**Histon December 2015/January 2016**

NEWSLETTER

**Methodist**

**Church**

## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY Services 10.30am and some evenings

MONDAY Craft Club (alternate weeks, see Diary for dates) 2.00pm to 4.00pm

WEDNESDAY Community coffee shop 9.00am to 5.00pm

THURSDAY Thursday Group (1st Thursday in month) 2.45pm to 4.00pm

SATURDAY Community coffee shop 10.30am to 11.30am

## MINISTER’S MESSAGE

Advent is probably my favourite time in the Christian calendar, for a mixture of both frivolous and serious reasons; I love all the mince pies and parties, the sparkling lights and candles, the songs and adverts, the exciting countdown to the food-and-gift-frenzy which will greet some of us on Christmas day. I love *It’s A Wonderful Life*, *Elf*, *White Christmas*, not to mention *Die Hard*. I even love *Love Actually*. Yes, I am one of those people who think that September is perhaps a little too late to start selling Christmas cards in the shops! And yet I also love the opportunity Advent gives us in the face of all this activity and clamour to slow down, to pause, to come before God in stillness. And to wait. To wait to celebrate the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. To wait for the fulfilment of all that God still has to do in us and in the wider world. To wait for God to meet with us.

It is a gift of the season which I would urge us all – myself included – to accept. It is easier said than done, but by making time for God in this busiest of months we open ourselves up to the possibility of a fresh encounter with the divine.

Despite the fantastic news that we have been granted planning permission for our building development project here at Histon Methodist Church, it is perhaps appropriate as we enter Advent that we are still waiting for the work to begin. I have only been directly involved for a few months, but for the many of you who have been involved in the planning and praying and fundraising for the development project for many years it must – at times – be an agonising wait. There will have been times of frustration, irritation, fatigue and even apathy in the midst of the hopes and dreams and excitement about what this new building might mean for the life and mission of the Church here.

So, as we enter this Advent season of waiting could I encourage us all to – once more – prayerfully and actively and hope-fully wait for the project to reach fruition; to dare to trust and pray and hope and give and work together to see this exciting initiative come to pass.

Finally, could I also gently point us all in the direction of our meeting at 7:30pm on Thursday 3rd December where we – along with other members of the Methodist Circuit – will be exploring with our Superintendent Minister Rev Colin Smith issues around marriage and human sexuality. We hope it will be a really interesting and positive gathering. There will be mince pies!

Thanks once more for everyone’s warm welcome and encouragement during these first few months of ministering with you, and may I wish you all a Merry Christmas (when we finally get there!)

*Simon Oliver*

## DIARY DATES FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY

Sun 6th Preacher: Prof Judith Lieu 10.30am

Wed 9th Afternoon concert (see notice) 2.00pm

Fri 11th Country Dancing Christmas Party` 8.00pm

Sun 13th Holy Communion. Preacher: Revd Simon Oliver 10.30am

Wed 16th Afternoon concert (see notice) 2.00pm

Sat 19th Church open - Beautifully decorated for Christmas. 10.00am-12noon

Sun 20th Preacher: Deacon Ian Murray 10.30am
 Carols by candlelight followed by tea/coffee and mince pies 4.00pm

Frid 25th United Christmas day service at Salvation Army 10.00am

Sun 27th All age worship. Preacher: Revd Simon Oliver 10.30am

Sun Jan 3rd 2016 Preacher: Mrs Judy Wynn 10.30am

Mon 4th Craft Group restarts 2.00pm

Sun 10th Covenant service. Revd Simon Oliver 10.30am

Thu 14th Thursday Group lunch at *Rose and Crown
 Big Issues* Jan Howieson of *Rainbow Saver Anglia Credit Union Ltd* 7.30pm

Sun 17th Preacher: Revd Jean Simmonds 10.30am

Sun 24th All age worship. Preacher: Revd Simon Oliver 10.30am
 Material for February *Newsletter* please

Thu 28th *Big Issues* Garry McDermott on the work of the *Street Pastors* 7.30pm

Fri 29th Country Dancing 8.00pm

Sun 31st Preacher: Mrs Kimberley Rayson 10.30am
 Circuit service at Haslingfield. *Faith to live by* with Dr Jill Barber 6.30pm

**CHRISTMAS FAIR REPORT
NOVEMBER 21ST 2015;**

I pulled back the curtains and saw the rain

Never mind it was Christmas market Day
once again.

The clouds parted and out came the sun,

And it’s off to the High Street for everyone.

Time to soak up the atmosphere in our church hall,

Buzzy and busy and great fun for all.

Once again the market pulled in the crowds and the seasonal stalls were loaded with goodies, ranging from pickles to aprons, books to meringues, with fun competitions to keep you on your toes –a quiz, guess the weight of the cake, numbers of buttons and/or sweets in jars, and name the appealing dog that we all wanted, together with an enticing raffle. The church was transformed into an inviting café and delicious homemade refreshments were served throughout.

Huge thanks go to all those who made or brought items for the stalls, those who organised the stalls, those who prepared the premises and those who cleared up afterwards, and of course the support of the customers.

