

The Ambassador

December 2017 - January 2018

The Magazine Of Market Harborough
Methodist Circuit

www.harboroughmethodistcircuit.org.uk



All of us in Market Harborough, Kibworth, Naseby and Husbands Bosworth Methodist Churches and Gartree Christian Fellowship are:-

Ambassadors for Christ

Dear friends,

Another year draws to a close, and (as I write this in mid-November) the commercial world is earnestly engaging in its annual task of convincing us to spend more than we can afford for the sake of giving our loved ones (and friends and colleagues and anyone else we can think of) things they don't really need and probably won't appreciate, much of which will be returned to the shops, or eaten, or simply wasted, come mid-January. As I look around the town centre, there's a familiar weariness on people's faces: "Here we go again! But let's start a bit earlier this year so that we might have some time to actually enjoy it!"



Thank you, Ebenezer, for your Christmas message. Now – where has our minister gone?

My job at times like this is to remind people to look behind the commercial madness to the "real reason for Christmas". (*So it's your job to be Mr Grumpy, is it?*) I find myself having to point out the real joy in a season that we have turned into two months of stress and over-spending. (*Oh it's about 'joy' is it? You'd never guess it by reading this article, so far!*) It all seems very ironic, when the real Christmas story is about a struggling mum and dad, whose baby is born into the utmost poverty, living under an oppressive government and forced to flee as refugees. It's a story where there isn't a lot of obvious joy... apart from in the child who is born to be the hope of the world. (*Slightly better, you've mentioned Jesus now, but you're still not selling it!*)

So, I guess that's where it might be best to start: In the Child. And if you can't get inside the mind of the Christ Child, then try looking in the hopes and dreams of all our children, in their excited eyes as they marvel at the lights and colours of Christmas, as they perform the

Nativity story for the first time and talk about what it means, as they wait for the Day approaching with eagerness and delight. Of course, Christmas isn't just for children, but they do have a lot to re-teach us. *(Ah, that's better – have you thought about writing lyrics for Cliff Richard?)*

And then perhaps we also need to look to those in poverty; and to try putting our time and gifts and money in places where it would make a real difference at Christmas, rather than that extra novelty piece of junk or yet another item of clothing for an already-full wardrobe. *(Oh, you were doing so well! Come on, how are you going to lift them up again?)*

But deep down I suppose it's about finding joy within. The true joy that only "God with us" can bring. The joy of his Spirit that helps us truly celebrate his coming as something good for the world, and takes us out of our gift-wrapped glittering comfortable bubbles *(or baubles?)* to find our place in the big story: to gaze in wonder like the shepherds at the angels, or to bring our gifts to his manger in worship, or to cherish every moment in our hearts like Mary.

Is there a moment when the shopping stops and the preparation ends, and we might dare to allow ourselves some time with God? Is there a moment when the things we think we need are stripped away, and everything we really need is revealed in our hearts?

(Go on then, finish with a carol...)

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, their great glad tidings tell,
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Wishing you all God's peace and joy this Christmas and in 2018,
Andrew *(and Emily)*.



“D I Y” Bible Study 32, written by

Eileen Bromley.

THE MINOR PROPHETS SPEAK TODAY

JONAH TREATMENT OF ‘ENEMIES’ - DISDAIN OR DIALOGUE?

Introduction

It has been questioned whether the book should be classified as among the minor prophets as it contains only one verse of prophecy. It is a narrative about Jonah and his relationship with God.

The book is set somewhere in the half century between 800 and 750 B.C. (See 2 Kings 14:23-35). The Assyrians (capital Nineveh) had taken over from Syria as the power in the area, but were particularly feared for their cruelty in battle.

READ the four short chapters.

[1] Jonah

a) Jonah’s faith

Note what each of the following verses tell us:

1:9

2:9

4:2

b) Jonah's mistakes.

Can you list five mistakes made by Jonah?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

c) Jonah's prophecy.

