

GoodNEWS MAGAZINE

FREE MONTHLY

From Lindfield United Reformed Church

2017/2018

WINTER EDITION

Christmas

Services/Concerts

Blessings

Reflections

Knitvity

New Year

Resolutions

Mission News



Bible verse of the month

“There is a way
which seemeth right
unto a man, but the
end thereof are the
ways of death,”

Proverbs 14:12 KJV



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Our verse this month comes
from Mike Wells.
For more information see
page 9

If you have a verse or article
you would like to share in
GoodNEWS email:
goodnews@lindfieldurc.org.uk



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Editorial

“The good news of Jesus Christ – the Message! – begins here”

The Message, Mark 1:1

Once again Christmas is rapidly approaching, with the good news of Jesus' birth: and, once again, we are blessed to have so many in the congregation willing to tell their stories of good news. This being a winter double edition we have managed to squeeze in an extra four pages and we hope there is something inside for everyone.

As well as Keith's letter we have one from the Synod Moderator, Nicola. Following his November article on the formation of the URC, Michael examines progress of the ecumenical movement and concludes with some very positive observations. Hopefully you will see Jacquie and team's Knitvity characters in the High Street during December – an innovative and inspirational way of bringing the Christmas story to the village. Rosieta describes Christmas in the Moravian Church, mentioning their Lovefeasts or Agapes, thereby linking to David's report of our own LURC Agape meal. Mike gives us some personal reflections on what his favourite Christmas Bible passage means to him - Word, Wonder, Worship - while Danny encourages us to re-examine a familiar Bible story in the Youth pages.

Carol reminds us of the ongoing situation in Yemen, where the joy of Christmas must seem distant. While it is easy to despair and feel we can do nothing, we include stories to show how you have brought joy to the disadvantaged, through the Shoebox and Angel Tree appeals as well as wider mission work. As we enter 2018, Ruth provides some realistic advice for our New Year's resolutions and we say thank you and farewell to Robert Bushby.

May we take this opportunity to wish you all a truly blessed Christmas from the Good News team, Anne, Ruth, Dan, Stuart, Carol, David and ourselves, and pray that 2018 will provide many opportunities to experience and share the GOOD NEWS of Jesus Christ.

God bless,

Helen and Martin

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Sunday January 14th 2018



Dear friends

As I went out the house the other day something caught my daughter's eye, and I was asked "When will they be on?" Attracting her attention was a cable where every few inches there was a coloured light bulb. The village's Christmas lights had been strung along the High Street's trees, but with it barely mid-November they weren't on. My response was that they would be lit up by village night, but I didn't know the actual date and time. Perhaps as you read this the street will be illuminated, but at the moment we are waiting expectantly for the lights to shine.

The prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah, but did not say when it would happen. Isaiah proclaimed, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you." (Isaiah 60 (NIVUK)) This gave people hope for the future but also left them wondering "when?" As years passed the waiting of God's people continued, finally the anointed one came to Earth; he was not a mighty warrior to save the people in a bloody revolution, nor was he someone born into the riches and wealth of a palace. Jesus was a small baby, wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger.

As an adult, Jesus, the Christ, spoke of turning the other cheek rather than violent struggle, and when it came time to enter the city of Jerusalem he had his friends bring him a donkey. He was not what the people had expected, but he made their hopes come alive. Then through his death on the cross the price of our sin was paid, we can be forgiven. At the resurrection the victory over the oppressor of humanity was won. The darkness of death does not prevail, we can know new life, a life that goes beyond the grave.

Jesus ascended to heaven, but our Lord will come again. We do not know when that will be, and so we wait. At his second coming the glory will be overwhelming, sorrow and sickness will end, and light will ever shine. May we, this advent, be preparing not just for Christmas, but ready our hearts for his return.

May you know the light of his love this Christmas

Your Minister

Keith

Family News

Thanks!

Today, 5th November, was the first occasion in which I have been able to attend morning service, after having been out of circulation for the past year due to spinal osteoporosis. During this time of absence I have been aware that I have been in the prayers and thoughts of many of my friends in the LURC and I would like to thank all of them for their consideration of me.

On entering the concourse this morning, I was quite taken by surprise by the sincere good wishes and ready smiles of "Welcome Back" from old friends.

To all of you who have had me in your thoughts over the past year, and for the Happy Welcome Back I received this morning, I am most grateful - and all being well I hope to get along to morning services more often, since the osteoporosis is gradually getting better, and I am able to walk to church.

Thanks again

Mac Turner

You raise me up

I am sure many of you will know this song "You Raise Me Up". It has been such a help to me over the past few months when I have been rather low in spirits due to illness and the loss of loved ones.

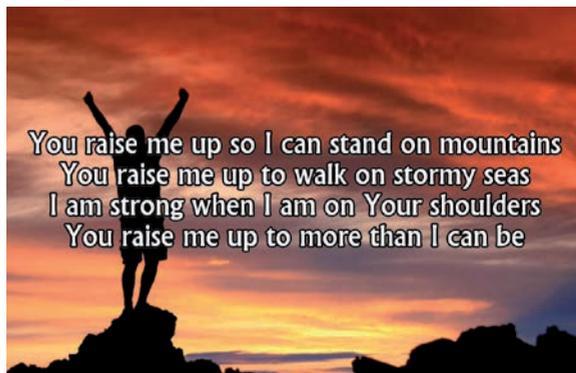
Not only has God blessed me in lifting my spirits, but so many dear, kind people have been thoughtful, sending me cards, phoning and visiting me. I have also had lovely flowers.

Thank you all so much, your kind and loving thoughts have certainly "raised me up" and I thank God that I am a member of such a loving and caring church.

As my hands are still not very good I shall not be sending Christmas cards but I do wish you a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our dear Lord.

Winifred Scopes

* Written by "Secret Garden", Brendan Graham and Rolf Løvland



Family News

The Fellowship

At our October meeting Betty Billins told us of her childhood in Walstead, on a farm, and in Lindfield. This was most interesting, particularly as some members' families were part of the story.

There will be no meeting in December. Our speaker for the first meeting in 2018 will be our own Minister, Keith Morrison. This will be on Wednesday 24th January, at 2:30 pm. All who come will be made most welcome.

Pat Phillips

In Touch

We met on the 24th October to see the film "A Street Cat Named Bob", a true story about how a stray cat "adopted" a recovering addict and helped to turn his life around. It was a touching story with a happy ending and we are grateful yet again to Richard for helping us to set up the DVD player.

We will not be meeting in December so please keep a look out for details about our meeting in January when we hope to meet in the Red Lion for our "Christmas" meal. As usual everyone will be very welcome to join us.

