

Keyworth Methodist Church

Minister

Rev Helen Fyall

Website

www.keyworthmethodistchurch.yolasite.com

KeyNotes Editor

Geoffrey Daft Tel: 0115 9149354 gdaft@ntlworld.com

CHRISTMAS 2025 ISSUE 19



'KEEPING US CONNECTED AT KMC'



WHAT'S THE CAROL?

Answer Page 15

THE DECEMBER/CHRISTMAS EDITION

SERVICES AT KMC DURING DECEMBER, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

ALL SUNDAY SERVICES BEGIN AT 10-15 UNLESS STATED.

December 2025

Sunday 7th Doug Kerr

16.00 Christingle led by Rebecca Bilsbrough

Sunday 14th Rev Andy Fyall

Tuesday 16th 18.30 Reflective Quiet Service Rev Helen Fyall

Sunday 21st A Nativity 'All Age Service Rebecca Bilsbrough

Sunday 21st at 18.30 Christmas Worship with our Catholic Friends from St Margaret Clitherow

Christmas Eve 24th Midnight Communion Rev Andy Fyall

Christmas Day Worship at 10.00 led by Keyworth Baptist Church

Sunday 28th Rev Mark Roberts

January

Sunday 4th Rev Helen Fyall our annual Covenant Service

Sunday 11th Peter Whitney

Sunday 18th 8.30 Communion Rev Helen Fyall 10.15 David Morley

Sunday 25th Paul Johns

February

Sunday 1st Rev Helen Fyall

Sunday 8th Rev Roger Hoath

Sunday 15th 8.30 Communion Rev Mark Roberts 10.15 A Local Arrangement

Sunday 22nd Rev Helen Fyall

Angels in Hidden Places



Dear Friends

Since the service on 19th October when Rebecca shared with us the idea of placing knitted angels in various hidden places around the village for people to find and take to a church over Christmas, I have been thinking about this. I hear the phrase so often, 'He/she was an angel' when we are helped by someone else in a significant and unexpected way which usually leaves us feeling humbled and thankful because their help has made such a difference to a situation. Angels in hidden places. Maybe this has happened to you?

In the Christmas story, angels are significant and unexpected. Firstly, an angel appeared to Zechariah, a priest, while he is serving in the temple, telling him that his wife **Elizabeth** will have a son, **John the Baptist** who will prepare the way for the Lord.

Later, Gabriel appears again to **Mary**, a young woman in Nazareth. He tells her she will conceive by the Holy Spirit and give birth to Jesus, the Son of God. Mary responds with faith and humility. Then an angel appears to **Joseph** in a dream, telling him the child is from the Holy Spirit and to name him Jesus, meaning "the Lord saves." Angels appear again to Joseph warning him to flee to Egypt to protect baby Jesus, and later telling him when it's safe to return. Joseph responded with faith and humility.

On the night of Jesus' birth, an angel appears to shepherds in Bethlehem, announcing the good news of Jesus' birth followed by a great company of angels praising God. This must have been an amazing sight! Angels, all bringing significant and unexpected messages from God that changed the course of history forever, that changed millions of lives all over the world. They were key parts of the preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ as the Son of God; the one who came to show us what God is like and offer us a living relationship with God.

I wonder what you believe about angels today? Do they exist? In heaven? On earth? How can we tell? How do we know if we have met one?

There are lots of books written about angels. In '*Angels: God's Secret Agents*', Billy Graham explains that angels are God's invisible messengers, created to serve Him by protecting, guiding, and comforting people. They act only under God's authority, reminding us of His constant care and presence. Graham urges Christians not to worship angels, but to take courage knowing that "the angels are nearer than you think."

So, this Christmas, as you hear the familiar story once again, I encourage you to listen out for the angels speaking to you and to look out for the angels who might come to your aid in significant and unexpected ways. And maybe God will prompt you to act as a hidden angel to someone else. What significant and unexpected act of kindness could we do this Christmas?

*On a still and starlit night, Heaven's light broke through the dark,
Angels sang of peace and joy, and hope was born within each heart.*

With love and prayers,

Helen F



THINKING ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP SESSION

From time to time, we give an opportunity for people to consider Church membership and what it means. Membership of the Methodist Church encourages us to be committed to worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism. Anyone is welcome to join me at a meeting to take a look at these aspects of the Christian faith and what Church membership means for us on:

Saturday 17th January from 10.30 – 12 noon

in the Prayer Circle at Keyworth Methodist Church

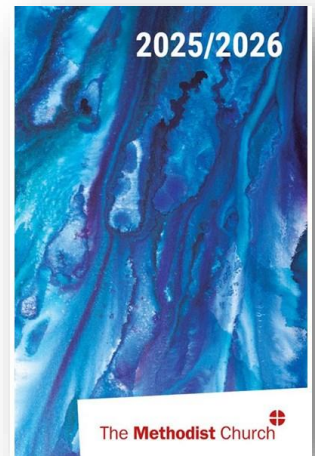
Church membership is the same as confirmation and it is important to note that if you have been confirmed in the past, in any denomination of church, it isn't necessary to be confirmed again but rather to either have your membership transferred to the Methodist Church or to hold joint membership of both denominations.

People sometimes ask what difference it makes to be a church member, and on one level, the answer is none at all, but we do feel it helps to increase one's sense of belonging and is an outward sign of an inward faith. Such questions can be shared and discussed when we meet.

At the end of our time together, I hope that those who wish to become members of the Church (there is no obligation by coming to explore the issue) will commit to doing so at a special service on Sunday 1st February 2026 and if so, we would arrange another meeting to look at the words of that service together.

