FREE MONTHLY

GoodNEWS MAGAZINE

From Lindfield United Reformed Church

December 2013

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given

Bible verse of the month

"Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord."





If you have a verse or article you would like to share in GoodNEWS email:







Psalm 117 NIV

Our verse this month comes from new members Brian and Jill O'Mant. See Page 14



Editorial

December means Christmas is near. Do read how our Elders letter reminds us, that so many of our Christian family will be thinking of Christmas in many different ways.

We are informed by Carol Marsh of how others spend Christmas in 'The Wider World'. There is a need to remember those who need our help as informed by our Mission Group. As I write we are seeing the devastation in the Philippines. All those people need our ongoing prayers and help. We have greetings from friends who belonged to our Lindfield URC and who now live in Australia, do share all they have to say. There are details about our Carol Service, so that we all know when we can share the joy of Christmas, singing our praises in a joyful way.

We have an update on how the Pastoral vacancy is progressing and most importantly how prayer is so essential, so that we get the result which our Lord is leading us to.

We wish everyone a time at Christmas when you can share the love of Jesus.

We send all good wishes on behalf of the Editorial Team.

God Bless,

Anne

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Contributions should be emailed to goodnews@lindfieldurc.org.uk or hard copy placed in the "GoodNEWS" pigeon hole at the rear of the church

Please include your contact details in case of query

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i, This is the December edition of the Good News magazine. This is great as it helps us to see that the event of Christmas is not only for December, but the good news is also for the coming New Year tool

As we see the shops already groaning under the weight of extra stock in their eager anticipation that we will be spending more on food and things. It can be so very easy to get caught up with the rush and expectations of a commercial Christmas. In our busyness let us not lose sight of the fact that we are celebrating the moment in history when God became man in order to show us the way back into a personal relationship with him. A relationship which if we are willing will change us into the people God intended us to be.

Maybe over Christmas as we sing and hear and think about the birth of Jesus it will create in us a longing to place ourselves in his hands and say; ' please for the rest of my life help me to grow back into the person you created me to be.' So that people may look at us and see the reflection of God's image.

Happy Christmas

Val Cookneu

Val Cookney -



we come towards the end of S another year, some will look back with heavy hearts on 2013 and for others there will be happy memories to treasure, and for some a mixture of both. Please remember especially those who have lost close relatives, for them an empty place at the Christmas Dinner Table for the first time. Also please pray for any who are facing their own difficulties or serious health problems, or who are worried about those they love.

May I say 'Thank you' to all of you within our Church Family who regularly visit and support the older friends in our congregation, and who care and reach out to all those in need. Some of you do it officially or through House Groups, but so much love is also shown quite naturally amongst us all; something which is very much appreciated and a sign of God's love in this place.

There are no 'Christmas Crackers' in the Good News this year, so if, like me, you like to send good wishes to the Church Family at Christmas without sending individual cards, how about sending a small Christmas Card to all your friends and we will make space to put it up so that everyone can see. If you feel led to do so, a donation could be given to Church funds or through the Church Christmas Post Box.

Meanwhile, I'll sign off by saying a sincere thank you for all the care and support that I receive. Whatever your circumstances, I pray that you all know God's peace at Christmas and His rich blessings in 2014. With love to you all,

Fo Tingley

The Fellowship

Please note there will be no Fellowship Meeting in December 2013.

Pat Phillips

Bereavement

We offer to Winifred Scopes and her Family our love, prayers and sincere sympathy on the death of her husband John.

Winifred and John were able to spend their Diamond Wedding Anniversary together quite recently. During the weeks of nursing John, Winifred has been very upheld by the prayers of her Church Family.

Our thoughts are very much with them all.

Fo Tingley

Thank you

Gladys Muir would like to thank all her Church family for all the kindness and help she has received this year. The loyal friends have helped her so much and she wants to send Christmas greetings and good wishes to all her Church Family.

Gladys Muir

A note of thanks

would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who knew about my accident at the Bluebell Railway. I fainted and fell between the platform and the railway carriage, which was as a result of me ignoring the symptoms of an M.E. relapse.

It was Serena who alerted my Christian family, which produced concern, shock and love, with immediate phone calls, visits, and flowers. Fiona came staggering in to my house with a very large pack of cat food not even my cat was forgotten!! All this demonstrated the care both practically and emotionally of my Church family.

With my grateful thanks, and may God Bless you all.

Jean Baxter

Thank You

Winifred Scopes would like to say a very sincere 'Thank you' to all her friends for the love, care and support that she has received during John's illness, and for the many cards and expressions of condolence that she has had since his death.