Have you found the one verse of prophecy? If not, look up the beginning of chapter 3, and note it:

.....

[2] God

a) What does the book tell us about the nature of God?

.....

.....
.....

b) How does God deal with our failures?

.....
.....
.....
.....

[3] What does the book suggest about our relationship with our enemies?

.....
.....
.....

Conclusion

Read Matthew 12:38-42 and meditate on it.

BETHLEHEM MIDNIGHT COMMUNION ON CHRISTMAS EVE

On Christmas Eve at Market Harborough, in a united service with the Baptist Church, we will be holding a traditional midnight communion service *TWO HOURS EARLIER*. **The service begins at 9.30pm at the Methodist Church.** This means that we will be celebrating the start of Christmas Day at 10.00pm (GMT), as midnight strikes in Bethlehem, where it all began. (For those wishing to celebrate Christmas in UK-time, other churches are available locally!)



Naseby News

Not much news from our end, apart from our decision to make our Soul Café Services (short, informal family service accompanied by children's crafts, bacon sandwiches and more) every month instead of bi-monthly. These are perfect for bringing friends or family of any age who are beginning to explore the Christian faith. Please check the new plan for upcoming dates.

Christmas Dates for the Diary

Saturday 16th Dec Christmas Crafts and Coffee Morning

10am – 12 noon A festive family gathering accompanied by carols from the Naseby Village Band

Sunday 17th Dec Candlelit Carol Service

6pm A family carol service for all ages, with Carols and readings arranged around an impromptu Nativity for the children

Christmas Day Family Christmas Service

10.30am Short Christmas Day service for all ages

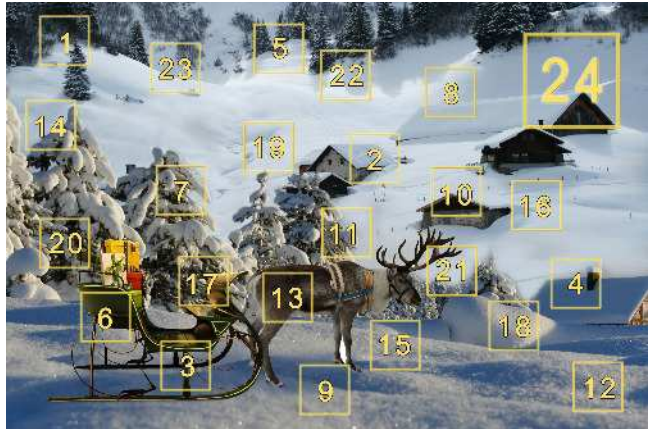
Wishing you a peaceful Christmas

Louise Jenkinson

And all at Naseby

Circuit Youth and Children's Work

As a child I was always very excited to receive an Advent calendar, it was the countdown to Christmas. The calendars were very different then though, no chocolate inside the door just a small picture and



every morning that short time of guessing - what will the picture be?- as you searched for the number door you needed. Then, on Christmas eve, opening the double doors usually in the centre of the calendar, to find the stable scene celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Today Advent calendars seem to be more about what's inside the door to eat, sweets, chocolate or even cheese and the picture, if there is one, is of very little importance!

Monday, Monday...

Monday Tots has got very busy! We have been very blessed with a lot of new faces and the return of some well known ones who first came to Monday Tots with their children and have now returned with grandchildren. The approach of Christmas means party time for the children and I'm sure Santa will pop in and say hello.

JimJams at Fairfield Road school continues to be popular with the children often enjoying acting out the story. Not quite so much for the boys this week when the story was the wise and foolish bridesmaids. None of the boys wanted to be the groom although

all the girls wanted to be the bride. Then of course the rest had to be bridesmaids so suddenly being the groom looked a lot more appealing!

