

 ***Newsletter*** 

December 2024



*From Rev Vicki's
desk*



Hello Everyone,

Last year the Methodist Church Connexional theme for Advent was an 'Out of the Ordinary Christmas'. However, personally speaking, it is Advent /Christmas 2025 that will be out of the ordinary. What is the reason for this? My sabbatical. This year I will not have the ordinary church based stuff of my Advent/Christmas. No church Advent candle lighting, no carol services with my regular congregations, no Christingle, no Christmas day celebrations with my circuit church family. Instead, I will be observing the time for personal reflection and attending worship with an ecumenical flavour. This will definitely seem rather unusual. Many of us like our Christmas traditions – Christmas isn't Christmas without the Midnight service or without the candlelit carols. Traditions offer us the opportunity to build up layers of meaning for special celebrations and yet, the occasion do something totally different can open our eyes to new dimensions of the divine story.

However. we celebrate Christmas, whether independently, with friends or in a family group, I hope that each of us will be able to experience something of the message of hope and peace of the season. This message is not restricted to any particular way of marking Christmas. The message is universal in its reach and scope. My gratitude extends to all those in the Circuit who will make the gift of my sabbatical possible through their time and skills. For Rev Debbie and Rev Paul offering pastoral cover to the churches in the north of the circuit. (The individual churches are aware which minister is their 1st point of contact.) For Rev Angy Long offering to cover general enquiries that should be handled by a Superintendent and for Alison Godfrey (in the District Office) and Rev Neil Vickers for covering property matters. For the Circuit Senior Steward, Hazel

Jackson, who will chair the Circuit Leadership Team. What a blessing they all are to our Circuit – as well as to me!

This year's Methodist Connexional resource for Advent and Christmas is 'Hush the noise'. I can recommend the materials available online:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmasresources/>

The materials are based on the Christmas carol 'It Came Upon a Midnight Clear'. As the carol suggests, I hope in the 'solemn stillness' of my sabbatical to 'hear the angels sing' more clearly. Furthermore, this is not the end of the story. Having heard the angels sing, I hope I can join with others in responding to their harmony so that ultimately

'...all the world repeat the song

Which now the angels sing.' (Hymns & Psalms 108)

Advent & Christmas Blessings to you all,

Rev Vicki



Christmas is forever, not for just one day. For loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away.

Norman Wesley Brooks



Ministers day off

Rev Vicki Atkinson

Saturday

Rev Paul Braisdell

Friday

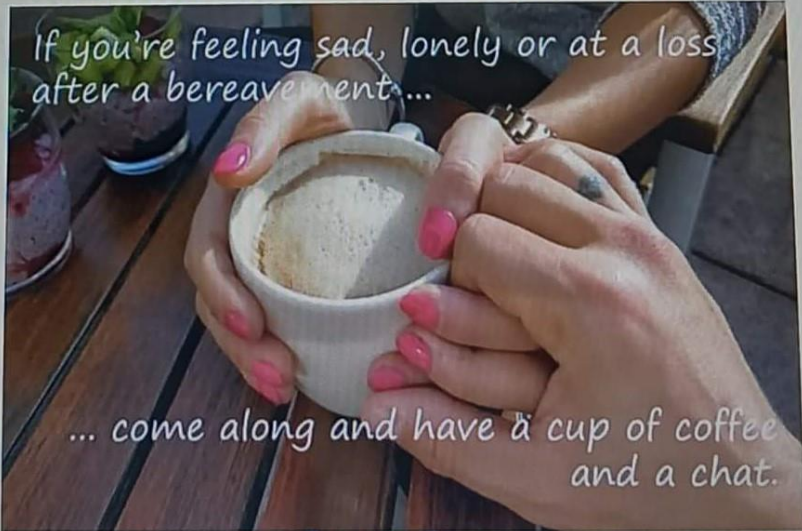
Rev Debbie Caulk

Saturday



Ashby Wesley Church **1st Wednesday every month**

*If you're feeling sad, lonely or at a loss
after a bereavement...*



*... come along and have a cup of coffee
and a chat.*

2pm to 3pm

Everyone is welcome to join us.



**A Prayer For the
Epworth, Scunthorpe & Gainsborough
Circuit (17/1)
2023/24**



Loving God,

A new year has dawned for us, and we are filled with hope that only You can provide. Through worry and uncertainty, help us to remember that you are here with us to give us courage and to embrace the future with faith. Together we pray.

