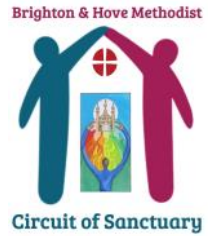




NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023

No. 278



Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton



Artwork by Sam Dyke

A Letter from Ken



Dear Friends

As I sat down to write this message, I was constantly aware that when you would be reading this, we would have just entered the Advent season of our Christian journey.

This is the period when we reflect again on the lives of the people and events who take us to what occurred over 2,000 years ago. This means we are looking at who God called to fulfil his mission, namely Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds, and the Wise Men. This illustrates to us today that God did not call the great, good and powerful, but part of the normal populace. Remember too shortly after the Birth, Jesus, Mary and Joseph became refugees.

Now where does all this leave us today? We do not need to be reminded that we are living still in a world of turbulence where the peoples are the victims of political differences through no fault of their own.

We celebrate the coming of the Prince of Peace and we invite all in the world, who wish to celebrate with us. Many accept this invitation, and many do not. However, we know that Jesus came to show us the Way, the Truth and the Life, which are the ingredients of a World of Peace.

Through prayer and example, we are the people that God calls today to deliver this message. The question is HOW DO WE RESPOND? Our answer will signify to the people 'who have Winter but no Christmas' the true meaning of our celebration and what it can do for them also.

May God give to us a Happy, Peaceful and Joyous Christmas time.

Ken Smith

Pastoral Care

Please pray for our friends who need our support at this time:-

In Hospital:-

Janie Thomas, Simon Veater.

In Nursing, Care & Rehabilitation Homes:-

Val Boyd-Pain, Anne Bristow, Marian Jackson, Pat Knight, Ian Parker.

Please continue to pray for:-

The future of our church and circuit, its vision and mission. We also pray for those who are in bereavement, those who are frail, housebound or experiencing long-term health conditions.

Prayers for the World:-

We pray for our worldwide family thinking of those troubled by conflict, persecution, hatred and natural disasters. We ask that God works through us to bring peace and compassion into this broken and suffering world. Amen

Dear Lord,

We lift up all those who are facing illness today. We ask that you would bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies.

Calm their fears and let them experience the healing power of your love. Amen



A Prayer for Advent

Lord Jesus, Master of both light and darkness,
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for
Christmas.

We who have so much to do
seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things
look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways
long for the complete joy of your Kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy
seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness,
yet seeking the light.
To you we say, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Father Henri Nouwen

The Sunday Club Cross

About ten years ago I asked Jim Badcock if he could make a simple cross for Sunday Club to use when the adult congregation were following a Lenten Liturgy.

A few days later he and Joyce were visiting their daughter's grave and he saw a branch lying on the path. He took it home, rubbed it down, cut it and put a large screw in the middle to make, what he called, a rugged cross.

We have used it every year since. When the adult congregation use a Lenten Liturgy we follow a simpler one, but on the same lines. When there is no Lenten Liturgy, we decorate it for Holy week and Easter.

Everyone who has attended Sunday Club over the years has written their name on the cross. We felt writing our name helped us to feel closer to Jesus. It has had hand woven purple cloth draped over it; it has had a hand sewn money bag hung on it, filled with chocolate money. It had a crown of thorns made from metal chocolate money wrappers. It has had nails hammered into it. It has had our photographs stuck onto it. It has had different coloured ribbons draped onto it. For Palm Sunday and Holy week we have put our palm crosses around it and stood it in the ground floor chapel. For Easter we have decorated it with flowers and put it on the top landing.

During lockdown, when all the churches were shut at Easter, our cross was in the church window, decorated with coloured ribbon, for all passers by to see. The following Easter, when our church was still closed, the cross was again in the window, a shining silver empty cross.

This year we had a new set of children celebrating their first Easter at Dorset Gardens and they enjoyed adding their names to the others and decorating it.