Please do chat with me, Geoffrey Daft or one of the Church Stewards about this if it would help before coming along to the meeting.

Every blessing, Rev. *Helen Fyall*



IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

I want to give more to the friends that I love,
To share my beliefs of my faith from above.
In my weakness, I failed to share the Good News,
To carry a message that saves and renews.

Written for me by the prophets of old,
A story of Jesus, written and told.

When I feel lost and consumed by despair,
I need to remember that God is still there.

Do I still have the voice to sing out his praise?
To give him my thanks through difficult days.
Sometimes afraid and at times feeling weak.
When life all around feels solemn and bleak.

When ones that we love are no longer there.
When we want to shout out, and life feels unfair.
God knows all our weakness, a Father that cares.
When we give our devotion and offer up prayers

Francis Parnham

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

A Sunday school teacher was teaching the Ten Commandments to her five- and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to "honour thy father and thy mother," she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

One little boy shouted, "Thou shall not kill!"



MONOPOLY

Earlier this year the Post Office produced a new set of 10 First Class stamps featuring the board game, Monopoly. I've yet to see one in use on an envelope, but what memories those stamps brought back. As a child I loved the game and wanted to own a set, and, lo and behold, one Christmas there it was and I was over the moon. Inadvertently my parents had left the price on (or Father Christmas had!). 19/11d – an old penny change from an old pound note. I couldn't believe that so much had been spent on a present for me! I'm not certain, but I believe we still have the set – now looking rather worse for wear, but certainly one of the Christmas presents I remember best.



My guess is that everybody who reads this has played the game. You have to agree, at least implicitly, how you're going to play it. Will you play gently – ensuring that everybody gets a 'set' early on and can start to build houses, ensuring in particular that children do well. But the gentler you are, the longer the game takes, and it can take a very long time indeed! Or will you be cut-throat? Try to prevent other players getting sets while you rake in the spoils of yours? That way the game's much shorter, but it's also the way to tears. Probably somebody will be eliminated quickly and have to be content to watch the rest of the game – or go off and do something else. That's the version of the game that's great if you're winning, but not if you're losing.

I guess that applies to the game of 'life' too. Do we play it gently so that everybody stays in the game and gets a real chance of success, or is our approach cut-throat, win at all costs and who cares about everybody else? We can ask that question about human behaviour at every level from individual to national. 'America first' I seem to recall hearing from a prominent baseball-capped politician. Here in the UK ugly scenes of protest outside asylum-seeker hotels dominated our news for days. To me both smack of 'I want hotels on Mayfair and Park Lane and am not prepared to allow others even a house on Old Kent Road'. The words 'no room at the inn' keep coming into my mind. Can somebody remind me where those words come from? *Peter Curtis*

HAVE YOU A FEW MINUTES TO SPARE?

A Monopoly quiz Can you identify the monopoly 'properties' from these clues?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 H ₂ O is usefully employed | 2 Nelson stands proud here |
| 3 Here there's a light-coloured place of worship | 4 News abundant! |
| 5 Might house a multi-storey | 6 Detained at his Majesty's pleasure! |
| 7 James would be at home her | 8 The place of wine-making |
| 9 Excellent spot for a beach holiday | 10 Alan Copson's dance |
| 11 Scousers' terminus | 12 Could a Prince live here? |
| 13 A place for remembrance | 14 A Spring celebration? |
| 15 An earlier route to the SE | 16 Dickie's Road? |
| 17 Location of an illiterate monarch's signature | 18 Look out for the trapeze artist |
| 19 Abode of a celestial being | 20 Home of a revealing lady |

ANSWERS ON PAGE 15

Possible Films for the next KMC film night:

A Streetcar Named Messiah A Hundred and One Galatians!

CAN YOU HELP?

The Meadows Foodbank and Pantry to help local families in need this Christmas?

(Recently we received the following letter and poster)

Dear Friend and Supporter,

Great news the Meadows Foodbank and Pantry is now registered as a charity with the Charity Commission. In December I'd like to ask if you could help us to with our Christmas Choice project.

The Christmas period can be very hard for families struggling to make ends meet. This Christmas we have created a dedicated room so that all foodbank guests and pantry members with children under the age of 18 will be able to choose for themselves a range of gifts for their children and either have them wrapped to take away or take away wrapping paper and tape to do it themselves. We are planning that we can help about 120 families choose appropriate gifts for around 300 children.

Thanks to the generosity of the construction company Balfour Beatty the room has been cleaned and painted and has now been kitted out with shelving units. Students from Nottingham College are in the process of creating and then delivering a mural to brighten up the room.

All we need now are suitable gifts to fill the room. We are grateful for the generosity of Rushcliffe Rotary club and recent attendees at West Bridgford Stalls Market who have contributed funds and gifts to get us started.

To make it easier for our donors we have created an Amazon gift list with a range of gifts from £3 to over £30. Just use this link - [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk) on KeyNotes electronic version or scan the code on the poster above and anything you buy will be delivered straight to us and be used to help brighten Christmas morning for a family.

Mark Secretary/Volunteer Meadows Foodbank and Pantry

If you would like to give a toy or gift suitable for a child and don't wish to use the suggested links please bring it to KMC and we will make sure it is delivered to the Meadows food bank at Bridgeway Hall well before Christmas. Sue Jackson



REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PASTA

She blew her fusilli, my pretty penne, when she found me watching daytime tagliatelle.

'Je ne spaghetti rien' I responded in song, but she did not linguini for long. Just walked out without further retort: a hard lesson to be tortellini, orzo I thought.

