebellion"
25	Christmas Friday Church
27	Information & January Newsletter Date
28	December & New Year Services

The Minister, Stewards and Officers of Newbury Methodist Church
wish you a Happy and Peaceful Christmas & New Year

Church Website Address - newburymethodistchurch.org.uk

The Christmas Story

Do you remember reading stories as a child? Perhaps you remember having them read to you by a parent or teacher? It may have been done to help you learn to read but if it was done well it may have succeeded in giving you a lifelong love of stories which you still enjoy today as I do. Story-telling and therefore story hearing has a long history in human society. We are conditioned to tell ourselves and each other stories to help make sense of the world and to try to bring some order to the confusion of events and ideas that confront us. Your life is a story which is still being told as you live it out. We are all part of the story of the community and the country in which we live. In these turbulent political times we may feel the story we are living through is rather too dramatic and is one where the end or even the next chapter is far from clear. What is the story we are writing together at the moment as a society? What are the conflicting stories political parties are telling us through which they promote their competing policies, and which they hope will move the story and drive the narrative in a particular direction?

We are approaching Advent and Christmas when we will retell the great story of God's action in sending Jesus. We must locate ourselves within this story that the Bible unfolds. It is the only story that makes sense of life and gives it meaning and purpose. It is a bigger story, and a far grander narrative than those written in a political manifesto or in all the philosophical works ever written or as the product of all the imaginings of the human mind.

Christmas comes and we must find fresh ways to tell this story, to explain it and to share it with neighbours and friends. We need to be imaginative and courageous in doing this because many just take it to be a fictional, fantasy story. It is all very nice as far as it goes - fine to tell our children but we have grown up. How can we enable adults really to hear the Christmas story, God's life-changing story, for the first time? How can we help them to find themselves and their lives within it? How can we help others to see how the story will unfold to its great climax? How can we draw people to the revelation that God's story is THE STORY, not just one of many? How can we explain we all have a place within its pages so that all our lives are subsumed into God's story, the story of life?



FAMILY & ELDERLY SHOEBOX APPEAL

Romania • Moldova • Ukraine • Bulgaria



Once again many thanks for your wonderful help and support for this excellent charity.

Along with support from Hungerford and Lambourn we filled and sent 52 Shoeboxes and also £170 to be used to support local initiatives in the designated countries.

Rosie led a beautiful shoebox dedication service when we learnt a great deal about the charity.

We will notify you of the destination of our shoeboxes in due course.

Many thanks again.

Doris



Thank you



A big thank you to everyone who supported Lydia at her Coffee Morning last Saturday (23rd Nov) when £113 was raised. This will go towards the cost of over £800 for Lydia to attend the World Choir Games being held in Flanders, Belgium in July 2020 with VOXFRESH Choir.

For those who listen to Radio Berkshire the choir was on the Andrew Peach Show at 7.45am on Wednesday 27th November. If you want to know more about The World Choir Games in 2020 full information is on the web or just ask.

David

NEWBURY METHODIST CHURCH



Pizza, Mince Pies & Praise



In Aid of The Children's Society
Saturday 7th December

Hope at *Joy*
5pm

Peace Wesley Hall *Love*

A Warm Welcome to All Awaits!



Day of Refreshment – Keep the date.

We are planning to hold a day when we can gather together for spiritual refreshment in preparation for Easter next year. This will be on Saturday March 28th 2020 from 10am to 4pm and will be held at Silchester Methodist Church about 25 minutes or so from Newbury. The day will include time to be quiet, to listen to God and to share thoughts together.

Silchester Methodist Church is on the edge of Pamber Heath and there are many easy level walks from the building. It also has a garden designed to enable quiet reflection. Whether you have been to a day like this before or not please consider coming along this time. A simple lunch will be provided as will transport if you need it. If you are interested or have any questions please have a word with one of us. There will be a sign-up sheet in due course.

Peter, Val and Muriel.



Christmas Lunches for our Groups
during December

Sunday December 8th - 12.30pm

Sunday Roast Christmas Lunch at
The British Legion

Thursday December 12th - 7.00 for 7.30pm
Mens' Fellowship Christmas dinner at The
Craven Arms, Enborne.

