

**THE METHODIST CHURCH  
BANBURY CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER  
December 2013/January 2014**

## Bending Down To Pick Us Up

*Rev Rob Anning, Superintendent Minister, writes:*

I was recently reading through a book of Prayers of Intercession by David Adam, formerly the Vicar of the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. I came to a set of prayers for Christmas Day and the following words really seemed to strike home:

*We give thanks that Jesus came down to lift us up,  
That he lived that we might not die.*

The idea that God, in the form of Jesus, might bend down to us, seems to say a lot about the nature of God. Wow! Do I really deserve that?

I am sure the same thoughts must have gone through the mind of the writer of Philippians when he wrote: *“Jesus, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death upon a cross!”*

Over the next few weeks, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus once again, we will be reminded of Jesus’ humility in coming to live among us, starting as a vulnerable, tiny baby. How much lower can you get in order to “bend down” and pick us up?

We will also be reminded that throughout the nativity story, people constantly bow down to meet him, face-to-face: the shepherds must have fallen on their knees in order to see the tiny child; the wise men, Matthew tells us, “bowed down and worshipped him”. And later, when the young child is taken to the Temple to be dedicated, you get the distinct impression from Luke that if Simeon and Anna’s age had allowed them, they too would have fallen on their knees before him.

If all these people responded to the tiny child by bending down themselves, perhaps there is a message here for all of us. After all, the writer of Philippians prefaces the passage above by saying: *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”*.

During the Christmas season, we are asked to give to so many good causes. Our giving helps to lift people up. But beyond Christmas, there will still be so many in our communities who need a bit of a lift. Are we as Christians prepared to do some of “bending down” in order to do some “picking up”?

If we really believe in following in the footsteps of Jesus, then we have no choice but to search out those who are down, and as Jesus did, do some bending and do some picking up!

## **ADVENT BIBLE STUDY**

Rev Rob Anning will be continuing the Advent Bible Study entitled “Expecting Christ” on Tuesday afternoons at 2pm. The dates are: 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> December, all at Marlborough Road. Everyone is welcome to come along and prepare themselves for this coming Christmas.

## **CIRCUIT SUPPER CLUB**

The Circuit Supper Club meets on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 7 for 7.30 pm at Marlborough Road Methodist Church. Our speaker is Mrs Maureen Sutherland from Warwick telling us about some of her varied experiences as a Tour Guide.

The cost is £10 per head for the evening which includes a two course supper and an entertaining evening. Please book in yourselves and any friends with David Hughes (*see paper copy or ask a Steward for contact details*) by Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January at the latest.

### **March 22<sup>nd</sup> Update on day conference for rural chapels**

As reported in the last Circuit newsletter, Saturday March 22<sup>nd</sup> is a key date for leaders of the different rural chapels in the Oxfordshire and South Northants partnerships. Due to space constraints at Wroxton Methodist Church, where we will be holding this event, numbers are unfortunately restricted to a maximum of 4 per chapel. Those fortunate to attend will be pleased to hear that the Revd Gordon Gatward (until recently Director of the Arthur Rank Centre at Stoneleigh) will be speaking during the morning and sharing his many years of experience of rural ministry and mission. Drinks during the day and lunch all provided. It should be a very good day!

Michael King

### **April 12<sup>th</sup> An afternoon down on the farm in Greatworth!**

Ross Adkins has kindly offered to host an afternoon, a short walk round his farm followed by questions and answers about some of the issues facing arable and livestock farmers at present. This will particularly interest those in the Circuit who live in urban areas! If anyone or any group is interested in a Spring visit to the farm, please contact Michael King (*see paper copy or ask a Steward for contact details*). We will need to limit numbers to 25 visitors, so first come, etc...!

## **A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC IN AID OF THE ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY**

The Judith Baxter Singers  
Bodicote Handbell Ringers  
'Serenade' with Gwyn and Ruth  
7.30 pm Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December  
Marlborough Road Methodist Church  
Tickets £7.50 including programme from One Man Band or at the door

## LECTIONARY READINGS FOR DECEMBER 2013/JANUARY 2014

### 1<sup>st</sup> December

Isaiah 2:1 – 5  
Psalm 122  
Romans 13:11 – 14  
Matthew 24:36 – 44

### 8<sup>th</sup> December

Isaiah 11:1 – 10  
Psalm 72:1- 7, 18 – 19  
Romans 15:4 – 13  
Matthew 3:1 – 12

### 5<sup>th</sup> January

Jeremiah 31:7 – 14  
Psalm 147:12 – 20  
Ephesians 1:3 – 14  
John 1: (1 – 9) 10 – 18

### 12<sup>th</sup> January

Isaiah 60:1 – 6  
Psalm 72:1 – 7, 10 – 14  
Ephesians 3:1 – 12  
Matthew 2:1 – 12

### 15<sup>th</sup> December

Isaiah 35:1 – 10  
Psalm 146:5 – 10 or  
Magnificat Luke 1:46b – 55  
James 5:7 – 10  
Matthew 11:2 – 11

### 19<sup>th</sup> January

Isaiah 42:1 – 9  
Psalm 29  
Acts 10:34 – 43  
Matthew 3:13 – 17

### 26<sup>th</sup> January

Isaiah 49:1 – 7  
Psalm 40:1 – 11  
1 Corinthians 1:1 – 9  
John 1:29 – 42

### 22<sup>nd</sup> December

Isaiah 7:10 – 16  
Psalm 80:1 – 7, 17 – 19  
Romans 1:1 – 7  
Matthew 1:18 – 25

### 29<sup>th</sup> December

Isaiah 63:7 – 9  
Psalm 148  
Hebrews 2:10 – 18  
Matthew 2:13 – 23

## ADDERBURY

**2014 CALENDAR** – Val Trinder has produced her “Landscapes of Britain” calendar again this year, price £5. All the profits this time will go to the Phakamisa project which Adderbury is supporting, which aims to lift the poor out of poverty in Durban South Africa. If you would like to obtain a copy please contact Val (*see paper copy or ask a Steward for contact details*)

## CHACOMBE

**Bible Study** – During December we will be attending the Advent Bible Study led by Rev Rob Anning at Marlborough Road. In January we will resume our fortnightly meetings led by Hazel at 2 pm in the home of Joan Boyles. Further details contact Hazel Stagg.