So thank you Jim for our cross. At your memorial service, your son said you could turn your hand to anything. You certainly did.

Rosemary Cuthbert



Paige 'flocking' to school on her first day!



Birthday girls,
Kezia and Izzy!

Hymn Sing



On Saturday 9th September we enjoyed a lovely musical afternoon, cherishing old and new hymns with a cuppa and cake!

Deeptima Massey

Thoughts for Quiet Reflection

- a. I will let God be my guide today and every day.
- b. With an open spirit, I will pray for someone in immediate need and be in communion with God.
- c. Neither fear nor worry can separate me from God's loving presence.

DG Welcomes Jollof Café



Revd Dan Woodhouse and my husband, Ibrahim, are pictured enjoying the delicious two-course meal on 22nd September when Dorset Gardens hosted Jollof Café, run by refugees.

The hall was full and there was a real buzz of conversation. The food was amazing, Egyptian moussaka and vegetable curry were followed by a delicious Tres Leches (milk cake). My husband and I planned to share a dessert, but it was so tasty we decided to have one each!

We will definitely attend again if this becomes a regular event. For more photos and details about Jollof Café, see their Facebook page at <https://m.facebook.com/jollofcafe>

Ruth Samur

Dorset Gardens' First Same-Sex Marriage

On Saturday 7th October, Dorset Gardens Methodist Church proudly hosted its first same-sex marriage. Dariusz Plata and Ben Parrish walked down the aisle following a vote at the Methodist Conference permitting same-sex couples to marry in the Methodist Church.



Ben, who has been with partner Dariusz for over four years, said: “We were thrilled to have a Christian ceremony to celebrate our marriage, that reflects our beliefs. It was fabulous from start to finish; we couldn’t be happier.” Dariusz added: “The day was truly magical and we felt very guided and supported throughout by the Church.”

The Methodist Church in Britain is the largest national Christian denomination to have voted for same-sex marriage. And at a local level, the Dorset Gardens Church Council voted unanimously in favour of taking this step, which includes its consent for services of

blessing for same-sex couples who are already married. Revd Andy Lowe said he was delighted to lead the wedding and hopes the ceremony will show that the church is open and inclusive. He said: “Marriage in church is a special milestone in life for many and as a church community we are delighted that we are now able to welcome same-sex couples for marriage ceremonies. We hope this sends out a clear message to all in the community that the Methodist church is here for all.”

Revd Lowe also said: “I would encourage anyone considering marriage or wishing for a blessing to get in touch with us via phone or email or to come to one of our Sunday services where they would receive a warm welcome and could meet our church community and talk to us after the service over a cup of coffee.”

The current membership of the Methodist Church of Britain is 164,000, making it the fourth-largest denomination of Christian Churches in the UK. Campaign group Dignity and Worth, which champions the LGBTQ+ community in the Methodist Church described the decision as a “momentous step on the road to justice and inclusion”.

A stranger entering the church was handed a rather battered Bible. “I’m sorry”, said the man on the door, “but they’re all like that”

“Don’t apologise,” said the stranger. “If the Bibles are falling apart, it shows that your congregation isn’t!”

Author unknown, from The Friendship Book of Francis Gay, 2000.

Farewell and Safe Travels

In November we said farewell to Ady and Hailey who sadly returned to Hong Kong, their home country. They contributed to the life and ministry at Dorset Gardens in many ways. We send with them our love, prayers and blessings and hope we will meet again.



Liz Swims Pier to Pier



Children's Worker, Liz Neale stepped out of her comfort zone and swam an epic mile-long race in September.

She took part in the annual Pier to Pier Race, battling some really big waves as the wind picked up and a thunderstorm blew in from the sea. The race is just over a kilometre from the West Pier to underneath the helter skelter on the Palace Pier, but swimming out to the start and back to shore again added an extra

600 metres, taking the final total to a full mile of sea swimming!