The great sum of £1850 was raised for church funds but above all everyone who came enjoyed another memorable Christmas Market and John Watson went home with ‘Sheba’ the dog, the envy of all!

**Revd Joe Ridholls**

We were sorry to hear of the recent death of Revd Joe Ridholls at the age of 92.

Some of us have very fond memories of Joe, who was our minister from 1962 to 1965, when we were part of the Cottenham Circuit.

He last preached in our church in June 1996 when he was invited back during our centenary year.

He made a lasting impression on those of us who were members of the Youth Club at that time, and it is due to his influence that some of us are still in the church today.

He and his wife Joan retired to St Agnes, Cornwall, where Joe remained active and preached until he was 90.

He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered.

**MINCE PIES**

There will be a sign-up sheet available in the church requesting offers of mince pies to be served after our candlelight service on 20th December.

**COUNTRY DANCING**

Jane and I look forward to welcoming you to our Country Dancing Christmas Party on Friday, 11th December, at 8.00 p.m. where we shall have a Bring-and-Share Buffet in the interval. Our guest caller this month will be Hugh Stewart. The next meeting will be on Friday, 29th January, 2016

See you there.

*Kathryn Coles*

**Sunday Coffee & Tea Rota**

Many thanks to all who are already on the rota. Your help and support are much appreciated.

New helpers will be welcomed, frequency on the Rota can be as seldom or often as you wish.

*Eileen Searjeant*.

**Prayer Box**

Regular visitors to our community coffee shop will be aware that baskets are available on the tables for people to write their requests for prayer.

Personal written prayer requests can also be placed in the prayer box, (which is kept on the vestry table), at any time during the week.

They can also be placed in the baskets, along with the offering, during morning service.

There is a notepad and pen available on the bookcase at the back of the church, or you may wish to bring something already written.

The Prayer Box is placed on the Communion Table during Sunday morning worship with the Offertory Baskets.

The prayers are offered collectively, rather than individually, by the preacher as part of the offertory prayer or during the prayers of intercession.

**HOPE FOR CHILDREN**

After an exhausting six day trek I have conquered Mt Kilimanjaro!

I would firstly like to thank everyone who supported events and gave donations to *Hope for Children*, as we reached just under £3000 before I had even started the trek. Whilst in Tanzania, I got the chance to visit one of the *HOPE for Children* projects at Armani Children’s Home in Moshi, and was able to play with the children that learned and lived there. All had such wonderfully cheeky personalities and were a joy to meet – I couldn’t comprehend that these children had been forced to work and live on the streets of nearby cities in awful conditions. But thanks to the volunteers who work there and your generosity, these children are now safe to act like children, have an education, and eventually can be reunited with their families, happy in the knowledge that they won’t ever have to starve again. This rehabilitation shows just how the money raised for *HOPE* has gone towards such an amazing and worthwhile cause.

The climb itself was tough and exhausting both physically and mentally – some of the fittest members of our group did not make it to the summit! Our team of porters and guides were a marvel, carrying our main bags on their heads and striding out ahead of us without complaint, and always with a smile on their face, happy to help whenever needed. This was great, as after the slow slog of a day, our tents and bags would be pitched ready-in-waiting for us. As we climbed higher it became more and more difficult to breathe with the reduction of oxygen in the air, and the effects of the altitude became noticeable in the entire group. Although luckily I only experienced a few minor headaches and loss of appetite, I had caught a cold which meant that I lost my voice over the entirety of the climb. The penultimate day, otherwise known as Summit Night, was the killer. Waking at 11.30pm to begin walking up the steep rocky path in complete darkness at 12midnight is enough to make anyone’s blood curdle, but then factor in the intense cold (I had to insert my camelback into my many layers of fleeces and coats so that it wouldn’t freeze) and the 15 hours of climbing that we faced, many people would just give up then and there – not me. I plugged in my music, turned my head torch on, put one foot in front of the other and didn’t stop. Wheezing and coughing all the way I defied the expectations of the medics and some of my teammates to make it past sunrise to Stella Point, the top of Mt Kilimanjaro. All we could do at that point was lie down on the dusty floor in utter exhaustion, forcing ourselves to stay awake before making our long decent back down the mountainside. Eventually we made it back to the comfort of the hotel and were able to reflect on our achievements. I’m very proud of what I and all of our group have achieved – a very memorable climb for such an amazing charity.

*Amabel Richardson*

**Samaritan’s Purse
Shoe Box Appeal**

Many thanks to everyone who supported this year’s Shoe Box Appeal.

During our morning service on 15th November we watched a video showing the delight on the faces of the children who receive them.

Sixteen beautifully decorated filled boxes, plus £45 in cash donations, have now been sent from our church.

**Scams and Fraud Protection Awareness Event**

Vulnerable people are being increasingly targeted by fraud and Scam

The *National Fraud Authority* estimates £9.1 billion was lost to fraud by UK individuals in 2012/2013 of which £1.5 billion of these losses were suffered by older people.

