

AROUND THE DALE

The Newsletter of the Calderdale Methodist Circuit

Number 22

December 2020

Dear All,

"This Christmas will be like no other we have ever experienced." I am sure you have heard that said so many times recently. One of the main questions being asked is, 'What will this Christmas be like?' I would like to ask a different question, 'What makes Christmas for you?'

Isaiah says in the familiar passage often read at Christmas: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light (Isa 9: 2). He is referring to the light of the world changing the way people see what is happening around them and to them. For me, this is the effect of Christmas. When the light of Jesus is spread round the world people's lives are changed.

To make Christmas happen we need a long list of things, and I do not mean all the presents, food, cards, decorations and parties that most people think of. To make Christmas we need the crying of a new born baby; the bright glow of a star showing the way; the stories of the first people to experience the birth of that baby; the impact this story has had in the history of over two thousand years; the tales shared from the pubs and pulpits of past Christmases; the emotions and memories shared as we sing the carols, hymns and songs; we

need to hear the story of the pain and the trouble of those days so that it speaks to us today in the struggles faced by many; we need to hear of the gloom and the uncertainty of those nights as we face similar situations today. But beyond the glitter and the tinsel of this hallowed, stressful time we share all the above with those we love because we are the people who have seen a great light.

As you celebrate the birth of Christ in 2020, Linda and I pray that you can love and be loved by those around you and that you light up their world. As we move in to 2021, may you continue to be the flickering light of your home and community in the name of Jesus Christ.

May God bless you.

Terry and Linda



Prior to lockdown. 2.0, we had just started getting out and about again with busoasis on covid community engagement partnership work, unfortunately that obviously has had to be put on pause for the time being.

We are re-engaging with schools, as they are currently not having guests in the same way as before, we have worked with Rev Paul and filmed several assemblies and have sent it into the 3 schools we are involved with, we plan to do this once a month until we are able to deliver Open the book, prayer spaces and Unique course again in person.

Along with a couple of circuit churches, messy advent in a bag has been planned and organised and distributed to approximately 60 families. A journey during advent with instructions, crafts and 'build a nativity scene' challenge, we then ask photos are uploaded onto the Circuit Facebook page - The Methodist Church in Calderdale. Please make sure you give it a like along with the new Circuit You Tube channel, also named 'The Methodist Church in Calderdale' where you can find all ours and other videos.

As part of the Circuits Mission Enabling Team, CMET, we held a successful zoom fun quiz in November, which was the

forerunner to a series of discussion sessions which are running each Sunday evening throughout Advent and which started on 29 November 2020 called 'Christmas Unwrapped'. Following the first meeting where we looked at 'Calendars' Rev Paul reported that it went well.

"We looked at the importance of dates in our lives, things to look forward to or even things in the past that we need to remember. We recognised our lives are dependent on calendars whether that is in paper form or electronically. So put the dates in your diary/calendar. All of the evenings are on zoom at 8pm on the next three Sunday evenings. If you would like a link please contact the Circuit Office or Rev Paul Welch. The next three themes are 'Carols, Candles and Characters' led by different people."



I emailed around a list of Christmas community engagement ideas earlier in November, if you would like another copy please let me know. I also

produced a health and wellbeing list, which covers a whole range of organisations, which is on the circuit website if anyone needs support at any time.

This year due to covid, and not being able to host the Posada in the traditional way we have created an online and paper version for you and your families to take part in. Please check out the videos on Circuits/Busoasis' Facebook pages and You Tube channel. Circuit Office have sent the email version around church links. I am hoping to do a similar thing with Christingle.



As we are unable to go into Blackburn House, the supported living scheme we have been working in for several years, I have put together 30 gift bags to be delivered shortly which along with some small gifts will include a Christmas card, reflection and prayer.

Christmas Angels will shortly be placed around Calderdale (Covid secure) with a message of 'Christmas may not look the same this year, but the story remains the same' #GodIsWithUs.

I continue to attempt to be creative (as I can be!) in adapting and transferring engagement opportunities to online such as weekly prayer and reflective videos and they can be seen on Busoasis, Circuit Facebook pages and You Tube channel.