Janet Wade

Christmas Postbox

Just a final reminder, further to last month's magazine, that the Church Postal Service will be operating again this Christmas. The Postbox will be on the Concourse from Sunday 3rd December until Friday 15th. Cards will be ready to collect on Sundays 17th and 24th December.

Postbox Team

Lunch Fellowship

Our Christmas Lunch will be on Wednesday 6th December at the usual cost of £4 and I do encourage as many of you as possible to join us for what is a lovely occasion. Do let me know if you have not signed up so I can make sure there is enough turkey for you all!!

We will begin after Christmas on Wednesday 3rd January. Thank you.

Sue Waller

Thank You!

Many thanks for all of your prayers, encouragement and food given so generously by such a wonderful and loving Church family.

Following a successful operation I am feeling much better.

Zoe McQuillin

Traditional Carol Concert

7:30pm Thursday

21st December 2017

It's that time of year again when I go to the loft and find the Christmas box. No it's not decorations but an accumulation of words, music and songs relating to Christmas.

This year our singers will be joined by the Haywards Heath singers, led by Sue Weller, for a choir of thirty voices and the band will be the Perdido Players 'Carol' Band.

While admission is free, once again any donations received will be for St. Peter and St James Hospice after church expenses. The performers are giving their services free as a donation to the work of the Hospice.

Refreshments will be served following the concert which will end at 9:00pm

We expect a good crowd which will need to be marshalled so I am seeking members to help with stewarding, likewise refreshments but more of this later.

Posters will be available and a note will be placed in the Middy.

The opening music sets the tone of the evening, "Rejoice, Rejoice". Let's do so!

For more information please contact **Peter Swann**



Knitvity this Christmas



The Knitvity comes to Lindfield United Reformed Church this December. On Christmas Festival Night all the children queuing to see Father Christmas will wander through a grotto of Christmas trees and ten scenes telling the nativity story with knitted nativity characters.

Enthusiastic folk have been knitting for months to produce these original and captivating displays.

There will also be a challenge for the children to find all the knitted nativity

characters which, thanks to the Lindfield shopkeepers, are hidden in Lindfield High Street shop windows. Quiz forms will be available in the URC hall from 6:30 pm on Tuesday 5th December. For children to gain a prize, completed quiz forms will need to be returned by 9:00 pm.

On the Christmas Festival Night a traditional nativity scene will again be located in the Ryecroft garage. Donations towards Worthing Churches Homeless Projects will be gratefully received as we remember those today who have no place to stay and who may be cold and hungry this Christmas.

Bible Verse

“*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*”

Proverbs 14 v 12 (King James Version)

At the end of WWII, after we gained access to our beaches again, I attended a Crusader summer camp by the sea.

One afternoon we were taken to the beach and were given the task of illustrating a text in the sand. Our tent leader suggested this text. We discussed how we would do this and then proceeded to build a grand highway with illustrations of the ways of the world, for example, some coins to represent love of money etc. At the end of this highway we dug a deep pit, which as the tide rose became filled with water. We deviated a bit from the text, since our highway had a straight and narrow side road paved with shells and ending in a cross which we made from drift wood.

You can now understand how this text, which I have remembered for over 70 years, has led me to choose it for this month's Bible verse.

Mike Wells

The Knitivity characters will also be on view following or during various Christmas carol concerts and services leading up to Christmas. If any church groups wish to borrow a Knitivity set to use, there will be a spare set located in Danny's room.

We hope these characters give you a smile this Christmas and help you to focus on the nativity story.

Jacque Odell



Good News!

It's all around us



Recently I was served some chips in a restaurant and they came in a mock newspaper which, after eating a few tasty specimens, displayed the words "Good News"! It reminded me that Good News really is all around us if we look carefully. Who would have expected Good News to be found in a dirty, smelly stable some 2,000 years ago – but there it was in the shape of a young helpless babe, the Son of God. As the angel told the shepherds at that time, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people" (Luke 2:10). And then some 30 years later, Jesus himself said, "I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent" (Luke 4:43).

Of course, there is no significant good news in a bag of chips unless you are hungry, and non-Christians would consign the empty wrapper to the nearest bin without a second thought. But, when those words are seen by Christians in even the most obscure context, they can remind us of the hugely significant Good News of Christ.

If you come across similar reminders in your daily lives then please take a photo' as I did and send it to the LURC Good News editorial team so that we can share it with others.

Martin Hall

Mission Update



As reported last month, the focus for Mission in November/December is the Worthing Churches Homeless Projects (WCHP), a local charity with projects in Worthing, Littlehampton, Horsham and the surrounding areas. Their Chief Executive, John Holmstrom, addressed the LURC congregation on Sunday 19th November.

The WCHP was founded in October 1990 by a group of local Christians, led by the Lord, who were concerned at the number of people sleeping rough in Worthing. The Charity has continued to grow in strength, funding and volunteer support.

WCHP provide community hubs for people who are rough-sleeping or insecurely housed, helping them to access food, clothing and to provide support through specialist staff and external agencies. Every night, there are over 60 men and women sleeping in their hostels, which provide accommodation together with different levels of support. For example, the WCHP Recovery Project in Worthing helps those struggling with substance misuse and they also aim to empower homeless and insecurely housed individuals to achieve sustainable independent living. Thanks to the support of the communities of West Sussex, WCHP are able to work with over 1,000 people every year and aim to meet what is, sadly, a growing need for their services.



Homelessness means:-

- No heat
- No running water
- No electricity or Insulation
- No home
- No safe-haven

A passage from Mother Teresa's book 'The Joy In Loving':

"Homelessness is not only of bricks, but homelessness comes from that terrible loneliness that the unwanted, the unloved know along their way. Are we there? Do we know them? Do we see them? We can never know how much good a simple smile can do."

In seventy years of selfless service to the poorest and most needy people, Mother Teresa represented nothing less than a life devoted to the will of God and the expression of his love in action.

Sally and Simon Ross-Clark

Bringing Joy

to disadvantaged children at Christmas

For many years now the folk at Lindfield United Reformed Church have been bringing joy to disadvantaged children at Christmas both through the Samaritan's Purse annual shoe-box appeal and through support of Crawley Prison Fellowship, whose mission to prisoners includes the Christmas Angel Tree Programme.



Shoe Box Appeal

Thanks to all who filled shoeboxes this year. We collected around 75 boxes, and delivered these to our local collection point. Any who made their donations on line will have been able to include a bar code in their box, which enables Samaritan's Purse to track the destination of the box and report, in due course, to the sender by email. We will try to let the church know where some boxes have ended up, probably early in 2018.