And so, here I am, on my macaroni, and now, my days feel Cannelloni.
Brian Bilston

Don't let a local child go without a present this Christmas.

Please donate below:

How to support the Foodbank this Christmas:

1. Scan the QR code.
2. Select a gift to purchase and donate.
3. The Foodbank will receive your donation to distribute locally.
4. A local child will not go without a gift thanks to you.




Meadows Foodbank & Pantry
Bridgway Centre
Arkwright Street, NG2 2JD
Registered Charity: 1213327

CHRISTINE'S CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

Many Years ago, when I was only 13 years old, I was a member of a really large family. My Dad, Norris Martin, had first worked on the railways and then became a miner, working at the Wollaton and Cotgrave collieries. My Mum, Christine, had had a really difficult start in life, being abandoned as a baby on a doorstep, never knowing her birth parents. Happily, she had been adopted by a couple who later provided her with a brother, although at times, I think, she felt rather pushed out of her family.

My Mum and Dad married in 1945 and Mum gave birth to 11 children of whom 8 grew up to be adults. A little brother died at birth and my sister Dawn passed away at three months from pneumonia. My sister Bonnie died when she was six after falling from a slide.

So, I grew up to the age of 13 in a three bedroomed house in Stapleford with my parents, 5 brothers and 2 sisters and me! We had to share beds and I remember holding my sister's hand so that she calmed down and went to sleep.

Each Christmas our parents had to explain that, because there were so many of us, we were only allowed one present for Christmas. Each year Mum often bought the presents from the local Co-op and was still paying off the bill in May. The presents weren't wrapped, but just lay on a chair when we came down on Christmas morning. I remember Julie receiving a pair of skates and Peter a Bus Conductors Uniform



By the time I was 13 I was attending the Arthur Mee Secondary Modern School with most of my brothers and sisters except for Charles, the clever one, who went to Grammar school. That particular Christmas I really wanted a wicker basket, like the ones in which many girls used to take their things to school.

So, when Christmas Day came my dream came true and I was thrilled to receive a Gondola wicker basket. I was so excited. It was not long before I proudly took my cooking things in my basket to school. Then, every day, I took my school books in it.

My Mum had left the price on - it was 13 shillings and 11 pence. I was so proud of it. I now owned what all my friends had! *Christine Corbett*

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO YOU?

Is it presents? Is it the business of shopping for food and preparing it ready for a banquet? Is it the joy of spending valuable time with family and friends?

Let's always remember the true meaning of Christmas. Let's always remember Jesus was born in a stable. He had a very poor beginning in life and yet it was the birth of our wonderful Saviour and Lord.

He's given us salvation, love and so much more. Without Him we would be nothing. Our salvation and knowing, "God is with us" every day of our lives is the most important thing about Christmas.

Christmas carols, services, showing love to everyone, we meet – these are so important, but trusting in God and getting closer to Him and loving Him and being grateful for all He has done for us is the best we can give Him every day and especially at Christmas. Hallelujah – what a Saviour!

Pam Burrell



CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

Let me take you to the **Blessing the Crib and Christingle Service in Grantham**, which we attended most years since our girls were about 5 or 6 years old (and they are now 40ish). In those days, only the first few pews were occupied and so few local families went that our girls were



roped in to take part in the service. We all would follow a path around the church while the Tree was lit up, the Crib blessed and a prayer said at the Font, to remind us of our own baptism. Then we would have supper nearby at our friend's house and return home.

And then, when we had family to stay, they would arrive from Rugby on Christmas Eve afternoon and we all drove over to Grantham, parked up, and walked to church. Arriving safely into the warmth of St Wulfram's in Grantham were our family of 4 and my husband's brother with his family. I would look at my brother-in-law over the heads of our children and we just nodded. It was at this moment that Christmas really began for us, too late to do anything else, but accept the well-worn pattern of family and friends together.

Today the service, which incorporates Christingle as well as Blessing the Crib, has grown in popularity and the church is packed. There must be at least 1000 with extra seats placed in the side aisles. The youngsters take their Christingles and form a circle round the inside of the church, the lights are turned off, and the full magic and awe of Christmas is reflected by candlelight shining in the faces of the children. You can imagine the emotion I felt when I saw our granddaughter in her mother's arms, her aunty by her side holding the Christingle with the light on her face.....

After the service, we walk back to our friend's house, a home which lends itself to entertaining: it is a tall three storey Victorian town house, with a huge basement. The five children would disappear into the basement to start rehearsing their pantomime for us. They would resurface a while later, dressed and made up, to present us with a programme and perform at least two scenes which was as far as they had got! One year, our nephew appeared as the Genie in Aladdin, with a completely blue face!

In 1994 we had all the family staying with us in Tollerton, which made 14 of us. Our Grantham friends still insisted we all go over for the service and supper. The youngsters decided to dress up as the adults: I shall never forget my niece, taking off my mother-in-law. We were in fits of laughter.

Then, as the children got older and left the pantomimes behind, much to our nephew's relief (he was the only boy and was always overruled). They then put on concerts for us as between the 4 girls they played flute, cello and piano: definitely more sophisticated than the pantomimes. We would gather around my god-daughter's baby grand piano and sing carols. Supper was provided, games were played and we would return to Tollerton, counting the outside Christmas lights on the houses, to try and keep the girls awake. My husband and his sister-in-law would prep the vegetables for the next day and my brother-in-law and I would fill the children's stockings and very quietly place them at the foot of their beds. We stopped the practice after they were no longer alone in their beds but had their partners with them!!!