Liz said, 'It was the choppiest seas I've ever swum in but it was an incredible experience. The views between the two piers with the swell lifting us up and down were amazing. There was a great camaraderie amongst the swimmers, about 250 people took part'.



Christmas Blessings

14th Brighton Scout Group Celebrate 100 Years!

The first meeting of the Dorset Gardens Scout Committee was held at Dorset Gardens on Friday 20th July 1923. In the minute book of that meeting it states:-

“Mr Bunker explained that in view of certain administrative difficulties the Dorset Gardens Scouts had been commenced not as a separate troop, but for the time being as part of the Troop at Preston Park, but it was proposed as soon as the DG Patrols could be registered as a separate troop, that such Registration should be effected.”

The Preston Park Troop was the 13th Brighton (Wesleyan) Group and the Dorset Gardens Troop was first registered on 25th September 1924 as 31st Brighton (Dorset Gardens Wesleyan) Group.

When the Scout Groups in Brighton were renumbered in January 1946, we became the 14th Brighton and the Preston Park Group became the 7th Brighton having relocated to Stanford Avenue Methodist Church following bomb damage to the church hall at Preston Park Methodist Church on 25th May 1943. The 7th Brighton is the oldest Scout Group in Brighton and we are the 2nd oldest.

One hundred years later and we are still meeting at Dorset Gardens Church and on Saturday 28th October 2023 we invited ex-members of the Group to join us in a celebration at our Campsite at Parkwood near Poynings. Forty-six people attended and while it was still daylight and dry, many of them went out to explore the woodland and look at the three memorials on the chapel gate for Bryan Moody, John Rogers and Lynn Wordingham. In December 1984 we planted a Red Oak tree in memory of Eric Pica, who had been Scoutmaster, Group Scoutmaster and then Group Chairman with the 14th and also a Local Preacher. The tree was in magnificent Autumn

colour and it was wonderful to see it in a prime position on the main activity field. The hall was set out with most of our archive material and hundreds of photos and it brought back many fond memories for everyone. We then sat down to a fabulous hot meal, prepared for us by Anne Hallifax, and this was followed by a sing song before everybody left.

The following day we held a joyous Celebration Service, led by Revd Robin Selmes who had been minister at DG when we celebrated our 90th Anniversary. Over 60 people attended the service which had a theme of Past, Present and Future. We had some of our photos and archive material set out in the small hall for everybody to look at over tea and coffee.

It was a memorable weekend, and we are continuing to celebrate our Centenary into 2024 and are now planning the next event which will be held in March next year for our present Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and their families.

My thanks as always to all the inspiring, dedicated, hard-working leaders that run our three sections.

Ian Lamb, Group Scout Leader





BEAVERS 
cubs 
SCOUTS 





On 16th November, Kevin celebrated his 1st Birthday!

Happy Birthday Kevin!

God bless you.



Hark the Glad Sound!



When the *Methodist Hymn Book* was published in 1933 all Advent, Christmas and Epiphany hymns and carols were collected together in one section under the heading “The Lord Jesus Christ, His Incarnation”.

When *Hymns & Psalms* was published in 1983 the hymns and carols were now in three separate sections headed “The Promise of the Messiah”, “Christ’s Birth” and “The Epiphany”. In *Singing the Faith* (2011) these three sections are now headed “The Promised Christ: Advent”, “The Incarnate Christ: Christmas” and “The Revealed Christ: Epiphany”.

My recollection is that in my youth, once we got to December, we would sing Christmas Carols right through to Christmas Day. Nowadays there seems to be much more emphasis on Advent during December and therefore we sing mostly Advent hymns during that period rather than Christmas Carols.

In all three of our Hymn Books, you will find “Hark the Glad Sound” written by Philip Doddridge (1702-51) probably the most widely sung Advent hymn. The original manuscript of the Hymn is dated 28th December 1735 and consisted of 7 verses but only verses 1,3,5 and 7 have been printed in our hymn books.

