

THE VOICE

MERROW METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE



HAPPY **NEW** **YEAR**

January 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE MANSE – JANUARY 2021

Dear friends,

Happy New Year!

The beginning of this New Year is very different from the previous ones. Though the pandemic is still there we are a people of hope believing that God our refuge and strength is with us always. Let us not look back at the disappointments of the yesteryear, rather look forward to the guidance of our merciful and loving God to lead us on the right path. We need to be positive and enjoy our Heavenly Father's loving-kindness which is fresh every morning and extend it towards others in this year.

As we move through the year, from winter into the promise of spring, this will be a great opportunity for each of us to form a deeper love relationship with God and to grow in our faithfulness. Let our focus in this year be on keeping a clear vision of what it means to follow Jesus in such a time as this. Well, we are only a few days of the way through and I'll tell you, I am excited as there is light of hope. We have struggled most of 2020 and now with the rolling out of the Covid-19 vaccine, life is going to move towards normalcy. I am also hopeful that those who are facing life-threatening, life altering challenges and struggles, the light of Christ will brighten their lives. I also pray and hope that 2021 softens the divisions and hard lines drawn among nations and religious and political groups by the warmth of the love of God.

Having said that, for this hope to change into reality, the people of the faith have to have a clear vision, sound focus and challenge the causes that hinder us to keep Jesus Christ as our guide and the anchor of our life. This is the time to put our faith and spiritual richness into operation. And this calls for work, for discipline, for intentionality. To help us in these purposes, a beautiful and very appropriate hymn written by Helen Lemmel comes to mind. It goes like this:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace ...*

This may sound simplistic, but honestly, we complicate things pretty regularly. If we are to grow in our relationship with God and reflect the light of Christ, we must uphold the truth and do the work God has entrusted to us. We have to be honest with ourselves and be willing to deny ourselves. We have to realise that our needs and comforts are not the ultimate goal. We have to focus on who Jesus was and is and what that means for us as those who call themselves his disciples. When we fully turn our eyes and our hearts and minds to Jesus and recognise the grace gifted to us, it calls us to be bearers of that grace to others.

So, let us set our sights on what matters. Let us turn our eyes to Jesus. Let us pick our cross, our baggage, our gifts, our griefs, our disappointments – let us pick it all up and follow our Saviour. May it be so.

May the Lord bless you and keep you in 2021,

Asif Das



EDITORIAL NOTE



The Methodist New Year began in September
The liturgical New Year began with Advent
But now, at last, we can welcome a New Calendar Year, 2021.

January's "Voice", what fun! First edition '21
February, fog and snow? What's the forecast, I don't know.
March's pages, full of laughs, snowdrops first and then the daffs!
April's Issue could be thin if you don't send something in!
Then the editor just **May** take a Spring Bank Holiday.
Seriously though, in **June** everything will be 'in tune'.
Asif leaves us in **July**. How the year is rushing by.
August, month for Junior pages now the schools are closed for ages!
But **September** changes brings. Welcome Reverend George, who sings!
In **October's** Autumn mists, I sort emails, rotas, lists.
Leaves are falling in **November**, all the fallen we remember.
Colds and coughs? Just get a tissue!
They won't stop **December's** Issue.

(My parody of an old English Nursery Rhyme which was made even more famous by Flanders and Swann)

Any items for inclusion in the **FEBRUARY** issue of "The Voice" should be sent to me by: **WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20th 2021**
via email: gillianbrierley13@gmail.com
or by post: 57, Darfield Rd. GU4 7YY

USEFUL ADDRESSES

SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER:

REV.KEITH C. BECKINGHAM

01483 575667

keithcbeckingham@gmail.com

MINISTER:

REV.ASIF DAS

01483 575432

asifdas@hotmail.co.uk

CHURCH OFFICE:

Bushy Hill Drive, Guildford, GU1 2SH.

01483 537655

office@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk

PROPERTY LETTINGS

ADMINISTRATOR:

01483 537655

lettings@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk

PRAYER SUPPORT GROUP:

This is a small group willing to put time aside for praying each day for special needs within the Church community. Your request will be passed on to other members of the group, where it will remain confidential.