We thank you for new beginnings that bring the voice of hope to the villages of our new Circuit of Epworth, Scunthorpe and Gainsborough. May your peace watch over us.

Caring God,

Watch over us as we seek to be your living disciples in our communities. Help us to show your love as we meet in our churches and in our interaction with all those we encounter, so that through our words and actions we can help others to draw closer to you.

Help us to work together to make the best decisions and guide us along the new direction you have created for us. May your Holy Spirit inspire us so that we can walk along this pathway in faith, with Jesus in the centre of our lives.

We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.



A message from Hazel – Senior Circuit Steward

Dear friends,

I'm sharing these few verses with you to cement my heartfelt thanks for all the love, care, compassion and support you have shown me over the past months following my accident at the circuit meeting on September 10th.

I have been humbled, overwhelmed and lost the words (something those who know me well, know that doesn't happen often) for the messages/texts/emails of goodwill, cards, flowers, lovely treats and baking along with housework and shopping, lifts to and from meetings, services and hospital appointments, and not forgetting all your prayers too... I have been kept afloat spiritually, physically and emotionally by everyone's loving care, but I am not surprised because we have a loving caring circuit exercising Jesus' teaching of loving one another and our neighbour and where love is, God is.....



love is the touch of intangible joy, love is the force that no fear can destroy, love is the goodness we gladly applaud. God is where love is, for love is of God

love is the lilt in a lingering voice, love is the hope that can make us rejoice, love is the cure for the frightened and flawed. God is where love is, for love is of God

love is the light in the tunnel of pain, love is the will to be whole once again love is the trust of a friend on the road. God is where love is, for love is of God

(words by Alison M Robertson from the church hymnary 4th edition Canterbury press)

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone of you across the circuit, a very blessed, peaceful Christmas and healthy New Year.

Hazel

Lea Methodist Chapel

Here at Lea Methodist Chapel, we have had the kind help of Laura since the middle of September. Currently a Year 9 student at Queen Elizabeth's High School, Gainsborough, Laura is doing three months' voluntary work as part of her Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award scheme. So far, she has worked in the Chapel garden, clearing up dead leaves and pruning back and deadheading old plants, and cleaning the Chapel windows (see photo, taken with permission). She has also helped serve breakfast and drinks at a Retreat Day, done the washing and drying up after services and counted up our Action for Children charity contributions. Future activities will include helping



out at our Coffee Morning on 23rd November and baking for church funds in December. Thank you, Laura for all your help.

Thanks to Anne-Marie Savage for permission to publish this photo in the newsletter.

Shared by Pat Gray

Little Tommy proudly tells his parents that he knows God's first name! Dad asks him what it is. Tommy says, "We sang it this morning. "Andy walks with me, Andy talks to me!"

Source : Christian Humor, Facebook

Epworth Wesley's invitation to -



Come to an Animal Blessing Service

This is Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of Jesus as a little boy, with his mother, Mary, & Jesus is holding his pet cat! I wonder what Jesus named his cat?!? What do you think?

◆ Bring your favourite stuffed animal(s) and/or a picture of your pet(s) – especially if you've ever had a pet you've now 'loved & lost' and you want to give thanks for having that dear one in your life – and especially if your pet is a budgie or a crocodile or a tarantula!

◆ And bring a picture of your pet if your pet is sick – we'll have a special little prayer you can take home with you to pray with your dear pet.

Source of photo – www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/

Wow what a wonderful service we shared at the end of October 2024 with the Rev Debbie and the Epworth Wesley Worship Band as they led us as we celebrated our love and respect of animals.

Invitations and posters were shared with the community and the various groups coming to Church in the weeks leading up to the service. I for one, was really looking forward to this service - as like many folk, my most favourite place to be is with a furry four legged pet. After losing my beautiful Sprocker Spaniel, Jessie in June, the

invitation that I could bring her photo to this service and a blessing would be said over her filled me with great joy!

The service started as we looked at the sketch and imagined a cat who lived with the Holy Family (as depicted above by Da Vinci). We shared our ideas about a possible name for the cat and imagined it living with the family in the stable and following them around. Folk joining in with the service via Zoom were included in this conversation too as they were asked to text Rev Debbie with their thoughts (while her mobile phone was put on silent mode). Everyone in the congregation got to share the name of their special animal companions, whether past or present, and so the service felt deeply personal. What would an animal blessing service be without bringing in St Francis and learning of his life and works. We learned about William Wilberforce and John Wesley who were leading figures who promoted compassion for animals and were concerned with animal welfare. For some further reading John Wesley wrote an essay on the souls of animals in *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation. The General Deliverance – Sermon 60 - based on Romans 8: 19 – 22*. Did you know that Christians were responsible for campaigning for the first legislation against cruelty towards animals and founded the RSPCA in the first part of the 19th century!