Philip Doddridge is considered one of the four great hymn writers of the 18th Century alongside Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley and John Newton. Three hundred and seventy of his hymns were published posthumously by his colleague, Job Orton in 1755, but it first appeared in print in a Scottish publication *Translations and Paraphrases of the Church of Scotland* in 1745, ten years after its composition. The hymns would have first been sung in the

Northampton chapel where he was minister. They were generally sung at the end of the service and based on the biblical text from which he had just preached. 'Hark the Glad Sound' is based on the text of Luke 4: 18-19.

He was born in London on 26th June 1702, the youngest of 20 children, the son of a successful oil merchant. The family were staunch Puritans and his grandfather was one of the ejected clergy in 1662. The Act of Uniformity prescribed that any minister who refused to conform to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer should be ejected from the Church of England. This was following the Restoration of Charles II.

Doddridge was educated at a school in St. Albans, and then Kibworth Academy, later moving with that Academy to Hinckley in 1722. He became a minister in 1723, and served in Leicestershire before becoming minister of the Congregational Meeting at Castle Hill, Northampton, in 1729. In 1730 he set up his Academy at Northampton, and was active in other ventures: in 1738 he founded a charity school, and in 1743 he was prominent in promoting the foundation of the Northampton Infirmary. In 1745 he raised a militia to defend Northampton against a possible attack by the rebels under Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the 'Young Pretender', Bonnie Prince Charlie. He died of tuberculosis in 1751 in Lisbon, Portugal, where he'd gone to recuperate from exhaustion.

The hymn was paired with the tune *Bristol* in the first edition of *Hymns Ancient & Modern* (1861) and has been closely associated with it ever since. It comes from the new tunes in Thomas Ravenscroft's *Whole Booke of Psalmes* (1621) where it was named Bristol Tune and classified among the English tunes but it is unclear whether it was written by Ravenscroft as he regularly published tunes by other composers in his books but never credited them.

As with all the 18th Century hymn writers they were reliant on composers to write tunes to accompany their hymns and as it is in Common Metre inevitably has been set to many tunes. In Cornwall it means one thing, Thomas Merritt's superb tune. Merritt was born in 1863 in Illogan near Redruth, the son of a miner, becoming a miner until ill-health caused him to retire at the age of 18 to become a music teacher. He was a prolific composer of hymns and songs but much of his work has been lost. His *Twelve Carols*, of which 'Hark the Glad Sound' is one, have survived and they are regularly performed each Christmas in Cornwall's churches and chapels. In 1907 he was diagnosed as suffering from consumption and he died on Good Friday, 17th April 1908 aged 44.

If you visit Falmouth on Christmas Eve, you will find a great crowd gather in the town centre to hear the Harmony Choir, which is made up of a number of Cornish Male Voice Choirs, and they will sing many of Merritt's Carols but the highpoint is his tune to 'Hark the Glad Sound'.

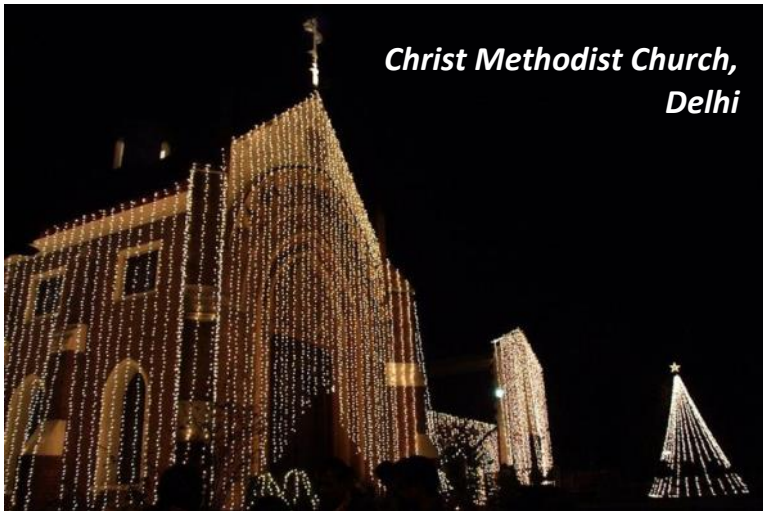
The other tune most associated with the hymn is 'Richmond' composed by Thomas Hawels (1734-1820) and which has been set to many hymns in our hymn books but is currently paired with Isaac Watts hymn 'Give me the wings of faith to rise' in *Singing the Faith*. It is also sung to 'Lyngham' by Thomas Jarman which is associated more with 'O for a thousand tongues to sing'.