Prams, prams and more prams

Stay, play and weigh Tuesdays sees so many prams / pushchairs lined up in the foyer and we have 15 + mums at each session. Lots of very new babies now, along with their mums of course. Once a month we have a lady who runs a sling library come along. She helps any mums who would like to try a sling to carry their baby, explaining the different types and how to put the baby in. I'm sure I would never get the hang of it!

I was invited to Church Langton school last week to discuss the possibility of providing a Prayer Spaces event for the children. It was my first visit there and what a lovely school it is. The school were very excited by the concept and we will be discussing dates for the Spring term for the Prayer Spaces and the school is also very interested in Experience Christmas for the year 6 children.

Experience Christmas is a series of stations / 'rooms' where we walk through various parts of the Nativity and think about the people in the story. At each station the children have the opportunity to take part in a reflective or craft activity. We usually hold these events in Naseby, Lubenham and Husbands Bosworth schools. It is just offered to Year 6 children so we have the opportunity to return each year and to build up our links with the schools we visit.

I hope you all have a very blessed and happy Christmas and a peace filled 2018

Love from
Susie x



Kibworth News

Sponsored Christmas Carol Sing



It was in the Autumn of 1978 when 5 men from Kibworth Methodist Church got together to form a committee to seek ways to raise funds and develop the social side of the church. Arthur James, Jack Brown, Ray Thorpe, Roy Bills and Mike Millward met at Jack and Win Brown's house to plan ahead. Amongst ideas raised, such as developing the Annual Garden

Party to include cream teas, Barn Dances, Men's Harvest Suppers, Quizzes and Social Evenings, it was decided to try a Sponsored Carol Sing at Christmas by singing 20 carols in one hour or less. The very first, held in 1978 raised the sum of £82 for church funds!

I remember Ray Thorpe saying that once we were strong we would be able to help others. Well, we have. Since then we have raised £35,393.16 for good causes both here and overseas. We alternate between 'home and away' and this year we have come right home. We shall be singing for Kibworth Charitable Trust (a grant making organisation that has been established to help organisations, clubs, societies, and charities) on Saturday December 16th starting at 10.30am.

We are celebrating our Ruby Anniversary, this is our 40th sing and we are hoping that many will join with us to celebrate this

achievement. Coffee and mince pies will be available, so as it is not too near Christmas, we hope that as many as possible will be able to celebrate with us. It would be nice to welcome friends from around the circuit as this is such a joyous way to start your Christmas celebrations.

M.M.

Wednesday Fellowship

All men and Women are warmly welcomed to the Wednesday Fellowship and there is a door-to-door bus for those who want to use it. (cost 50p). We meet in the Methodist Church in School Lane, Kibworth at 2.30 p.m.

Dec 6th Bring and share tea (Bus)

Dec 13th Meal-out in Wigston

We take a break over Christmas and New Year

Jan 17th Sing-along

Jan 24th Fun Quiz

Anyone attending our meetings can use the door-to-door bus – please ring Brenda on 0116 2793307 for details

MARKET HARBOROUGH CAROL SERVICE

This Christmas, the traditional carol service at Market Harborough will feature (a portion of) the very popular and widely-acclaimed *Market Harborough Choral Society*, now in their 50th year. The service will take place at the Methodist Church on **Tuesday 19th December at 7.30pm**. Everyone is very welcome.



Christmas Services

in our family of churches



Sunday 17th Dec (Advent 3)

Nativity Service at Market Harborough, 10.15am

Morning Service at Kibworth, 10.30am

Carol Service at Husbands Bosworth, 4.30pm

'Space' Christmas Special at Kibworth, 5.00pm

Carol Service at Naseby, 6.00pm

Tuesday 19th Dec

Carol Service at Market Harborough, 7.30pm

featuring the Market Harborough Choral Society

Christmas Eve (Sun 24th)

Nativity Service at Kibworth, 10.30am

Crib Service at All Saints', H. Bosworth, 5.00pm

Carol Service at Kibworth, 6.00pm

Bethlehem Midnight Communion at Market Harborough, 9.30pm *(when our clocks strike 10pm, it will be Christmas Day in Bethlehem!)*

Christmas Day

United Service at Market Harborough Congregational Church, 10.00am

Family Service at Kibworth, 10.30am

Family Service at Naseby, 10.30am

Sunday 31st Dec

Morning Service at Market Harborough, 10.15am

Morning Service at Kibworth, 10.30am





Market Harborough News

Living with Questions

The two words 'peace' and 'justice' conjure up the work of big organisations like *The United Nations* and *The Truth and Reconciliation Project* in South Africa – so are much too big for me to be involved in --- or to get my head round.