Angel Tree Christmas 2017

Prison Fellowship's (PF) Angel Tree programme provides Christmas presents to children who have a parent in prison. In 2017 Crawley PF expect to provide and deliver some 200 presents to the children of men in both our local prison, HMP Lewes and also HMP Huntercombe in Oxfordshire, an establishment holding male foreign national offenders. Where there is no local group able to undertake the Angel Tree programme, PF (England and Wales) try to use the capability of non-local groups to provide this - hence Crawley PF and HMP Huntercombe.

Since September, prisoners have been making their requests for presents for their children. The type of present is nominated by the father and purchased and delivered as if from, and with a card written by, him. In addition to the joy of the receiving children, the programme has a great effect in maintaining family links. The majority of the presents will be provided, at a very substantial price discount, by a department store in East Grinstead.

The big "wrapping day" is Saturday 9th December when volunteers, including, usually, the young people of the Jubilee Community Centre in East Grinstead, will wrap the presents.



Angel Tree

First there is the matching of the present to the right child and doing the Christmas paper wrapping of the present, an appropriate Christian Book, and the father's card. Then a smaller, security-cleared group will do the brown paper wrapping and the addition of the address.

Most presents will be delivered by Royal Mail, which has a good record of being able to find the recipients. Given the chaotic lives of many prisoners' families though, there is always the sad sight of returned, undeliverable presents. Prior to the "wrapping day" presents destined for children overseas will be separately wrapped and despatched and, in the period right up to Christmas the Chaplaincy at Lewes will attempt to relieve the distress caused by the removal of a father from his family, at this time, to get Angel Tree presents to the children.

After Christmas, prisoners, and mothers, will be fulsome in their thanks and with reports of the joy brought to their children by the programme.

Missions Group

New Years Resolutions

Will you be making a New Year's resolution this year? People often look towards the New Year with thoughts of what they would like to change in their life. A New Year's resolution is 'a firm decision made on New Year's Eve to do or refrain from doing something over the course of the coming year'.

The most common resolutions made each year are to exercise more and to lose weight. Throughout January, shops are full of work-out clothes and exercise gear trying to cash in on people's fresh start. I have heard stories of gyms and leisure centres hiring in more exercise machines to deal with the influx of new members. However they rent them on a short contract because they predict people will only last a month of their new regime before giving up.

Although it is important to keep our body healthy, it is good to think about the spiritual side of things too. It can be done at any time, but the start of a New Year is a good opportunity to look at our relationship with God. As followers of Jesus we should be striving to grow closer to God, but for many of us, life gets in the way.

I am by no means qualified to be giving advice on New Year's resolutions, but my recent thoughts have led to three things that I will be trying out this year:

Choose something you struggle with

If you want to strengthen your relationship with God, what is holding you back? For example, it can be easy to spend time praying for others, but more difficult to hand over your own worries to God.

Have a plan

If you are serious about improving, having a plan will help you to achieve. For example, if you are trying to study the Bible more, rather than putting it off and ending up disappointed that you never have time, choose a specific time to read or listen to the Bible and try to stick to it. Don't be disheartened if you miss a day, you can carry on tomorrow.

Don't quit!

Encourage each other. If you start off well but things go downhill, don't worry! This isn't your only opportunity, you can pick it up again. Sharing with others what you hope to improve on can be daunting. It can feel like admitting your failures, but the person you tell might be struggling with the exact same thing, and you could end up helping each other.

So if you choose to make a New Year's resolution, or even a mid-February resolution, I hope you outlast the January gym goers!

Ruth Goodall

On the feast of Stephen

26th December

Everyone knows that it was on the feast of Stephen that 'good king Wenceslas looked on'. After all, it's in a Christmas carol - but why? There's nothing about Christmas in it: a splendid young page who rustled up some flesh, wine and logs, an old man out in the snow ('deep and crisp and even') and a kindly monarch. But Christmas?

The clue is in 'the feast of Stephen', which falls on 26th December, or 'Boxing Day', as we know it. That, too, has nothing to do with Christmas, beyond the fact that in the past people put a contribution in tradesmen's boxes as a kind of Christmas present for their services during the year.

The Stephen whose feast day falls on the day after Christmas was the first Christian martyr. (You can read his story in the book of Acts). He was a member of the church in Jerusalem in its very early days, and found himself involved with six others in administering the allocation of food to those in need. The apostles, who were the leaders of the church, felt that it wasn't appropriate for them to abandon preaching and 'serve tables', so they selected these seven to do the job for them. Stephen, however, quickly revealed hidden gifts as an eloquent spokesman for the Christian cause.

The Temple authorities, who had already had trouble with the apostles, were soon alerted to this new and hitherto unknown evangelist.

They decided to make an example of him, thus firing a warning shot, as it were, across the bows of the apostles themselves. So they arrested Stephen and accused him of speaking against the two central elements of their religion - the 'holy place' (the Temple) and 'the customs Moses handed down to us' (the Law). It's always dangerous to criticise a monument or a custom!

Given the right to defend himself, Stephen instead launched into an eloquent and at times biting account of Jewish history, culminating in the accusation that they had committed the worst possible sin by killing the Messiah. Inflamed by his words, his hearers abandoned any pretence of legal impartiality, rushing towards him and dragging him out of the city to a place where they began to stone him to death. Stephen, the rank and file Christian, died under a hail of rocks for claiming that Mary's Son was the promised Messiah.

That is most probably the reason why the first martyr is honoured on the day after we celebrate the birth of the Saviour. It's a bit like the myrrh in the gifts of the Wise Men - a reminder, as we celebrate, that the bitter shadow of a cross is never far away from this story.

Parish Pump

Farewell

to the Reverend Robert Bushby

Robert Bushby is currently the Minister at Haywards Heath URC and Burgess Hill URC. He is also the Co-leader of the Central Sussex United Area. Robert, his wife Kerry and son Phil will be moving to Sleaford in Lincolnshire in the New Year, where Robert will start a new phase in his ministry as the Minister at Riverside Church. From the church's website it looks as though Robert is in for a very exciting time at this lively, active church. He will also be very busy as, in addition to this pastorate, Robert will be the Mission Development Officer for the East Midland Synod of the URC and the Mission Enabler for Lincolnshire. I am not sure what he is going to do in his spare time!

Robert has been at Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath since 2006, when he moved here from Hayes Free Church and Beckenham URC. It is not the first time he has served in the area as he started his ministry in the old Sussex East District at Robertson Street URC in Hastings.

We have had a close relationship with Robert and Kerry over the period, with a group of us meeting together with them at Burgess Hill once a month on a Sunday evening for a time of informal praise and worship.

Robert was also Interim Moderator at LURC during our recent vacancy. Some of you will also know Kerry, who works as a practice nurse at the Lindfield Medical Centre.

Their Farewell Service is at Burgess Hill URC on 7th January at 6:30 pm and Robert will be inducted at Riverside Church on 3rd February.