'Hark the Glad Sound' has been published in 732 hymnals and translated into several languages including Latin. Only two of his other hymns appear in our current hymn book. 'Hark the Glad Sound' will soon be 300 years old, but I am sure that it will continue to be a popular Advent Hymn for many years to come.

Ian Lamb

Christmas and New Year Traditions in India

Christmas in India is called 'Bada Din' (Big day). Church buildings are decorated with lights and large nativity displays. Church choirs give special performances both at the candlelight service and by visiting local neighbourhoods singing carols at night which helps to get you into the Christmas spirit.



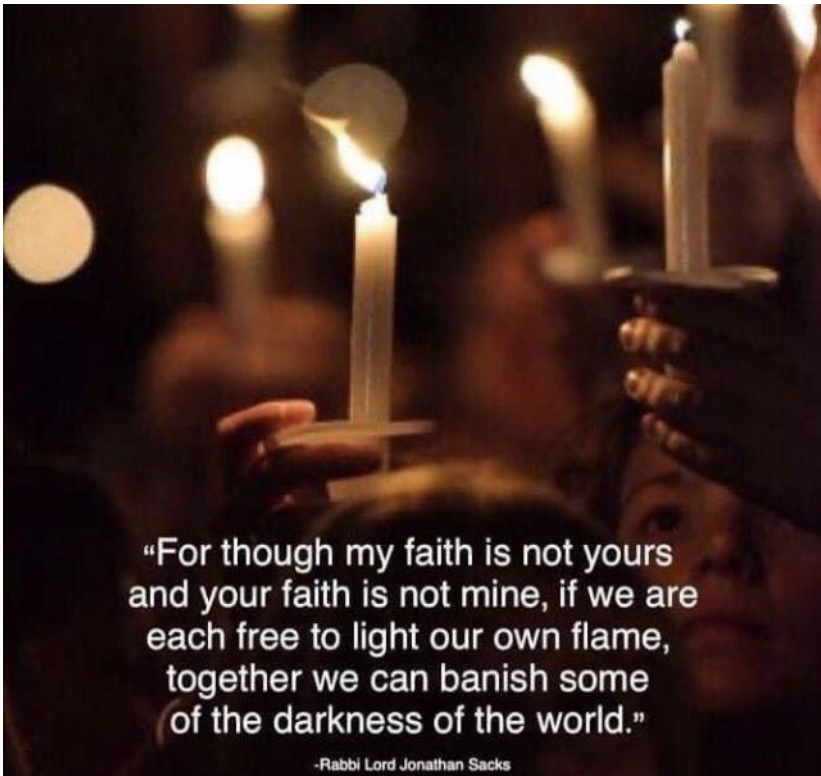
A Christmas tree service is held a few days before the 25th when all the young children are invited to sing carols, eat goodies and receive a gift from the church. Members of the Women's Society of Christian Services and Methodist Youth Fellowship visit old-age homes, prisons and orphanages to share in fellowship.

On Christmas Day, churches are packed with not just Christians but also those from other faith backgrounds. Large TV screens and additional furniture are arranged to accommodate people, often in the range of 500 to 1000. Families meet to exchange gifts and share a meal together. In most houses, a special lamb curry and biryani

rice is prepared. It is a tradition to prepare homemade Christmas fruit cake along with several savoury and sweet delicacies, which are shared with friends and family throughout the week leading up to the New Year.