Winifred knows that it is only with God's help and strength that she has been able to cope nursing John, and she is so grateful for all the prayers that have upheld her physically and spiritually.

Fo Tingley

In Touch

We spent a very enjoyable evening in our October Meeting watching "Letters to Juliet", a gentle and easy to watch film set in Italy.

We do not meet in December; our next 'In Touch' meeting will be on 21st January and this will be to have our Christmas meal, which will be at the Church. Details will be published nearer the time.

Meanwhile we hope everyone has a very Happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing everyone at the Christmas meal.

Janet Wade

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your thoughts and time spent in prayer, after having received the letter sent out a few weeks ago, concerning the financial situation of our Church.

The outcome has been very favourable and so many of you have responded positively. This is certainly an answer to many prayers and we thank God for that.

In the Winter Edition of Good News I will explain the 'Giving', by weekly Free Will Offering Envelopes. There is a way of how you can help us with no cost to yourselves by signing up to Gift Aid. This is tax you have already paid which we can claim on your giving.

If you have any questions, please speak to me or any other member of the Finance Committee. Thank you once again and God Bless you all.

Terry Ward (Treasurer)

Around Lindfield

Tuesday 3rd December 6:15pm - 9:00pm : Village Night

Friday 6th December

7.00pm : Horticultural Society in KEH : Christmas Social.

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Music Hall to Mission Hall

On Saturday 2nd of November the good old days returned to Lindfield and we would like to thank all those who took part and those who attended and for involving themselves with the show. The Church resounded to laughter and many a Hallelujah which was truly meant.

Somebody asked how many conversions had been made? I could not answer but as we said, we must leave it to the Lord.

The event raised almost £300 that has been shared between the Hospice and the Church but more than that we proclaimed the Gospel as relevant today as in the good old days.

Peter Swann

Save Money

The fluffy red pillar box is making its annual appearance in the Concourse from Sundays 1-15th December. By using this service and donating the same amount, or slightly less than you would spend on postage, you could be saving money and helping the Worthing Churches Homeless Project. Please send your cards only to regular worshippers who live locally.

It would also be very helpful if you could sort out your cards alphabetically (with a full address) and secure them with an elastic band.

The post box will be taken out of church on Friday, 20th December for sorting and distribution will be on 22nd December.

Thank You Stuart Marsh



News from the Engine Room

On New Year's Day the church will be open from 10.00 am – 12 noon. This will be a time to assess through prayer where we are spiritually both individually and as a church.

There will be thoughts based on 2 Chronicles 7.14 to aid us in our prayers and meditation.

Help us to build up the power in our engine.

Carol Walters

Church Bookstall

t is almost a year now since we started the experiment of having a bookstall in church. It has, looking back, proved to be reasonably successful and so will continue for the next period.

Christian books are great; indeed they are vital, as they help us grow in our faith through inspiring biographies, stories or through more systematic studies of the Bible. Nothing however can compare with reading the Bible itself. It is God's word to us. Through it he teaches us more about himself, about our relationship with him and with others. It is the book which transforms our lives in a way that no other can. There is a piece of paper on the bookstall for people to put down requests for daily Bible reading notes. Please do make use of this. If you are unsure what to choose do chat with folks in the church who may be able to help you decide.

We have a wide selection of books for all ages available including many great Christmas books telling the true Christmas story. Many of the books would make great gifts for friends, families or even yourself!

Val Cookney



Special Hymn



One Lord, one Faith. The Church's one foundation Samuel John Stone, 1868

have chosen my favourite Hymn 501 (Hymns for today's Church) which give me hope that the time will come that all Churches will come together, whatever denomination, and worship our Lord and Saviour to help us to understand what it means: the Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. As children we were told ,at Sunday school, how important it is to follow Jesus and look to Him who loves each and everyone.

Mies Campling

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord; she is his new creation, by water and the word: from heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride; with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth, her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth; one holy Name she blesses, partakes one holy food, and to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder men see her sore oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed; yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, "How long?" and soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.

Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war she waits the consummation of peace for evermore; till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blessed, and the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God, the Three in one, and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won. O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.

December Mission

During December we have the opportunity of supporting the work of 'The Worthing Churches Homeless Projects'. Louise Brooks who is the Community, Trust & Statutory Fundraiser has written to us at Lindfield URC as follows:

"I have just had a look at our records and the church has donated a staggering £18,728 since 2002 when we opened our Day Centre. This is an amazing amount of money and has enabled the organisation to be there for vulnerable adults helping them to rebuild their lives and showing them that people care for them too. Your support makes such a difference to the charity and we really do appreciate it.