Our Christmas Eves spent at Grantham made us such wonderful memories.

Clare Franklin October 2025

Possible Films for the next KMC film night:

One Flew Over the Curate's Vest! The Nuns of Navarone! Honey, I Shrunk the Congregation!

CLIFF COLLEGE FESTIVAL 2026

Andy and I, alongside others from our circuit, have attended the Festival Weekend at Cliff College over the last three years and have found it to be a really uplifting and faith inspiring time. It is full of hope filled worship, Bible teaching, a wide range of seminars and activities for people and families of all ages. In 2026, the Festival runs from **22nd – 25th May** but it is fine to go just for a day too. You can enjoy as much or as little as you choose from the programme and also breathe in the beautiful scenery around.

Accommodation can be booked at the college, braver folk than us might enjoy camping on site or there are BnB's etc in the local area.

The theme in 2026 is, 'Our Story, Our Song.' How do the stories we tell and the songs we sing shape us as Christians and as the Church? What is the story God is calling us to tell in this time and place? What are the songs burning in our hearts as we face the challenges and opportunities of being Christians in today's world?

The prices are as follows:

Adult weekend pass - £60

Concessions (aged over 70, students, living with a disability or on benefits) - £50

Adult day pass - £20

All youth and children are free of charge

Please see the Festival website for more information; www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/cliff-festival

We'd love you to join us next year. Please chat with us if you would like more information,

Helen Fyall

I CAN'T REACH

I have high hedges.

There's one near the pavement
where people walk by,

There's one to shield vans
that were ever so high,

There's one where the bird's nest
and goldfinches fly.

I used to use ladders and balance. Oops! How?
But to stand on a ladder isn't sensible now.

I can't reach.

Likewise, my mind seems to limit its store.
Of the names from the last 70 years or more.

Surely my memory box can't have a limit.

It's actually not physical,
though I store ideas in it.

And as to remembering words on a page.

If I've patience to try it, it still takes an age....

But-



There's glorious freedom for my mind to create
Scenarios unlimited - it's never too late.

Some friends may pity my reduced
memory banks.

But I manage, I cope and give God my thanks.

For I know that he made me just as I am

And I enjoy his understanding, his peace
- it's His plan.

Yes, I can actually reach some amazing
new worlds

With my imagination on fire,
and thought unfurled.

Elspeth Jackman



THE BOY AND THE STARFISH

It is hard to ignore the many horror stories in the news at the moment and there are simply too many to list here. In all honesty that is not my focus so I will leave you to think on what stories you find most upsetting, challenging or simply scary.

If, like me, you sometimes feel helpless in the face of all the bad news we are bombarded with then this story might help. I know I turn to this when I feel overwhelmed by the realities of how cruel the world can be.

'A boy was walking along a beach with his mother after a particularly bad storm. They approached an area strewn with thousands of stranded starfish washed up by the storm. The boy ran forward and picked up a starfish, rushed to the sea edge and threw it back into the water. His Mum came up beside him and said, "What's the point? There's too many. You can't make a difference."

The boy ran and picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea. "I can make a difference to this one and this one and this one....." he cried as he threw starfish after starfish back into the sea. His Mum joined in, following his example.

This story so perfectly reflects the work of our church. So often I hear people say we are kind, we are caring, we help each other. We make a difference. We might not be able to change the whole world but what we do can change someone's world for the better. All it takes is kindness and compassion. We as individuals are not created to carry the weight of the world upon our shoulders. We are created to love one another. As Mother Teresa said, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples"

Be content that you are one of those stones & believe that you do make a difference. *Sally Barker*

KMC SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Do you look forward to Christmas? Or do you think Bah Humbug? Or maybe the very thought of Christmas fills you with dread.

A recent report listed the things we Brits like most and least about Christmas

Most liked

Time with loved ones 35%

Food and Drink: 9%

Christmas cheer and goodwill 8%

Decorations 7%

Least Liked

Commercialisation 20%

Too Expensive 18%

Pressure to buy presents 7%

Everywhere is too busy 6%

Some interesting statistics:

Supermarkets sell 750 million Brussels Sprouts each Christmas. If you were to line them all up, they would stretch from London to Sydney.

In 2016 1391 babies were born on Christmas day. The most popular Christmas day baby names are: Gabriel (967) Nicholas (398) Holly (209) Angel (166) Star (37) Merry (5) Gift(4).

2590 people filed their tax returns on Christmas day.

Christmas day is the least popular day to get married. Between 1996-2015 there were only 105 Christmas day weddings, averaging 5 per year.

The average UK family spends £2500 in the run-up to Christmas. 28% of that being online, compared to only 5% ten years ago.

Books remain a very popular present with sales of books doubling in November and December unlike diaries with 41 million sold in 2008 but only 17million in 2017.



(Do you look forward to Christmas continued) But on a more serious note:

Last Christmas across the UK 56,242 workers were registered as homeless with 32,138 of them in full-time employment and 24,104 working part-time. And this is an under-estimate according to the Salvation Army.

7900 people were homeless in Nottingham last Christmas (Salvation Army),

In Nottingham 1 Child in 57 is homeless (Salvation Army)

Rents have increased by 8.4% on average across the country this year.

Approximately 1 million people work on Christmas day including 51% of the clergy. 145,000 Care workers, 82,000 nurses and 37,000 chefs also work on Christmas Day.

28% of people in the UK are worried that they cannot afford the things they need to do for Christmas. While only 35% of men have felt stressed around Christmas, for women the figure is 51%. Over a third of women also say they've felt anxious, whereas less than a quarter of men say the same.

