



The Methodist Church

Stamford Circuit

Registered Charity :1160930



December/January 2023



And early in the morning you say, 'It is going to rain, because the sky is red and dark.' You can predict the weather by looking at the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs concerning these times!

(Matt 16: 3)

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The Circuit Newsletter exists to build up fellowship across the Stamford Methodist Circuit. Items for inclusion in the Circuit Newsletter should be: *Inspiring, encouraging of faith and discipleship to promote the growth of church relationships within the Circuit.*

Could you please send any articles for the February 2023 Circuit Newsletter to:

Email: admin2322@gmail.com

or by post to the Circuit Office at Stamford Methodist Church

Articles for the February 2023 Newsletter should be sent no later than Monday 14th January 2023.

<p>Rev Andrew Hollins 11 Jackson Way, Stamford, Lincs. PE9 1FG Tel: 01780 762282 StamfordMethodistSuper@gmail.com Rest Day: Monday</p>	<p>Rev Bekkie Wright 2 Wensum Close, Oakham. LE15 6FU Tel: 01572 720721 Bekkie.wright@methodist.org.uk Rest Day: Friday</p>
<p>Rev Ruth Charlesworth 2 Coggles Causeway, Bourne, Lincs PE10 9LN Tel: 01778 422258 ruth.charlesworth@methodist.org.uk Rest Day: Friday</p>	<p>Rev William Booker BA Assistant Minister, Stamford Methodist Church with pastoral charge of Ryhall Methodist Church 5 Frognall, Deeping St James, PE6 8RS Tel: 01778380195</p>
<p>Phil Jones- Circuit Mission Enabler 5 Rycroft Close, Deeping St James, PE6 8NX Tel: 01778 346389 pdvjones@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Julia Husbands Circuit Children, Family and Youth Work Enabler Tel:01780 753968 Julia.cfywenabler@gmail.com</p>
<p>Circuit Administrator Rowan Scholtz admin2322@gmail.com Tel: 01780 481395</p>	

Dear Friends,

Do you love those fantasy “what if?” questions? What if you were given just one wish? (More wishes, obviously). What if you won £10,000,000? (Buy all my loved ones a house!! Plus friends – form a queue please.)

What about “what if you could know your future?” Hmm. More debatable. One of my favourite comedy programmes, “The IT Crowd” has an episode where Roy is told by his friend Moss (via a computer app) the date of his death – next Thursday at 3pm as it turns out! Doesn’t sound like comedy material but it is handled really cleverly.

Would you want to know the future? Your future? Even what will happen next week? For me, I think not – best to muddle on as usual, one thing after another, same old same old eh?

Well, says The Bible – and Advent particularly (and Jesus especially) – YES and NO.

You can’t know the day or the hour, say the scriptures. That’s not up to you. But the future is not bumbling on endlessly. There is a purpose and, more importantly, **an end point**. So, says Jesus, keep watch. You know the signs of the weather, well, look at the signs of the times. Somewhere along the track a tree has fallen – we don’t know how far down the track but that doesn’t mean it hasn’t happened.

What if, like Roy above, you knew the end date? What if it was next Thursday at 3? You’d start to act very differently toward those round you, and the world you live in. You might change what was important and who you showed love to. “What I say to you, I say to everyone – WATCH” (Jesus, Mark Ch. 13 v 37)

Phil Jones, Circuit Mission Enabler

Bible Recording Project – Calling all readers

One of the (few) joys of lockdown for me was the online worship and particularly seeing the faces of friends from around the circuit, reading the various passages of scripture. The Online ministry team would like to keep this going and we would like to build up a set of readings which can be used for worship.

So I am looking for people to record each of the coming years lectionary readings please.

If you are comfortable recording at home, please drop me a line and I will send you the verses to record. If you would like to be involved but are not confident recording yourself, we can help there too.

You don’t need to be a preacher or an experienced reader to get involved, all you need to do just willing to share the gospel by recording a few verses of scripture.

And don’t worry that I might get too many offers, once we have done the gospel we can move on to the Old Testament, Epistle or Psalm ;)

Sarah Atwell King
Pad4535@aol.com

Pray without Ceasing December 2022



Suggestions for each day of the month. A few spaces have been left for your own concerns.

1. For people with Birthdays or Anniversaries this month
2. Rev Andrew Hollins
3. Oakham church
4. Ryhall Chapel
5. Those who use our premises on Mondays
6. Those who use our premises on Tuesdays
7. Those who use our premises on Wednesdays
8. Rev Ruth Charlesworth
9. Thurlby Chapel
10. Uppingham Church
11. Rev William Booker
12. Barn Hill Church
13. Bourne Chapel
14. For those who have suffered war and famine
15. Those who use our premises on Thursdays
16. Those who use our premises on Fridays
17. Those who use our premises on Saturday
18. Rev Bekkie Wright
19. Deepings Church
20. Empingham Chapel
21. Phil Jones Circuit Mission Enabler
22. Ketton Chapel
23. Julia Husbands CF&YM Enabler
24. For those who will be alone at Christmas
25. Jesus the Light of the World
26. Our Supernumerary Ministers
27. Our Local Preachers
28. **
29. Circuit Administrator Rowan
30. Circuit Officers
31. For Peace in the World as we enter a new year

Any suggestions or requests please let Nina Rawlins know on 01780 753649 or email ninarawlins@yahoo.co.uk

The Warm Welcome Campaign

Uppingham Methodist Church has signed up with The Warm Welcome Campaign and pledged to open our doors and offer a warm welcome, in all senses, for those that need it this winter.