During 2013 the charity has experienced change, once again we have had to deal with a further reduction in government funding although thankfully this has not resulted in any reduction to our services or staff losing their jobs.

In the past 2 years we have seen a 45% increase in demand for our services and we are constantly developing our services in response to this need. One that we have found beneficial is group work where clients can give peer-to-peer support and help each other. There are various group work sessions that are delivered on a weekly basis and include:

- Voice hearers group
- Auricular acupuncture
- Music group
- Art and games group
- Anger management group
- 12 week relapse prevention course for residents of the Recovery Project.
- Weekly outreach café for clients who have moved into their own accommodation

WCHP understand the importance of enabling clients to maintain or rebuild relationships with family members and during 2013 a lounge at our Recovery Project was refurbished and has become a self- contained family room. This has meant that residents can now have family visit them in a safe environment, this is especially important for those with children.

In April we were appointed by West Sussex County Council to deliver part of the Local Assistance Network, our role is to provide support to families and individuals in the community to prevent crisis by providing assistance in the form of furniture, household items, emergency financial support for gas and electricity. Local Assistance Network replaces the crisis loan system.

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Our Mental Health Worker with support from a dedicated team of volunteers ran exploring Christianity courses for clients, which were well attended.

During the coming months the organisation will be considering how to develop its services further working in partnership with local agencies. We are determined to continue to be there for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness and for those in need.

Your support makes such a huge difference to the vulnerable members of society and we are so grateful to you all"

During the year John Holmstrom became the new CEO. In an interview he said that he looks upon the appointment as a wonderful opportunity and challenge, as a Christian, to lead an organisation with a Christian ethos that puts faith into action.

More information can be found on the missions display. If you would like to give please use the special envelopes and place your gift in the offertory at any Sunday service. Please complete a Gift Aid Slip if appropriate.

Thank you Missions Group

Christmas Lights

Dear Friends,

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in the land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

But the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

ast night as I was driving home from church (in mid November) I was struck by the number of homes that had Christmas lights strung and brilliantly lit. There were houses with Santas (more than one!) and houses with stars and bells and reindeers and a plethora of angels, all flashing like beacons in the darkness. It gives new meaning to the phrase 'your Christmases have come early this year'.



As I drove on I wondered why there are so many lights so early this year? And what kind of people live in the houses behind those lights? Did those lights illuminate the homes of both those who did and did not proclaim Jesus as the Christ-child?

I would like to believe that the lights that I saw were expressions of defiance in the face of dark times whether it be poverty at home, or earthquakes in China and flooding in the Philippines not to mention war and rumours of war that still encircle our world. I would like to believe that they are tangible statements that when all is increasingly dark there is always hope. I would like to believe that they are an attempt on the part of believers and non-believers alike to affirm that, at this Christmastime, there is goodness and tidings of great joy to be had.

We all need to defy the darkness. We all need hope. For me, the lights of Christmas provide this. Even as I get older the anticipation of the birth of the Christchild grows. I find it so exciting to prepare for Christmas by hanging lights and decorating trees and preparing gifts for those you love. I drive my husband mad! But I find it even more exciting knowing that the reason for my eagerness is that a time is coming when the whole world will have hope. It is because of the birth of the Light of the World at the first Christmas. It is because of his life, death and resurrection and his promise to come again. It is because he is present in the hearts of all those who believe in him through his Spirit that the world can have hope and change and be at peace.

The growth of food banks in our local churches working in co-operation with local authorities, the increasing numbers of people involved in Street Pastors, those supporting the homeless through night shelters are all testament to the fact that our world is hopeful. The light of the world has truly come!

May His light shine from your homes this Christmastime and in all the seasons of your days.

Christmas Blessings,

Simo

Nicola Furley-Smith Nicola is moderator of the URC Southern Synod

New members



Brian and I both became Christians whilst living in South Africa (my home country) in 1990. They say that the tougher the nut the louder it cracks-Brian's conversion was quite amazing.

We were clearly shown that we had to return to the UK and were gently led back to West Sussex in 1992.

Guided by our firm belief we were prompted to start a Domiciliary Home Care Service the following year. God blessed this business for seven amazing years. He served the sick, disabled and marginalised members of the local community. Our gifts were used time and time again and this was a remarkable period of our life and also the most rewarding. We were devastated to discover that Brian had a rare eye disorder and was eventually registered partially blind by Moorefield's Eye Hospital. This rocked our world upside down and took a while for us to discover God's plan for our lives. We prayed that he would direct our path and after a few wrong turns we were blessed with a lovely home in Lindfield.