For those of us who have been blessed with the unconditional love and loyalty of a dog (s), Rev Debbie ended our service by sharing a poem that took us to imagine, “What if Jesus had a dog? The author imagined Jesus in Gethsemane and while the disciples slept, the dog was there awake and eager to be beside Jesus. Many a time in my own life, while my family have slept and I have stayed up praying late into the night, my dog has been there close beside me and so this poem was so relatable and really struck a chord with me. I found for days and weeks afterwards, I was able to speak openly with my friends and family about this animal blessing service and we openly shared our ponderings. Many of my friends and family don’t come to

Church and so its been a huge blessing to be able to connect and share my faith – our common ground has been our love of animals.

Next year, it is hoped that instead of stuffed animals, we'll be able to bring our pets to the Blessing Service. I can hardly wait!

Louise Howard

Epworth Wesley



Further reading [Methodists and Other Animals: Time to Reclaim a Legacy – Theology Everywhere](#)

From Gainsborough

Hi All

It feels like I hear “Christmas starts earlier every year” earlier every year and I wish I had a lump of cheese for every time I’ve heard it.

Anyway up, I’m sending my greetings to you all for the Festive Season, and trusting you are in decent fettle.

As always, the GMC team have been beavering away, planning and running their events.

Every first Saturday morning a group of men meet at Wetherspoons for breakfast. I still need to work out a way to gatecrash that event. At the beginning of November, we celebrated our Church Anniversary with Rev Paul. Somehow, he chose the same hymn “**we will build a house**” as we had for the 50th jubilee of the building in 2018, and at its inauguration in 1968. Afterwards, I managed to sneak a lift to the Golf Club where a sizeable gang had a slap-up meal. It’s funny how food attracts us!

Do your chapel fill Christmas Gift shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse, who then deliver them to needy kids in a far-off land? I'm sure GMC can help you start a project for 2025.

Now here's where my tiny brain cell gets confused. Our annual BAZAAR has had a name change to "**Christmas Market**". Are we competing to replace Lincoln's? It is on 30th November between 10 and 1 and "Brews Up" will be doing their usual posh coffees and YESsss NIBBLES. Craft stalls will be in abundance.

Following a week later... instead of a Service in the morning, it will be a "**Christmas Celebration**" to start at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Now, what's great about this, is that I overheard them describe it as (CAFÉ) style. I don't think they've forgotten our service of **CAROLS**... That is on the books for 22nd December... must save my voice until then.

There will be plenty of opportunity to stock up my larder for Christmas with all the bookings we are getting; poor bookings secretary really works hard.

GMC Band?... well, our bassist changed guitar to a normal six string one. He really makes it sing, and hidden his CV.. we reckon he has played alongside top stars... wow.

I've been on tour again. They said they were going to a place called SKEGGY after the service, so I found my place in the rucksack and settled in. Fish and Chips, followed by ice cream what more could I ask for? Then they stuffed a long stick thing into the bag, it was called "rock". How many times do we hear 'Jesus is my Rock'? I tasted it... a bit minty and sweet. Was this inspiration for John Newton's "**How sweet the name of Jesus Sounds**"? maybe not as he was late 18th century.

I love my rock in both senses and can't get the tune out of my head. Stay firm on the rock and pray for one another.

Have a peaceful and Blessed Christmas.



Anon-e-mouse



Shared by Sue Brown from Gainsborough

Would like to thank [Sue Brown](#) and [Gainsborough Methodist Church](#) group for donating these lovely blankets for our warm space



👍 Like 💬 Comment ✉️ Send ➦ Share

WINTERINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH NEWS

WATER AID

We mentioned in our last newsletter our involvement in collecting small change for the above charity. We report through peoples generous contributions, and we have recently sent *Water Aid* £112.92. This money will be used in third world countries to provide clean drinking water and water for toilet use.

HARVEST FESTIVALS

We were approached by the local under 5 group to cater for their Harvest Festival in the Chapel. We were highly delighted to welcome 15 children and four leaders to a short mid-week service and we sang a few harvests based choruses. Rev Vicki led short prayers and a harvest story. They brought along lots of food for *The Forge*. Therefore, it has been a good outreach experience for both our Chapel and the under 5 group.