But I discovered at the Harborough Churches Together Justice and Peace Group that there are issues that I can begin to understand because there are individuals who follow specific concerns and who share what they know with the rest of us – 'Does anyone have information about progress in tackling climate change?' 'Are more or less children involved now in the textile industry?' These discussions result in me picking up on news reports that have a link with those concerns and so furthers my knowledge and interest and prayers.

Some of the subjects are close to home – 'What is the take up at the Food bank now?' 'Does anyone know how the Syrian Refugee family now living in Harborough is getting on?' 'How are the local churches responding to homelessness?'

I used to think that the 'Peace and Justice Group' was some sort of 'committee' and you had to be a designated church rep to attend. It's not. It's for anyone who has an interest in how we

live together and manage our lives in a fair way – a Christian way. And we may not always agree on what that should look like!

So if you feel you would be interested, the next meeting is on Thursday 22nd March. A new date for a new diary.

Before then there will be the annual Peace Vigil on 5th January at 5pm in The Square when we pray / think in silence about all the individuals and nations who are troubled or at war.

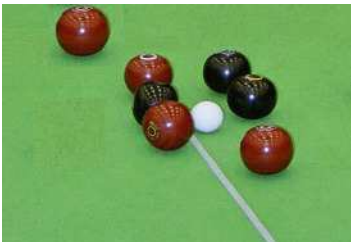
*So, Prince of Peace, disarm our trust in power,
teach us to coax the plant of peace to flower.
May we, impassioned by your living Word,
remember forward to a world restored.*

Fred Kaan 'Singing The Faith' 698

Anita Beer

Indoor Bowls at Market Harborough - Monday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 pm

We enjoy our regular sessions of indoor carpet bowls. Part of the reason for enjoyment may be because the evening is not really about 'winning' as such, although we all try our very best. It is all about fellowship and friendship. **Come and join us** - I guarantee you will enjoy the fellowship and the game.



Choral Society

Golden Anniversary Concerts

Market Harborough Choral Society is celebrating its 50th birthday with a season of special concerts and events starting with a performance of Handels Messiah at Robert Smyth Academy on Saturday 9th December at 7.30pm.

The Choir was founded after a United Choir from the churches in the town came together to give a performance of Messiah on Saturday 9th December 1967 in the brand new Robert Smyth Assembly Hall.

When it was realised that the 9th December fell on a Saturday again in 2017, it was obvious when and where an Anniversary Concert should be held and what should be sung!

The concert will also be special because it is the very first time the Society will perform with the Market Harborough Orchestra.

It will feature top professional soloists Martyn Hill (Tenor) and Julie Moffatt (Soprano) together with Phillipa Ouvry Johns (Alto) and Andrew Ashwin (Bass).

The Choral Society has been delving into its archives and there will be a display of photographs telling the story of the Choir at each concert. If anyone has programmes or photographs featuring the Society - particularly in the early years - they would love to receive copies!

Neil Ryrie, Chair of the Society says "We are looking forward to seeing many former members join us as we celebrate our Golden Anniversary during this season. In addition to doing what promises to be a wonderful performance of Messiah in

December, we have Bob Chilcott, former member of the Kings Singers and popular choral composer coming to lead a Singing Day on Saturday 17th March 2018, and the night before on Friday 16th March we have a celebratory dinner at the Three Swans Hotel. We are rounding the season off with a special Joint Concert on July 9th with the Market Harborough Orchestra."