We pray that as new Members we will be able to serve you well and get to know you all in time.

Thank you for making us feel so very welcome and all praise to our wonderful caring God who has always been there for us. Psalm 117.

Jill and Brian O'Mant



When I am an old woman I shall wear purple

With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.

And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves

And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.

- I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
- And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells

And run my stick along the public railings

And make up for the sobriety of my youth.

I shall go out in my slippers in the rain

And pick flowers in other people's gardens And learn to spit.

and realities spite

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?

So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple

P. L. Wallet

Sunday Services

The **9.30am** service is an opportunity for all age groups to join in a relaxed informal time. Most weeks, children leave after 20 minutes for their own activities (including crèche). Lighthouse (Junior church) is for children and young people up to age 14. Holy Communion (1st Sunday)

Coffee is served between the morning services.

The **11:15am** service is a more traditional service than at 9:30. Holy Communion (4th Sunday) Where there is a fifth Sunday in the month, normally a joint service is held at 10:30am

At **6:30pm** it is sometimes a celebration, sometimes a quieter ministry time and sometimes an open communion service or something quite different!

Holy Communion (2nd Sunday)

Healing services as announced

Personal prayer is available after every service. We can also offer personal prayer ministry at home or in hospital.

We do not take up an offering during the services, those wishing to give are invited to place a gift in one of the bowls at the doors before or after the service.

Recordings of services can be borrowed free from the church.

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Prayer Meetings

Mon	9.30am	An Hour of Prayer
Wed	9.45am	Short Service of Intercession
Thur	8.00pm	Church Prayer Evening (As announced)
Sat	8.45am	Three Churches Prayer Meeting. Venue rotates between the three churches

Prayer requests and brief statements of praise for answered prayer can be put in the red book on the concourse table.

Regular Activities

Mon	10.00am	Art Group
	6.00pm	Brigade - Anchor Boys (5-7 years)
	6.30pm	Boys' Brigade - Junior Section
	7.30pm	Boys' Brigade – Company Section (11+ years)
Tue	10.00am	Stepping Stones (Parents and toddlers - term time)
	7.45pm	In Touch (4th Tues) for women of all ages
Wed	2.30pm	The Fellowship (4th Wed) for men and women of all ages
Thur	10.00am	Pop–In Coffee and a chat
	8.00pm	Church Meeting
Fri	7.15pm	Zest (Years 6–9) games, craft, tuck and a bible mes- sage (term time)
Sun	7.30pm	Youth Fellowship

The church is open most mornings from 10.00am to 12.30pm

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December Church diary

				I	
1st Sunday	9:30am 11:15am 6:30pm	Communion Morning worship Stuart Dew Evening Worship Mike Gardiner	15th Sunday	7:00am 9:30am 11:15am 4:00pm	Gift FM Launches Family Worship* Morning worship Darryl Sinclair Praise Party Josh Thomas
3rd Tuesday	6:00pm	Village Festival Night	17th Tuesday	7:30pm	The Tricks and Laughs Show*
5th Thursday		House Groups	19th Thursday	7:30pm	Christmas Concert*
7th Saturday	8:45am	Three Churches Prayer Meeting The Tiger- All Saints	21st Saturday	8:45am	Three Churches Prayer Meeting The Tiger- All Saints
8th Sunday	11:15am	Family Worship Morning worship Jeremy Heath Communion David Walters	22nd Sunday	9:30am 11:15am 6:30pm	Family Worship Communion John Fernandez Lessons and Carols by Candlelight*
11th Wednesda	•	Lunch Fellowship	24th Tuesday	4:00pm	Crib Service
13th Friday	12:30pm	Lunch Fellowship	25th Wednesday	10:00am	Family Christmas Worship* David Walters
14th Saturday	8:45am	Three Churches Prayer Meeting The Tiger- All Saints	28th Saturday	8:45am	Three Churches Prayer Meeting The Tiger- All Saints
	live on 87.	rked * are available 9FM - the Gift and ww.thegiftfm.com	29th Sunday	10:30am	Joint Worship John Goodway





ello! In this months magazine we look forward to this years Gift FM project and we also explore the hidden meaning behind one of our nations favourite confectionary items.

Jelly Babies hidden secrets!

A nyone who was around at our 9.30am Remembrance Day service, will have heard me talk all about the hidden secrets which can be found on one of our nations favourite sweets. For those of you who were not around I did not want you to miss out, so here we go....

After World War One, what we today know as jelly babies started being manufactured, back at this time however they were known as Peace Babies. Each peace baby was a different colour which represented a nation who had fought in the war.