Christmas can also be detrimental to mental health because:

Some wish they didn't have to deal with Christmas, or find it stressful because of other events in their lives.

Some feel alone or left out because everyone else seems happy when they're not.

Some feel frustrated by other people's views of a 'perfect' Christmas, which feel different from their experiences.

Some have ideas about what Christmas should be like and feel as if you they need to enjoy it or worry something will disrupt it.

Some feel like Christmas gives them something to focus on and look forward to, and find it difficult when it's over.

Some look back at difficult memories, regret things about the past, or worry about the coming New Year.

Despite all of this....! I hope you have a very happy and blessed Christmas.

Debbie Boote Promotor of Social Awareness

A MONOPOLY PRAYER

For all the potential and excitement of bustling city life
I praise you, Father.

For the professional skills of planners, architects and builders
I praise you, Father.

For honest financiers, wise economists and all who seek the
public good, I praise you, Father.

For every constructive use of the talents of teachers, artists, writers, and performers,
I praise you, Father.

The times when I claim a monopoly on knowledge, Father forgive.

The times when I claim a monopoly on wisdom, Father forgive.

The times when I claim a monopoly on truth, Father forgive.

Selfish desires to monopolise the earth's resources, Father forgive.

For ease of transport from my local bus stop or station, Father I give thanks.

For each time clean water flows from my tap, Father I give thanks.

For light at the touch of a switch, Father I give thank.

For regular income as each month passes 'Go', Father I give thanks.

For those spending time in gaol and those who visit them, Father I pray.

For those who dream not of Mayfair but of a single room on Old Kent Road, Father I pray.

For those who control what people read, Father I pray.

For those who make laws and govern our land, Father I pray ...

.... in Jesus' name. Amen



"T'WAS THE ALTERNATIVE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS"

T'was the night before Christmas, when all through the town
Not a creature was stirring, not even a clown;
No stockings were hung by this chimney with care,
As everyone knew Saint Nick wouldn't go there;



They lived in a shed with no lights and no heat
And worked through each day - trudging home, feeling 'beat'.
The children were lying exhausted in bed
After doing the jobs that the adults had said;
Their mum, looking tired, with her face full of tears said,
"No Christmas for us, kids - we're out on our ears!"

Then from the outside came a thumping great noise
As the Landlord turned up to evict mum and her boys.
With shouting and screaming and almighty clatter
He knocked down the walls, as if they didn't matter
They fled to the windows to try to escape
Thinking, 'this must be someone's idea of a jape'.



They opened the shutters and threw up the sash.
And stared at the site of the almighty crash.
The garish new moon on the new-fallen snow
Gave the scene of disaster a hideous glow.

I remembered a poem from many a year
Of a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
And a little old driver so lively and quick,

That I thought for a moment this might be St. Nick.
Then reality dawned, that this wasn't a dream,
And children like these are not blessed and not seen.
They hide in the corners and fall through the cracks
They're abused by their carers and get lost in their tracks.



So, as we rejoice at the birth of our Lord
Remember the children that don't say a word;
The unloved, the lonely, the damaged and bruised.
The frightened, the beaten and sexually abused.
These children are hidden, too frightened to speak
But their eyes tell a story you'd hate to repeat.

As WE celebrate Christmas with joy in our heart,
Remember we're lucky and must all play our part
To seek justice for everyone, equality for all,
We must all 'do our bit' - no matter how small.
We must speak of the baby, born in the stable,
And show by example that Christ makes us able.
To overcome difficulties, help others out
As our faith gives us strength to live life without doubt.



"Merry Christmas to all and to all a 'good life'"
And may we all do our best to live life without strife "

A Nonny Mouse



"A TREASURY OF BIRDS" - a mixed reflection from Bob Leake

I have been interested in birds and in particular bird song since the age of 10. I remember leading some early morning bird-watching trips for those in our church who were interested, especially those which included breakfast, provided by Anne. It was Gwyn Summers who introduced me to the British Trust for Ornithology Garden Birdwatch. Participants were asked to record the number of each bird species they saw at the same time in their gardens each day. My earliest records date from September 17th 2001. Initially I submitted the results for each week on special sheets provided by the BTO. Then on 29th of June 2008 I started to submit the results online and continued recording until September 2016, after which I was prevented by hospital commitments.



The number of bird species I recorded, mostly in the back garden, over this period, was 55! This included some unusual, even rare birds, like the lesser spotted woodpecker, woodcock, reed bunting, tree sparrow, turtle dove, moorhen, whitethroat, jay, nuthatch, tree creeper and lesser whitethroat. These less usual birds were only seen on one or two occasions.



Some patterns were evident in the records. Chiffchaffs were first detected (by their song) right at the end of March or in early or mid-April, before they moved on to more suitable habitat. The mature trees on the boundary of our back garden attracted a male blackcap in late March or April which would frequently stay and sing until early June. I also noticed a separate population of blackcaps, often including females, in the winter. They mostly fed on food put out by us. The BTO told us this population was from Germany while the summer visitors spent the winter in Southern Europe. Other winter visitors included fieldfares (up to 32), redwings (fewer and less frequent), siskins and bramblings.



When I compare these records with garden sightings in recent months the difference is stark. I no longer see the house sparrow, collared dove, chaffinch, greenfinch, jackdaw, starling, yellowhammer, bullfinch, mistle thrush, pheasant or goldcrest. The most notable decline is in the starling population which formerly numbered up to 93 at a time and fed mostly on grubs such as leatherjackets, found below the turf of the back lawn. Maximum numbers for house sparrows, collared dove, chaffinch and greenfinch were 18, 8, 14 and 15 respectively. Numbers of the latter two species were distinctly lower in the summer months compared with the winter ones.



