



# ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

*News & Notices-December 2014*

## **7th December**

10.30am Dcn Richard Beckett

3pm : Eastcote

## **14th December**

10.30am Mr Keith Brooks

3pm : Eastcote

On Duty at 10.30am

Dec—Stretton/Bell

Jan– Gulliford/Sue/Roz

## **21st December**

**10.30am Family Service : Rev Romeo Pedro**

3pm : Eastcote

## **Christmas Eve**

**4.30pm Candlelit Service : Mr John Atkin**

## **Christmas Day**

**10.30am Rev John Marriott**

## **28th December—No Service**

## **4th January**

10.30 Mr Chris Hardy

## **The Ministers letter for December is from**

### **Rev Tina Swire**

*Blessed are you, O Christ Child, that your cradle was so low that shepherds, poorest and simplest of earthy people, could yet kneel beside you, and look, level-eyed, into the face of God. Blessed One, we come to you in reverence. (Prayer from Uganda)*

I love Christmas cards. I have one with the usual picture of Mary and Joseph and the star and the animals and the kings and the shepherds. And yet, this very pretty image misses out the energy, the love, the transforming life affirming love of God, made known to us in the Incarnation.

And so I send you this one.

The wonder of the Natal Christ is both profoundly empowering and deeply humbling, for it witnesses to us that God is with us, especially in the frailties of life, and in them, transforms them with a love which bears all things, hopes all things and endures all things and which never ends.

God, being all powerful did not have to become Incarnate in a human birth. Pregnancy and birth are a vulnerable time, a time of dependency, of wonder surely, but also with no guarantees. Anything can happen, and sadly, does. The child is utterly dependent on the mother and the mother is at risk to nutrition, environmental factors and numerous other things beyond her control. Yes, the odds are better now, than in Mary's day, but not for all women, and not completely so.

Why choose such a way of coming into the world? God the all powerful all knowing all seeing all loving, eternal strong to save whose arm has calmed the restless wave, surely to be so humble, so dependent on another is a profound statement of love.

We too are frail and vulnerable. But it is in vulnerability, that God, in the Holy Spirit can dance and set the whole creation free. In vulnerability, people were healed in Christ Jesus. In vulnerability, we witness to whose we are and why we are.

Manger and cross and empty tomb are intimately linked. It is God's will to gather all creation in the gift of Christ. And as a reflection of our communion in the Triune God, of manger cross and empty tomb, the church is God's instrument in fulfilling this prayer. For in vulnerability, in being present in the vulnerabilities of the world, and in being vulnerable in their midst, the God of manger, and makes all things new. In the cross and empty tomb, we know that God is drawn into the brokenness of life, and brings forth healing and wholeness, and right relationships with all of Creation.

God comes in humility and asks us live our faith in such a way, for humility is an antidote to arrogance. Further, humility recognizes and is at peace with our limited knowledge, creativity and moral character and keeps our hubris in balance. In humility, we find our strength.

We are not islands; we need and depend on each other. Sometimes that feels good, other times, it is a challenge. For whatever reason, we bump along, in the glorious wonder and messiness and confusion and insight and joy that is the human condition

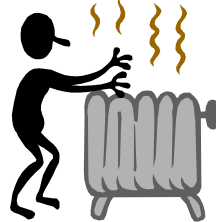
The Incarnation helps us to see this truth. The measure of a healthy, life affirming society is not whether it privileges those who have much with much more, but whether the vulnerable, the fragile, the humble, the dependent, the shepherds of our time, are privileged and honoured and lifted up.

This is no sentimental Christmas card, but one which is life for all. Let us go and live the wonder and the mystery and joy of Christmas every day. May you know God's richest blessings this holy season and in all seasons.

Tina

## News ...

Many thanks to those who have donated towards the cost of the **new heaters**. It's not too late to contribute—they were £14.99 each



Rev Romeo Pedro led a very interesting process as we looked at the future **Mission** at Astcote. Romeo will be joining us for Christmas Cracker and our Family Service on 21st December to get to know us and see what goes on. We will then meet with him again in the New Year.

**What about the windows?** We now have full Planning Permission and are obtaining an updated estimate for the work—watch this space!

The **Card Making Workshop** was great fun with Kate showing us a great design for an 'easel'. If you weren't able to come last time, there will be another Workshop on January .....

## **Dates for your Diary**

**December 12th—Concert & Coffee**

**Christmas Cracker 20th December**

**Covenant Service & Lunch 11th January**

**Church Council Meeting 12th January**

**Messy Church 7th February**

**Christmas Collections**

**Lunch Club** - is for the retired and will usually be held on the 2nd Tuesday each month. Maureen Corbett can be contacted for more details on 830296.

**The Well Group** - An ecumenical ladies group which offers a time to socialise and share for Christian women or those interested in the Christian faith. Meeting 12-2pm, including a simple lunch Contact Alison Brierley if you would like to come along on 830770

Next Meeting

**Monday Club (Reception, Years 1 & 2)**

**'Sunday School' after school 3.15-4.15pm**

**Wednesday Bible Club 'Friends & Heroes'**

**12.30-1pm (yrs 3-6)**

For more information please speak to John Atkin on 830907. Both groups held at Pattishall Primary School

## **From the Methodist Prayer Handbook:**

God of serenity,  
as we think of the cost of war,  
we are reminded of the price of peace.  
Watch over and protect all people who dutifully  
serve you in areas of conflict throughout the world.  
May their presence achieve the stability sought  
and may harmony be restored. Amen.

*Hilary Cheng, Minister, Cambridge Circuit*

## **Just a reminder about Praying for others**

As mentioned last month, we have a prayer book at the Chapel where names of those particularly needing our prayers can be placed on Sundays. To go a step further we now have some cards that can be given to those we pray for, just to say 'we remembered you in prayer today'. We hope this will help those receiving a card to feel that they are loved and cared for, albeit in a small way.

Everyone is invited to take a card home for that special person we have remembered.

**Northampton Methodist Circuit Team Ministry**

Superintendent: Rev Tina Swire

Rev John Marriott

Rev Romeo Pedro

Rev. Phil Snelson

Deacon Richard Beckett

**Contact point is Circuit Office: 01604 721 908**

**At Park Avenue Methodist Church**

**Northampton**

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**To book the Chapel rooms** please ring Kate Stretton on  
830115

Please also contact Kate if you would like to place flowers in the  
Chapel in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a birthday,  
anniversary etc.

For items or suggestions for this newsletter  
please contact::

Ann Atkin, Church Secretary on 830907

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