I will be sharing connexions Christmas Campaign which was launched at the start of advent.

In the new year, I would like visit churches with Busoasis listen and record videos of the community sharing their stories, good or bad of the last 12 months. Please let me know if you know anyone willing to do this....or would you?

The Methodist church in Great Britain website has recordings of lots of interesting webinars covering lots of subjects to help folk/churches through Covid 19. Details on www.methodist.org.uk.

A massive thank you to my husband Jeremy Longman for all his technical know how and support in putting all the techy stuff together.

As every if you need any support or ideas of how you can engage with your community please email me on:

staff.busoasis2013@gmail.com

Christmas may look different this year but the story remains the same!

I hope you all have a peaceful and safe Christmas.

Sharon Longman

*Community Engagement Pioneer work
including Busoasis*

Northowram

Remembrance Sunday

One of our members, Mrs Anne Hodgson, created this lovely display of poppies in the garden at the side of the church. It attracted many visitors and £135 was raised for the British Legion. The display also received over 300 likes on the Northowram Facebook page.



Our Pastoral Visitors

continue to provide us all with support & encouragement via the telephone.

We continue to publish a **news sheet** keeps us all up to date with what's happening & provides us all with a Service at Home so we can all feel connected to each other & to God.

We have taken the difficult decision to keep our church building closed

but are keen to show the village we are still around & functioning so will be decorating as many of our visible windows as possible with

handmade posters/decorations. To give us enough items our members have been asked to design & make something to go up in the windows. We look forward to seeing what they come up with.



In the lead up to Christmas we have got permission for two of us to do a tour of the village with a flat back van!

Unfortunately timings for this '**Cul-de-Sac Carols**' event have to be vague (i.e. no dates or timings) as we aren't allowed to publicise it, other than directly to those living on the streets we are to visit, in order to try to prevent illegal gatherings!

Northowram continued . . .

'Cul-de-Sac Carols' will see Mary & Joseph presenting their new baby to the people of Northowram in front of a Bethlehem backdrop to an



accompaniment of carols & bible readings.

Everything is prepared. Printed flyers will be delivered to each house on the streets lucky enough to have been chosen telling them we are coming.

The event has a small but vital amount of sponsorship from a couple of businesses but more particularly has the support of the other 2 churches in the village. They are helping by providing people to assist our member deliver flyers & are also providing financial support.

There will be more details about this event, hopefully with photos, for the January edition of the news sheet.

Mike



Cliff College Certificate in Women in Leadership Academic year 2019/20

I studied for the certificate 'Women in Leadership' in September 2019, which seems like a million years ago, but only 'graduated' last month along with the other short course students.

My week at Cliff College was an amazing experience. It was the first time the course had run and the course leader brought a team of women from Chick-fil-A who shared inspirational stories about their lives in leadership and their love of God.

To gain the certificate I had to complete a 3000-word book review which was challenging after many years out of education.

The best part of the course for me though was the week of tranquility. We had to work hard, but there was lots of personal time when we could go on walks in the grounds or attend services in the chapel

I made several new friends whilst on the course and would encourage other people to go Cliff College if they get the opportunity. I am very grateful to Methodist Women in Britain for the bursary they offered towards the cost of the course.

Pamela Hales

*See also pages 6 and 7
for details of a course taken by Lynne
and Janet who run our Circuit office.*

Lynne and Janet's visit to Cliff College

Back in February, we spent 5 days at Cliff College in Derbyshire attending the Certificate in Administrative Ministry course.



For those of you who have never visited Cliff College - what a place! The surroundings took our breath away. Our accommodation was like that of a good hotel. There were 12 of us on the course, either circuit administrators or district administrators. We were all housed in the same student block with en-suite rooms, a lounge and kitchen and lecture rooms. We ate our meals in the refectory. The food was lovely, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays there were buns at morning break. 😊

After breakfast each day, we had the opportunity of attending morning prayers in the chapel and on the Tuesday evening a full service. We spent our afternoon break in the lounge of our 'home' for the 5 days, chatting and some of us crafting. It's amazing how many of us brought craft work to do in our spare time. There was little of that during the day, however, with just 2 free session in the week. We had two sessions in the morning and two in the afternoon each day except for the Friday when we left after lunch.