MAIN HARVEST FESTIVAL CHAPEL CELEBRATION

We held an all-age service which was well attended with the congregation bringing along gifts of food for *The Forge*.



32 years ago, a young child came to our Sunday school and continued to eventually become a leader. She is the daughter of the Rev Henry and Mrs Dubois. She now lives with her family near Sleaford, and I proudly report that Becky is now a local preacher and holds an important lay role within

the Methodist Church. It was heartwarming to hear Becky preach and lead worship.

Becky, pictured above, with two of our young people at the harvest table.

Thankfully Winteringham Methodist Church along, with others, sowed the right Christian seeds which are now coming to fruition. We often feel our work within the church has little or no influence on people we meet, but I vouch that is incorrect. We say well done Becky and thank you for taking a heartwarming service for us.

CLOTHING FOR THE FORGE

We are currently collecting items of clothing to help clients who are Homeless and visit The Forge.



BOX IN A BARROW

Round the village food collection for The Forge during Advent. We are currently getting the wheel oiled up on the barrow and contacting residents to host The Barrow.

People are very responsive and, in the past have given

such a lot for this good cause.

SHOE BOX APPEAL

We currently have 18 people involved in this annual event where most of these are residents who kindly give of their time and money to help this good cause.

APPEAL THANK-YOU

We say a huge thank you to Andrew Wilson and Mr Ken Jacobs for all the advertising they undertake for our Chapel. The posters and Winteringham website are a success for us.

Pictured above, delivery of harvest goods to the Forge

Consent has been given to publish the above-mentioned photos.

Share by Will Maw



North Lincolnshire Sanctuary Group

Thank you very much for all your generosity – we've been amazed with all the many donations; arriving so quickly following our appeal. You've donated kitchen items, mirrors, curtains, bedding, toys to name just a few. Thank you all very much, on behalf of our group and the families moving into our area who have lost so much; thank you for donating items to enable others to start rebuilding their lives; it is appreciated by so many. Thank you also for supporting our fundraising concert in November & for all the prayer support.

An event we've done this year is around kite flying which is an 800 yearold Afghanistan tradition, showing skill and cultural pride. Children make kites out of paper & try to knock each other's kites out of the sky. It was banned by the Taliban, alongside dance and music for a number of years.

In 2022 to mark one year since the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban; people in over 30 cities worldwide participated in kite festivals celebrating the Afghan tradition. This was an act of solidarity, telling the world not to forget Afghanistan & its' people.

The Taliban imposed many rules including:

- placing restrictions on women & girls trying to erase them from public places.
- Those peacefully expressing views critical of the Taliban, faced disappearance & torture.
- Woman were banned from doing many jobs outside the home.
- Women had to have a male chaperone when travelling more than 72km.
- Beauty salons were closed down.
- Women were not allowed to participate in sports activities.

North Lincolnshire Sanctuary Group Joined in the kite festival in 2022 & since then have repeated it annually; raising awareness of Afghanistan & refugees.

Kites were made at the event by the families of refugees in our area. The children loved making them, colouring them and decorating them before flying them. You may have seen the display of kites at Ashby Wesley Chapel.

Please continue to remember Afghanistan in your prayers. For all Afghans who have had to flee their country. For all refugees all over the world, fleeing their homelands for many different reasons. Thank you for your support.

Kirsty Barker





Methodist Women in Britain

For women, for justice, for Christ

Ladies from our circuit have enjoyed taking part in two recent events. The first on Thursday 17th October was held at St Giles Methodist Church, Lincoln where we

received a very warm welcome from the ladies of the church. Their minister, Rev Juliet Wrigglesworth led our day from start to finish, and what an interesting day we had.

Entitled 'Safely held and deeply loved' the day was based on the 1669 painting by Rembrandt called 'Return of the Prodigal Son' and also on the writing of Henri Nouwen about this painting. In a nutshell it was a journey from darkness to light inviting us to dare to step into the centre and be held in the loving arms of God.

Juliet guided us to explore the younger son's journey from darkness to light, the older son's move from bitter resentment to joy and to consider the Father – back to the loving embrace. In honest conversation and fellowship with others, Juliet led us in a thought provoking and affirming day.