As we all know, it wasn't long until World War Two began and during this time sugar was a luxury and as such was rationed, the production of peace babies therefore ended.

After the war was over, a man who loved Jesus took over production of the newly named Jelly Babies. He decided he wanted to teach people all about Jesus and his love for us and if you wipe the icing sugar away from each Jelly Baby you will see a little symbol. The black jelly baby has a heart on it, this represents the sin in our lives and how if we live in sin we live in darkness. The green jelly baby is crying, this represents God's sadness that people did not know the way to Heaven. The red jelly baby has a B on it, this represents Blood, Jesus' blood as Christ died to show us how much he loves us.

The pink jelly baby is smaller then the rest and is a baby, this represents being reborn in Christ, when we become a Christian we become children of God.

The yellow jelly baby has a necklace, this represents the riches of heaven with yellow being close to gold, we inherit the riches of Heaven when we choose to follow Jesus.

And finally

The orange jelly baby is wearing a bum bag, this tells us we need to be prepared for the time when Jesus comes again.

So that's the hidden meaning behind Jelly Babies, I guarantee you will never be able to look at a jelly baby in the same way again!



Gift FM



From December 15th - 25th the hugely exciting and successful Gift FM will be returning to the airwaves around Lindfield and Haywards Heath on 87.9FM and online via our website www.thegiftfm.com

Once again we will be unwrapping the true message of Christmas with a mix of festive favourite music, special events and special Christmas messages from local church leaders. We will be working in conjunction with local schools and churches to ensure a truly jam packed ten days of festive joy.

There will be a number of special events being put on during the ten days including services, carols, comedy and music. All of these will be open to the public to attend so come along to be a part of this brilliant project, look out for more details of these events over the coming weeks. Once again we will be giving our young people the opportunity to get involved in this unique project and application packs are available from me and other youth leaders in the village. We are also opening this up wider this year and if anyone slightly older wants to get involved we would love to hear from you, have a chat with Dan McQuillin or myself, there are plenty of ways you can be involved.

Tune in for a fun, festive and most importantly the true Christian message this Christmas and look out for postcards which will be available to hand to family and friends so we can encourage people to hear the true message this Christmas time, that our Lord and saviour came to earth as a child to save us from our sins.

Josh Thomas

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Family Fun Comedy and Illusion

Lindfield United Reformed Church will be hosting an evening of comedy and illusion from two of Britain's premier Christian comedians. Steve Legg and Tony Vino will be performing their last date of 2013 on their acclaimed Tricks 'N' Laughs tour on Tuesday 17th December at 7.30pm.

The evening promises to provide fun for all the family, and regardless of age, you are guaranteed a lot of laughter from the men BBC described as performing "life affirming comedy". The show will be broadcast live on The Gift FM 87.9 FM or online at www. thegiftfm.com as a part of 10 days of Christmas magic. So come and get yourself on the radio!

Tickets are priced at £4 with discounts available for families. For more details or to book your seat please contact Josh Thomas on jthomas@lindfieldurc.org.uk or on 07443438970. Tickets can also be booked on The Gift FM website.





Our Annual Enrolment Service was held in mid October; David Walters gave a lively address to accompany the lively worship led by Josh, our Youth Pastor. Most Boys were present, as were a good number of parents and Church members. This was judged one of the best Enrolments of recent years.

A team of Juniors - Brandon, Marden, Matthias, and Joshua - competed in the Battalion Potted Sports held at Burgess Hill Methodist Church. Although they did not manage to win, they had a good afternoon of fun and games. The photo shows our lads participating in this event.

A week or so earlier we held a "Bring a Friend" evening for juniors, taking the form of an invitation to a football tournament, followed by burgers. two more boys joined as a result. The tournament itself was won by "Manchester United" - well that is what they called themselves! (really Brandon, Joshua and Ben). We hope to build up our numbers by similar events for the other sections.

Geoffrey Cocksedge



Vacancy Update

How are we doing?

Well since Charles retired we have been working through the initial stages of the process for calling a minister.

Revd. Robert Bushby, the minister at Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill URCs has been appointed as our Interim Moderator. He has attended some Church Meetings and met with the Elders at their monthly meetings. At the Elders half day away together, we waited on the Lord for a clear vision for the future. We looked at the information that we needed to bring together for our Pastorate Profile. This will be circulated to any minister, who indicates an interest in our Pastorate. This Pastorate Profile will be finalised and brought to the January Church Meeting.