We were privileged to have the current President of Conference, Revd Richard Teal, take a couple of the lectures – one based on 1 Corinthians 12. He asked us to act out a comedy, and randomly gave out the scripts, Lynne tried to hide but ended up getting one. It was based on all the ingredients required to make a cake. You can guess the rest, we're sure. On the Thursday evening we had a film night complete with popcorn of several varieties. We watched 'Hidden

Figures' - well worth watching if you haven't seen it.

We were required to do an assignment of 3000 words if we wanted to be awarded the Certificate in Administrative Ministry. Lynne reviewed a book called '(Ad)ministry – the Nuts and Bolts of Church Administration' and wrote a reflection on her ten years in the circuit office entitled 'from Job to Administrative Ministry'. The requirements for the assignment were to explain her understanding of administrative ministry, describe it to someone else,



discuss the joys and frustrations of the job and relate it to biblical images and stories.

Janet broke her assignment down into four sections. These involved asking 10 friends and colleagues what they understood her role to be and reflecting on the responses; reflecting on a particular piece of everyday work and how it impacted her and others; exploring what she understood her role as a minister of the gospel to be and reflecting why and when you say "No" referencing the book "Boundaries".

The assignment was a daunting task for both of us, but we submitted them and hoped for the best. We're pleased to say we were both delighted with our results.



We should have attended the Graduation ceremony at Cliff on 14th November but due to the Covid restrictions this was held on social media. All things told it was a good ceremony despite the fact that Janet's internet dropped just as her name was being read out, so she didn't hear it!!

We hope we will be able to meet with the friends we made at a celebration at Cliff in the spring.

On reflection, we both think that Cliff College gave us a sense of peace, calm, of God being all around, of community and of love and respect for each other.



Nativity Treasure Hunt

There will be a 'Real Christmas' Nativity Treasure Hunt starting 21st December for 12 days and ending on 1st January 2021.

You will need-

- a vehicle (for transport around Calderdale)
- mobile phone/device that can read QR codes to see the story develop and give details of the next stage on your nativity journey
- a pencil/pen and paper will also be required to write down the clues from each sheet

You will then be able to collate all the clues unjumble them and put them together.

You will also be asked questions at each location to think about.

At the final location you will be able take something away as a reminder of your journey. Most of all have fun.

There will be 12 locations (mainly church doors not exclusively though) with an A4 sheet with all the info you need to help you find your next destination and clue.

Look at the Circuit Face Book page on 21st December to see where your starting point is.

Virtual Tour

If you would like to do a virtual version instead or find out where the first location is then please email Rev Paul Welch on 21st December

revpwelch@gmail.com or Sharon Longman staff.busoasis2013@gmail.com

- Circuit Mission Enablers (part of the Circuit Mission Enabling Team)



Since the last Circuit newsletter we have said goodbye to Chris Robinson who has now moved to Bedford to be nearer to his family. We were looking forward to hearing Chris preach at Christ Church on 22nd November but of course, due to the current lockdown restrictions this service was held over Zoom.

We thanked Chris for all his contributions to Christ Church over the years: his many roles in church life including his great local preaching, his leadership of the Bible Study groups and the hymns he created specially for our services. He was also a major contributor for our Keeping In Touch magazine. We are lucky he has stayed on our mailing list for now so his contributions continue! We hope he settles into his new church in Bedford.

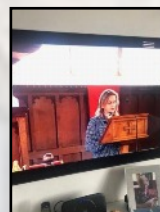
A prayer for these unprecedented times

Keep us good Lord
under the shadow of your mercy,
In this time of uncertainty and distress
sustain and support the anxious
and fearful
And lift up all those who
are brought low
That we may rejoice in your comfort,
knowing that nothing can separate us
from your love.
In Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.



Our services continued in church, under COVID restrictions until the lockdown in November and have since reverted back to Zoom services. We are looking forward to resuming the services in church from December 6th.