Nowadays we count the number of species on the fingers of our two hands. There may be many reasons for these declines; I have not been recording systematically since September 2016, so it is more of a general impression. We still put out food and water for them all year round - seeds, nuts and sunflower hearts in hanging baskets, sometimes mealworms on the terrace, but not now food on a bird table. The



conclusions are overwhelming : there has been a general decline in many garden birds from various causes, such as changes in farming practice, parasitical infestations seriously affecting both chaffinch and greenfinch and preventing them from eating (which actually spreads where numbers of finches congregate, as on bird tables) and locally another major factor, all the building work and disturbance taking place in what was a field at the bottom of our close over the last two years or so.

We have to hope that now the work has finished, some of the birds in our depleted treasury will return - and after all, we live in the season of Hope.



TIME TO DISCOVER

After our summer break we restarted in **September** with a meeting of **Summer Reflections**, We continued with topics on '**The Creeds**, (Paul Roebuck) and then the **Kendal Convention** (Peter and Pam Whitney). We currently have two meetings looking at '**Philippians**' (Robin Wilcockson). Our remaining two autumn meetings are on

November 27th Peter Curtis sharing thoughts on 'Harvest Hymns' and how their words have changed over the various revisions of our hymn books. We will conclude with a '**Christmas Miscellany**' meeting on **11th December**. We will **restart** after New Year on **January 8th** and continue fortnightly thereafter (topics yet to be arranged) until Lent when we anticipate meeting as a Thursday evening **Lent Group**.

As always, see KMC weekly notices for updated details, and for hosting addresses.

Our meetings are normally fortnightly on Thursday evenings at participants' homes, and are open to any who may wish to come along – whether regularly or whether just for an occasional topic of interest. And if so, it can be helpful to hosts if you let the host or myself know beforehand. If you want to know more about the group, just contact Robin Wilcockson. *Robin*



u3a

EXPLORING WORLD FAITHS

We continue to normally meet on the **third Friday afternoon of each month** at 2.0pm in the **Centenary Lounge** of the Village Hall, although occasionally we

have a visit instead. After our summer break we restarted in **September** when **Sheila Spencer** from **The Society of Friends** in a lovely meeting shared with us on **Quakerism**. A nice follow up to this was that Sheila couldn't find a similar u3a group in her part of Nottingham and has asked if she could continue to come along to ours! Which of course she can, by joining our u3a as an 'Associate Member'.

In **October, Peter Curtis** explored the origins of two major groups of faiths – the **Abrahamic religions** (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and those originating in **India** (Hindu, Buddhism and Sikh} We noted for each of these groups how some common threads continue, but also the respective points where ideas or leaders had become sufficiently distinctive for new religions to emerge.

At our meeting in **November, Ian Todd** shared with us his study of '**Near Death Experiences**'. Ian is a former member of KMC, having since moved to Derbyshire, and he came to Time to Discover to lead a discussion on this and its implications for our Christian faith as in his book 'Why Are You Here?' Clearly there would be implications also for those of other faiths, so we looked forward to Ian also sharing with us at the 'Faiths' group.

Looking ahead, we will have an informal '**Fuddle**' meeting in **December**. Our topics **after New Year** will include **Revd Hilary Cheng** on '**Mercy Ships**', which, although very much a Christian based charity, does also have involvements by those of other faiths.

In our group we have participants from various faith (and indeed no-faith) backgrounds, and with a good representation from KMC. If you are interested in coming along, please contact Robin Wilcockson to find how to join u3a, if not already a member. *Robin*

My friend rang me last night to tell me she failed her first exam in Aboriginal music. I said, "Didje retoo it?"



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

No, not that one. Christmas and Easter form the backdrop of all our Christian lives, every day, but Christmas especially has become overlaid with tradition and hype over the centuries, particularly in recent times, with preparations in the community beginning three or four months beforehand to ensure that a 'Happy Christmas' is maximised. Of course, there are always some who genuinely need time to prepare or practise - such as musicians! And not long ago it was on behalf of our church music group that I was considering how to celebrate sincerely, freshly, with glad hearts.

We have a wide repertoire of carols old and newer, full of joyful words and uplifting music, many recognisable as carols by a certain 'spring' and atmosphere, often related to folk music, which is itself born out of popular feeling. How we look forward to playing and singing these songs of praise and wonder; we all have our own favourites and build them into our memories and our understanding of the importance of remembering.

So, I have had running round in my head one carol that has become a particular favourite of mine since I discovered it thirty years or so ago. It has a simple and, to my mind, a more personal touch than many. It is an old Welsh carol in translation (O Deued Pub Cristion)

All poor men and humble,
All lame men who stumble,
Come haste ye, nor feel ye afraid;
For Jesus, our treasure,
With love past all measure,
In lowly poor manger was laid.

Though wise men who found him
Laid rich gifts around him,
Yet oxen they gave him their hay:
And Jesus in beauty
Accepted their duty;
Contented in manger he lay.



Then haste we to show him
The praises we owe him;
Our service he ne'er will despise:
Whose love still is able
To show us that stable
Where softly in manger he lies.

I have read that very few Welsh carols cross over into popular culture and those that do are generally set to hymn tunes. This tune is *Owen*, ascribed to one of the great Welsh musician-organists, Dr Caradog Roberts, and the carol is commonly known as *Poverty*. Perhaps you sang it when you were at school? I did find a copy in the main Nottingham library clearly arranged for singers, recorders and percussion.