The Mission Criteria and other information about the church were submitted to the Synod Scoping Team and the Interim Moderator and Elders met with this team at the end of October. They questioned us on some of the details and we had a good open discussion. They report to the Synod Deployment Group in December and we should be informed of the scoping (percentage of a Minister) we have been allocated. The Synod Moderator, Revd. Nicola Furley-Smith, will be meeting with the Elders at the end of January to discuss our expectations. Following this meeting she will take our name to the Moderators monthly meeting where vacancies are discussed. It is at this point that a summary of our Pastorate profile is placed on the URC website and all ministers in the wider URC are notified of our vacant pastorate. We are however currently ensuring that our current position is becoming known in certain areas within the denomination.

And Rycroft......well we are still looking for a tenant for a short term let. A number of people have looked at the property, some have shown further interest but that is a far as we have got at present.

The life of Lindfield United Reformed Church continues and the Elders are looking at ways we can ensure we do not 'Stand still' during the vacancy. Church Members should continue to contact their Elder if they have any questions or concerns. Those within the fellowship, who are not Church Members, can contact any of the Elders. House Groups are also avenues for pastoral caring and the Pastoral Group will, as always, be available.

If you have a Pastoral matter or any other concern PLEASE SPEAK UP

Of course the whole process needs to be surrounded in prayer by the whole church. We are not just appointing someone to be chairman of our club or society we are about seeking God's will for the future of our Church in Lindfield.

David Walters

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Positive Christmas

The importance of Christmas cannot be underestimated, but all too often the real meaning is lost in today's material world and Christmas can become a time of family stress: "will the turkey turn out alright?", "will they like the presents we've chosen for them?", "will the needles stay on the tree?"!

As a counter to such stresses we thought it would be good to share a few positive stories from Christmas. One of the most positive was that we heard from Youssef Ourahmane over the weekend of 16th-17th November, when he visited Lindfield URC with his wife, Hie Tee, and one of his daughters, Lydia. Youssef and Hie Tee are the founders and leaders of the House of Hope, an evangelical ministry supported by Operation Mobilization International. The Algerian church is the fastest growing church movement in the Muslim World. In celebrating the birth of Christ there can be few better ways to do so than by being reborn into the Christian faith on Christmas Day itself. This is what happened on December 25th 2012, when 100 Algerians, all former Muslims, were baptised in the Tizi Ouzou Church, the largest church in Algeria and the 4th largest in the Arab World, with more than 1200 members. Perhaps that is something we can aim for at Lindfield URC some Christmas in the future!

Kristen McNultey of the MAD (Making A Difference, www.madradioshow.net) Christian Radio Show, broadcast from

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Canada, wrote of Christmas:

"Christmas comes once a year and is by far the busiest time of year for most people. This isn't something new. When Jesus was born, Christmas meant a census and all of the people in Israel were travelling to their ancestor's land in order to be accounted for, Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. It was so busy there in Bethlehem that I have often wondered if anyone besides the Shepherds even noticed the birth of Jesus - I often wonder the same thing about people today. Today people are so busy buying gifts, baking, and doing other so-called Christmas related activities, how many of us actually have the true Christmas spirit in our hearts. Christmas is not a time to count how many aifts are under the tree, but to account for why we celebrate Christmas. Everything Jesus did, from being born on earth to dying for our sins was done out of love. When we show love to others and to Christ, we are remembering why Jesus came and what Christmas is all about "

Many positive stories from Christmas come from taking the opportunity to help others by showing them the sort of love that Kristen wrote about. A regular way we have done that at Lindfield URC is through donating Christmas shoe-boxes for children. As it says on the Samaritan's Purse website, since 1990, more than 100 million boys and girls in over 130 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple shoe box gifts from Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan's Purse works with local churches and ministry partners

to deliver the gifts and share the lifechanging Good News of Jesus Christ. The shoeboxes are given to children based on need, regardless of their background or religious beliefs - an unconditional gift of love. There are many opportunities to donate over Christmas, with time as well as money. As Timebank, who help match volunteers to charities, point out, many charities are desperate for people to lend a helping hand over the festive season. In doing so you'll know that you have made a difference – made a child's eyes light up as they unwrap a present, given hope to a homeless person in a hostel or created a space that children can play in. Another website coordinating Christmas volunteers, Do-it, offers opportunities ranging from collecting presents for families going through difficult times in Newcastle, to coordinating carol singing in Norwich, in aid of Christian Aid.