Our services are shown on Facebook Live when they are held in church so that those who don't make it to the church service have the option of watching them as they happen via social media.



WITHOUT GOD
OUR WEEK WOULD BE:
SIN DAY
MOURN DAY
TEARS DAY
WASTE DAY
THIRST DAY
FIGHT DAY
SHATTER DAY

Clifton Craft Club

A Christmas takeaway with a difference

Our craft club at Clifton is still going strong on Tuesday afternoons even though we haven't met in person since March.

We keep in contact through our WhatsApp group, emails and phone calls. (It's no good having a zoom meeting when your head is down concentrating on your craft project!) and we chat about our latest projects, swap ideas, recipes and materials.



Looking back at our WhatsApp chats where we also show photos of our projects, it's obvious that we like baking, card making, crocheting and knitting!

At the start of lockdown we discussed the best way to make face masks and have sewn plenty of them. We were also



requested to make laundry bags for worn hospital uniforms so that the bag and uniform could be thrown straight into the washing machine.

We decorated crosses at Easter to put in our windows, and made decorations for VE day also.

Our latest 'get together' was on one Tuesday a few weeks ago when some of us painted pottery with a Christmas theme. The pottery café is closed but is offering a 'take away'



service. One of us collected the pottery items we had chosen and all the paints and brushes etc and delivered a set to each of those who were taking part. The painted pottery was duly collected and delivered back to the pottery cafe for glazing and firing. We waited impatiently for our efforts to be returned to us and were very happy with the results.



Other Christmas projects so far are Christmas cards and decorations, poinsettias made from card and knitted covers for chocolate oranges. One of our members has been making Christmas cards for weeks already – all to be delivered to patients who are in hospital over Christmas.

Our final Christmas activity will be mid-December when we intend to have a Tuesday afternoon making table decorations and wreaths from foliage in our gardens.



Glad tidings for Christmas from Clifton

We are sure we are not alone in continuing to discover new ways of staying close with each other at a distance during our various restrictions.

During Advent, instead of our usual tree and nativity festivals, we are running an Advent Windows trail which tells the Christmas story bit by bit, by way of posters and decorations. You can see how high Rev David and Hilary have set the bar in the photo of their window (Poster 15) and the humour from Hazel and family (Poster 10).



Starting and ending at chapel, it loops all the way out to Thornhills Hamlet and back again. By word-of-mouth, we have several new families joining in who we hope will come to our outdoor carol service on Christmas Eve around our nativity scene. This is also pictured along with our new addition of an outdoor tree donated by our treasurer.

If you'd enjoy a Christmassy Clifton walk,

the route of our Advent trail is on our Facebook page, @ccliftonmethodistchurch.



Our efforts to stay linked to our community continue to adapt, with hundreds of apples and pears being shared from the chapel steps during October; with our prayer request box beginning to be used; by regular updates on our Facebook page with recipes, craft news and hymns.

The Clifton church family, including our members in Rastrick and Brighouse, is still managing to keep close via WhatsApp groups, emails, phone calls and distanced door-step chats as we swap books, jigsaws and deliver our weekly newsletter. This is still very popular, with reflections from Rev David and church family news, including weekly bulletins and photos from one of our church family who has experienced lockdown during his first term at uni.

In November, we've discovered the magic of Zoom travel and enjoyed sharing in two services with the lovely congregation across the valley at Christ Church, including a one led by Chris Robinson's service from Bedford.

Clifton continued . . .

One of our members who phones in, was able to enjoy the service with her son, also hundreds of miles away. Our weekly Zoom services and fellowship meetings continue to expand, including a very dear ex-member now in Buckinghamshire, now able to keep up with her Yorkshire friends.

For those who are not on-line, Rev David is offering a shorter phone service before the longer Zoom service.



As we await a happier new year, we at Clifton cling to the love of God which came down at Christmas and share His tidings of hope and joy with all our circuit family.



St Andrew's

With the words of the hymn by Joseph Hart 'We'll praise him for all that is past and trust him for all that's to come' going through my mind sometimes it's hard to praise when we are hit with difficult decisions that have had to be made.