We wish them every blessing in their future ministry.

David Walters



Sunday Services

The **10.00am** 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.

Coffee is served after the morning service.

Holy Communion (4th Sunday)

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

Holy Communion (2nd Sunday)

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.

Prayer Meetings

| | | |
|------|--------|---|
| Mon | 9:30am | An Hour of Prayer |
| Thur | 8:00pm | Church Prayer Evening 'Engine Room' (4th Thursday) |
| Sat | 8:45am | Three Churches Prayer Meeting. <small>Venue rotates between the three churches</small> |

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

Regular Activities

| | | |
|-----|---------|---|
| Mon | 10:00am | Art Group |
| | 6:00pm | Boys' Brigade - Anchor Boys <small>(5-7 years)</small> |
| | 6:30pm | Boys' Brigade - Junior Section <small>(8-11 years)</small> |
| | 7:30pm | Boys' Brigade - Company Section <small>(11+ years)</small> |

| | | |
|-----|---------|--|
| Tue | 10:00am | Stepping Stones <small>(Parents and toddlers - term time)</small> |
| | 7:45pm | In Touch <small>(4th Tues) for women of all ages</small> |

| | | |
|-----|--------|--|
| Wed | 2:30pm | The Fellowship <small>(4th Wed) for men and women of all ages</small> |
|-----|--------|--|

| | | |
|------|--------|---|
| Thur | 8:00pm | Church Meeting <small>(2nd Thursday, Alternate Months)</small> |
|------|--------|---|

| | | |
|-----|--------|--|
| Fri | 5:00pm | Rooted |
| | 7:30pm | Pulse <small>(Years 6-9) games, craft, tuck and a bible message (term time)</small> |

| | | |
|-----|--------|-------------|
| Sun | 7:30pm | 18-25 Group |
|-----|--------|-------------|

The church is open on Tuesday (Concourse) 10.:00am - Noon.

December Church Diary

2nd
Saturday 8:45am Three Churches
Prayer Meeting,
All Saints

3rd
Sunday

10:00am Family Service
Rev Keith Morrison
6:30pm Something
Different
Rev Keith Morrison

5th
Tuesday

6:15pm Village Night

6th
Wednesday

12:30pm Christmas Lunch
Fellowship

9th
Saturday

8:45am Three Churches
Prayer Meeting,
All Saints

10th
Sunday

10:00am Family Worship
Rev Keith Morrison
6:30pm Something
Different
(Communion)
Rev Keith Morrison

16th
Saturday

8:45am Three Churches
Prayer Meeting,
All Saints
7:30pm InChoir Concert

17th
Sunday

10:00am Family Worship
with Nativity
Rev Keith Morrison
6:30pm Carols by
Candlelight

21st
Thursday

7:30pm Traditional
Christmas Concert

24th
Sunday

10:00am Communion
Rev Keith Morrison
4:00pm Crib Service for all

25th
Monday

10:00am Christmas Day
Celebration
Rev Keith Morrison

30th
Saturday

8:45am Three Churches
Prayer Meeting,
All Saints

January 2018

1st
Monday

10:00am Church Open for
- noon Prayer

3rd
Wednesday 12:30pm Lunch Fellowship

21st
Sunday

10:00am Family Worship
Rev Keith Morrison
6:30pm Something
Different
Rev Keith Morrison

6th
Saturday 8:45am Three Churches
Prayer Meeting, URC

7th
Sunday

10:00am Family Service
Rev Keith Morrison
6:30pm Something
Different
Rev Keith Morrison

23rd
Tuesday 6:30pm In Touch Meal
Watch for details

24th
Wednesday 2:30pm The Fellowship
7:45pm Elders' Meeting

11th
Thursday 8:00pm Church Meeting

25th
Thursday 8:00pm Church Prayer
Meeting

13th
Saturday 8:45am Three Churches
Prayer Meeting, URC

27th
Saturday 8:45am Three Churches
Prayer Meeting, URC

14th
Sunday

10:00am Family Worship
Rev Keith Morrison
6:30pm Something
Different
(Communion)
Rev Keith Morrison

28th
Sunday

10:00am Communion
Rev Keith Morrison
6:30pm Something
Different
Rev Keith Morrison

18th
Thursday House Group Week

20th
Saturday 8:45am Three Churches
Prayer Meeting, URC

For more information as well as last
minute changes and additions to
the diary check the church website :
www.lindfieldurc.org.uk

YOUTH



Hello!

On the 10th – 12th November, I attended the National Youth Ministry Weekend in Birmingham. Although it was its launch weekend, I joined 600 other youth workers from across the UK, and even some who had travelled from as far as India to be there!

Over the weekend, there were 5 main sessions with seminars slotted in between them – so much in fact, that if you chose to, you could be in a seminar or meeting from 8 am through to 9 pm! (I can't say that I did this!).

There were many different speakers from a variety of backgrounds talking about almost every area of youth ministry you could think of, but I would like to tell you about a talk led by Miriam Swaffield, who shared her thoughts on the feeding of the five thousand, found in Mark 6.

We all know this story well; it is likely that we could all re-tell the story when asked. Five thousand men (plus women and children) were listening to Jesus, when it started to get late. The disciples began to get worried about so many people needing to eat, and so suggested that Jesus send them home.

Instead, Jesus gets everyone to sit down in groups, and the disciples find a boy with fish and bread. Jesus gave thanks to God for the bread, and everyone ate as much as they needed – and there were even leftovers!

However, something has been missed out of this re-telling of the story. Something that I hadn't noticed until Miriam pointed it out. When the disciples suggest that Jesus sends the crowd home, in verse 37, Jesus replies "You yourselves give them something to eat".

Jesus hands the problem back to the disciples and says, "You feed them". The disciples, who still don't fully understand who Jesus is, try to throw money at the problem: "Do you want us to spend 200 silver coins in order to feed them?"

But Jesus asks them to go and see how much bread there is. They return to let Jesus know that they have got five loaves and two fish. They then hand the food to Jesus. (This is good, and we can go far with this teaching: give what little you have to Jesus, and he will multiply it).

However, let's see what Jesus does. Jesus took the loaves, thanked God, broke them, and then he handed the bread straight back to the disciples! Once again, he is saying, "You feed them".

We can learn so much from this story. I often find myself a lot like the disciples. My expectations of Jesus are way too small. I forget that He can do wonders beyond anything I can think of!

When I then come to the point of giving things over to Jesus, I often want to leave them there. But I need to be aware that Jesus regularly looks back at me and says, "You feed them". The work of Jesus is put into our hands. He will help us, he will be with us, and through him we can do immeasurably more – but we need to remember that he chooses to use us in his work. The miracles happen when we go out and do the work of Christ, with him by our side.

