



# ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

## *News & Notices-January 2015*

### **4th January**

10.30 Mr Chris Hardy

3pm see *noticeboard* : Eastcote

### **11th January**

10.30am Rev Tina Swire—Covenant Service HC

3pm Mr John Hutcherson : Eastcote

### **18th January**

**10.30am Family Service : Mr Keith Brooks**

3pm Rev Romeo Pedro : Eastcote

### **25th January**

10.30am Mrs Mary Winchcombe

3pm Mr Stephen Spandle :

Eastcote

On Duty at 10.30am

Jan– Gulliford/Sue/Roz

Feb-Hysom/Boenke

## The Ministers letter as we begin 2015 is from:

### **Deacon Richard Beckett**

**Hospitality** is a word we use a great deal at the University Chaplaincy when we are talking about the welcome that we give students.

As individual Christians and churches we can learn a lot about the welcome we give people from the example set by Abraham when he welcomed three strangers to his tent. You can read about Abraham's actions in Genesis 18, verses 1-8 but here I want to just highlight some of the striking details and share some thoughts on their significance for us.

Abraham sits at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day and he looks up and is startled to see three men standing there. And suddenly out of habit the whole Jewish tradition of hospitality kicks in and even though Abraham was 'already very old' he hurried from the entrance to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

I remember visiting a church in Bermondsey (the majority of the congregation were Ghanaian or Zimbabwean.) I was there for the first time that day and I was surprised when the minister asked the congregation if there were any visitors there and would they stand and introduce themselves!

That's the normal tradition in many churches and a sure sign of hospitality but as a leader, I am not sure I would ever have the nerve to ask newcomers to do that myself (too British and reserved perhaps?) but actually it felt quite special to me and there was no doubt who the new people were and were especially warmly welcomed after the service too.

- Our welcome when people come to our churches needs to be appropriate and practical – simple things like making sure families with children know about the facilities available and what provision is

Available for them can make all the difference; Perhaps *showing* them the rooms where their children will be, and yes, even asking people to introduce themselves during the service might be appropriate. Such things as making an effort to overcome barriers where English is not the first language can help too.

Then Abraham springs into action and offers more hospitality – he urges the visitors to stay – offers foot washing and rest and ‘ a little water....and something to eat’, which turns out to be bread made from the finest flour, a choice tender calf and curds and milk!

- That says something about how we go out of our way to be generous when welcoming people. Do we offer the best we can? Have you done a quality check on your tea, coffee or biscuits lately? Are cups and saucers the easiest thing to handle when you have young children?

Amazingly Abraham and Sarah demonstrated their hospitality even before they knew who their visitors were which says so much to us about how we too should express God’s unconditional hospitality as we welcome others into our churches, our homes and our lives.

Happy New Year

Deacon Richard Beckett



*Richard will be speaking at the Well Group on 29th January.*

## **News & Dates**

**Christmas Collections** on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day totalled £250 for the Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge. Many thanks everyone.

**What about the windows?** The windows have been measured and the order will be placed very shortly.

**The Covenant Service** will be held on 11th January when we renew our commitment of faith to follow Jesus.

**Our New Year Lunch** will now be on Sunday 18th January, approx 12.30am following our Family Service. Please tell Ann 830907 if you would like to join us for a roast dinner.

**Church Council Meeting Mon 12th Jan 7.30pm**  
with Rev Romeo Pedro

The **Card Making Workshop** was great fun with Kate showing us a great design for an 'easel' card. If you weren't able to come last time, there will be another Workshop on 24th January, 2-4pm. Book a seat with Kate on 830115.

**Messy Church Saturday 7th February 2-4.30pm**  
Pattishall Parish Hall.

## **Astcote's website**

We now have our own website:

[www.astcotemethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.astcotemethodistchurch.org.uk)

where you will find the latest copy of this newsletter . Some of the other parts of the website need updating, perhaps some pictures added. If anyone has knowledge of websites and would like to bring things up to date please let me know.—Ann

## **Concert & Coffee**

Just before Christmas parents and visitors had the privilege of hearing a choir from Pattishall Primary School sing their Christmas repertoire.



**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 29th Jan: Deacon Richard Beckett, Northampton Methodist Circuit

**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

## Prayer for the New Year

O Holy Spirit, giver of life and light,  
breath of all creatures, purifier of all souls  
and healer of all wounds:  
be fire to my heart, light on my path and  
friend for my journey;  
and this for your own love's sake.  
Amen.

*Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)*

*Please remember that names can be added to  
the prayer book at Church every Sunday and  
that cards are available for you to send or give  
to those we have prayed for.*

**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

[ann.atkin51@btinternet.com](mailto:ann.atkin51@btinternet.com)