Tuesday December 17th - 7.00pm
JOY Christmas Meal at The Woodpecker,
Wash Water

Dear Friends

This edition of *Contact* will reach you on Advent Sunday - the beginning of a new Church Year. The four weeks of Advent are a vital part of the preparation period before we celebrate again the coming of God into the world in human form in the infant Jesus.



The candles that will be lit at the beginning of the service each week have a significance which adds to the totality of the story. This year we shall be using some of the imagery from the book of Isaiah to help us move through this season - please see the article later in the magazine.

Increasingly, we see references to 'Xmas' rather than 'Christmas' - one commentator made the following observations,

"When people use Xmas, they really mean Xhaustion, Xcuses, Xchanges, Xcesses, Xtravagances, Xasperations, Xhibitions, and worldly Xcitement."

By leaving 'Christ' in Christmas, we have a different focus for our festivities. John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin spoke of a road being prepared in the wilderness, of mountains being flattened, of valleys being raised up and of crooked roads being made straight. In some ways, the questions remain for us to consider in our preparations... Have we built a straight highway into our hearts for Christ's coming? Are we prepared internally to properly celebrate the birth of the Messiah into our world?

The Bible tells us that the unborn John recognised the significance of the visit by Mary to his mother, Elizabeth.

"... as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy."

Luke 1:44

The road to be taken by Jesus in his public ministry was set out in the song that Mary sang following that encounter - the Magnificat. It is a song that speaks of turning the world right way up, of bringing in a kingdom where the watchwords are justice and peace. It is a song that makes demands of us and all people of faith. The message of the song was revolutionary and it was echoed by the song of the angels. For once you accept that God is the Father of all people, once you accept the fact that Christ died for all people, once you accept the fact that everyone on earth is our brother and our sister, it becomes impossible to justify the oppression of one people by another. It becomes impossible to justify that some would live in absolute luxury while others go to bed each night with hunger pangs gnawing at their insides. Jesus came to turn the world right way up.

How will our preparations and celebrations reflect that truth to those with whom we share the season? What will differentiate 'Christmas' from 'Xmas' for us? May the promptings of the Holy Spirit shape and guide us in the coming weeks so that it may be said of us "they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child..."

Happy Christmas and shalom,
Peace,
Rachel.

Revd Rachel Borgars
Superintendent Minister – Kennet & Test Valley Methodist Circuit

Saturday Coffee Mornings

For as long as I can remember the price for a cup of coffee has been 50p and Tea 40p. There have been significant increases in the cost of coffee, tea and milk which has not been reflected in the cost of either a cup of coffee or tea.

With effect from January the cost of a cup of coffee or tea will be the simplified and the price will be increased to £1.

Whilst this is a significant price increase it is realistic as the object of the Saturday Coffee mornings, apart from being an enjoyable time for everyone, is to raise money for the respective cause that the coffee morning is for.

The price of any cakes etc will continue to be determined by each individual or group running that coffee morning

The rota for Mid December to March 2020 is now on display in Wesley Hall. If you would like to book one of the vacant dates please book by adding your name to the list against the appropriate the Coffee Morning date.

Thank you,

David





Action for
Children

Donate to be a Secret Santa for a vulnerable child this Christmas

There are children in the UK facing a Christmas without food, warmth or a safe place to call home.

In the past decade, life for many vulnerable children has reached breaking point. More and more families are falling into crisis and struggling to make ends meet.

That's why we're asking you to make a donation and be a Secret Santa for a vulnerable child this Christmas.

Be a Secret Santa

Did you know about Amazon Smile?

Amazon Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support a charity every time you shop, at no cost to you.

So, if you have an Amazon account, set **Action for Children** as your chosen charity before you start shopping around for Christmas presents.

Thank you for your on-going support!



Project Band

The Project Band meet in Wesley Hall on a Wednesday Night.

You are invited to their Christmas concert on December 11th.

Starting at 7.30 finishing at 9.00.