So, this Christmas and into the New Year, may we, as Lindfield United Reformed Church, be excited and challenged by the fact that Jesus has put us in the mission field called Lindfield, and says to us, "You feed them".

Danny

PAGES

Who am I?

Revealed

Many congratulations to those of you who guessed that the subject of November's "Who am I" was Dawn Walters. No, I wouldn't have guessed from her accent that she was a Geordie either! However, Dawn moved with her parents from the North-East to the South-West at the age of around 18 months, which explains her gentle, western accent.

Dawn met her husband-to-be Richard in 1993, while both were studying at Lancaster University. They were married at Little Stoke Baptist Church in April 1998 after which Dawn settled in Lindfield.

Since then they have, together, provided a wonderful service to our Church, especially to Lighthouse which Dawn has co-ordinated for around 10 years. You will often see them in the Church in various disguises – Men in Black, Jigsaw pieces, circus characters - as they prepare to take the monthly Jigsaw sessions.

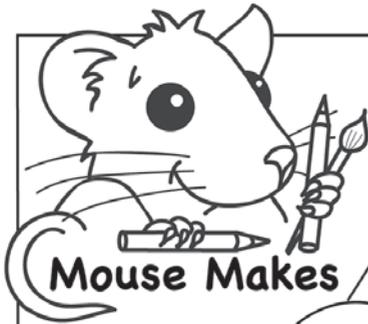
Dawn enjoys the Wednesday evening badminton sessions in the LURC main hall (with its special rules for those frequent shuttles that hit the roof!) and would encourage anyone who wants to 'have a go' to do precisely that!

However, Dawn's main form of relaxation is through reading and music, both singing and playing her flute in church and with The Perdido Players. Having a husband who is also a musician is a bonus because they can encourage each other – as those of you who come along to a Sunday evening service can witness.

If you failed to guess the identity of any of the "Who am I" stars of 2017, then look out for a new batch in 2018!

Martin Hall





Mouse Makes

Colour in one star
a day as you
countdown to
Christmas



"I bring you **good news** that
will bring great **joy** to all
people. The **Saviour** has
been born today! ...

Glory to God in the
highest heaven, and
peace on earth to
those with whom
God is pleased".

*from Luke 2
vs. 10,11,14*



C H R I S T M A S

B A B Y T H O L Y J U D E A R T H
 B J P E A C E S O N O F L O C K P U S
 R O F I E L D E G A S H E P H E R D S
 I Y O N B O R N O Z E G M A R Y A A A
 N M R N A T O Z O A P A A L I R I V V
 G O D S C H I L D R H L N A S O S I I
 L J E S U S H O N E L I G H T O E D O
 O G U A R D I B E T H L E H E M Z S U
 R S L S H E E P W H Y E R L O R D O R
 Y N N A N G E L S B H E A V E N A M E

MARY • JOSEPH • NAZARETH • GALILEE • JUDEA • BETHLEHEM • DAVID
 HOLY • CHILD • BABY • SON • NAME • JESUS • MANGER • ROOM • INN
 SHEPHERDS • FIELD • GUARD • FLOCK • SHEEP • ANGELS • SHONE • BRING
 GOD NEWS • JOY • SAVIOUR • BORN • CHRIST • LORD • LIGHT
 PRAISE • GLORY • GOD • PEACE • EARTH • HEAVEN • CHRISTMAS

Christmas Letter



Dear Friends,

“Fake news” has been named Word of the Year by Collins Dictionary and will be printed in the next edition. The phrase, which is often used by Donald Trump, has seen a 365 per cent rise in use since 2016. It is often defined as false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting. There’s a lot of it about and even if everyone spots it and dismisses it, it still manages to sow doubt causing us to question nearly everything in order that we may find a lie. Of course, questioning can be healthy as our attitude to exploitation in the workplace attests to. But I’ve also seen comments on videos from war-torn countries that suggest the news is fake and dead children and grieving mothers are just actors.

Evil is made even worse by the denial of its existence.

As Christians, we believe in the good news which claims to tell a truth that can seem to contradict what we know to be scientific truth: some two thousand years ago, an angel appeared to a young Jewish girl and told her that she would carry the son of God. The baby grew up preaching and teaching, making the blind see and the lame walk amongst other things. Then at thirty-three years old, he was crucified and, three days later, he rose from the dead.

To us today this might be considered fake news. But this is real news. And it is real, not just because of historical evidence from Josephus or Pliny but because of Love.

Philosophers and biologists will say that love is just a concept or an evolutionary quirk. Society doesn't seem very interested in talking about it. And so, the news, fake or otherwise, is dominated by evil.

But the good news is that Love came down at Christmas. The power of love here on earth is immense. We cannot buy love because it must be a gift given freely. When we are embraced in love, we know it is because others truly care for us, not because of a good they hope to get from us. We are secure because we know that we are cherished by others for what we are. God's gift to us is a gift of love. God so loved the world that He gave....so says John's Gospel. It is a giving love, a generous love. It is grace love, gift love; free and unconstrained. God doesn't make a list and check it twice to find out who's naughty or nice before He gives His Christmas gift. His gift is free and undeserved and unsolicited and unlooked for love. The love-gift of God is ours. We need only take it by faith in Jesus Christ. That's the message of the Scriptures. That is the good news for Christmas. The greatest gift ever given, offered free, unconditionally to all who believe.

At this time of year, people head to midnight services only in part because it's something to do or they're drunk or they do it because it gives them a lovely feeling.

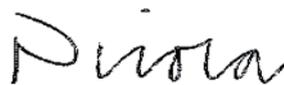
Carols have the best-known tunes. By candlelight, the church glows. But here must also be a transformation of the heart – and there generally is. Charity will be provided this year, as every year, by millions of Christians because love is tangible.

It is a full stomach (a Christmas day lunch at church for those on their own). It is a bed for the night (in the Winter Night shelter). It is a friendly phone call or even just a smile. We do this big Christmas festival thing for a reason: because Love teaches us to walk the way of the Christ-child in humility and service.

Some people have found 2017 disappointing and depressing. But then evil trades in doubt and we should resist it. The fake news is that humankind is lost. The good news is that, because Love came down at Christmas, it can be saved.