**Coffee Mornings** – Held on alternate Fridays from 10.30 am – 12 noon in the schoolroom, these gatherings are very popular. We occasionally have a quiz – most entertaining! – And there is always a selection of mouth-watering cakes on offer. Contact Joan Boyles for further details.

**Carols by Candlelight** – 23<sup>rd</sup> December 7.00 pm. Don't miss this lovely service taken by Pastor Barrie Lawless. The Brownies will be taking part, also the handbell ringers plus a surprise visitor will be popping in.

## **HINTON METHODIST CHURCH (Woodford Halse)**

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December from 10.00am to 12.00pm** – Woodford Churches Together Tea and Coffee Morning at Hinton Methodist Church. There are cakes and biscuits plus a stall to purchase items for the chosen charity.

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am, Hinton Methodist Church** will be having their **Carol Service** lead by Rev Rob Anning. All are welcome to come along for a good sing with carols from the Bethlehem Carol Sheet.

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2014 from 10.00am to 12.00pm** – Woodford Churches Together Tea and Coffee Morning at Hinton Methodist Church. There are cakes and biscuits plus a stall to purchase items for the chosen charity.

If you do not have a car, the 200 bus from Banbury stops outside the church.

We look forward to seeing you there.

## **HORNTON**

At last we are seeing our dreams come true – our new building is nearing completion and we hope to be able to use it before Christmas. The official Dedication service will take place next year on 5<sup>th</sup> April – God willing.

During December we start off with 1<sup>st</sup> December ‘Spreading the Light’ service. We meet at Parish Church at 6 pm. The Church Bell will ring at 5.45 when it is hoped that Village Lights will then be switched on. From Church with lit torches the procession will make its way to the Village Christmas Tree where a Carol will be sung and finally we will continue our journey up to the Chapel to finish our special service. Please come and join us if you can.

On 15<sup>th</sup> December – there is a ‘Christmas Story’ (details to be confirmed).

22<sup>nd</sup> December – Carol service at 6 pm in Chapel.

Our fund raising is still continuing with soup lunches etc.

## **MARLBOROUGH ROAD**

Looking for a small Christmas stocking filler? Why not a copy of "A View from the Pew" which will make a welcome gift. The price is £3.00 per copy or £5.00 for two copies. All profits to Church funds. Copies are available direct from Trevor Parry, (*see paper copy or ask a Steward for contact details*) or from the "Mustard Seed" bookshop where copies are £3.00 each.

## **MARLBOROUGH ROAD THURSDAY CLUB 7.30 pm**

5<sup>th</sup> December – Carol Singing with our Church Choir

January – No meeting

6<sup>th</sup> February – Rev Victoria Bravette

Enquiries: – Shirley Davies, (*see paper copy or ask a Steward for contact details*)

## **MIDDLETON CHENEY**

Advent Bible Study 2 – Hazel Stagg is offering a four-week Advent course, “Expecting Christ” on Thursday afternoons at 2.15.

## **NEITHROP CHAPEL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME ALL MEETINGS START AT 7.30pm**

11<sup>th</sup> December – Carol Concert – Sing your favourite carol. Please bring along mince pies, sausage rolls, etc.

8<sup>th</sup> January – Michael King

22<sup>nd</sup> January – John Giddings – The Cold war

## **ST FRANCIS**

Christmas Services at St. Francis Church, Highlands, Banbury.

- Christingle, Carol service Sunday December 15<sup>th</sup>, 4.30pm
- Crib Service Christmas Eve, 4pm
- Midnight Communion Christmas Eve 11.30pm
- Christmas Day Family Service 10am

## UPPER BODDINGTON

We invite friends from the Circuit to come and join in any of our Christmas celebrations. **CAROL SINGING** will take place in the Chapel on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 pm. We will be singing favourite carols for about an hour and then mince pies with tea or coffee will be served in the schoolroom. During the evening a collection will be taken for Acton for Children.

**CRIB SERVICE** will take place on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December at 2 pm when the Rev Mary Pheasey will be leading our worship. Friends from the Anglican Church will join in this event and everyone of any age will be welcome.

**CHRISTMAS DAY** we will have our usual short Family Celebration Service which Eileen Burgess will lead. The service will start promptly at 10.30 am and last for about 30 minutes. That will leave plenty of time to get home and cook that special dinner!

We wish all our friends around the Circuit a joyful and peaceful Christmas and pray that together, renewed by our celebration of Jesus' birth, we may go forward to find new ways to serve our God in the future.

### CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other)

11<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Dinner at 12.30 pm followed by carols

8<sup>th</sup> January – Memories of the 50's and 60's – Jennifer and John

22<sup>nd</sup> January – Katie and John

We meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday afternoons each month except July and August at Marlborough Road at 2.30 pm and welcome Men and Women of any age to share a varied programme. The money we raise goes to the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission.

**DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY EDITION**  
**THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**  
**CONTRIBUTIONS TO MARY TANNER**  
*(see paper copy or ask a Steward for contact details)*