The prayer contact for JANUARY will be

HELEN BELSHAM

01483 823742

EDITOR – ‘The Voice’

GILLIAN BRIERLEY

01483 531191

gillianbrierley13@gmail.com

TRAID CRAFT

GLENYS MAGILL

01483 823587

glenys.magill1@ntlworld.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JANUARY

We are still adhering to government restrictions and Methodist Church advice but the following services should happen as planned:

January 3 rd	Hargreaves – Covenant and Holy Communion
January 10 th	Das – pre-recorded
January 17 th	Funnell
January 24 th	McKay
January 31 st	Shepherd – pre-recorded

Steward's Rota – for Sunday Worship

Date/Time	Vestry	Door/Booking	Worship Leader	P/A & A/V	Organ
Jan 3 rd 10.30	Joan Wells	Helen Belsham Maggie Woolcock		Jane Vinall	Gillian B.
Jan 10 th 10.30	Hugh Bradley	Suzanne Burnham Julie Wallis		Glenys Magill	Joan T.
Jan 17 th 10.30	Helen Belsham	Ruth McCulloch Maggie Woolcock		Jane Vinall	Gillian B.
Jan 24 th 10.30	Suzanne Burnham	Joan Wells Julie Wallis		Glenys Magill	Joan T.
Jan 31 st 10.30	Joan Wells	Ruth McCulloch Suzanne Burnham		Jane Vinall	Gillian B.

The church continues to open for Silent Prayer each Wednesday from 10-11.00 am

Wednesday Steward's Rota for Silent Prayers 10-11am

Date	Door Steward	PA/Door steward
Jan 6 th		
Jan 13 th		
Jan 20 th		
Jan 27 th		



TOILETS, TAPS AND TRAINING – A LIFESAVING TRIO

JANUARY'S COFFEE MORNING – THURSDAY JANUARY 21 10.30 – 12.00

While we still can't meet up for coffee at the church, please join me for a virtual 'cuppa', cake and chat and help raise some money for the charity Toilet Twinning UK

We are all so familiar with the concept of a flushing toilet, running water and a basin to keep ourselves healthy, that it is almost impossible to think of living without these basic amenities, but in many countries these are still not common and this year the lack of water for hand washing has increased the risk of catching COVID -19 too.

Toilet Twinning UK is a charity run by Tearfund to support partners in more than 35 countries to help the most vulnerable communities protect their children dying from diarrhoeal diseases and also themselves from rural diseases caused by poor hygiene and sanitation, including Covid-19 .

In practice, this means providing toilets and taps for communities which lack these most basic of necessities, improving people's access to clean water, providing hygiene training and products such as soap and distributing the latest public health guidance by all means possible.

In many communities, they are helping families set up simple handwashing stations called 'tippy taps' that help improve hand hygiene while preserving precious water reserves.

Investing in sanitation is one of the most cost-effective forms of aid. For every £1 spent on water and sanitation programmes, £5.50 is returned through saved time, reduced health costs and increased productivity.

So, what does toilet twinning mean?

Each £60 we raise will help fund a project in a poor community that will enable families to build a basic toilet, have access to clean water and learn about hygiene – a vital combination that saves lives.

And to show that we have helped, we'll receive a certificate to hang in the church loo – showing a photograph of our overseas toilet twin and GPS coordinates so you can look up our twin's location on Google Maps!

To join the Zoom meeting, send an email to glenys.magill1@ntlworld.com or copy this address:-

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86878068369?pwd=OV00d0dGbUwzMzdaazNlemx6Z3JoQT09>