On Saturday 19th October five ladies from this circuit travelled to Stamford in the south of the county for the World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women Day. Here ladies from many parts of the UK gathered to listen to and learn from Dr Nancy Day, a Kenyan opera singer and gifted communicator. Entitled 'Embodied Worship – Put your whole self in' Nancy introduced us to the joy and exuberance of Kenyan worship and encouraged us to use movement within our worship as much as we use our voices.

We sang the 'Hokey Pokey' several times to encourage us to move; we learnt songs in Swahili and attempted to move and sing those; we wrote new lines – in English – to a traditional Swahili song; we laughed, we were moved and we came away spiritually fed.

Methodist Women in Britain days are open to all and are times of fellowship, fun and learning. MWiB also has grant money available and I would encourage you to visit our website www.mwib.org.uk to see what is available to support mission at your church.

Bronwen Braidell

Dates for your Diary

Lincolnshire Spring Day – Thursday 27th March at Holbeach Methodist Church
– Rev Vivienne Smith

Lincolnshire Summer Day – Thursday 12th June at Wesley Memorial Church, Epworth
– Madeleine Reed (Helen Kim Memorial Scholar)

Lincolnshire Autumn Day – Wednesday 1st October at Immingham Methodist Church
– Rev Leonora Wassell (MWiB CoChair)



Methodist Women
in Britain

Swanwick Conference 2025

this little light of mine ...

Rev. Dr. Sonia Hicks draws on her own experience as a Black woman Presbyter as she speaks about the difficulty of letting the light of Christ shine brightly but also challenges us not to allow that light to go out no matter what the cost.

Come and be challenged and encouraged.

Friday 4th to Sunday 6th April 2025

at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire
with keynote speaker

Rev Dr Sonia Hicks

(President of Methodist Conference 2021-2022)

plus worship, workshops, fellowship & friendship

Cost for the weekend £200 (Bursary's & District help available)

(Booking opens mwib.org.uk 2nd January 2025)

Contact Rita Rowe – ritarowe18@gmail.com to go our District mailing list

Contact Bronwen Braidell – communications.mwib@gmail.com for national news

Keep up to date with all things MWiB at mwib.org.uk or join our Facebook page



Christian Aid News

Deacon Cedric May received recognition of his 60 years of support and service to Christian Aid in October 2024. Whilst attending an ecumenical coffee morning for Christian Aid at St Andrews Church, Epworth Mrs Jackie May read out a greeting from Jez Gowers-Cromie and presented Deacon Cedric with a certificate of gratitude.

"Cedric,

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your incredible commitment and service over the past 60 years in supporting Christian Aid and organising the Epworth Christian Aid Group. Your dedication has not only helped raise significant funds locally but has also made a profound impact on the lives of some of the most poor and vulnerable people around the world. (Cedric has been involved in the Epworth Group for the past 8 years) The Epworth Christian Aid Group has raised an impressive £34,000 over the years. When adjusted for inflation, this amount equates to £64,000 in today's money.

Thank you once again from us all at Christian Aid for your inspiring generosity and unwavering support for our work. Warm regards, Christian Aid"

The Epworth Scunthorpe & Gainsborough Circuit would also like take this opportunity to extend their thanks and congratulations to Deacon Cedric on such excellent work and faithful service.

MESSINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH

Program for December 2024

Worship each week – Sunday - 10:45am

1st Thursday each month – 10:00am - Holy Communion

2nd Tuesday each month – 2:00pm - Tuesday Club

10th Dec. Social afternoon with the Messingham Handbell Ringers

3rd Wednesday each month – 11:00am - Light Bite – lunch club

4th Wednesday each month – 10:00am – Coffee Morning

December is the final month of our annual autumn appeal; this year we are supporting the RNLI who are celebrating their 200th anniversary. Founded in 1824 the RNLI currently has over two hundred stations and operates around 440 lifeboats of various classes. In the two hundred years of its existence 146,277 lives have been saved, that is an average of two lives per day over the two hundred years.



Please, hold the work of all the emergency services, and particularly the RNLI, in your prayers.

'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you'
(Isaiah 43: 2).

Colin Cowling

It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you.