However, I never knew it myself as it has seldom appeared in popular collections or carol services - until I found it and set it for our music group anyway. It has been undeservedly neglected, perhaps because of the quietness of words and music. There lies its attraction for me: it is essentially an invitation to the 'poor' and 'humble' and all who 'stumble' in life to find the love and acceptance of God in Jesus provided in this image of the stable 'where softly in manger he lies'.

'Be not afraid' says the carol, that phrase so often found, from beginning to end, in the Bible. And I think of two particular instances of reassurance, one from the Old and one from the New testaments.

Isaiah speaks of the coming 'servant' through whom the Spirit will work: '*A bruised reed he will not break . . .*' (ch. 42, v. 3) and in John's gospel Jesus, speaking of himself as the 'bread of life', says: '*Whoever comes to me I will never drive away*'. (ch. 6, v. 37)

Listen out for the carol this Christmas, as we all become treasure-seekers . . . *Anne Leake*

HAVE YOU A FEW MINUTES TO SPARE?

ANSWERS

A Monopoly quiz

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Water Works | 2 Trafalgar Square | 3 Whitechapel Road | 4 Fleet Street |
| 5 Park Lane | 6 Pentonville Road | 7 Bond Street | 8 Vine Street |
| 9 The Strand | 10 Leicester Square | 11 Liverpool Street Station | 12 Regent Street |
| 13 Whitehall | 14 Mayfair | 15 Old Kent Road | 16 Bow Street |
| 17 King's Cross Station | 18 Piccadilly Circus | 19 The Angel Islington | 20 Coventry Street |

What's The Carol? (from page 1)

Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly



SINGING IN THE RAIN *from the Garden Philosopher*

You're not going to believe me, I know you're not, but here it is. At 7:30 this morning, I was enjoying my usual morning cup of tea, on a dark morning when the tail end of storm Claudia was battering away at the garden. I suddenly became aware that there was singing going on outside. I couldn't believe my ears, but got up and opened the window to hear better and yes - a young girl's voice was lilting away, somewhere nearby, out in a garden in the rain.

The tune was not clear, but there was a joyful improvisation in the burst of notes, which lifted my rather damp spirits. Who could it be who would be singing on such a morning in such an unrestrained and joyful way? I hesitated to interrupt, but curiosity got the better of me, and I called out, 'Hello!' The singing stopped, and the voice answered, laughing, hoping she had not disturbed me. 'Of course not,' I said and just began a conversation based on, 'Who are you?' And, 'Where are you?' And, 'Do you like the rain?' (Yes!) And, 'Are you wet?' (Yes!) I said thank you for the singing, and asked her to carry on, but, though she laughed again, the singing was, alas, over. However, that had set me up for the day.

It also sent me thinking about being young and childlike again, fresh to new experiences and encounters and deeply moved by them. I thought of the things I might be doing this morning; breakfasting, listening to the news, tidying, and cleaning, practical things. And then I thought of going out in the garden on any sort of morning and singing (and probably dancing too.) It felt like a huge wave of thankfulness and joy breaking over me.

Singing is one of the most natural and expressive ways of being childlike, thankful and joyful. And so is the entry into the story of Christmas. I would not be surprised if, for many, if not most of us that the Christmas story was the very beginning of our faith in God's love and goodness. It is the place where someone who delighted and still delights in children put them centre stage. Someone who, when he was grown-up and other people thought he should be being serious and attending to more important matters, actually told them off, saying, 'Let the little children come to me...'

Singing and Christmas: put the two together, and what do you get? Christmas carols! But don't let that deter you from making your own joyful thanksgiving and having your own conversation with the God who gave us Jesus.

P.S. I did find out who the youthful singer was, but that's our secret



KNITTED SQUARES

A huge thank you to all those of you who are knitting/crocheting blanket squares and blankets. Some of you are new knitters, others have been involved for many, many years producing the squares or making them into blankets. Many others make beautiful knitted garments in all sizes, which were gratefully appreciated by the children and families in the care of Children in Distress in Romania. Since C.I.D. no longer send out aid items due to the increased transport costs, this aid is now given to two other charities whose needs differ slightly.



1 National Police Aid Charity (NPAC)

send aid in containers to Africa, particularly to schools, hospital, clinics, orphanages, and families in The Gambia and Zambia. The Inner Wheel Club of Keyworth and Ruddington make up Baby Bundles for babies age 0 -12 months. These contain a set list of items so each mother receives a similar bundle and are given out at the clinics. This encourages the mothers to attend and get medical checks and advice during their pregnancy. The items are wrapped in a knitted/crocheted blanket, approximately 36-40 inches / 1metre square, (6 rows of 6-inch squares = 36 squares) and which is often used to carry the baby on the mothers back as well as a warm baby wrap.

2. City Hub Ukraine.

Many other knitted items are given to Ukraine, whose needs are enormous and ever changing. Due to the severe winter climate, the thicker knitted items, including all sizes of blankets (shawls - bed size), all sizes of jumpers, hats, scarves, mitts/gloves, slippers and amputee stump covers are sent to Ukraine, whilst the thinner, finer knits go to Africa.