Are you a former member of the Choral Society? Perhaps you were in the audience at that first concert 50 years ago or have some photos or memorabilia you are willing to share? If so, the Society would love to make contact with you. Please call Stephen Pointer, Publicity Officer on 01858 433299 or 07929 908821

Tickets for the Choral Society's Anniversary Messiah Concert on December 9th are priced at £12 (£10 concessions) and are available from Spencers Estate Agents, High St, Market Harborough, from Clive Hookins (07946 081959) or online via Ticketsource.





Thank you for reading this prayer letter.

We will be thinking of the young people today and praying for them. Not just those in our own town but for young people generally.

Recently a headline in the Guardian highlighted the rising numbers of young people seeking help for mental health issues. It reported that the services could not deal with the number of young people who were of concern. Growing numbers showing signs of depression, low self esteem, anger and self harming. Waiting lists that are growing daily.

For all of us during our teenage years we can remember that there were times of anxiety and stress. For some young people life was hard and some even turned to drugs and suicide as a way of dealing with their issues. So what is it today that is causing the upsurge in the numbers of young people needing help and advice? The numbers of self harmers and suicides.

Thinking back to the 50s and 60s we were expected to conform and pass exams. The dreaded 11 plus and GCE's. However we knew that when we left school even with low grades or none at all there was the assurance of finding work. Today one of the big stresses for our young people is the uncertainty for their future. Exams and society's expectations, debt, an increasing number of broken family relationships, the constant bombardment of news of horrific incidents in this country and abroad, the question of

the changes in our climate and the destruction of parts of our world through war and self interest. Then there are the demands of social media and the need to be like the celebrities living the lifestyle and looking right - not just for girls but boys as well.

So this month we ask that you will pray for all the young people who are finding life a challenge:

- Through the expectations of others.
- The need to conform to what society is saying.
- The need to be heard and understood.

Lord grant that we will be there for the young people we meet in our own families and in the wider community. Help us to listen to them and support them - not to place our expectations on them, but to help and to encourage, rather than criticise.

Lord grant your wisdom to those who will be listening to the young people who are stressed and anxious. Especially we pray for all the counsellors and doctors who meet the young people who are at a crisis point.

Grant to parents understanding and compassion as they deal with the day to day issues of family life. Be with the Teachers whose job it is to encourage and open up the world of knowledge. In our churches and youth organisations may the leaders and volunteers show your love and support to those they serve.

May each young person realise how unique and precious they are in your sight.

Amen



Listening, Caring, Helping Your Street Pastors need you!

Street Pastor

Being a Street Pastor is indeed a rewarding experience. Current conversation in churches tells us we should be out meeting people and showing God's love for all; and being a Street Pastor is exactly that; being with people where they are and in their time of need.

All street pastors receive training; starting with four mandatory modules, after which they join the team out on the street once a month on either Friday, Saturday or Bank Holiday Sunday evenings.

We walk around the town praying for and talking to the people we meet; offering help to those who are ill, lost or in need of support. The remaining six training modules are completed during the first two years. All Street Pastors require a DBS check and they and/or their church will hopefully make a financial contribution towards the charity. We patrol in teams of three or four and have the support of the District Council, Police and local businesses; using phones and radios which keep us connected to the Prayer Support team, CCTV and police or emergency services if required.

Currently we have a team of 21 street pastors, all from local churches, and we are truly grateful for the tremendous support from our 7 prayer support team members. Prayer is at the heart of what we do in the name of Jesus.

Prayer Support

If walking the streets of Market Harborough on a patrol fills you with dread, please do not let this stop you from becoming involved. Any adult Christian can be involved on the prayer and support side.

Prayer support is hugely important, but not an onerous task. Again we ask for a once a month commitment at the Bower House alongside another support worker, assisting the Street Pastors in preparation for the patrol by offering/making refreshments and leading prayer.