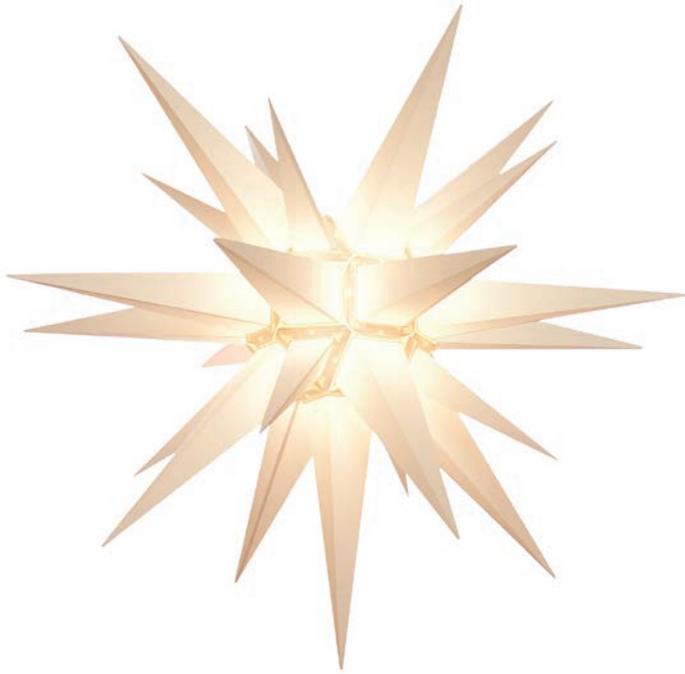
Come, Lord Jesus.
Be born in us this Christmas.

With Advent and Christmas blessings,



The Revd Nicola Furley-Smith
Synod Moderator

Christmastime and sharing



“I will bless the Lord at all times forever singing His praises, and love Carols and candlelight, harps and stars, trumpets and music of angels”

Advent Stars, Lovefeast and Christingle! Christmas time is one of the few occasions when I miss being in North America. Advent is a very busy time in all Christian Congregations: in the Moravian Churches it is even more so.

There are thousands of beeswax candles to be made and dressed for Vespers, Christingle services and Lovefeasts. There are sugar cakes, Christmas cookies, buns, pretzels too, all of which are to be made ready for Advent and Christmas services of celebration.

In the larger Churches, tickets and programmes are to be printed, order of services and of course the mass rehearsals of choirs and bands. In the smaller congregations, service booklets to be typed, printed, folded and packed and candles to be dressed. Advent Stars to be prominently displayed and lit from the First Sunday in Advent until Epiphany.

Advent stars are set and lit on the highest mountain peak surrounding the two major cities. Most dwellings in the surrounding areas are decorated with Advent stars and Christmas candles are lit in windows. Three of the larger congregations arrange Vespers for three nights over the first three weekends during Advent, where anyone and everyone who is able to get a ticket can participate and enjoy (fire regulations permitting!).

For many, many years, in Bethlehem (Pennsylvania) and Winston Salem (North Carolina), these services have become a great attraction to tourists as well as other visitors from the entire USA and beyond. They are truly Christmas services with mass choirs and musicians of all sorts, where the Biblical gospel story is told.

On a personal note, as soon as the last pretzel, coffee and sugar cake was finished after the Christmas Eve or Christmas Day service I would get the first flight home to spend Christmas or post-Christmas in the bleak mid-winter of East London, as for me:

*Christmas time comes once again,
with thoughts of home and far off
friends.*

*The nights are long, the darkness
cold, while sharing stories new and
old.*

*Tales of wise men who saw a star,
which guided them to lands afar.*

*They carried gifts to a new born
King, with hopes of peace and
thanks-giving.*

*Prophets great from kingdoms
small, proclaim God's blessings to
one and all*

*Let all sing! Praise! give thanks to a
Father whose grace always amazes
us all.*

This year perhaps you could take time to look at the light hanging on the entrance to the Concourse. A star has been hanging there for the past three years. It is a symbol of the Moravian Advent/Christmas Star, just in case you had missed the television and Songs of Praise showing last year.

I am sincerely thankful to all the members of the LURC. Your thoughts, prayers, generosity and love during the past year have been much appreciated. I have felt truly blessed and I will continue to ask God to make me a blessing. A truly blessed Christmas to you all and give praise to God the Father.

Rev. Rosieta Burton

What price unity?

Ecumenism in retreat

In the November "Good News" I wrote a piece giving some background to the ecumenical movement and the formation of the United Reformed Church (URC) in 1972. This was following up on a sermon I preached in September, which was really about the failure of the churches, after a century of endeavour, to achieve much in the way of structural, organic unity, which everyone thought was the aim of the Christian unity movement.

There have, of course, been some successes, such as the Church of South India, the Uniting Church in Australia and I suppose the URC can also claim to be a modest example. But far from being the catalyst, structural unity seems to have ground to a halt.

A couple of years ago I was interviewed by one of our ministers who was researching this whole matter. Martin Camroux, recently retired, has spent much time and energy exploring the history of the URC and the church unity movements and trying to understand and communicate what went wrong.

I waded through his book "Ecumenism in Retreat – How the URC failed to break the mould". For most of it I became more and more depressed as I read.

With meticulous clarity he tabulates the way in which the great excitement and anticipation of 1972 faded as the decline of mainline denominations continued and every attempt to bring Christians together or even into a covenant relationship seemed dismally to collapse.

He even concludes that the efforts to achieve organic union may have impeded mission rather than enabling it. He points to the enormous time and energy we have had to devote to church structures and bureaucracy to keep the show on the road rather than devoting it to the proclamation of the Gospel and the service of the Kingdom.

But wait a moment. What we saw as the practical aim – organic church unity - may have been mistaken – but the underlying thrust of our ecumenical calling certainly was not – Jesus' prayer " May they all be one...that the world may believe".

So three positive points to sum up (and cheer you a little, I hope).

First – just look how we have advanced. For the most part we are now friends – with All Saints up the road and the Evangelical Free round the corner, with Baptists and Methodists in Haywards Heath. We share in Churches Together, including Roman Catholics and some of the ethnic minority churches.

Even some more radical evangelical and charismatic fellowships co-operate in community projects. We may not have come together structurally, but the ecclesiastical climate has warmed immeasurably since I began my ministry. Thanks be to God!

But second – I think the things which used to separate us and indeed, which caused wars and persecution not so very long ago, have faded somewhat and are certainly not as divisive as they used to be. Christians are much more tolerant and understanding of each other. No longer do we demand of others that they “do it my way”. There is much more sense of acceptance that the Lord has not made us all the same.

Unity does not demand of us a dull uniformity. Whilst some will stand for hours in the rich resonance of the Russian Orthodox mass others will sway and wave to the sound of electric guitars. Some will want to “christen” a new arrival round the font in a family gathering quietly on a Sunday afternoon, others will pack in round a baptistry to watch new believers being immersed as a witness to their faith. Are there really people who believe the Jesus we follow is the slightest bit interested in the quantity of water or the timing of baptism – rather than what is going on in the believer’s heart?