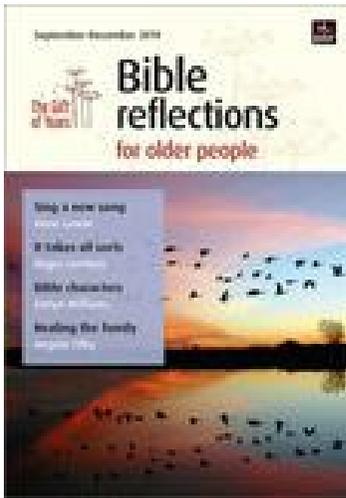
Entry is free and all are welcome.



On Thursday 19th December there will be a coffee morning from 10am to 12 noon in St Nicolas' Church Hall. I will be appealing for good quality bric-a-brac and cakes nearer the time.



The Season of Advent



“Bible Reflections for Older People” Edited by Eley McAinsh and produced by BRF

Just recently I discovered a fairly new publication from BRF entitled “Bible Reflections for Older People”. This wonderful little booklet comes out 3 times a year, in January, May and September, and is written by older people for older people. It is aimed at those who have retired or are in their later years. Each booklet has a lovely photograph on the front cover and contains 40 short Bible reflections to read whenever you feel like taking time out with God.

The reflections are designed to “bring hope, assurance and sustenance, reminding the reader of the presence and love of God”. They are grouped around various themes, each starting with a short passage from the Bible and ending with a prayer or suggestions for prayer. Each reflection contains something about some aspect of our relationship with God.

Past themes include The good neighbour, Memory’s treasure, Strength in weakness, Who am I? and Being useful. They are written by a number of different contributors, 3 of whom I can personally recommend – Jennifer Rees Larcombe, Russ Parker and Anne Townsend.

The booklets are well laid out with clear print and as there are only 40 reflections to span 4 months, you don’t need to read one every day. In the central section of each booklet, Debbie Thrower of BRF’s The Gift of Years ministry shares interviews and ideas to encourage and inspire us.

I’ve only looked at one issue, but am very impressed with it. Even if you’re not used to reading the Bible, you might find the booklets helpful, and they are a good resource for pastoral visitors. Why not give them a try? Perhaps you could buy a copy as a gift for a friend. They can be obtained from Shoemakers at £5.05 per issue or from BRF online. A sample copy should be on display in the church foyer.

Enjoy!
Chris

Services for Advent

Sunday 1st December - Advent Sunday

10.30am Morning Worship Rev Rachel Larkinson

Wednesday 4th December

12.15pm Midweek Communion Rev Peter Bennett



Saturday 7th December

5pm Pizza, Mince Pies & Praise - Christingle Service
Alan Green

Sunday 8th December - 2nd Sunday in Advent

10.30am Morning Worship Muriel Wood

Sunday 15th December - 3rd Sunday in Advent

10.30am Morning Worship Rev Peter Bennett
includes Holy Communion

Sunday 22nd December - 4th Sunday in Advent

10.30am Morning Worship Tessa Bennet

*Unto Us
a Child is Born*

A red starburst graphic.

Services for Christmas

Sunday 22nd December

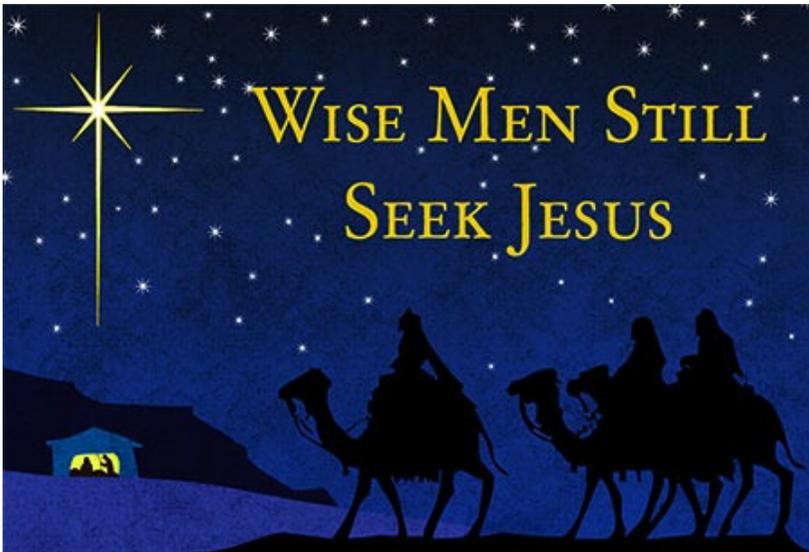
6.00pm Carol Service Rev Peter Bennett
Please join us for our Carol Service followed by Mince Pies, Coffee / Tea

