



# ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

## *News & Notices—December 2016*

### **4th December**

9.30-10am Prayer for the Community

10.30am Mrs Firita Pedro

### **11th December**

10.30am Rev Dr Tim Woolley HC

### **18th December—Family Service**

10.30am Mr John Atkin

### **Christmas Eve**

4.30pm Candlelit Service for all—Rev John Marriott

### **Christmas Day**

10.30am Christmas Family Celebration—Rev John Marriott

### **1st January—No Service**

### **8th January**

10.30am Rev Alan Sharp—Covenant Service HC

### **Eastcote Baptist Chapel**

3pm Service on 1st Sunday in the month

On Duty at 10.30am

Dec—Stretton/Bell

Jan— Gulliford/Roz/Sue

Dear Friends

(from Rev Romeo Pedro)

We all know that Paul was speaking about the Cross when he wrote these words in 1 Corinthians 1: 20, “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ... For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.”

The truth is that they are equally true about the “foolish” birth of Jesus. Paul says: “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:27-28).

One cannot be blamed when thinking that God must be foolish to choose to be born into poverty within a country under aggressive foreign occupation. Jesus required liberation before he could start his liberating work.

A refugee child on the run is how Jesus’ life began – this is of course relevant as we hear from one of our Local Preachers, Pam Kirkland, who taught in a refugee camp during the Summer: *“Please continue to pray for Farishta and all the other children and their families at Oinofyta Refugee Camp, and for the thousands of the refugees trapped...”*.

Isn’t it foolish for God to choose to be born as a “nobody”? Why not come as someone powerful or at least popular? Why did God not come as someone who could “get the message out” far and wide? Why did the Divine not come as one who had access to important people with money and who could sway the real decision-makers?

What a foolish God indeed.

As it was at the start so it was with Jesus’ birth. God specialises in creating out of nothing – what a message of hope. All through scripture we see God doing wonders with so-called nobodies. Now this is affirming news when we feel

so-called nobodies and it is also a reminder that the Divine more often than not comes to us from the unwanted margins of society. Those ignored and maligned, downtrodden and forgotten are who God uses to turn this world right-way-up. Christmas invites us to take our lead from the despised and marginalised.

So the call to us this Christmas is to see God in the peripheral places of society, to allow God to use us in our weakness, our vulnerability and our brokenness to bring hope and healing to the places where we are.

I end this letter with a Prayer, written by ~ *David Blanchflower* 1987. *Pray this with me this Christmas:*

### **CHRIST THE HUMBLE CHILD AMONG US**

Humble child of Bethlehem, whose parents found no room in the inn,

**we pray for all who are homeless.**

Humble child of Bethlehem, born in a stable,

**we pray for all who live in poverty.**

Humble child of Bethlehem, rejected stranger,

**we pray for all who are lost, alone, all who cry for loved ones.**

Humble child of Bethlehem, whom Herod sought to kill,

**we pray for all who live with danger, all who are persecuted.**

Humble child of Bethlehem, a refugee in Egypt,

**we pray for all refugees throughout the world.**

Humble child of Bethlehem, in you God was pleased to dwell,

**help us, we pray, to see the divine image in people everywhere. Amen.**

Wishing you a blessed Christmas

*Romeo*

## *News & Dates*

**Reverse Advent Calendar!** At our service on 20th November Linda Leathersich told us that at Kingsley Park Methodist Church, instead of taking out a chocolate every day from an Advent Calendar they had decided to give something every day—such as a tin of food for a charity. A few of us thought that was a great idea and so from now until Christmas we will have a box in the kitchen to collect food items for the Hope Centre—and also men's pants and socks are also in short supply (good condition or new). We can remember the homeless and save some calories at the same time.

**New and Improved Nativity Scenes** First of all a big Thank You to Val and John Stephenson who have given us a beautiful Nativity Scene for the Chapel that used to belong to Val's Father. We will enjoy and cherish this for years to come. Also, Jeanne & David Gulliford have upgraded the Nativity Scene that we have outside the Chapel. This will be revealed during December. Thank you.

**Christmas Charity** Our Christmas collections year will be for to the Cynthia Spencer Hospice in Northampton.

**Tuesday evenings : Worship Time 7.30-8.30pm** Everyone is welcome to join a few of the musicians and other members of the congregation for a time of worship. Arrive any time from 7pm

## **Christmas Cracker Saturday 17th December 2-4.30pm**

Our Annual Christmas Workshop for Primary School Children ending with the Christmas Story and Carols in the Barn for all the Family. If you are able to help, or would like to book a place for your child, please contact John Atkin on 830907. Places are limited—book early to avoid disappointment.



**No Service on 1st January** but we do encourage you to be ecumenical and visit another church. Nearest is St Luke's at Cold Higham where there is a 9.30am Holy Communion. Methodist Services will be held at Park Avenue (10.30am Rev Romeo Pedro), Roade (10.30am Rev John Marriott), Queensgrove (10.45am Rev Tina Swire) - for more details pick up a Circuit Newsletter at Church.

**Sunday 15th January Family Service** followed by our New Year Church Family Lunch at approx 12.30pm A date for your new diary!

## **\_God of the waiting - from Christian Aid**

God of the waiting,  
give us courage to wait with those in the most broken  
places of the world,  
and with all those who struggle to be bearers of hope  
there.

We pray with those who wait for wars to stop, for  
violence to cease.

God of the waiting, turn conflict into peace.  
And we pray for those who have given up on the  
coming of hope,  
because they feel they wait in vain  
at checkpoints, at borders, for jobs, for food,  
and for all those whose lives are crushed under the  
structures and systems of injustice.

God of the waiting, wait with your world.  
Turn anger into reconciliation,  
and our lack of hope into courage,  
so that our waiting may be over  
and all the things of darkness shall be no more.

Amen



**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.

New members are welcome.

Please give Maureen a ring.

**The Well Group** - An ecumenical ladies group which offers a time to socialise and share a meal 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

December—no 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

## **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.

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

For items or suggestions for this newsletter  
please contact::

Ann Atkin, Church Secretary on 830907

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