Mother Teresa

Events for the Yuletide season



**WESLEY MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH
HIGH STREET, EPWORTH**

*Come and join us at Messy Church and make a Christingle
Saturday 7th December at 10.30 am. All ages welcome*

**Throughout Advent a series of themed services “Hush the noise”
Sunday mornings at 10.30 am**

*Carols by Candlelight
Sunday 15th December at 6.00 pm
with the Isle Choral Singers*

**Sunday 22nd December at 10.30 am Contemporary Worship
and 4.30 pm Winter Solstice Prayer**

*Christmas Eve Service Tuesday 24th December
4.30 - 5.30 pm Family Nativity Service
and 7.30 pm Christmas Communion*

**Christmas Morning Family Service
Wednesday 25th December at 10.00 am**

*Wesley Memorial Methodist Church Website
<https://www.esqmethodist.org.uk>*

*Find us on Facebook:
[www.facebook.com/WesleyMemorialMethodistChurch Epworth](https://www.facebook.com/WesleyMemorialMethodistChurchEpworth)*

CAROLS IN EPWORTH

*Carols in Epworth Market Place
Saturday 21st December at 10.00 am*

*Carols in Epworth Market Place
Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24th December 6.00 to 7.00 pm*



MWiB Christmas

Tuesday 3rd December, 2.30pm at Brigg Methodist Church
- a Christmas Celebration - Bring & Share Tea.

OLD BRUMBY UNITED CHURCH

The Scunthorpe Rotary Festival of Christmas Trees takes place on December 8th/9th and 13th/14th/15th December with many local music and entertainment groups performing, free entry and refreshments to buy.

We will be holding a Christmas Day service at 10:00 led by David Sanderson.

Scunthorpe Festival of Christmas Trees 2024

With financial assistance from  **Rotary Club of Scunthorpe** 

Over 60 Individually decorated trees
Live musical entertainment
Refreshments

Free Entry!

Old Brumby United Church, Ashby Rd. Scunthorpe.
7th, 8th, 13th, 14th & 15th December
Saturdays & Friday 10.30am to 5.00pm
Sundays 12.noon - 4.00pm

Donations invited. They will be shared equally between:  & 

**Old Brumby United Church,
Ashby Road, Scunthorpe,**

Invites you to these services

Saturday December 14th **Christingle Service 4.30pm**
led by Mr Lawrie Holtby

Sunday December 15th **Civic Service 10.30am**
(as part of the Rotary Club
Festival of Trees)
led by Mr Lawrie Holtby

Christmas Day Service 10am
led by Mr David Sanderson

All are welcome



LAUGHTON METHODIST CHURCH

Laughton will be celebrating Christmas this year in the following ways:

By hosting a candlelit Carol Service on Thursday 19th December at 6pm led by Rev Paul. There will be tea, coffee and mince pies to follow.



By having a half hour service on Christmas morning, 25th December, at 10am led by Kevin Wilbur.

Everyone is very welcome to attend these special services.

From the mouth of babes

The Sunday School teacher was telling the story of the Nativity, and had just finished the part about there being 'No room at the Inn'. A small voice piped up "I blame Joseph, he should have booked".

On another occasion, the teacher was exploring the children's notion of God.

She asked, "Tommy, who is God?"

Six year old Tommy furrowed his brows and thought for a moment or two about the question. Suddenly he brightened, and with a smile said: "I think God is the man who saved the Queen".

R.D.

(Christian Crackers - compiled by Phil Mason)

Christmas Traditions and Customs



The Christmas Pickle

The tradition of the Christmas Pickle has got to be one of the strangest modern Christmas customs, in that no one is quite sure why it exists at all!

In the 1880s Woolworth stores started selling glass ornaments imported from [Germany](#) and some were in the shape of various fruit and vegetables. It seems that pickles must have been among the selection!

Around the same time it was claimed that the Christmas Pickle was a very old German tradition and that the pickle was the last ornament hung on the Christmas tree and then the first child to find the pickle got an extra present.

However, the claim that it's an old German tradition seems to be a total myth! Not many people in Germany have even heard of the Christmas Pickle! (Similarly in Russia virtually no one knows the supposedly Russian [story of Babushka!](#))

Some families now have the tradition of hanging the pickle on the tree, with the first person/child to find it getting a present. But it probably didn't start in Germany!



Christmas Pickle Legends

There are two other rather far-fetched stories linking the pickle to Christmas.

One features a fighter in the American Civil War who was born in Bavaria (an area of what is now Germany). He was a prisoner, and

starving, he begged a guard for one last pickle before he died. The guard took pity on him and gave a pickle to him. The pickle gave him the mental and physical strength to live on!