Tuesday 24th December - Christmas Eve

11.15pm Midnight Communion
Rev Peter Bennett
Wonderful reflective service to welcome Christmas 2019 with Holy Communion

Wednesday 25th December - Christmas Day

10.30am Christmas Day Celebration
Rev Peter Bennett
A service of celebration for Christmas



Sunday Roast dates for 2020

January 12th,
February 9th
March 15th
May 31st
June 28th
July 26th
August 23rd
September 13th
October 11th
November 22nd
December 13th.



All are very welcome to
join us for a time at
12.30pm for good food and
fellowship at The British
Legion.

Doris

J.O.Y dates for 2020

18th February - Speaker Evening
21st April - Activity Evening
23rd June - Summer Meal
18th August - BBQ
20th October - Speaker Evening
15th December Christmas Meal

Any requests or suggestions please let me know.
All ladies and friends welcome.
Book the dates now in your diary.

Doris



WORSHIP

Celebration of the Contribution of Older People

Wesley Methodist Church, Leigh-on-Sea

In September, a special service of worship was held at Wesley Methodist Church, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex entitled a Celebration of the Contribution of Older People.

Prior to the service, older people were visited to learn more about their life stories and activities, past and present. Favourite hymns and Bible readings were included in the service.

The minister, Pastor Steve Mayo, spoke about celebrating not only what older people had contributed in the past but also what they can still contribute to church life with their wealth of experience and knowledge.

There was a large congregation for the special service and it was a joyous occasion, honouring many contributions over the years and those that are ongoing.

EVANGELISM

Chesterfield Pride

Central Methodist Church, Chesterfield

In the summer Central Methodist Church, Chesterfield attended Chesterfield Pride. The church is the first religious organisation to be represented at Chesterfield Pride, attending with the message 'God Loves Everyone'.

The team of enthusiastic volunteers, including members from other churches, gave out stickers displaying the Dignity and Worth rainbow sheep with the caption 'Loved By God'. Many of those encountered were keen to wear the stickers, even some of those who declared themselves not to be Christians.



Methodist Buzz

In addition to stickers, biscuits and information leaflets, the volunteers talked to those attending the event asking how the church can make everyone feel safe and welcome. The conversations were welcomed, with many people saying what a great thing it was for a church to be represented at the event and the importance of building bridges to make God accessible to all.

Many shared stories of their personal experience of church, with themes of both heartbreak and joy. Chesterfield Methodist will use comments from the event to help them continue their journey in becoming a more welcoming church.

LEARNING AND CARING

Trinity Learning

Trinity Church, Abingdon

Over seventy supporters of Trinity Learning gathered at Trinity Church, Abingdon in September to mark ten years of supporting well-being in local schools. Trinity Learning began in October 2009, when Trinity Church, Abingdon, appointed Rosemary Perrow as their education development officer. Her remit was to explore ways in which the church could use its time, talents and space to enhance the quality of life for those working in local schools, both students and staff.

Trinity Learning has provided small group workshops free of charge to over 3,500 students from 22 local schools. Projects have included “Putting Yourself First” INSET sessions for staff and supported work experience. Trinity Church is regularly used as an outside classroom and they have developed a partnership with the local primary school, helping it to become a Beacon School for the Peaceful Schools Movement.

During the event, Rosemary, the original and now retiring education development officer who worked so hard to establish the scheme, was presented with gifts and cards by the Revd Ian Griffiths. Rosemary is succeeded by the new education development officer, Nicola Williams..



