



# ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

## *News & Notices—January 2017*

### **8th January**

9.30-10am Prayer for the Community

10.30am Rev Alan Sharp—Covenant Service & HC

### **15th January—Family Service**

10.30am Angela McNally

### **22nd January**

10.30am Dcn Richard Beckett

### **29th January**

10.30am Paul Barford

On Duty at 10.30am

Jan– Gulliford/Roz/Sue

Feb– Hysom/Boenke

### **Eastcote Baptist Chapel**

3pm Service on 1st Sunday in the month

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

Dear Friends,

Minnie Louise Haskins is not a poet that many of us know. She was a woman with a long and varied career. During her life she worked in India and the East End, industrial welfare and academia. She wrote books and poetry. Her life was about service .

We see this early on. In 1903, she worked for the Springfield Hall Wesleyan Methodist mission and in 1907 she went to Madras with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society to serve in the Zenana mission to women.

To help fund this mission, she wrote a book of poetry entitled *The Desert* which included the poem God knows. This poem touched a chord with many, becoming a favorite of both many people, including King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

The poem includes these lines:

*And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:  
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."*

*And he replied:*

*"Go into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.:*

*So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.*

The statement of faith and hope and trust sustained her during her missionary years, two world wars, and a life in academia in days when few women lived such a life.

Minnie understood that at the core of our faith is an embracing of mystery, of the unknown. She had no idea of what missionary life would look like at home or abroad, but on she went. Nor could she have known how radically the world would change in her lifetime, but she still served and trusted. She still put her hand in the hand of God, this mysterious, wondrous, surprising God, who creates, redeems and makes all things new, this God who comes to us in Jesus Christ, in the mystery and wonder and surprise of manger cross and empty tomb. This God who asks of us only, take my hand. I am with you. Embrace your liberation and see what wonders there are. I will never leave you. I am with you always.

We stand at the beginning of a new year. We do not know what will come. The world will change. We will be asked to embrace the hand of God who changes everything, but who is changeless. Our Circuit will change, so too our churches. The world as well. Nothing stays the same.

But what does stay the same, is this extended and extending hand of God and the gracious invitation to take it and be set free.

“ And remember, I am with you. Always.”

These words of Christ in Matthew 28 come in the context of the resurrection. He tells them everything has changed now. All things are new. The possibilities are now endless. Embrace your life and live your faith.

As we enter a new year, let us reflect on Christ's words: Remember. Always.

And embrace the hand of God .

Blessings and Peace,

*Tina*

Rev Tina Swire



## *News & Dates*

**Christmas Charity** Our Christmas collections for the Cynthia Spencer Hospice in Northampton totalled: **£205**  
Many thanks for your donations.

**New Year Lunch Sunday 15th January 12.30pm approx**  
Roast Dinner ... please let Ann know if you would like to come along—830907—(before Friday 13th please).

**Church Council Meeting Monday 23rd January**

**Fairtrade Afternoon Tea Saturday 4th March 2-4.30pm**  
Helpers on the day and items for the tombola very welcome.

**Card Workshop Saturday 11th March 2-4pm** at the Chapel with Kate Stretton—book a place by ringing Kate on 830115.

**Messy Church Saturday 25th March 2-4.30pm** at the Parish Hall—helpers always welcome—please speak to John Atkin on 830907.

**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.



At the start of the new year Methodists make a distinctive resolution.

The Covenant Service, often celebrated on the first Sunday of the year, is at the heart of Methodists' devotion and discipleship, and their dedication in working for social justice. In the service the Church joyfully celebrates God's gracious offer to Israel that "I will be their God and they shall be my people".

This offer is then extended beyond Israel to all women and men in Jesus Christ, who also provides the supreme example of what it is to live in such a relationship with God.

That relationship primarily involves the corporate life of the community of God's people (i.e. the Body of Christ). It is concerned with individuals within that group.

What God offers is a loving relationship. The Covenant is not a contract in which God and human beings agree to provide particular goods and services for each other! It is not something that we have to do to create a relationship with God. God has freely and graciously already made it possible.

Rather, the Covenant is the means of grace by which we accept the relationship and then seek to sustain it. It is therefore not so much about getting in to a relationship with God as it is about staying in it. It is not about acquiring a relationship with God, but living within the loving relationship that God has already offered us.

God's gracious offer to us is therefore simultaneously a challenge. If God is committed to us, are we prepared to accept that as reality and commit ourselves in return to God? Even if we do choose to accept it, how can we manage to live out our commitment adequately, frail and human as we are?

The New Testament suggests that as we join the group of those seeking to follow the way of Jesus, we respond to God's challenge with him and begin to share his relationship with God as Father. Within the group of disciples, this leads to his Spirit bubbling up in us as individuals, encouraging and enabling us to live out our side of the relationship (i.e. "writing God's ways on our hearts" as Jeremiah 31 describes the Covenant).

*Taken from the Methodist Church UK website.*

For more information about the Covenant Service and the Methodist Church please go to:

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

**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

Thursday 26th January—Alan and Linda Hadley talk about *The Gideons*

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

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

Restarting 16th January 2017

**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.

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For items or suggestions for this newsletter  
please contact::

Ann Atkin, Church Secretary on 830907

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