The other story is linked to [St. Nicholas](#). It's a medieval tale of two Spanish boys traveling home from a boarding school for the holidays. When they stopped at an inn for the night, the evil innkeeper, killed the boys and put them in a pickle barrel. That evening, St. Nicholas stopped at the same inn, and found the boys in the barrel and miraculously bought them back to life!

There is an old legend about St. Nicholas rescuing boys from a barrel but the barrel was originally holding meat for pies - not pickles!

So it's most likely that an ornament salesman, with a lot of spare pickles to sell, invented the legend of the Christmas Pickle!

The American city of Berrien Springs, MI (also known as the Christmas Pickle Capital of the World) has an annual pickle festival held during the early part of December.

Some bad Christmas cracker jokes

*What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney?
Claustrophobia!*

*Why did Santa go to the doctor?
Because of his bad "elf"!*

*Why did Santa's helper see the doctor?
Because he had a low "elf" esteem!*

*What kind of motorbike does Santa ride?
A Holly Davidson!*

www.whychristmas.com



Journeying

8h · 🌐



You are the peace of all things calm,
You are the place to hide from harm.
You are the light that shines in dark,
You are the heart's eternal spark.
You are the door that's open wide,
You are the guest who waits inside.
You are the light, the truth, the way,
You are my Saviour this very day.

Celtic Blessing from the first millennium



www.journeying.co.uk

A Methodist Way of Life

A Methodist Way of Life encourages us to grow together.
Make time to discuss these questions regularly with others.

Worship

- What is the pattern of your prayer life?
- How easy or hard do you find it to pray?
- What has spoken to you recently in worship or in the Bible?
- When, lately, have you felt close to God or distant from God?

Learning and Caring

- How have you practised generosity since we last met?
- How have you shown hospitality to others recently?
- How are you caring for yourself?
- How and what are you learning now?

Service

- How are you seeking to serve others in your communities and beyond? What has helped or hindered you in your service of others?
- How are you caring for God's creation?
- How are you using God's gifts (including your financial resources)?
- What issues of injustice are you currently concerned about? What are you doing in response?

Evangelism

- When was the last time you were able to talk about God?
- What opportunities to share your faith have there been since we last met?
- How have you responded to opportunities to share your faith?
- Is there anyone you might invite to consider Christian faith?

How can we support each other in our Way of Life commitments?

A Methodist Way of Life

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

Worship

- We will pray daily.
- We will worship with others regularly.
- We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.

Learning and Caring

- We will care for ourselves and those around us.
- We will learn more about our faith.
- We will practise hospitality and generosity.

Service

- We will help people in our communities and beyond.
- We will care for creation and all God's gifts.
- We will challenge injustice.

Evangelism

- We will speak of the love of God.
- We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus.
- We will share our faith with others.

**May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church,
for the transformation of the world.**

The **Methodist** Church 

13. Jesus was Conceived to Virgin Mary

Luke 1:26-38 KJV

... the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

For with God nothing shall be impossible.

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.



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13. Jesus was Conceived to Virgin Mary

ANGEL	GABRIEL	REIGN
BARREN	GIVE	SAW
BLESSED	HAIL	SHALL
BORN	HIGHLY	SIXTH
BRING	HOUSE	SON
CONCEIVE	JACOB	THRONE
COUSIN	MANNER	TROUBLED
DEPARTED	MARY	VIRGIN
ESPOUSED	NAZARETH	WOMEN
FORTH	OVERSHADOW	WOMB



Lectionary readings for December 2024 to February 2025

1 st December	Psalm 25:1-10 Luke 21:25-36
8 th December	Psalm 85 Luke 3:1-6
15 th December	Psalm 126 Luke 3:7-18
22 nd December	Psalm 80:1-7 Luke 1:39-45(46-55)
29 th December	Psalm 148 Luke 2:41-52
5 th January	Psalm 147:12-20 John 1:(1-9) 10-18
12 th January	Psalm 29 Luke 3:15-17,21-22
19 th January	Psalm 36:5-10 John 2:1-11
26 th January <i>Holocaust Memorial Day</i>	Psalm 19 Luke 4:14-21
2 nd February	Psalm 71:1-6 Luke 4:21-30
9 th February <i>Racial Justice Sunday</i>	Psalm 138 Luke 5:1-11
16 th February	Psalm 1 Luke 6:17-26
23 rd February	Psalm 37:1-11,39-40 Luke 6:27-38



John Wesley quote

“The church changes the world not by making converts but by making disciples”



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