Thirdly, there are, of course, differences between Christians, but they depend much more on the different skills, experiences and cultures of the believers than on theological specifications. Some are called, trained, equipped to be evangelists and preachers of the Word. Others are much more comfortable with deeds than words, with caring for those in need and demonstrating Christ’s love than proclaiming it orally. God has blessed his people with a rich variety of gifts and they are complementary, not in competition – in conflict. Paul reminds us that we are – all together – the body of Christ – but some are limbs and some organs – we each have our own distinctive place, our role to play.

But you know there is still a mighty band of believers and I sense we are much more willing to love one another and work together than ever before.

Perhaps we have been looking for the wrong sort of unity. Let’s rejoice in and go forward in the overwhelming unity we do have as limbs and organs of that one body of which the head is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Rev. Michael Davies

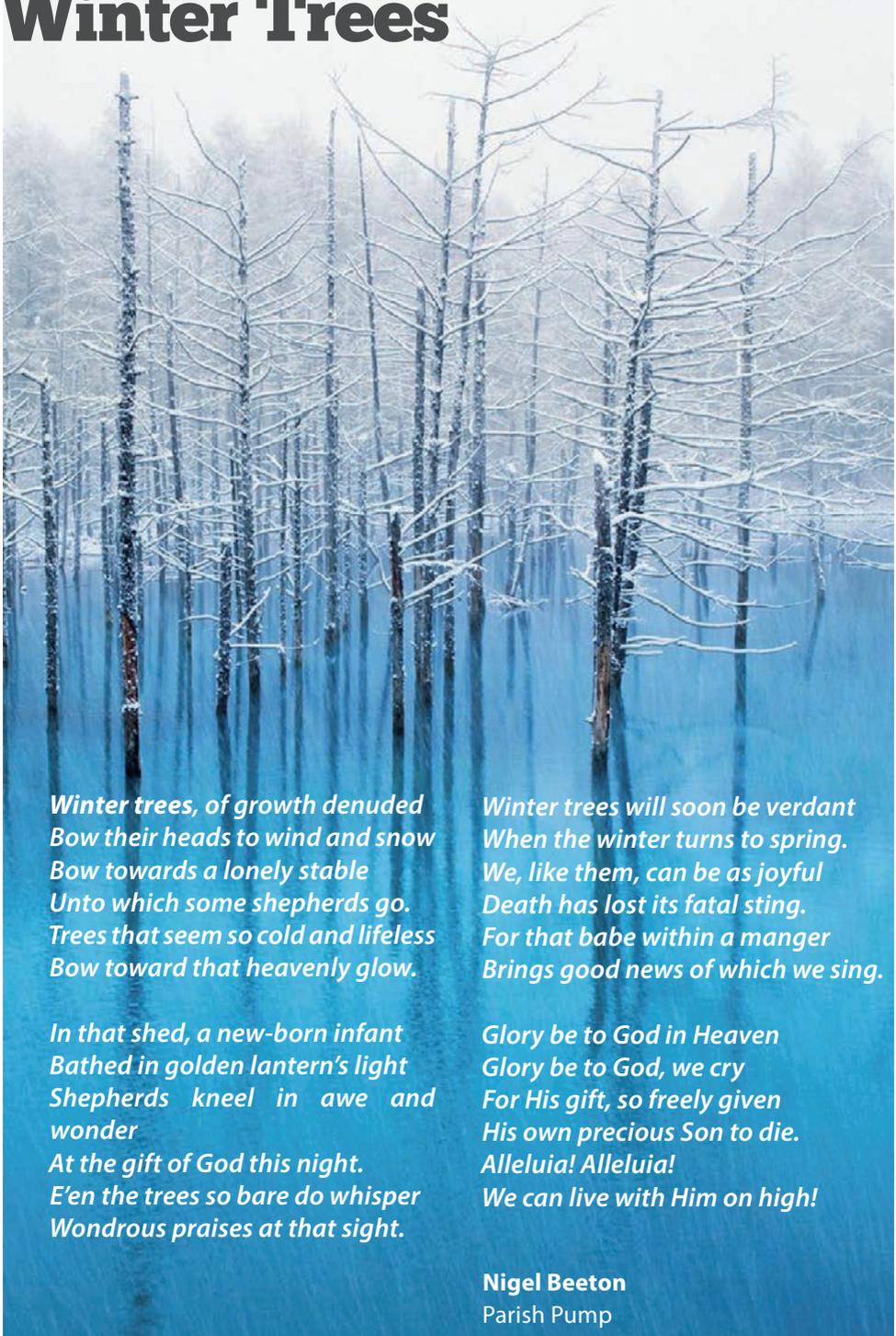
The Table is set



Those who gather for the evening service on a Sunday are getting used to finding we have #Something Different each week. We were quite surprised, however, when we turned up for the communion service in November to find the table was laid out in a rather different way, right down the length of the church. We had heard it was to be an Agape Meal but this was something very different. We all sat round the table, which was laid out for a full 3 course meal with the bread and wine for the communion positioned at the centre. We started with nibbles, then the first course of a very spicy soup and bread. We sung some worship songs at various points (mainly when we had our mouths empty!) and shared prayers and a Bible reading.

The main course of cold meats, cheese and salad came next and the message for the evening was shared by Adam. We all had an input responding to a number of questions on 'Love'. The communion followed between the main course and the sweet. This was shared around the same table becoming part of the whole fellowship meal. Finally the sweet of fresh fruit and cookies rounded off the evening. This was a very special occasion with the meal, fellowship, worship and communion all brought together as one.

Winter Trees

A photograph of a winter forest. The trees are bare and covered in snow, standing against a pale, overcast sky. The ground is covered in a layer of snow, and the overall scene is captured with a blue color cast, giving it a serene and cold atmosphere.

*Winter trees, of growth denuded
Bow their heads to wind and snow
Bow towards a lonely stable
Unto which some shepherds go.
Trees that seem so cold and lifeless
Bow toward that heavenly glow.*

*In that shed, a new-born infant
Bathed in golden lantern's light
Shepherds kneel in awe and wonder
At the gift of God this night.
E'en the trees so bare do whisper
Wondrous praises at that sight.*

*Winter trees will soon be verdant
When the winter turns to spring.
We, like them, can be as joyful
Death has lost its fatal sting.
For that babe within a manger
Brings good news of which we sing.*

*Glory be to God in Heaven
Glory be to God, we cry
For His gift, so freely given
His own precious Son to die.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
We can live with Him on high!*

Nigel Beeton
Parish Pump

Christmas Reflection



My favourite Christmas reading is John 1v1-18. May I recommend that at some time over these busy weeks before Christmas, you make space to read it through slowly and thoughtfully, as though for the first time. On the human level, this wonderful passage is the fruit of an aged apostle's lifetime experience of preaching and teaching about Jesus. Reflecting on the indelible memories of that all-too-brief time walking, talking and listening to the most dynamic and captivating man John had ever met. But this is no ordinary writing, for God Himself is inspiring John to write the most sublime truth.