At the moment the St Andrew's church family are trying to come to terms with the news that the Revd Terry will be leaving us at the end of the current Connexional year – but on the other hand we do have a very good reason to praise the Lord for the time Terry and Linda have been with us and we thank them for their love and care given to us all and we will trust that they will be welcomed and loved by a new church family soon.

We will miss them and pray that God's blessings will be upon them. We also praise the Lord that from the first Sunday in December our church doors will be open once again for worship.



Although our worship has not stopped at all over the last few months and the love, friendship and fellowship we have had with each other has been a wonderful testament to the strength

St Andrew's continued . . .



and feelings that we have for each other. We are still exhibiting the picture depicting our **'Candles of Hope'** in the Quiet Room Window and our Christmas Tree with all it's beautiful lights and decorations adorns the outside of St Andrew's with an

invitation to anyone passing to take one of the red ribbons available and tie it onto the tree to place anyone they know who needs God's love and care in their lives into God's capable, always open hands it also reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of God as we can still praise God in whatever situation we are in.

At St Andrew's for Christmas this year we are

celebrating the birth of Christ by giving small gifts to those who would



normally be rejoicing and celebrating with us in our church groups at this wonderful time of year as we are making up Christmas bags with small gifts, a knitted angel and something nice to eat, in them.

Our folks have responded most generously by giving all the many 'gifts' which will bring pleasure to the recipient of one of our 'Christmas Bags'.

The children who attend our Messy Church group have also received Advent Christmas Bags which were received with much excitement and anticipation of what they may have held. Once again this year the church family have responded wonderfully to appeals for toys and gifts for our Toy & Gift Service as we are supporting the Food Drop in Centre at Ebenezer – The Gathering Place also based at Ebenezer and the St Augustine's Centre who are joining together in the hope that they can make up **600 Family Gift Bags** to be given to all the many families, homeless folk and asylum seekers who use all of the three Charities mentioned.

During lock-down many activities have been taking place but our 'knitters' have excelled themselves and the St Augustine's Centre have been



overwhelmed by receiving the most beautifully knitted items i.e. gloves, sweaters, blankets, etc. some of which will be going into the family gift bags mentioned above.

Love certainly will come down at Christmas from the St Andrew's church family for lots of people who may have been thinking that they are forgotten and often excluded from this normally happy time of year. We send Christmas Blessings, much love and many good wishes for the coming year of 2021 to all our friends in the Calderdale Methodist Circuit and continue to trust the Lord for all that's to come during that time.

Greetings from Brighthouse Central Methodist Church

To all our sister churches in the Calderdale Circuit. As we are now in the season of Advent we look forward with renewed hope to celebrating the special time of Christmas and all the blessings it brings.

Although many of us will spend our Christmas season differently this year the message will remain the same, '**Love came down at Christmas**', a message that challenges us to do likewise and share God's love with others. That challenge takes us in many different directions both personally and as a church body. At Brighthouse Central, inspired by our Associate Pastor Jodi, we have launched '**Christmas Angels**', a new toy donation drive which gives everyone the chance to be a Christmas Angel to a child in our community during Christmas 2020.

Different ways have been set up to donate a new toy to a child in need including a link to the Christmas Angel wish list 2020 on Amazon. It is one of our ways of giving love to a child in need at Christmas. Jodi is also our link with local schools and although we cannot invite them to the usual Christmas visit to Brighthouse Central there will be virtual opportunities made.

Our virtual services continue to be streamed through Facebook which are now live from our Worship Centre where our Worship Band, socially distanced, offers hymns/worship songs.

We are due to invite people back into the Worship Centre on 13th December but will continue to live-stream services so that those choosing to stay at home can still be involved in worship. Our

Christmas services will be:

Sunday 20th December - 10.30am
and 4.00pm

Christmas Eve - 4.00pm

Christmas morning - 11.00am



Whatever you have planned for Christmas we wish you many Christmas blessings and I close with this poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins entitled

Moonless darkness stands between

*Moonless darkness stands between.
Past, O Past, no more be seen!
But the Bethlehem star may lead me
To the sight of Him who freed me
From the self that I have been.
Make me pure, Lord: Thou art holy;
Make me meek, Lord: Thou wert lowly;
Now beginning, and always:
Now begun, on Christmas Day.*

May Christmas bring fresh hope to the world.