Then you will spend around 1½-2 hours of fellowship with your colleague; some of which will be spent in prayer for the pastors, the town, the people they meet or anything else on your mind. When the pastors return for their break you will again prepare drinks and cake (all street pastors love their cake!) spending around half an hour in fellowship with them.

From this point some prayer support members choose to go home after clearing up, whilst others stay awhile in fellowship and some prayer time; others stay until the pastors' return at the end of their shift, however, this is entirely up to the individual; whatever feels comfortable!

Our prayer support team tell us it is rewarding, particularly when the pastors recount the events of the evening.

Interested in joining us in either capacity?

Please contact our administrator Angela Zemplak on 07792 021760 or marketharborough@streetpastors.org.uk

Methodist Church pledges support to UK Armed Forces

The Methodist Church of Britain has signed the Armed Forces Covenant pledging its commitment to fair treatment and support to the whole Armed Forces community including regulars, reserves, veterans, and their families. The signing took place at Methodist Church House on Tuesday 14 November.

Alongside the public recognition of the value of the Armed Forces community, in signing the Covenant the Methodist Church has made a number of specific commitments including:

- recruiting veterans of all ages with a tailored pathway to employment
- to support employees in the reserves and help to accommodate their training and deployment
- facilitating the transition to and from civilian and military ministry for Armed Forces Chaplains
- a favourable approach to leave and flexible working for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment
- ensuring, where possible, buildings and facilities have good access for disabled veterans
- establishing a dedicated Methodist Church webpage to inform the Church about the specific needs of the Armed Forces community
- recognising and remembering the sacrifice of others including the availability of liturgical material or use throughout the Methodist Church.

The Armed Forces Covenant was signed by both the President and Secretary of the Methodist Conference, the Reverend Loraine N Mellor and the Reverend Canon Gareth J Powell.

Reverend Mellor said: "Our Armed Forces undertake an often difficult and dangerous job. The impact of their unique role on the service personnel and their families, while they serve and afterwards, cannot be underestimated. I am delighted that the Methodist Church is signing the Covenant to support the Armed Forces community."



On behalf of the Armed Forces the Covenant was signed by The Venerable (Air Vice-Marshal) Jonathan Chaffey, Chaplain-in-Chief RAF, and Commodore David Elford, Naval Commander Regional Forces.

Commodore Elford said: "The Methodist Church in Britain already plays a substantial role in supporting the Armed Forces community through the great work of its Chaplains across all three services.

"By signing the Armed Forces Covenant the Church makes a very public statement that it values the work of the Armed Forces and offers its compassion, care and love to support them in the particular circumstances that they, veterans, and their families find themselves in."

The Armed Forces Covenant is a commitment from the nation, enshrined in law, that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

More than 1,500 businesses and organisations across the UK have already signed the Covenant, making practical pledges that have made a difference across the Armed Forces community.

This article first appeared on the Methodist website: <http://methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/news-releases/methodist-church-pledges-support-to-uk-armed-forces>



Husbands Bosworth News

Husbands Bosworth Methodist Church 1912 - 2018

Our Services for December are:

Dec 3rd 5.00pm Tree Festival - United Service at All Saints'

Dec 10th 4.30pm Evening Service with Holy Communion, led by Rev. Andy Murphy

Dec 17th 4.30pm Carol Service, led by Rev. Andy Murphy

Dec 24th 5.00pm Crib Service at All Saints'



Please note there will be no Service on Christmas Day or Sun 31st - please see the centre spread for details of Services at the other Churches in the Circuit.

Deadline for the next edition

The next edition of The Ambassador will cover February - March. If you have anything you'd like to include in the next edition, please ensure your submission reaches Dave Kennard by Sunday 14th January. Articles can be emailed to mhambassador@gmail.com, posted to 40 Tungstone Way, Market Harborough, LE16 9GG, or handed to Dave at Harborough after the morning service.