Special thanks must go to June Curtis and her team of wonderful knitters, blanket makers and quilt makers and my personal thanks to her for taking me with car loads of aid to the Ukraine Hub. I couldn't do it without you June THANK YOU. *Trish Witcomb.*

SEEN IN KEYWORTH DURING OCTOBER/HALLOWEEN

Did you spot the message in this Keyworth window? It was designed by someone whose church, St Giles in West Bridgford, was taking part in the 'Streets of Light' initiative. A few houses were on the map for West Bridgford but there was only one in Keyworth! Maybe we at Keyworth Methodist Church could promote this initiative in November 2026.

If you look at the 'Streets of Light' website

<https://share.google/5DJW7sJ4qZNmxNFY0>

you will find that all you have to do to get involved is to decorate one (or more!) window of your house, flat or workplace, and then leave the lights on from 5.30 to 9.00pm between Saturday 25th October and Sunday 2nd November, so people can see your fantastic displays. Your design can be anything you like, but should include one or more of the words **LIGHT, LOVE or HOPE** somewhere in it. You can also find maps of all the places taking part. *Geoff D*



THE CAMEL'S TALE

You must admit we look picturesque silhouetted against the skyline. I mean, what would the Christmas card trade do without camels? But I'll tell you this - that journey to Bethlehem was no roll down the sand dunes! For a start, I drew the short straw.



Old Casper was by far the biggest of the three kings - and of course he had to choose to take gold! Silly old Monarch. Frankincense and myrrh didn't weigh nearly as much - just no consideration!

Then of course there was his method of indicating he wished to mount - a short crack on the back of my knees, enough to make you spit! I mean, why couldn't he say, "Rajah", (yes, that's my name. They call you a prince and treat you worse than a peasant.) "Rajah, please kneel down so I may get on." But then, some people have no manners!

And for hours on end, all he did was moan about how sore he was from sitting so long. Sitting? Hummmm, chance would be a fine thing! I tried to indicate I wouldn't mind changing places; my feet were killing me. But all I got was another whack from the royal stick!

Well, after days and nights, following that blooming star, we finally stopped outside a stable. The three old boys got very excited. I couldn't see why myself. I mean, if you seen one stable, you've seen them all. Anyway, they all scrambled off and went inside. And this is what really gets up my nostrils,

After carrying them all that way, no one had the decency to ask us in!

Go on, you look at the inside of the stable on Christmas cards, dozy old donkeys? Yes! Half-baked oxen? Yes! Smelly sheep? Yes! And even a few hens but camels? Oh no! They are firmly left outside. Not even offered a bucket of water!

Well, after a while, the three of them trooped out, and it's the old crack on the knees again! Mind you, I did manage to whip my head round and nip old Casper as he tried to scramble on. And I hardly noticed the sharp whip he gave me because I was laughing so much.

On the way home. He and the other two talked a lot about what they'd seen. It seems there was a new King in that stable. Come to earth to preach about love and goodwill to all.

Well, all I can say is, it doesn't seem to include camels! Enough to give you the hump!

A PRAYER FOR THIS CHRISTMAS

Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infant's cry in lowly manger. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold his glory, and are bathed in its radiance.

Be with us as we sing the ironies of Christmas, the incomprehensible comprehended, the poetry made hard fact, the helpless Babe who cracks the world asunder. We kneel before you shepherds, innkeepers, wisemen. Help us to rise bigger than we are. Amen.

Catholic online

GOODBYE AND THANK YOU

In 1962, John and I moved into one newly built house at 100 Selby Lane. Julie was one and David was due to arrive the following year. John had always lived in Keyworth and seemed to know everyone. I very quickly made new friends here and most people I met were keen to see what was inside the huge, two tone, grey Silver Cross pram that I pushed proudly around the village, ("Nothing, but the best for my grandchildren"- thank you Poppa.) We lived here very happily, until the children left to go to university, then to get married. We talked about downsizing, but it never happened.



When John died in 2021, I realised the house and garden were too big for me. I moved to Belvoir Vale where the staff were immensely kind and caring but eventually, I decided that I was too independent to stay, when I was longing to do things "my way ". (Those friends who know me

well will understand what I mean.) My daughter Julie found a four-room apartment which seemed perfect, half a mile from her house and 2 to 3 miles from both my elder grandson and his family of four, and my granddaughter, living no more than 2 miles away. They all promised to come and see me often. I was very thrilled about all this. I am waiting for the solicitors to complete and hope to be in for Christmas.

I shall miss my many friends from Keyworth, especially those at K.M.C. who gave me such a warm welcome when I first came through your doors. I am deeply grateful for your love and kindness. Thank you so much. If any of you are driving through Yorkshire at holiday time. I would be delighted to see you. Tea and coffee will always be on the table! Just ring 07899 828750 With love and good wishes to you all,

Shirley Keays

ADVENT CALENDAR

This year there will be an Advent Calendar to bring some brightness to these dark days. By the time you get your KeyNotes at the beginning of December the Advent Calendar will have been erected outside our Church and the first panel or two will have been revealed as we move into December. I organised such a calendar while we still lived in Perth and it was well received and chatted about. The project is a way to put God and the Christmas story centre stage over this festive period. I hope you like it and will try to pop down from time to time to see the story unfold. The 'trees' will remain in 'situ' until the beginning of January to give as many people as possible the opportunity to view. My sincere thanks to those of the church family who have given me their help and support. Wishing you all a happy Christmas. Enjoy. *Evelyn Shearer*



*My thanks to all who have contributed to KeyNotes. My apologies to anyone whose contributions I have lost, misfiled or misplaced! The Easter KeyNotes 20 will be published at the beginning of April. Please email all your ideas and contributions by **Sunday 22nd of March.***

***The earlier the better!** I hope you have enjoyed another 'bumper' edition! Geoff D*