Of course we can volunteer and donate all year round, not just at Christmas. On their website, Tearfund has placed a very inspirational video "thank you" to all their supporters over the past year, for their generosity, prayers and actions. As an example they relate the story of Raju, Sarita and their two children in Nepal who have found hope and a life blessed with knowing the fullness of God. Through the support of the local church and Tearfund Partners in Nepal, this family now has a home for Christmas. Watch the video and be inspired this Christmas and throughout 2014 by the positive impact that Christ's coming to the world has made and continues to make to countless lives!

Martin Hall



Raju, Sarita and their two children

Down Under

Christmas Greetings from Mullaloo, W. Australia

ear Friends

Let was good to see so many of you when we visited in January and joined with you in worship on two Sundays. It was just lovely to be back in a place that has meant so much to us and to see so many old friends.

Now here we are seven weeks away from Christmas and we have been asked to write a short article for the Good News magazine.

We attend quite a large Baptist church - about 600 folks and 20 nationalities attending over 3 services. We meet in the auditorium of the college that the church built 20 years ago and now has about 1300 pupils - a Christian school which Ben and Alex attend. Bill and I have the task of spotting newcomers to church, making contact and welcoming them. We also go to a homegroup. The church supports a number of missions including Samaritans purse OCC programme with a number of ladies sewing and knitting items to fill the shoeboxes, Care Fund to support struggling families and mental health programmes, a family working with the indigenous people in north WA, a hospice in India and we hope to be involved in a Building Bridges programme through Baptist world aid in Cambodia. A lady works in China in

the university, teaching English as a foreign language and someone else works as a street chaplain. The college supports World Vision and have raised over \$40,000 two years running mainly through an annual fast by the students. So there is quite a variety of support.

Christmas is very hot with temperatures usually in the high 30's c, (cold and frosty it is not!) We attend a seniors Christmas lunch (being on the receiving end has come as a bit of a shock!) A number of churches have Carols in the Park in December. We go to one that we can walk too. About 4,000 people were there last year - some go early and take a picnic and make a real evening of it. It is a great opportunity to share the real meaning of Christmas. Last year the evening ended with a firework display, which was lovely. The fire trucks and crews were in attendance so it was great that they hear the Good News too!

In Perth city a Christmas pageant is held every year with the Christmas story faithfully told. Again thousands of people attend which is fantastic. We have never heard "O Holy Night" sung so passionately, we were almost moved to tears. There are live chickens, sheep and the Kings arrive on camels. There are about 1 million camels in all of Australia so it isn't difficult to find 3 for the pageant!



On Christmas day we go to church and then to the beach with family for a short while and a quick dip or paddle. It's too hotto staylong, not to mention the sharks which have been around recently!! Santa Claus hats take the place of sun hats and it's a popular day to fly flags from home countries. Lunch is sometimes a traditional roast sometimes BBQ but usually with all the family together and in the afternoon a swim in the pool and relaxing in the shade. All very Australian!! Temperatures are usually between 35 and 40c. A tad warm!!

It still seems strange celebrating Christmas in the sun and Iris particularly remembers Village night – lots of mince pies, carols and fun, and one year the sheep running down Lindfield high street from the tableau set up in Rycroft garage!!

Whether it's hot or cold, wherever we live it's wonderful to be able to celebrate the birth of Jesus. May you all know the joy of the presence of God in your lives and His blessing in the year to come. Happy Christmas to you all.

Iris and Bill, Sam, Tim, Ben and Alex, Chris, Melanie, Toby and Ollie

Hilary Greatwood

eather telephoned Hilary's daughter Bobby to get news of Hilary. This is what she has to tell us all.

Although Hilary is still getting around and happy in her surroundings, she is suffering from dementia problems and can get quickly confused. Hilary still loves to talk about her life in Lindfield but no longer remembers all the local names and sadly Bobby feels that Hilary's health, at the wonderful age of 93, is deteriorating quite quickly. I am sure we all have very fond memories of Hilary and we still miss her very bright and outgoing personality.

We send our love and good wishes to Hilary from all her Lindfield Church Family.

Heather Swann

Wider World

Christmas customs from around the world

Lebanon

n Lebanon 35% of the population follow a form of Christianity called Maronite Catholic. These Christians build manger scenes in their homes called a Nativity Crib, which is more popular than a Christmas tree. It is based round a cave, rather than a stable and often decorated with sprouted seeds which have been grown by the children on damp cottonwool during the weeks leading up to Christmas. This scene then becomes a focal point for prayer for the people in the house. These Christians go to a midnight Mass service on Christmas Eve.

It is traditional to take sugared almonds when visiting friends and relatives and these are often eaten with cups of strong black coffee.