These verses cannot fail to inspire us. For me, three things stand out:-

WORD: John is the only Gospel writer to call Jesus The Word. The reason is in verse 3, "All things were made by him". Look at Genesis 1, with its oft repeated "And God said". If God had kept silent, there would have been no creation, but instead, "by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, the starry host by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33v6). The mind-blowing thing is that Jesus is that Word, always with God, and one with him (v1).

Thinking about that fills me with

New Year Mission Focus

WONDER: that our God should come in person to this needy world. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (v14). He could have remained distant, unknowable, but instead chose to live in an ordinary family in a poor country among people who would turn their back on his love. Above my desk is a photo of a large crucifix standing upright and unbroken in the rubble of a church following the Haiti earthquake. It reminds me that what Jesus chose in coming into this world as the baby of Bethlehem was rejection, pain and a cruel death amidst the rubble of a humanity that had rejected its creator. Which leads me to

WORSHIP: as I reflect that the baby of Bethlehem is the Christ on the cross, whose death and resurrection invites me to enter that life-changing experience the Apostle John knew: "... to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (v12). This Christmas, all of us need to recapture the wonder of the God who loves us fickle and fallible people so much that he gave his only Son to experience a criminal's death so that we could become members of his Royal Family.

So Come let us adore him!

Rev. Mike Gardiner

The mission focus for January and February 2018 will be on the Romans One Eleven Trust.

"I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith" Romans 1:11-12

The Trust's main aim is to provide mutual encouragement for churches in the UK and in African countries. We continue to follow with interest the work of Pastor Samuel Muhumuza, an ordained Minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Uganda. The Trust supports the work of the Ssanje Modern School that Samuel established in the Kibaale District, including coordination of sponsorship of several children and young people. The September 2017 edition of the Trust's magazine, "Mutually Encouraged", is available from the missions display table and includes reports on visits to Uganda in July 2017.

Please see the mission display for more information or contact one of the Missions Group team – Jean Gardiner, Terry Oliver, Lesley Sparks, Alex Hall and Helen Hall. As always, if you would like to give please use the special envelopes and place your donation in the offertory at any Sunday Service. Thank you for your faithful support of missions whether through prayer, giving in time and/or financial support.

Missions Group

The Wider World

Yemen

The ongoing crisis in Yemen, caused by prolonged conflict, has led to huge impacts on human life, basic public services and the economy. Up to 3.15 million people have been displaced and more than 40,000 have been killed or injured. Families are struggling to survive, and now the risk of famine and cholera loom.

Since 2014, ongoing conflict between government and non-government forces has produced a severe humanitarian crisis. The clashes have destroyed the public infrastructure and services like hospitals and schools, blocked access to basic food supplies and forced millions from their homes. Almost 19 million people - nearly 70 per cent of the country's population - are in desperate need of humanitarian aid, including water, food and medicine.

Yemen imports nearly all its food supply, but because of the conflict only three of eight sea ports are functioning so that supplies cannot be brought in. The limited food that is available is too expensive for most families to purchase as many of them have lost their sources of income. Four and a half million are malnourished including over two million children.

Because of the lack of clean water and sanitation, due to pumps and treatment facilities being damaged, the risk of disease has been exacerbated and more than half the country's health centres have been put out of action due to the conflict.

The United Nations has called on the international community to 'redouble' its support for the people of Yemen. Failure to do so means that the catastrophe will claim many more lives and scar future generations and the country for years to come.

Let us pray that a peace agreement can be reached in the very near future and that this suffering nation can receive the aid that it so badly needs.

Carol Marsh



Phonebook

Keith Morrison (Minister)

Telephone 01444 484791
Email kmorrison@lindfielddurc.org.uk
Normal day off Friday

Danny Goodall (Youth Pastor)

Youth Office 01444 487607
Mobile 07443 438970
Email dgoodall@lindfielddurc.org.uk
Normal day off Saturday

Church Secretary

Sue Waller 01444 455047
Email waller.s@sky.com

Treasurer

Terry Ward 01444 482986

Boys' Brigade:

Keith Morrison (Chaplain) 01444 484791

Flowers

Betty Billins 01444 484494

Hall Booking Secretary

Shirley Anton 01444 482819

In Touch

Sue Waller 01444 455047

Lunch Fellowship

Sue Waller 01444 455047

Pastoral Group

Fiona Tingley 01444 483419

The Fellowship

Pat Phillips 01444 484507

Stepping Stones

Zoe McQuillin 01444 484364

Transport

Janet Drayton 01444 483621

Lighthouse (Junior Church)

Co-ordinator

Dawn Walters 01444 441601

Flower Rota

Arranging

Distributing

December

| | | |
|------|-------------------|--------------|
| 3rd | Plant | No further |
| 10th | Plant | deliveries |
| 17th | Plant | until Monday |
| 24th | Christmas Flowers | 8th January |
| 31st | Christmas Flowers | 2018 |

January

| | | |
|------|---------------|-----------------|
| 7th | Doreen Fowler | Heather Swan |
| 14th | Janet Wade | Fiona Tingley |
| 21st | Lesley Sparks | Sue Tester |
| 28th | Mary Comber | Janet Sanderson |

February

| | | |
|------|-----------------|---------------|
| 4th | Zoe McQuillin | Meta Orchin |
| 11th | Carol Marsh | Jo Bloxham |
| 18th | Jessie Green | Iris Bingham |
| 25th | Winifred Scopes | Heather Swann |

Around Lindfield

Saturday 2nd December

7:30pm Tiger Arts Concert in All Saints Church: A Dramatic Staging of Handel's 'Messiah' performed by The Merry Opera Company

Sunday 3rd December

2:00pm Tiger Arts Concert in All Saints Church: A Dramatic Staging of Handel's 'Messiah' performed by The Merry Opera Company

Tuesday 5th December

6:15pm Lindfield Christmas Festival

Wednesday 13th December

12:00 noon Tiger Arts - Lunch in The Tiger

1:00pm Concert in All Saints Church: Rachel Smith (Flute) and Friends will perform a programme of Baroque, Classical and Romanesque music

Wednesday 10th January

12:00 noon Tiger Arts - Lunch in The Tiger

1:00pm Concert in All Saints Church : Alexander Andakov, Piano, Professor of Music at Trinity College, London

8:00pm Lindfield Horticultural Society in King Edward Hall
Talk: "Vegetables in Containers" by Vanessa Jones

Thursday 25th January

7:00pm Village Film Night in King Edward Hall
To be announced - Tickets available from Tufnells