The Pavilion Histon & Impington Recreation Ground, New Rd Impington, Thursday 3rd December 2.00 – 3.00 p.m. Short presentation followed by Q & A session

jean.newman7@ntlworld.com
Tele 07772437789 to register your attendance

**Big Issues News**

Big Issues takes a break in December. We explored a variety of topics in our first five meetings, and were joined by several people who were interested in the specific topic at each meeting.

It was moving to see a young boy on BBC TV’s *Children in Need* showing us how his ‘Dogs for Good’ trained dog had enhanced and enriched his life, the very evening after Andy Lee and his dog Rufus had showed us similar ways these dogs can help their owners with everyday living.

Our meetings start again on 14th January when Jan Howieson of the *Rainbow Saver Anglia Credit Union Ltd* will tell us what Credit Unions are and how they work. They regularly have representatives at the St Andrews Church Centre.

On 28th January Garry McDermott tells us how *Street Pastors* support those distressed or vulnerable on a night out in Cambridge.

11th February and our own Revd Simon Oliver takes us on a theological exploration of the popular arts *Jesus, Movies and Rock n Roll.*

25th February is the date Revd Dr Roger Abbott of the Faraday Institute challenges us with *Since When Have Disasters Ever Been Natural?*

Our guest speaker, at our last meeting on 10th March, Revd Barbara Johnson, who is Service Chaplain to Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, considers *Chaplaincy – Church without Walls?*

We are indebted to all our speakers who willingly accept our invitation to come and speak at our meetings, where, as ever, we endeavour to have ’a stimulating, and at times controversial, evening to challenge our thinking.’

All are welcome to join us for some or all of these meetings.

*Helen Allen*

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

After a long delay, we have at last received the revised planning consent from SCDC. The architect is now preparing detailed construction drawings to enable us to proceed. We will need also to make firm decisions on a number of matters to enable plans and specifications to be drawn up.

This has been a quieter month in terms of fund-raising but the Christmas Market result will be reported elsewhere and we also hope to hold concerts on two Wednesday afternoons in December, as last year. These will be on the 9th and 16th so look out for details.

In addition, we continue to approach grant-making Trusts to obtain further funds for our project. The Parish Council has agreed a sum of £500 but more may be available in the new financial year. A request to SCDC is also with them for 2016/17 and there are other bodies from whom much larger sums may be available and with whom discussions (and complicated applications and procedures!) are in process.

At the end of the day, this is OUR church - YOUR church - and we all need to think and pray about how we as individuals can contribute towards the total amount needed. We must not sit back and wait for others to do it for us. Some people are working hard already - please will YOU consider what you can do? You / we are the church.

*Michael Simmonds*

**AFTERNOON CONCERTS**

Afternoon concerts will take place on Wednesday 9th December and Wednesday 16th December in the Church at 2.00pm. We will be pleased to welcome John and Rosemary Clarkson who will be performing on Guitar and Concertina on 9th and Rex Freeman and friends on 16th. Please put a note in your diaries. Admission is free but there will be a retiring collection in aid of the Church Development Fund.

**News from the Turning Point Trust**

The morale was low that day in 2013, as the staff team met for prayer. After a decade of work in Kibera, we were feeling the effects of the global economic downturn and had had to make some brutal cuts to programmes benefiting those on the bottom rung. Heavy on our hearts was the fact that the TP children in government schools were not doing well, and we were getting very little relational time to impact them.

It was Florence who brought the challenge, reminding us of Exodus 4. God has spoken to Moses through the burning bush and given Him a specific calling. Doubting and fearful, Moses comes up with four different problems. Four times God adjusts his focus and says, ‘it's not about you, it's about me.’

Then Moses answered and said, ‘But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, The LORD has not appeared to you.’

So the LORD said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ ‘A staff,’ he replied. (Exodus 4:2)

'What if we stopped looking at what we lack, and look at God's faithfulness over the years?' Florence said. 'What do we already have in our hand?'

At that moment something was unlocked, and our focus was adjusted. Unconsciously, we had slipped into a poverty mind-set. We were looking through lenses which said ‘lack’ instead of ‘God is able’. That morning, the concrete vision for the *Fountains of Hope School* was born. Technically there was no facility for it, yet we already had three centres in our hand! Mud-walled, tin-roofed, but adaptable and a clear testimony God's faithfulness. We stepped out in faith and in January 2014, began. In 2015 we added another class and knew that we would soon need to rebuild. But with what? We had reached our limits, but were starting to see results.

In the last two years there has been funding support from three unexpected sources which we couldn't have predicted. Last month, a legacy we had no idea about came in. We needed to start rebuilding this November. By October, everything we needed was in the bank. God is able! What do you have in your hand today? Does it seem ordinary or not enough? Offer it to Him. Readjust your focus. In God's hands, your humble 'stick' is a power tool for His glory.

**A PRAYER FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS**

‘And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us’

Heavenly Father

We thank you that you did not leave us in darkness, but sent your son, Jesus Christ, to be light for all the world. Enable us, by your spirit, to welcome and receive your Word, and to reflect His light and grace, as those who are your children.