Greenland

n the villages of the Polar Inuits many families put up an illuminated star in their windows and they also appear in many public buildings. As it is almost completely dark for most of the day, these stars are not only symbolic but they help to bring some light! Christmas trees are very popular, but they all have to be imported from Denmark as Greenland is within the Arctic Circle where no trees grow. Villages often put a large lighted tree on a nearby hill for everyone to see and is usually erected at the start of Advent.

On Christmas Eve church services are held and the people often attend them in traditional costume with the men wearing white anoraks which are kept for special occasions. Families then visit each other and everyone in a village gets a small gift, while the children go from house to house singing traditional songs.

Some rather unusual food is eaten over the festive period and it certainly wouldn't be to our taste! 'Mattak' is whale skin with a strip of blubber inside. It is supposed to taste like fresh coconut, but it is very tough! Other Christmas foods consist of barbecued caribou, fish, either raw or cooked and popular desserts are berries and apples with crispy toppings. Danish pastries are also very popular.

GoodNEWS MAGAZINE

It is traditional on Christmas night for the men to look after the women, serving their food and coffee and stirring the meal for them.

"Juullimi Ukiortaassamilu Pilluarit!"

Bethlehem

n Bethlehem the town is ablaze with flags and decorations every Christmas. On Christmas Eve natives and visitors alike crowd the Church's doorwavs and even stand on the roof to watch for the dramatic annual procession.. Galloping horsemen and police mounted on Arabian horses lead the parade. They are followed by a solitary horseman carrying a cross and sitting astride a coal-black steed, then come the churchmen and government officials. The procession solemnly enters the doors and places an ancient effigy of the Holy Child in the church. Deep winding stairs lead down to a grotto where visitors find a silver star marking the site of the birth of Jesus.

Christian homes in Bethlehem are marked by a cross painted over the door and each house displays a homemade manger scene. A star is set up on a pole in the village square.

Wherever you are, have a Very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year!

Carol Marsh

Carol Concert

Traditional Carol Concert on Thursday 19th December at 7-30pm.

The Copthorne Silver Band (Musical Director Brian Cox) will again be joining our singers and guest artists for the event.

Admission is free and there will be a retiring collection for the St Peter and St James Hospice and other good causes.

Our singers would like some help for this concert and if anybody could come and join us it would be appreciated. No audition required. Rehearsals are on Friday nights at 8-00pm..

If P&O and a council can get a choir for Gareth Malone, we should have no problem as we sing for the Lord!"

Peter Swann 01444 450335



Mission Support 2013

We would like to thank all those who have given so generously throughout 2013. Together with the 10% tithe on our general income we will have distributed around £20,000 in gifts.



Organisations that have benefited from our giving include:

- Release International supporting the persecuted church
- Savannah Education Trust developing schools in Ghana
- Cascaid working in Romania
- Operation Mobilisation Moldova & Algeria, UK and Ship Ministry
- Feba Broadcasting the Good News
- Wycliffe Bible Translators & Bible Society
- Prison Fellowship Support of their work in Lewes Prison
- Tearfund providing relief & development worldwide
 - Samuel Muhumuza Ssanje Modern Primary School Uganda
 - Salthworkz & Worthing Churches Homeless Projects – locally

In addition we are continuing to sponsor the education of over 40 children in Uganda

Together with over 100 shoeboxes to be distributed through 'Operation Christmas Child' our giving continues to have an impact on many lives both in the United Kingdom and globally

Thank you for your support

The Missions Group



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Phonebook

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Hall Booking Secreta	rv		Arranging	Distributing		
Carol Walters	01444 457938	Decer 1st	mber Janet Wade	Janet Sanderson		
In Touch		8th	Christmas Decoratio	ons		
Sue Waller	01444 455047	15th	<i>u</i>			
		22nd	Ш			
Lunch Fellowship Wednesday:		29th	и			
Sue Waller	01444 455047	Janua	arv			
Friday:		5th				
Anne Parker	01444 473519	12th	Mies Campling	Sue Tester		
Destavel Cream		19th	Lesley Sparks	Jan Foreman		
Pastoral Group Fiona Tingley	01444 483419	26th	Mary Comber	Barbara Shepherd		

the Joy the Hope the Story the Meaning the Gift fm 87.9

Unwrap the Gift December 15th~25th 2013

This Christmas Lindfield will have its very own radio station. Broadcasting **on 87.9 fm** and online at **www.thegiftfm.com** the 3 Churches will be celebrating the joy, sharing the hope, telling the story and unwrapping the meaning of Christmas

Tune in for the sound track to your Christmas celebrations including live events, concerts, carols and services from Lindfield Schools & Churches

EtheGiftfm^{87.9} unwrap the meaning of Christmas