Susan Yates - Senior Steward

Christmas blessings from everyone at St Paul's

Christmas blessings to everyone from all at St Paul's!

We are very conscious this year that we have to do things differently, and in particular, are unable to hold the Live Nativity event for our community.

Instead, we are joining in with the town's 'Light Up Sowerby Bridge' initiative, with our (Not So Live) Nativity. In place of our usual large decorated Christmas tree, we are sharing the Christmas message with a life sized stable scene facing onto the street, complete with figures angels and animals; it is our Light in the Darkness. Within minutes of it being unveiled, a passer-by commented that they preferred it to the traditional tree! It will be illuminated from 7am until midnight each day and can be easily seen from the nearby Lidl car park.

Some smaller windows are lit up and each is being used to depict a carol; the public being invited to work out which.

Mary and Joseph have begun their Posada journey, this year travelling by Covid-secure email. Their adventures will be shared with everyone after they arrive in Bethlehem.

In place of our community Carols by Candlelight, a recording of a family Nativity service, using the Bible Society poem and slides, will be available on our Facebook page from Sunday 13th December.

This year has been challenging for us all but with a Christ's 'Light In The Darkness', we can look forward with hope.

[Light up Sowerby Bridge can be searched on Facebook.]

Angela



News from Highgate

All through this strange year we have done our best to remain connected as a fellowship at Highgate. Mailings, knitted hearts, bookmarks, books of prayers and worship material have been posted or delivered to keep the beating heart of Highgate healthy.

During the lock-down the Highgate congregation who had zoom facilities were able to join with St Andrews for worship and we enjoyed meeting together in this way.

The decision was made to re-open the church for worship on 6th Sept and we celebrated our Harvest Festival on 27th Sept. We were very pleased to welcome Chris Robinson to lead that service, one of Chris's last appointments before his move I believe. Chris has been a good friend to Highgate, always willing to be part of the team for themed Lent preaching when asked.

The church was decorated for Harvest using some wonderfully lifelike knitted biscuits and cakes – Judith's work during lockdown. Our money gifts went to CICS.

By now Trisha had worked out how we could zoom our own worship so those

who couldn't get to church but could zoom could join the congregation of about 20 for worship.

By Remembrance Sunday we were back to zoom worship again and we linked with our preacher Dr Michael Fryers at his home and his wife read a Bible reading. We were able to observe the 2 minutes silence on time.



Zoom worship has continued through the second lock-down and now we are looking forward to re-opening to celebrate Christmas.

We are planning to have Carol service in two

parts 'A Promise Made' and 'A Promise Fulfilled' using appropriate music and readings.

A Christmas mailing is promised to all Highgate families, but I am not going to spoil the surprise by telling what the envelope may contain. I can say Judith's knitting may be involved!

January 3rd will be our Covenant Service when we will be re-dedicating ourselves to God's plan and purpose and looking forward with hope to serving him in our part of the Calderdale Circuit in 2021.

Circuit Website

[www.calderdale
methodistcircuit.org.uk](http://www.calderdalemethodistcircuit.org.uk)

This was launched at the beginning of September. If you spot anything you think is incorrect please let us know in the office as we are the ones who will now be maintaining it. It is still a work in progress so please bear with us as we learn the ropes! ☺

We would still like some photos of events relevant to your church that we can add to your church pages to replace the generic ones that were on view at it's start. Also any news stories that you would like to share with the rest of the Circuit and any others who might look at the website.

*Janet and Lynne – Circuit
Administrators*



Be assured the
Methodist people
are praying for the
world at this time



The **Methodist** Church
www.methodist.org.uk



It is hoped that Issue No. 23 of this News-letter will come out soon. The Circuit Office is currently closed but material can still be sent to office@calderdalemethodists.org.uk Please send items as soon as you have them available

Around the Dale

The Newsletter of the Calderdale Circuit
of the Methodist Church

AROUND THE DALE ~ DECEMBER 2020