On New Year's Day, there is a morning service in all churches often followed by a sports afternoon. Most youth participate in games and fun activities. Thereafter, everybody shares together in a simple meal prepared by professional chef, often catering for almost 500 people. As the Christmas season culminates, it leaves a deep sense of joy, love and warmth amongst people across all cultures.

Kushma & Deeptima Massey



The Angel of the North



You may have seen it from the train on the East Coast line to Edinburgh; you may have seen it from the A1: you may have seen it in the opening scenes of "Vera", but to really see it you have to get up close, feel it, hug it, see how huge it is. It is **awesome!**

It is the largest statue of an angel in the world. Erected over a coal mine where men worked in the dark for over 200 years. It was completed at the end of the last century and stands 20 metres high with a wing span of 54 metres. The winds are strong there, but the Angel is unlikely to topple over, due partly to the slightly angled wings but also because, like a tree's root, it has as much construction below ground as it has above ground.

Its designer, Anthony Gormley, was asked " why an angel?" His reply was "because no one has ever seen one (how does he know?) and we need to keep on imagining them."

In recent years people have left mementoes at the Angel: toys, flowers, solar fairy lights in the copse below. No one leaves a name, but the Angel is obviously important to some folk.

So if you ever go "up north", I recommend you take a detour to see it close up. For me, although I only spent a little time with it, it was the highlight of my Northumberland holiday.

Rosemary Cuthbert







Advent and Christmas
At Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

Sunday 10th December ~ Second Sunday of Advent

10.30 am, All Age Gift Service

Bring along a Christmas Gift for Voices in Exile

Tuesday 12th December

1.30 to 3 pm, Advent Hymn Sing

Tea, coffee and cake will be served

Sunday 17th December ~ Third Sunday of Advent

10.30 am, Advent Worship with Holy Communion

Christmas Eve

4 pm, Carol Service

with the Village Metropolitan Community Church

Christmas Day

10.30 am, Christmas Celebration!

Come and join the celebrations!

Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Dorset Gardens, BN2 1RL

Worship Programme at Dorset Gardens

Sunday 3 December ~ First Sunday of Advent

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Ken Smith

Sunday 10 December ~ Second Sunday of Advent

9 am, Morning Communion

10.30 am, All Age Gift Service

Both Services Led by Andy Lowe

Sunday 17 December ~ Third Sunday of Advent

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion

Led by Andy Lowe

Christmas Eve ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

4 pm, Carol Service ~ Led by Andy Lowe

with the Village Metropolitan Community Church

Christmas Day

10.30 am, Christmas Celebration

Led by Heather Leake Date

Sunday 31 December ~ New Year's Eve

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Bob Winton

Sunday 7 January 2024 ~ Epiphany

10.30 am, Covenant Service with Communion

Led by Andy Lowe

Sunday 14 January

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Kathleen Richardson

Sunday 21 January

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Deeptima Massey

Sunday 28 January

10.30 am, Circuit Together Service at Hove

Led by Andy Lowe

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion at DG

Led by Cynthia Park

Sunday 4 February

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Jonathan Gravestock

Sunday 11 February

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion

Led by Heather Leake Date

Sunday 18 February ~ First Sunday of Lent

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Cynthia Park

Sunday 25 February

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Stella Goddard & Paul Richards

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion ~ Led by Cynthia Park



Artwork by Sam Dyke

The Spring 2024 edition of Newsletter will be published on Sunday 3rd March 2024. Any items for inclusion must reach the Editor, Deeptima Massey, **by Sunday 11th February 2024**. Email: office@dgmc.org.uk

Disclaimer: "The items contained within this newsletter are personal views and not necessarily the views of The Methodist Church".