Methodist Buzz

SERVICE

Community Space Kingswood Methodist Church, Wollaton



Wollaton community groups and residents have celebrated the opening of a new community space in Kingswood Methodist Church.

Reordering and opening up the interior of the old space has created a bright, welcoming area which greatly enhances the experience of the community. Toilets have been moved and refurbished and an accessible WC provided. The kitchen hatch has also been relocated to assist the serving of refreshments.

The work was carried out with the assistance of the community and a grant from the Methodist Church Fund for Property and the FCC Communities Foundation.

The Revd Christine Fox, minister of Kingswood Methodist Church, is delighted that the new community space is now in use. She commented: "This new light, open space at the heart of Kingswood is a brilliant resource for our current and wider community in Wollaton. We are extremely grateful to those who helped fund it as without their support we would not have been able to go ahead."





November update on current needs at West Berks Foodbank

Urgently Needed

Laundry Detergent
Garlic Puree
Dried Onion Granules
Razors

Low in Stock

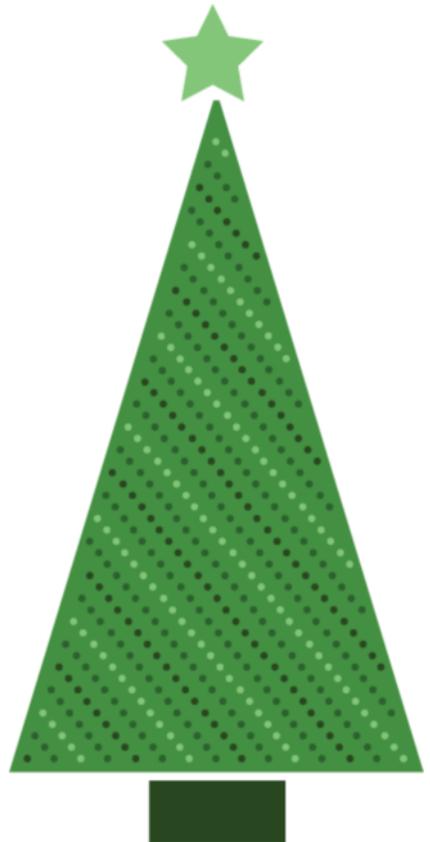
Mixed Herbs
Sunflower Oil

Well Stocked

Please, no Pasta, Beans or Soup

Thank you.

(As at 20/11/2019)





Volunteers are needed for the Community Christmas Day Lunch (25th December!) at St. Georges Church. Help is needed for preparations on the 24th and also the lunch on the 25th. This is a great opportunity to show the love of Christ by serving those, especially the elderly who would not get the opportunity to spend Christmas with their families.

Work to be done includes:

Prep hall and vegetables Christmas Eve, driving, kitchen help, entertainment, and companions on Christmas Day.

If you have a few hours to spare, for more information contact Joanna Abraham on 07828244119 or marinaoabraham@gmail.com.

Wrapping with Love

7-15th December Kennet shopping centre
CTNA will be wrapping Christmas presents over a cup of tea and biscuits. If you would like to help please contact Carolyn Bramhall by email: carolyn@h4t.org.uk





Newbury and District Organists' Association

presents a

Lunchtime Organ Recital

given by

CLIVE GRANT

(St. George's, Wash Common)

Thursday, 12th December 2019
at 1:10 pm



**At NEWBURY METHODIST
CHURCH,
56 Northbrook Street,
Newbury, RG14 1AN**



Admission Free

Retiring Collection



Ticket sales for our conference are now open!

We're really looking forward to welcoming you to Derby on 7 March 2020, to look at the big challenges we all face – rethinking economic structures and taking radical steps towards climate justice, and how we can all act – in faith, for people and for planet.

About this Event

Our environment is in crisis, inequality is growing, and yet our economic system seems fixated on endless growth, while politics is paralysed and coarsened by division.

How must our political and economic assumptions change in order to meet these challenges?

How can we model new ways of living as individuals and as churches?