The Warm Welcome Campaign's mission is to support churches and other community organisations to provide a free, safe, warm and welcoming space for anyone concerned about heating their homes this winter. It was started by the Church Works Commission.

Their aim is for no one to be left in the cold. Rather, a Warm Welcome Space be available to help turn someone's difficulty into an opportunity to be seen, belong, and receive a life-giving response in their local context.

If you would like to know more, please go to www.warmwelcome.uk

**WE ARE A
WARM
WELCOME
SPACE**



Uppingham Methodist Church

ADDRESS:

**Orange Street
Uppingham
LE15 9SQ**

**(at the traffic lights, corner of
Orange St and North St West)**

OPENING HOURS:

Monday 10:00 – 12:00

Wednesday 10:00 – 12:00



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Unfortunately I feel that this Week of prayer and following celebration is sadly missed on many agendas. It was celebrated annually by the Roman Catholics and Anglicans in the 1890s. It was not until 1908 that the dates were changed to coincide with the Confession of Peter and the Conversion of Paul (now celebrated during January). Since that time, and certainly since 1986 for me! I remember pulpit exchanges, special services, home and prayer groups daily, across the denominations. Sadly most of the above are now in the past - except I am pleased to announce the special service in Uppingham at the Parish Church on **Sunday 29th January followed by a bring and share lunch.**

I also remember this Week as a highlight in the local churches with large congregations, major events, joint study groups and the icing on the cake being an ecumenical service of wonder and worship. Where has this important week in the Christian calendar gone?

Perhaps there is a "politeness" that has avoided real engagement with prayer and with our other brothers and sisters - a decline in church attendance leading to apathy, or a battenning down of the hatches because of bad weather!! Or is this Week being celebrated by some because it means we as a church can tick one of the boxes on the calendar, rather than out of real conviction. Whilst prayers are offered in the intercessions, special services are often only attended by a few. Although this trend saddens me, I am glad that the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is still a source for celebration and that many inroads have been made ecumenically.

By Moyra Collins

Lord God, we thank you for calling us into the company of those who trust in Christ and seek to obey His will. May Your Spirit guide and strengthen us in mission and service to Your world for we are strangers no longer but pilgrims together on the way to Your Kingdom.
Amen.

Churches Together in Britain & Ireland.

Stamford Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Scheme

This is a scheme to buy, and send, Christmas presents to the children of prisoners at Stocken Prison.

This helps to build good relationships among prisoners' families.

The cost of each present would be approximately £15, including postage.

Your donations to this fund would be much appreciated.

Any cheques need to be made payable to:

'Stamford Prison Fellowship – Angel Tree'.

Your donations can be given to Maurice Wade:

17 Drift Avenue, Stamford, PE9 1UY.

Many thanks and every blessing

Maurice and Judith



The Parable of the Snow by Eddie Askew

Have you noticed how our reactions to the same things vary with circumstances? One wintry Saturday morning my wife and I were shopping, slipping and sliding through the snow. It was a nuisance. On Saturday afternoon I went sketching in a local park. Not many people were about, and those who were must have thought me mad, standing ankle deep in snow, poring over a cold sketch pad. But the park was beautiful, the light and shadow, the muted colour, the simplification of form.

For some reason the parable of the sower came to mind. "parable of the *snow* more like" I said to myself. Then I thought, "But why not? If Jesus had walked through snowfields instead of harvest fields wouldn't he have had something to say?" So I took the parable and rewrote it, in paraphrase anyway. Here it is:

"The snow came. And as it snowed, some snow fell along the footpath, white and pure, until the feet of busy people turned it brown and dirty.

Some snow fell on the road, where it brought peace and silence, until the cars came, skidding and uncontrolled.

Some snow fell on rocky ground, where it remained, white and clean, until the sun came out, and it melted away.

And some snow fell on the mountains, where it gave pleasure to the skier, and joy to all who saw its beauty.

Hear then the parable of the snow. The snow is like the word of God, each flake beautiful and perfect.

The snow on the footpath is like one who hears the word and accepts with joy. But the demands of busyness taint and destroy it.

The snow on the road is like one who hears, but the world and its wealth and glamour leads him astray.

The snow on rocky ground is the one who hears and accepts but has no staying power. The thaw comes and his belief is swamped, and flooded, and drowned.

The snow on the mountains is like those who hear, and accept, and their faith becomes a thing of beauty and joy, reaching up to the heavens, declaring the glory of God "

Submitted by Beryl Teasdale

Emmanuel Now

God, make us ready for our celebration,
Praising your Son for his heralded birth.
Glory on high, as the angels proclaimed it,
Peace to all peoples and nations on earth.

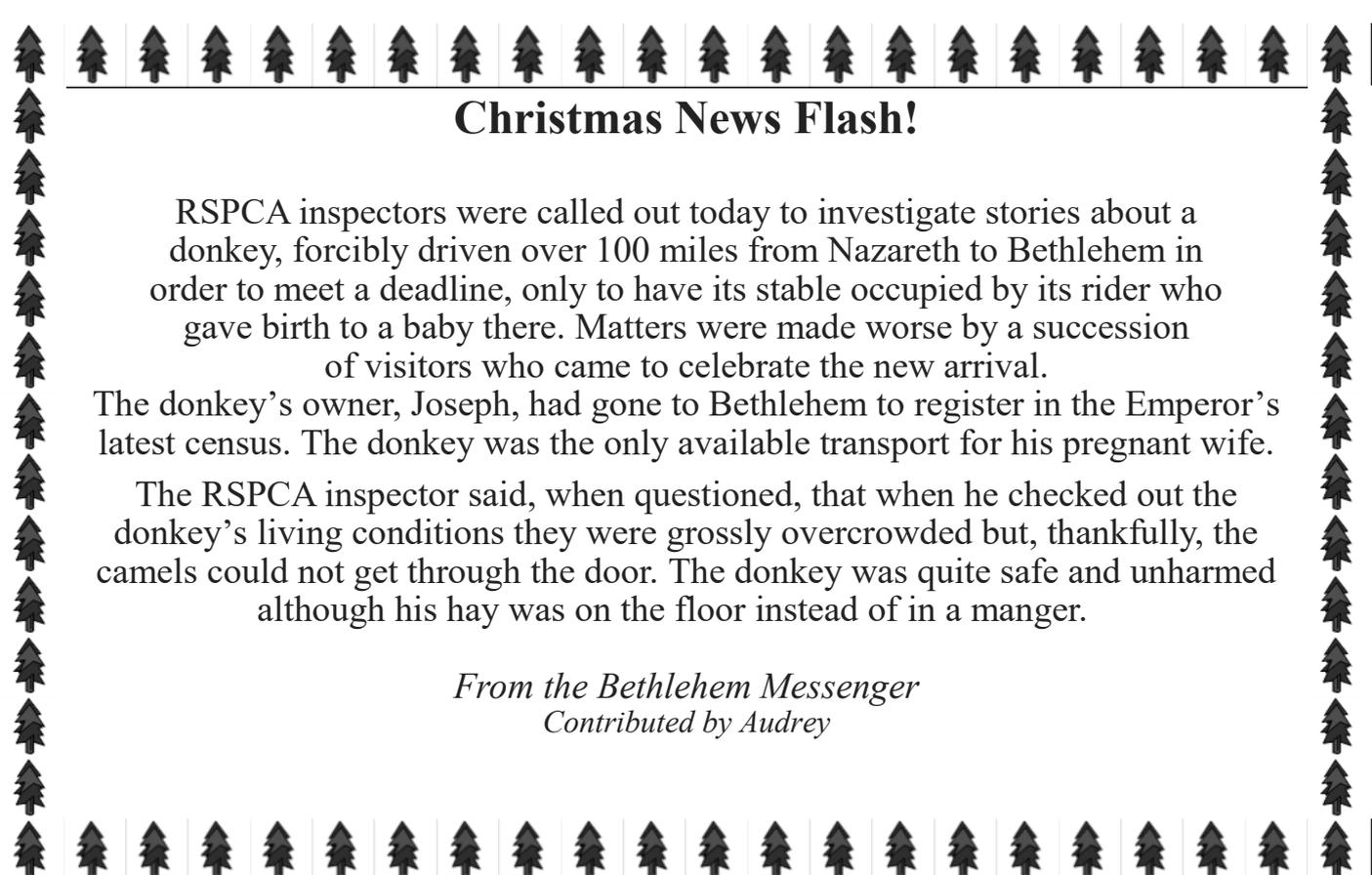
God, help us open our hearts to the other,
Feeling the pain of your unequal world.
As in the old times the prophet proclaimed it,
Justice like rivers the sign of your rule.

God, call us now to be a part of your purpose,
Seeing your world as you made it to be:
Living your Kingdom, as Jesus proclaimed it,
Your restoration, where love is the key.

God, be our Peace sign, as Christ in the manger;
God, roll down Justice in strength and in power;
God, come Restore us, your spirit inspiring;
God, be God with Us, Emmanuel, now.

1 Sept 2016 ©Tony Law

May be freely used in worship - Tune: Epiphany StF 595 or 672



Christmas News Flash!

RSPCA inspectors were called out today to investigate stories about a donkey, forcibly driven over 100 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem in order to meet a deadline, only to have its stable occupied by its rider who gave birth to a baby there. Matters were made worse by a succession of visitors who came to celebrate the new arrival.

The donkey's owner, Joseph, had gone to Bethlehem to register in the Emperor's latest census. The donkey was the only available transport for his pregnant wife.

The RSPCA inspector said, when questioned, that when he checked out the donkey's living conditions they were grossly overcrowded but, thankfully, the camels could not get through the door. The donkey was quite safe and unharmed although his hay was on the floor instead of in a manger.

*From the Bethlehem Messenger
Contributed by Audrey*

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYBODY

*A bit of fun! When they start singing Slade at Christmas,
here's a new version to join in with!!*

**Are you ready for the festive fun to start?
In the rush, are you prepared to do your part?
Are the children all expectant?**

**Have the tables all been laid?
But will you forget God's Son on his birthday?**

Chorus

*So here it is, Merry Christmas
Everybody's having fun,
Look to the future now
It's only just begun!*

**Are you waiting for The Baby to arrive?
Will you make him room to come into your life?
Does the Bible seem to tell you
that he's come to rule the Earth?
Do you see it in a humble baby's birth?**

So, here it is...

(Bridge)

**What will you offer him,
Who's the greatest Saviour, Immanuel?
Ah-ha!**

**Are you looking for the King who'll come one day?
When the earth will see that Jesus is The Way?
Will you make your preparation,
So that you can welcome him
As the Lord of lords and reigning King of kings?**

**Chorus x 4
So here it is...**

IT'S CHRISTMAAAAAAAAAAASSSSS!!

Phil Jones

(I have a karaoke mp3 for this if you'd like!!)

Good King Wenceslaus

Like many of our favourite Christmas Carols the origins of this one are found in a combination of reality and legend.

Wenceslaus (a latinised or western form of the Czech name Vaclac of Slavic origin) was actually Duke of Bohemia and lived in the 10th century. Legend has it that he was known for his good works, going round in bare feet at night with one companion, his chamberlain, to give alms to the poor and those afflicted by any form of difficulty, becoming known as Vaclac the Good. However, his younger brother Boleslaus (known as the Cruel) assassinated him in 935 when he was only 28. (Those were very tumultuous times!).

After his death he was canonised as a martyr and saint and later the Holy Roman Emperor promoted him from Duke to King posthumously. I have visited the statue to him in Wenceslaus Square, the main square in Prague, while his remains are in St Vitus Cathedral, also in Prague.

It was the 19th century theologian, John Mason Neale, a noted scholar of ancient liturgy and hymnology, who wrote the words of this very familiar carol to a melody which is a 13th century tune in praise of spring.

His saint's day is September 28th, the anniversary of his death and a public holiday in the Czech Republic, but the carol was written for the Feast of St Stephen, December 26, which we know as Boxing Day.

John Bassill



Christmas Anagram competition

1. GEIELLBSNJ _____
2. TNIVATYI _____
3. EEHASITCHRSTR _____
4. HPOURDL _____
5. ETSLNI _____
6. TKICONGS _____
7. GLSEIH _____
8. MIEMYSHRRRSTA _____
9. COLSAR _____
10. RPESTETNS _____
11. ERTAWH _____
12. EIRSTMLOT _____
13. DEIENERR _____
14. RARCKSCE _____
15. OSMNNAW _____
16. AANSCTLUSA _____
17. OJLYL _____
18. HMEERWINTSEE _____
19. LGEAN _____
20. NKOFWLSEA _____

Please send your answers to:
Rowan Scholtz at Stamford Methodist Church,
11 Barn hill Stamford PE92AE
Before December 15.

A winner will be drawn from a hat and a prize given!

Stamford and Rutland Circuit Diary

Date	Time	Event	Venue
<i>Monthly:</i>			
<i>Second Thursday</i>	<i>8.30am</i>	<i>Circuit Staff Meeting</i>	<i>Various</i>
<i>1st & 2nd Tues</i>	<i>10.30am-12noon</i>	<i>Prayer & Bible Study. Exploring deeper into faith. A welcome to you.</i>	<i>House Group at 2 Walnut Close, Empingham LE15 8QJ</i>
DECEMBER 2022			
Sat 3rd Dec	10am-1pm	Christmas Coffee Morning Tea, coffee, mince pies, sausage rolls and Christmas craft & gift stalls	Bourne MC
Sun 4th Dec	10.30am	Gift Service	Thurlby MC
Mon 5th Dec	2-3pm	At Empingham Post Office- Christmas Music- 'Rachel & her pupils', refreshments available.	Empingham MC
Tues 6th Dec		Advent Study Day (Churches Together Event)	At Rectory-45 Lime Tree Avenue, Uppingham
Sat 10th Dec	10am-12Noon	Annual Mince Pie Morning	Ketton MC
Sun 11 Dec	3pm	Christmas Carol celebration Refreshments to follow the service-collection for 'Shelter'	Empingham MC
Sat 17th Dec	7.30pm	Stamford Brass A Christmas Spectacular (See back page for details)	Stamford MC
Sun 18th Dec	10.45am	Annual Carol Service Led by Rev Bekkie Wright	Uppingham MC
Sun 18th Dec	3pm	Carol Service (refreshments available)	Bourne MC
Sun 18th Dec	3pm	Carol Service Led By Richard Bailey	Ketton MC
Sun 18th Dec	6pm	Carol Service Led by Rev Bekkie Wright	Oakham MC
Sun 18th Dec	6pm	Carol Service Led by Rev Ruth Charlesworth	Thurlby MC

Stamford and Rutland Circuit Diary

Sun 25th Dec	9.15am	Christmas Day Service Led by Rev Andrew Hollins	Ketton MC
Sun 25th Dec	9.30am	Christmas Day Service Led By Ernest Fytche	Thurlby MC
Sun 25th Dec	10am	Christmas Day Service Led by Rev Bekkie Wright	Uppingham MC
Sun 25th Dec	10am	Christmas Day Service Led by Rev Ruth Charlesworth	Bourne MC
Sun 25th Dec	10am	Christmas Day Service Led by Rev William Booker	Deepings MC
Sun 25th Dec	10.30am	Christmas Day Service Led by Rev Andrew Hollins	Stamford MC
Sun 25th Dec	10.30am	Christmas Day Service Led by Iain Cameron & Marion Roberts	Ryhall MC
Sun 25th Dec	10.45am	Christmas Day Service Led By Rev Barry Gent	Oakham MC
JANUARY 2023			
Sun 1st Jan	10.30am	Café Church, Carols and Coffee	Thurlby MC
Sun 1st Jan	10.45am	New Years Day Service	Uppingham MC
Sat 28th Jan		Circuit Quiz	Stamford MC
Sun 29th Jan		Annual Covenant Service (Churches Together)	Uppingham Parish Church
FEBRUARY 2023			
Sat 11th Feb	9.15-11.30am	Kaleidoscope Quiet Morning "Darkness to Light"	At the Home of Beryl & Ron Teasdale, Ashbrook, First Drift, Wothorpe, PE9 3JL



CHRISTMAS QUIZ SINGALONG – ENDINGS! (Complete the next sentence)

So here it is, Merry Christmas, everybody's having fun

Oh the weather outside is frightful but in here it's quite delightful

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed; The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head

Have yourself a merry little Christmas, let your heart be light

Last Christmas I gave you my heart but the very next day you gave it away

Christmastime – mistletoe and wine! Children singing Christian rhyme,

He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake,

We're walking in the air, we're floating in the moonlit sky

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas, just like the ones I used to know

Sleigh bells ring, are you listening? In the lane snow is glistening.

Answers can be found on Page 23

The National Methodist Youth Brass Band

The National Methodist Youth Brass Band visited Stamford Methodist Church for the fourth time at the beginning of November. Twenty four young people from Methodist Churches all over the UK spent the weekend with us and provided us with some rousing entertainment.



They slept on the floor in the church halls and were fed by volunteers from the church. Some came from as far as Durham and others closer to us, like Newark.

On the Saturday evening they gave us an amazing concert when we raised over £1000 towards the church's Mission Projects which

includes the Nixon Memorial Hospital in Sierra Leone and the 2nd Stamford Scout Group.

Stamford has two members of its church in the band and the band's Director of Music is Simon Oliver, also from our church who, now a music graduate, is the band's conductor.



On the Sunday morning the band led us in our morning worship providing a rousing finish to their weekend. They all had a great time and we enjoyed their company. They seem to come here roughly every seven years and we look forward to them coming back around 2029.



During the past six months donations have been made to the Disasters Emergency Committee Appeals for Ukraine (£2,990) and Pakistan (£1,265).

Each donation includes gift aid where applicable and £500 from the Stamford Mission Projects Group.

Webinar-Disability and Church

In late October I attended an online webinar about disability and church, hosted by *Preach*, the magazine of the Leaders of Worship and Preachers' Trust (LWPT). The webinar aimed to open our minds, as preachers and others, to many issues affecting people with disabilities in church.

There were three speakers. Rev. Katie (KT) Tupling is an Anglian priest who is Disability Adviser for the Oxford Diocese. She is herself a wheelchair user, having cerebral palsy.

Rev. John Naudé is Associate Vicar at The Point church in West Sussex; John is also a wheelchair user.

Bernice Hardie is co-founder of WAVE (We're All Valued Equally) church in Muswell Hill, described as a Fresh Expression of St James Church Muswell Hill and Muswell Hill Methodist Church. Its aim is to bring together people of diverse abilities in worship, with Makaton signing, visual prompts and creative activities. Oakham's Easy Access Worship shares some of the same aims.

I don't have complete notes, but the thing that stood out for me was the difference between doing things "for" people with disabilities and doing things with them. As a model for how not to do it, KT told us about the "stramp", an award-winning architectural feature combining a flight of broad steps with a ramp zig-zagging across it. Sounds (and looks) good? Award winning it may be, but there are many things wrong with it including: no colour or texture differentiation at the edges of the ramp; nothing to prevent a wheelchair falling off the side of the ramp and tumbling down the steps; poor provision of handrails and sightlines for walking, but visually impaired, users; and an open invitation to skateboarders!

This stands as a paradigm for us well-motivated people who provide what we think is appropriate, without working alongside those who will share the facility or activity. The word "agency" was used repeatedly, identifying a need for involvement in activity, not just being a recipient.

KT referred us to Jesus, who always asked "What do you want me to do for you?". She opened our eyes to his interaction with a hearing- and speech-impaired man (Mark 7:31-37). Jesus's first response was to take him aside, where the noises and distractions would not get in the way of their interaction. Then he used touch and signs, not words, to communicate.

In the chat there was a lively conversation about the difference between cure and healing. Both KT and John, as disabled people, stated firmly that their physical state is part of their personality. They are "fearfully and wonderfully made" in the image of God – and they do not want or need to be "cured" of their disabilities. We wondered how the healed lepers (in the preceding Sunday's Gospel) would have got on trying to re-integrate into a society from which they had for so long been outcast. And we noted a difference between cure and healing. In some (though not all) of Jesus's encounters, healing took place through pronouncement of forgiveness or from affirmation of the person's faith, either before or after the cure of a physical condition.

Webinar-Disability and Church

Continued...

I remember hearing one of our Methodist greats, Whitfield Foy, preach from a wheelchair with more fire than most of us achieve standing. And in practical terms for churches – is there an expectation that preachers will always stand? KT leads, and celebrates Eucharist, from her wheelchair. The conversation also ranged over practical provisions like ramps, dedicated spaces, hearing support, BSL versus Makaton signing, and appreciation of preachers who make sure they can be seen as well as heard since a lot of people with less than perfect hearing lipread without even being aware of it.

There was too much content to do more than report in brief! There were also a number of publications mentioned, too many to include here, but preachers may have access to the recent issue of *Preach* which is dedicated to these questions. A video replay of the seminar is on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDHx0FvWvAI>.

By Tony Law

God's Other Book

Creation shouts the power of God
in storms with crashing waves
and flying spray that mists the world
in earthquake shattering rock
revealing foundations of life
in floods inundating
filling, soaking, seeping, flowing.

Creation speaks the power of God
in sigh of wind and sea
whispering hidden depth and distance
wide open vistas embracing difference
intricate landscapes, lifestyles
Word echoing through time and space.

Creation sings the power of God
in song of bird and call of wild
in music plucked from string, resounding drum
in voices raised in speech and song
in silent praise, in stars and sun.

Creation shows the love of God
in bursting bud and tender shoot
and crying babe
in dripping rain and fiery sun
in autumn's fall and winter's sleep
and life renewed again.

*Audrey Hensman 12th Nov 22 written at 'Kaleidoscope'
Ashbrook, First Drift, Stamford PE9 3JL*

Pray without Ceasing January 2023



Suggestions for each day of the month. A few spaces have been left for your own concerns.

1. For people with Birthdays or Anniversaries this month
2. Rev Andrew Hollins
3. Ryhall Chapel
4. Thurlby Chapel
5. Rev Ruth Charlesworth
6. Uppingham Church
7. Barn Hill Church
8. Rev William Booker
9. Those who use our premises on Mondays
10. Those who use our premises on Tuesdays
11. Those who use our premises on Wednesdays
12. Bourne Chapel
13. Deepings Church
14. For those who struggle with the cost of living
15. Rev Bekkie Wright
16. Ketton Chapel
17. Empingham Chapel
18. Phil Jones Circuit Mission Enabler
19. Those who use our premises on Thursdays
20. Those who use our premises on Fridays
21. Those who use our premises on Saturday
22. Oakham Church
23. Julia Husbands CF&YM Enabler
24. For those who work in the emergency services
25. **
26. Our Supernumerary Ministers
27. Our Local Preachers
28. **
29. Circuit Administrator Rowan
30. Circuit Officers
31. For those starting out on a new beginning

A prayer for the New Year

Gracious God, thank you for giving me the passion to do great things.

Thank you that You desire for me to follow Your will.

In all that lies before me in the future, at the start of this New Year, this new season,
in all that excites me, cause me to pause to check that the path I am about to step
upon is the one You lay before me.

Surround me with those who will give wise counsel, and may I be drawn
into great things for You.

In the name of Christ Jesus

Amen.

A prayer for January

Holy, gracious and loving God, You stepped into our world;

You became incarnate;

You took on our humanity that we might take on Your divinity.

May I rest this night knowing what the dawn brings, knowing the joy which awaits me.

May I rest this night ready to celebrate the glorious birth of Jesus

Christ and this coming New Year.

Amen.

Prayers By David Cole.



A reflection - January 6th - The Epiphany

The Epiphany celebrates the "showing forth of Christ to the Gentiles". It is therefore often seen as the breaking out of a light that would shine into the whole of human consciousness, changing attitudes, driving away fear, revealing the grace and glory of God in His incarnate Son. It can be expressed in a single profound but elusive sentence - "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it".

John 1, v.5.

This has always been a special day for me since I lived in North Germany for 10 years, We lived in a Missions Village and here I was introduced to the Seminary which primarily supported Ethiopia and the Orthodox Church, and where 70 students from all around the world, learnt theology, several languages, the role of a missionary and the work which they had been called to do by God. So on this day, Epiphany, we stopped to remember not only The Visit of the Magi, the gifts they brought, but also to reconsider our faith journey and what gifts we could bring to God. The journey of the Magi was long, yet their short stay was life-changing, and brought them to their knees in wonder and worship. Perhaps as we remember today, we too will want to celebrate likewise. As I remember and give thanks for the Epiphany message, I think of all of us who are pilgrims, fellow travellers, or simply passers-by welcomed and invited to come and worship, as we offer our gifts.

Moyra Collins

A decorative border consisting of a repeating pattern of lightbulbs, each with a small flame or glow, arranged in a rectangular frame around the text.

Circuit Trivia Quiz

Saturday 28 January 2023

Starting with food at 6.15pm

at **Stamford Methodist Church, Barn Hill**

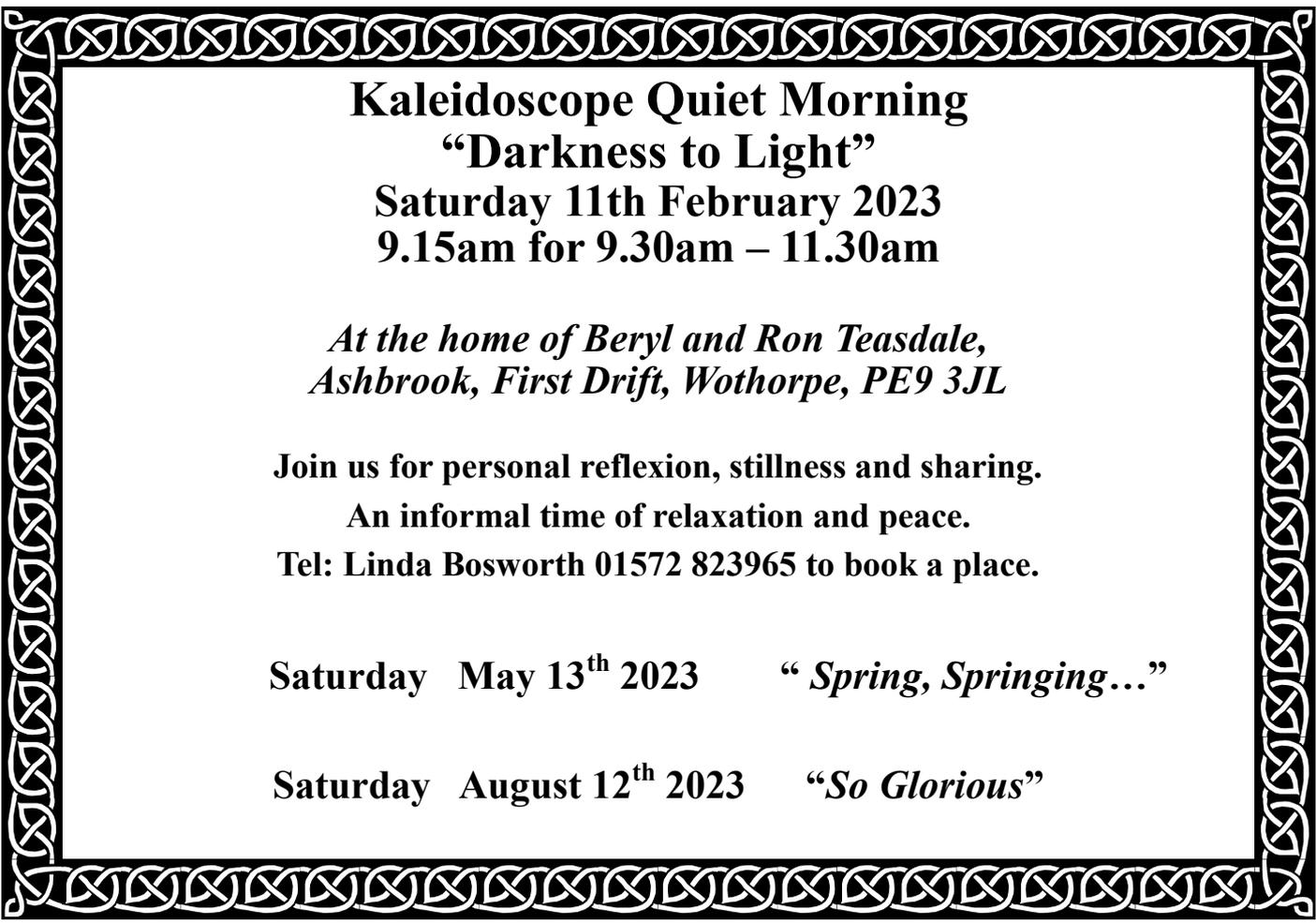
Come and join in a fun evening

Free Admission; a collection will be taken during the evening in aid of this year's Circuit Charity.

Maximum of 8 in each team. Teams can be made up on the night.

Ring 01780 753968 or e-mail Julia.Husbands@gmail.com to book.

Donations of puddings will be gratefully received.

A decorative border consisting of a repeating pattern of interlocking Celtic knot or braid designs, arranged in a rectangular frame around the text.

Kaleidoscope Quiet Morning

“Darkness to Light”

Saturday 11th February 2023

9.15am for 9.30am – 11.30am

*At the home of Beryl and Ron Teasdale,
Ashbrook, First Drift, Wothorpe, PE9 3JL*

Join us for personal reflexion, stillness and sharing.

An informal time of relaxation and peace.

Tel: Linda Bosworth 01572 823965 to book a place.

Saturday May 13th 2023 “*Spring, Springing...*”

Saturday August 12th 2023 “*So Glorious*”

Ketton Community Soup Lunches

Why not join us at Ketton on the third Wednesday of each month from 12.00-1.30pm for a hearty soup lunch.

Next Date 18th January!

There is a warm welcoming atmosphere to chat with and make new friends. We offer a choice of Four delicious homemade soups with bread, cheese, biscuits and fruit, all rounded off with a nice cuppa!

There is no charge but donations to charity are very welcome if you feel able.

Do come and join us and bring a friend- you will be glad you did!



EMPINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH

Empingham Toddler & Baby Group, We meet Thursday's during term time 10.30 - 12noon

Lots of toys, activities, singing and fun.

Refreshments £1 a family. A warm welcome to join us we look forward to seeing you.

Eileen Ray 01780 460676

Articles for the newsletter

We are delighted that some of our readers are inspired to submit book reviews, poems and articles to be included in the newsletter.

When doing so, please make sure that you add your name to any item so that folk can follow up if they want to know more.

For published items, please ensure you have the permission of the author and add their name as author of any work.

Please do send in anything you would like to be included in the Newsletter to Rowan at Admin2322@gmail.com

Please send all entries for the February 2023 newsletter no later than Monday 14th January 2023,

including Prayers for the Prayer page from Church Stewards

Thank you

Please PRAY for:

Bourne

We pray for all those who are struggling at present, worried about daily living costs whether it be food or fuel. We thank you Lord that you know the problems these people are facing and the resulting anxiety it brings.

We pray for all those who will be facing a lonely Christmas. While most of us will be enjoying the Festive Season there will be many for whom this will be a sad time either through bereavement or distance from family, but we hope that we can all join together in celebrating the Saviour's birth.

We continue to pray for those in war torn countries particularly the people of Ukraine who will be celebrating Christmas under extremely difficult conditions but we know that they will feel your love surrounding them. We pray that 2023 will bring them peace.

Deepings

Pray for the Churches Together stall at Market Deeping Christmas Market.

Pray for our new Advent House group as it starts.

Empingham

We pray for all the folk who enjoy refreshments and fellowship at our weekly 'drop in' at the Post Officer and for the opportunity to welcome folk as they attend the annual Christmas events in our churches. Help us to be aware of the various needs of those we meet and help us to be a prayerful blessing.

Ketton

Heavenly Father we remember and pray for all who are struggling with their health; for those who are anxious; for the bereaved and for whom this season is a difficult time. We pray for comfort, healing and peace that only you Lord can give.

As the 'Season of love and Goodwill to all men' draws ever closer and we prepare for our Saviour's Birth, help each one of us to find ways to bless our community, especially the most vulnerable, with our love, prayers and generosity. Let us open our hearts, our homes, our wallets and our premises in whatever way we can for those in need, in these days of severe financial crisis.

We send Christmas and New Year blessings for our friends around the Circuit.

Oakham

Dear Lord, we ask you to bless the Oakham Hope into Action housing for the homeless project. As Christmas approaches we pray for all who are involved in the project in any way. We ask that the joy of your love and presence will be felt by our tenants, their friendship and support volunteers, our investors and by those on the project leadership team. We give thanks for the work that has been done over the past year and we look forward with Hope in our hearts as we approach the celebration of your coming to live amongst us on Earth

Stamford

All people in this season of advent. May we hear the story afresh and feel the presence of Your love around us.

For all those who find this time of the year difficult, may they feel at peace in Your peace. Our various acts of worship from community events, children's events and those more traditional activities. May all those who attend experience a new understanding of the true meaning of Christmas.

Please PRAY for:

Thurlby

Dear Lord, As we approach the festivities of Christmas and New Year we thank you that we can enjoy time with family and friends, thank you for the love we share. We ask you to be with those who have no family, no friends and no love in their lives, that they may be touched by you. We pray for those who grieve, those living through a time of conflict and those in pain. Put your loving arms around them.

Uppingham

Let this be our prayer for Christmas and the New Year. May the mind of Christ our Saviour live in us from day to day, by His Love and Power controlling all we do or say.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ SINGALONG – ENDINGS! (answers)

So here it is, Merry Christmas, everybody's having fun
Look to the future now, it's only just begun!

Oh the weather outside is frightful but in here it's quite delightful
And since we've no place to go - Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed; The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head
**The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

Have yourself a merry little Christmas, let your heart be light
From now on our troubles will be out of sight

Last Christmas I gave you my heart but the very next day you gave it away
This year – to save me from tears – I'll give it to someone special.

Christmastime – mistletoe and wine! Children singing Christian rhyme,
With logs on the fire and gifts on the tree, a time to rejoice in the good that we see.

He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake,
He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake.

We're walking in the air, we're floating in the moonlit sky
The people far below are sleeping as we fly.

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas, just like the ones I used to know
Where the treetops glisten and children listen to hear sleigh bells in the snow.

Sleigh bells ring, are you listening? In the lane snow is glistening.
A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight, walking in the winter wonderland.

STAMFORD METHODIST CHURCH
presents

STAMFORD BRASS
with

A Christmas Spectacular

An Evening of Festive Favourites

7.30pm Saturday 17th December

Tickets £10 from the Arts Centre [01780 763203],
from the Well at the church or at the door

All proceeds to the Nixon Memorial Hospital in Sierra Leone
2nd Stamford Scout Group and Stamford Brass

