

Dear Friends,

This news sheet comes with a special sense of longing and anticipation, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, and get ready for the building work on our Project *Regenerate!* to begin.

Minister's Letter:

I write to you towards the end of a turbulent year, in which our news has been filled with the ongoing conflict in Syria, the continuing refugee crisis, and political change both here in the UK and abroad. After listening overnight to the unfolding news of the US presidential elections, I switched off the radio and took down the American essayist and environmental activist Rebecca Solnit's 'Hope in the Dark' from the shelf. It is all too easy to become disillusioned, worn down, and to feel small and powerless, but Solnit offers these words 'To hope is to give yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present inhabitable.' For those of us that dare to call ourselves followers of Jesus, our hope is found in a God who we are reminded in the Christ-child became vulnerable, poor, and rejected. Our hope is found in a God who lived alongside family and friends with the joys and sorrow that those relationships brings. This is the God who in Jesus offered his people life in all its fullness. This is the God we adore and worship, this is the God whose light refuses to be extinguished, this is the God who offers us hope which cannot be taken from us by any change in political or social climate, this is the God who stands alongside those who have been failed by our human systems. This is the God whose love for us knows no bounds and the knowledge of this love for

us demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is what allows us to carry the Christ light within us, sharing it and witnessing to it in every encounter at every opportunity. This is the God who requires us to give ourselves to the future, to work tirelessly for a world where the radical song of the Magnificat, in which the lowly will be lifted up and the hungry filled with good things, will one day become a recognisable reality. As we journey together we are encouraged by Paul's words in Ephesians 3:20-21.

'Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.'

May you know the presence, peace and love of the everlasting God this Christmas
Yours in Christ
Christine



Christmas Services

Sunday 18th December

10.30 am

Nativity & Holy Communion

6.00 pm

Candlelit Carol Service

Christmas Eve

12.00 noon

Carols in the Café followed by a

Short family nativity service

Christmas Day

10.00 am

All Age Christmas Service

A Very British Nativity

This advent sees the release of a short film highlighting some of the challenges facing asylum seekers in the UK through a modern retelling of the nativity story, produced by the Methodist Church, Baptist Union, URC and Church of Scotland.

Director of the film and policy adviser for the Churches, Grace Pengelly commented:

"Our Churches are very concerned about the degrading treatment and challenges faced by asylum seekers in the UK. Rather than providing the standard of care that we would wish for ourselves, many aspects of the UK's asylum system appear to add to the suffering already endured by those seeking refuge."

"Our hope is that in seeing this film people will be more aware of how hard this Christmas will be for some of the poorest members of our society."

Martha, aged 8, who attends a Methodist Church and played Mary in the film said:

"Mary must have felt tired because she did so much walking with her suitcase and her baby. She would have been sad because she couldn't find a home and worried about her baby. I think people should watch this film. We all need to help people who have left their home because something bad has happened."

The film is available on youtube, through the Methodist Church website and will be showing in the hall during advent.



News from the Church Family

Thanksgiving & Baptisms:

Daisy Alice Ramage
(daughter of Tanya and Frazer)
baptised on 4th December

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Weddings & Anniversaries:

Vera and Bill Hollinghurst
celebrated their 65th (blue sapphire)
Wedding Anniversary on 26th October.

Adam Burley & Yujie Zhang
who were married on 27th August.

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We remember and give thanks for the life of:

Janet Fennell who passed away
on 25th September.

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Any family news for future
newsletters to be passed to
Linda Tudor in the office.



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Project Regenerate!

We are thrilled to be able to say that Armitage Construction Limited, who have a great deal of experience in working on historic buildings, will begin work at Wesley in the middle of January. Our last Sunday in the worship area as it stands will be Sunday January 8th: our Covenant Service. Following the concert on Tuesday 10th, we will spend the week clearing out of the space, ready for the work to begin on Monday 16th (due to be completed by June).

Wesley Church Centre will remain open during the week, and Sunday worship will focus on the Hall. Tuesday lunchtime concerts will be held across the road at the Welsh Presbyterian Church.

We are now realising that the hard work of Project Regenerate! will not be completed when the building work is done! We need also to work on making space for different patterns of worship. This was one of the main reasons

for setting out on the project in the first place, and has been a significant part of the applications we have made for the grants which are helping to fund it.

We are hard at work planning the worship during what we are calling this 'transition' period. At the moment our hope is to pay particular attention to the way in which we gather and prepare for worship; then to spend some time worshipping all together, before separating for different activities (space in the hall means that we will struggle to get all of us in for the whole service); and then gathering again for the end of worship. The aim is that we will offer a sermon, some other activity to reflect on the theme, and activities focused for children and young people (though others can join them!)

Pray for those planning and doing the physical work on the building, and for those preparing and leading worship.



Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal 2016 #Lighttheway

We have been using material from Christian Aid during advent both in our worship and around the centre to help us as we seek to share the light that we recognise in Christ to a world where many experience fear and respond the global refugee crisis. Christian Aid's work encourages us to recognise that more than 65 million people are

fleeing from conflict and crises as they searching for refuge from violence and war, our brothers and sisters urgently needs shelter, clothes for winter and hope towards a brighter future. We each have the capacity and opportunity to make a difference and offer this hope, through our campaigning and our giving.

Our collection at the **Carol Service on the 18th December** will be in aid of the #Lighttheway appeal.

Further information can be found at www.christianaid.org.uk and catalogues for extraordinary gifts from Christian Aid are on the table at the back of church.