How does our hope in God's future empower us to live a hopeful, abundant life on a planet with finite resources?

JPIT's 2020 national conference *Renewal and Rebellion: faith, economy and climate* invites you to join with us in looking at the big challenges our world faces, rethinking economic structures and taking radical steps towards climate justice, and how we can all act to bring lasting change – in faith, for people and for planet.

Through panel discussions, workshops, poetry, art and conversation, we hope to inspire and resource people to speak, pray and act boldly for justice and peace over the next decade.

You will need to choose a workshop to take part in at the conference. Full workshop descriptions can be found [here](#).

Keynote Speakers Include:

Ed Miliband, MP and co-host of 'Reasons to be Cheerful' podcast

Katherine Trebek, Wellbeing Economist

Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD

Anthony Reddie, Director of Oxford Centre of Religion and Culture

Ross Greer, Green Party MSP

You can find out more information about the conference, including a running order of the day and additional information about accessibility on our [website](#).



Children are being exploited by gangs involved in drug crime. Know the signs to spot.

County lines gangs use children and vulnerable people to courier drugs and money. A young person who is involved in county lines activity might exhibit some of these signs:



Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area



Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones



excessive receipt of texts or phone calls



Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association



Leaving home or care without explanation



Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries



Parental concerns



Significant decline in school performance



Significant changes in emotional well-being

If you see something that doesn't feel right, or looks suspicious, concerning a child or young person you should report it to Thames Valley Police, online or call 101, or 999 in an emergency. Alternatively, you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111



Christmas Friday Church

Friday the 13th December
at 7.30pm, but maybe altered to
Saturday 14th December in the
afternoon, please see weekly
notices nearer the date.



the connexion - Autumn 2019 issue is out!

The latest issue of the connexion magazine is out in hard copy and online. This issue includes articles by Tom Donaghue, Evangelist at Cliff College, on connecting people for God; Emma Nash, Mission and Community Engagement Officer, on leadership; and the Revd Roger Hides, Superintendent of Ceredigion Circuit, on how companionship and nourishing food is bringing people in Wales to God.



It's here! Christmas '19

YOUR MOST SUSTAINABLE
CHRISTMAS YET



SEE OUR CATALOGUE ONLINE

January 2020 Newsletter

Any information or articles for inclusion in this edition should be with me

No later than Sunday 29th December

Email information should be sent to

newsletter@newburymethodistchurch.org.uk

Contact details:

Rev Peter Bennett-

Email : minister@newburymethodistchurch.org.uk

Senior Steward

Email : steward@newburymethodistchurch.org.uk

Other Email addresses can be found on our website.



Electronic Version of the Newsletter

Newsletter is now available and distributed in electronic format **in colour**. As we currently do not print the entire magazine in colour this is a great way to enjoy the it. If you have not already told me but would like it electronically instead of in paper hard copy format please let me know and I will add you to E-Mail distribution list

On our Website

You can now read the current and previous newsletters on our website at:

www.newburymethodistchurch.org.uk/newsletter

December & New Year Services



Sunday 1st December - Advent Sunday

10.30am Morning Worship

Rev Rachel Larkinson

Wednesday 4th December

12.15pm Midweek Communion

Rev Peter Bennett

Sunday 8th December - 2nd Sunday in Advent

10.30am Morning Worship

Muriel Wood

Sunday 15th December - 3rd Sunday in Advent

10.30am Morning Worship
includes Holy Communion

Rev Peter Bennett

Sunday 22nd December - 4th Sunday in Advent

10.30am Morning Worship

Tessa Bennet

6.00pm Carol Service

Rev Peter Bennett

Tuesday 24th December - Christmas Eve

11.15pm Midnight Communion

Rev Peter Bennett

Wednesday 25th December - Christmas Day

10.30am Christmas Day Celebration

Rev Peter Bennett

Sunday 29th December

10.30am Morning Worship

Local Arrangement/
Worship Leaders

Sunday 5th January 2020 - Covenant Service

10.30am Annual Covenant Service
includes Holy Communion

Rev Peter Bennett



CHRISTMAS IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND