A decorative border of stylized Christmas trees surrounds the text. The trees are arranged in a repeating pattern along the top, bottom, and sides of the page. Each tree is a silhouette with horizontal lines and small dots representing ornaments and lights.

Epworth, Scunthorpe &
Gainsborough
Methodist Circuit

Travelling Nativity Diary



Advent 2023

Epworth, Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Methodist Circuit

The Travelling Nativity –

Order for a Time of Reflection

The Travelling Nativity is a set made up of colourful wooden 'Peg dolls', that pack into the Stable for easy transport. People were invited to 'Mix and Match' from the following ideas to suit their group.

- Set out the nativity figures where people can see them.
- Light the candle as a sign of light and hope.
- Bible reading - Luke 2 v 1-7 or Isaiah 9 v 6-7.
- Read a section from the 'Christmas Blessings' book
- Offer the following or another prayer:

Lord our God,

let your blessing come upon us.

May the lights of Christmas

and the figures of this Nativity

be a sign of your promise

to be with us throughout our life.

Bring your blessings on us all

as we undertake our journey through Advent.

May this time of preparation

be a time of unity and renewal.

As these figures go out into our circuit and communities,

we pray that they will serve as a witness

of your presence in our world today. AMEN.

- Sing a carol or listen to one on the CD.

Saturday 2nd December 2023

Epworth Wesley Memorial Methodist Church

Messy Church

We used the Nativity Figures as part of our Messy Church today.

The children retold the story and each time a character was mentioned, they found it in the box.



At the end of our
Christingle Service,
we shared the prayer.

We prayed that the figures and the Christingle Lights would help share the message of God's love this Christmastime, and that we too, would be shining lights, spreading the love of Christ throughout the Isle and beyond.



Sunday, December 3rd

Beltoft and Butterwick Methodist Church

Sunday Service

The Travelling Nativity arrived safely at Beltoft and Butterwick. Unfortunately, the weather conditions meant that it would be unsafe for people to travel to church on Sunday, and the service was cancelled and the church remained closed.



However, the Stewards took photographs of the Nativity and these will be placed on the Altar table, ready for the next service.

This means that all our church family can share in the lovely display and share fellowship.

We give thanks for God's Love this Christmastime, and throughout the coming year.

Monday 4th December

In the Circuit

A home visit

Today the Circuit Travelling Nativity came with Rev Vicki to visit the family of a Chapel Member who had died.

Their presence was a gentle reminder that

'God is with us'

- with us in times of sorrow and loss,
and with us in times of hope and joy.

As the Nativity figures continue their journey, may Christ journey alongside all who encounter them.



Tuesday 5th December

Winteringham, Old Brumby and Zoom

A day of journeying

The Circuit Nativity figures have been well travelled today.

They began as 'Guests of Honour' at Winteringham Chapel Coffee Morning, where everyone enjoyed hearing all the places they had already visited. We sang a carol together, to cheer the Nativity Figures on their way.

(By the way, if anyone is looking for marzipan nativity figures, for the top of a Christmas Cake, Winteringham is the place to go!)

In the middle of the day, the Circuit Nativity Figures made their way to Old Brumby, where they were on display during the 'Soup & Sweet' lunch. This ended with people sharing together in the short service set out on the card.



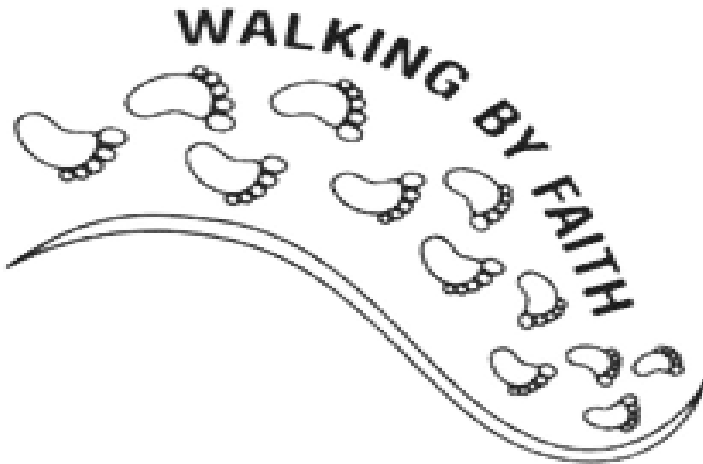
In the evening the Travelling Nativity participated in the 21st Century experience of attending the 'Epworth Stewards Meeting' on ZOOM!

Wednesday 6th December

Across the Circuit

Planning ahead

For where two or three are gathered together in my name,
I am there among them" Matthew 18:20



The Circuit Travelling Nativity joined gatherings of various sizes today - from a small staff meeting in the day, to the large evening Circuit Meeting.

May we know Christ's presence alongside us,
whether we are alone or in company.

Whether we are surrounded by familiar faces,
or in a bigger crowd.

Thursday 7th December

Ashby Wesley

Christmas Angels



Mary and Joseph joined Ashby Wesley Methodist Church for coffee today.

They helped to put angels and notices together, ready to go on the railings outside the church.

The angels are available for people to collect as they pass by the church.

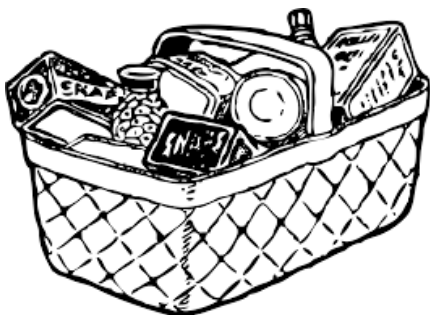


The joy of Christmas, and the birth of Our Lord, have been remembered in the drinking of coffee this morning.



Friday 8th December

Gathering supplies for the journey with Rev Vicki



Today, Mary, Joseph and Jesus took the 'Christmas Good News' outside the church walls, by coming around the supermarket with me, in my top jacket pocket.

No-one was brave enough to ask me about them, but I did have an interesting conversation with the check out operator about Carols!

(She said "it could be too much of a 'good thing' to listen to them all day, every day from the 1st of December until Christmas.")



Saturday 9th December



Crowle & Ealand and to Gainsborough

Coffee, Lunch and a Sleepover

The Travelling Nativity started the day at the Crowle and Ealand Methodist Church Christmas Coffee Morning.

Suitably refreshed, the Nativity travelled on to Gainsborough Methodist Church, where the Christmas Bazaar was taking place.



There were craft stalls, charity stalls and a raffle. (I don't think the Nativity Party had any soup, but it was delicious.)



The Nativity group spent the night in the church, which was lit by the lights on the tree and the lights on the Christmas Cross.



Sunday 10th December

Gainsborough Methodist Church

Toy Service

The Travelling Nativity had a prime spot while Rev Paul and Bronwen led our 3pm Toy Service, speaking in rhyme as they told us about Christmas.

We had been invited in advance to join in with the fun family service, by dressing up as one of the Nativity characters. The stars of the 'show' were Chris Smithson, who played the piano dressed as a King, complete with crown and cloak, and his wife Joan, who was an amazing donkey!

PACS (Performing Arts Club of St John's – a local community youth theatre group) came and performed the Carol of the Bells and two 'feel-good' songs from their recent shows.

A young father joined us for the service, with his 2 children – his son had got up in the morning and asked to go to church!

We were so pleased to be there in the afternoon as they had looked around for an open church



Monday 11th December

Lea Methodist Church

Monday Club

Today, the Travelling Nativity made its way to the 'Little Retreat @ Lea' and joined the Monday Club as they prepared for Christmas with a festive morning.



Pat, speaking for the Monday Club tells us - 'They had a lovely time, no knitting or art today. Singing carols, playing three different quizzes and eating some yummy cakes!'



The Monday Club meets fortnightly and everyone receives a warm welcome.

The Nativity Group spent the night at the home of Sue & Paul Brown.

Tuesday 12th December

A Gainsborough Tour



The day began for the Travelling Nativity with a visit to Joyce's home, where the Bible Study for GMC takes place on Tuesdays. The Nativity Group was centre stage as the group discussed

'The Light of Jesus' and how we might share that light with all we meet.

In the afternoon the Travelling Nativity went along to the Kid's Club at the Gainsborough town centre Parish Primary School. The children listened and retold the Christmas Story to one another and their helpers. The brightly coloured, shiny figures were a big hit with everyone.



Wednesday 13th December
Scotter Methodist Church
Carols in the Afternoon



A short journey north from Gainsborough brought our Nativity Travellers to Scotter Methodist Church. They were the guests of honour at the afternoon Carol Service, and delighted the congregation.

Susan admired the Nativity Set greatly, commenting on 'how the simply painted figures made a very impressive Nativity Scene.'



Thursday 14th December

Owston Ferry & Misterton Methodist Churches

Morning Coffee & Fish and Chip Lunch

Today's first visit for our Nativity group was to Owston Ferry for the 'Coffee Time' event.

The experience was a reminder of how Mary and Joseph had to stay in a stable, because there was no



room in the Inn for them.

It was standing room only in the meeting room that morning, so it is a good job the Nativity didn't take up much space.

I hope there will be space in people's hearts and minds though for the Christmas message.



On to Misterton, where the Travelers met the resident knitted Nativity, crafted by the Prayer Shawl Ministry Group. They arrived just in time to join in with the monthly Fish and Chip Lunch.

The diners enjoyed listening to the Christmas Story and sang together the Carol - Away in a Manger .

The Lord brings us peace and joy at Christmas and throughout the year.



Friday 15th December

Yaddlethorpe Methodist Church

Carols and Mince Pies

The Nativity joined us at Yaddlethorpe for our afternoon of Carols and Mince Pies.

This event attracts friends who do not come to Chapel, but support us faithfully at our other events.



★
For
unto
you is
born this
day in the
city of David
a saviour, which
is Christ the Lord.
Luke
2:11

The little figures reminded us all of the 'true meaning of Christmas' once again.

Saturday 16th December

Winterton

Cornerstone Community Cafe



Today, the Circuit Travelling Nativity visited Cornerstone Community Cafe in Winterton. The figures were admired by different customers and volunteers, and the Christmas Story was shared.

Carols were very popular at Cornerstone - and we managed to squeeze in a number of 'special requests'.



Sunday 17th December
Althorpe Methodist Church
Carol Service



The Circuit Travelling Nativity joined Althorpe for their Carol Service. The Nativity Set added to the colour and beauty of all the Christmas decorations.

The beauty of the message of God's love in Jesus was joyfully sung in the Carol Service.

The Holy Family spent the evening and night in a private family home, where they were set out in the dining room, facing the window.

This meant that passers-by could see them easily!

Monday 18th December

Alkborough

Bible Fellowship

Our Nativity stood in pride of place, in the sitting room of our Alkborough host, whilst our Ecumenical (ANGLICAN, BAPTIST, and METHODIST) group met for Bible Fellowship.

We were studying how the writings of Paul help us to understand more about the love of Jesus. We looked at Timothy 1, chapter 1, v1-2 and 12-17.

Our leader, Helen, read out the prayer to conclude our time together.



Tuesday 19th December

Rest & Recouperation at Winterton

The Circuit Travelling Nativity had a 'Rest Day' to reflect on the past progress, and to prepare for the final stage of the journey.

The 90 mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem would have taken Mary and Joseph a minimum of 4 days, if they had travelled eight hours each day at an average pace of 2½ miles per hour.

Our Travelling Nativity covered a minimum of 335 miles across the Epworth, Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Methodist Circuit. Fortunately the Travelling Nativity had the whole of the Advent Season to complete their journey.

If the Travelling Nativity wasn't able to visit your church or event this time, perhaps you can work to remedy this in Advent 2024?



Wednesday 20th December

A Lincolnshire Ramble with Rev Vicki



The Circuit Travelling Nativity went exploring the Lincolnshire countryside today, to share Christmas Greetings with one of the Circuit Local Preachers staying nearby in a Care Home.

She was very happy to receive these special guests, they reminded her of her 'Home Church' in the Circuit.

We shared the prayers and bible readings between us. (she loves to read Bible passages in her local church via the blessing of Zoom!)



Finally we sang the carol 'In the bleak mid-winter' together – being especially touched by the last verse and last line.

'Yet what I can, I give him – give my heart.'

Thursday 21st December

Messingham

A Curious Cat joins the Travelling Nativity!

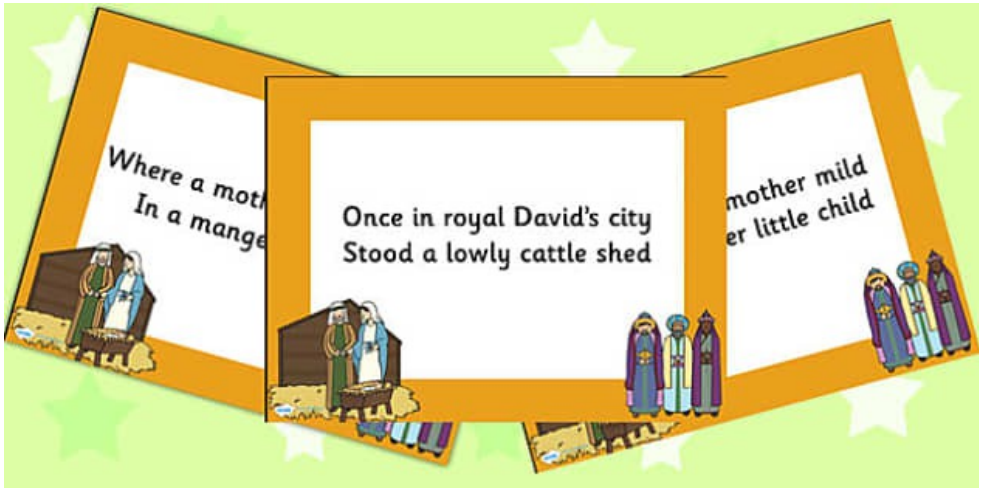
Today, the Circuit Travelling Nativity paid a visit to the Rev Renée Howling, where the group sat proudly alongside her home-made Crib Scene.



The cat showed great interest in this new arrival.

We read the bible reading and prayer, then sang a carol together.

Rev Renée requested 'Once in Royal David's City' as her favourite carol.



The Travelling Nativity may not have made it to Messingham Chapel, but it still made it to Messingham!

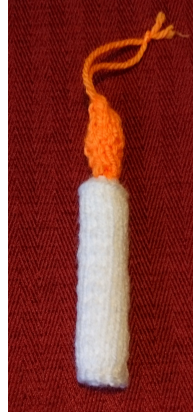
Friday 22nd December

Scunthorpe

The Forge Project & A Home Visit

The Travelling Nativity came with the Winterringham folk to deliver all the produce they had collected for The Forge.

We left them one of Epworth's knitted candles as a parting gift.



Later, the Travelling Nativity visited a member of a congregation, who is housebound.

With her husband, we talked about the different sorts of nativity set – including one they had - in the form of an Advent Calendar, (with a different figure behind each door).



Saturday 23rd December

A home visit in the Circuit

**The Lord is my shepherd. He restores my soul.
He leads me by still waters. He restores my soul**

The Travelling Nativity visited one of the circuit Stewards today.



They helped to bring some Christmas cheer as she recovers from her accident.

We agreed that learning to value the gift of each day, and not to take things for granted, was something important to remember.

Whatever is happening in our lives, the Gift of God's Love in Christ remains.



Sunday 24th December
Haxey Methodist Church
A Christmas Eve Service

The Circuit Travelling Nativity came to Haxey today, and we lit the 4th Advent Candle. This day marks the end of Advent and we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, tomorrow.



Everyone took part in our Christmas Eve Service, either reading a bible passage, saying prayers or joining the singing. We lit the candles and celebrated the blessings of Jesus' birth together.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Monday 25th December

Winterton Methodist Church

Christmas Day



The Circuit Travelling Nativity finished its journey today, at the Christmas Service at Winterton, and the Nativity Group were Guests of Honour on this special Celebration Day.

We hope that they enjoyed the jingle bells, the dancing and the cake to mark Jesus' birthday.

The presence of the Circuit Travelling Nativity has helped us feel the connection with other disciples of Jesus across the Circuit, and with Jesus our Prince of Peace himself.