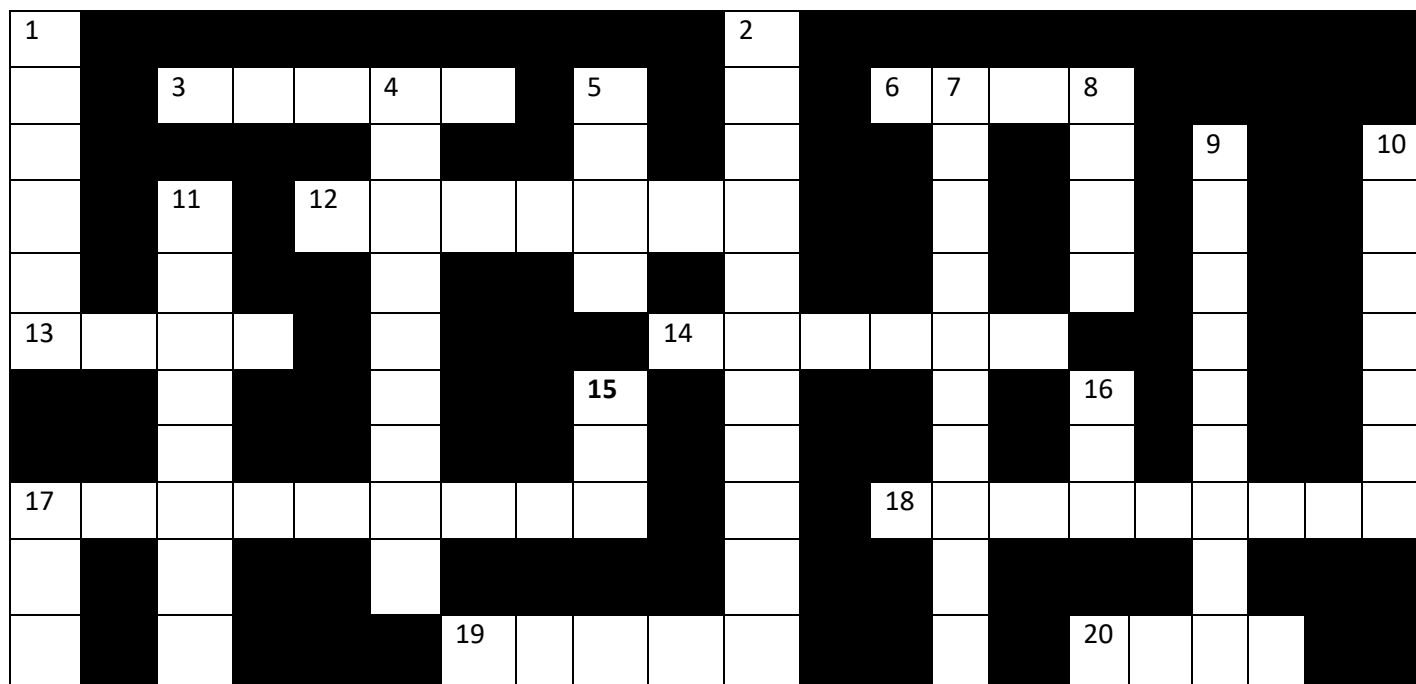
There will be donation forms available at the church, which can be returned via the offertory box or I can collect any donations from you.

If you would to twin your own toilet, taps or bin, or give as a gift to a friend and receive a certificate – you can donate £60 on-line at www.toilettwinning.org

Glenys Magill

JUNIOR NEW YEAR'S PUZZLE PAGE – for the young and young at heart

As the (3a) strikes (1d) on New Year's (16d), and we hear the (11d) chimes of



(15d) & (17d), we link (6a) and sing Auld (20a & 8d). On television you hear the (9d) as the old year (13a). We celebrate the (17a) of (2d), the 1st of (12a), with a (19a) for (10d) & (14a), letting off (18a), drinking (4d) and making a New Year's (7d). In Scotland a stranger brings his host a lump of (5d).

Can you complete the above story, by filling in the words which have been omitted into the grid above?

(Did you get them all? Answers on P 20)

Why do birds fly south for New Year's Eve? **It's too far to walk**

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

What was the caterpillar's New Year's resolution? **To turn over a new leaf**

Story time



Dinah's New Year Present

Dinah is one of the most good-natured children that ever lived, but she is very, very lazy. There is nothing she likes, or used to like, so much as to curl up in some warm corner in the sun and do nothing. Dinah's mother wished very much that her daughter should learn to read, but the lady who tried to teach her soon gave it up. "It is no use," she said, "Dinah will not learn. She is not stupid, but she is too lazy for anything."

It happened, soon after this, that a young man from another town came to the town where Dinah lived and surprised everyone by having such fun going rapidly up and down the street on roller skates. Dinah was so astonished when she saw this that she ran after him, her black eyes shining as they had never shone before.

One day the young man allowed her to try on the skates. The child was too happy for words. Of course she fell down, and sprawled about the floor, but did not mind at all. "Look here, Dinah," said the young man, "I understand that my aunt has been trying to teach you to read." Dinah answered that she certainly had.

"Why didn't you learn?" asked the young man. "You need not trouble to answer," said he, "I have heard that it's just because you are too lazy.

Now, if, on the first of January, you can read, I tell you what I will do. I will send you a brand new pair of roller-skates in just your size." How Dinah's eyes sparkled. For a moment she said nothing, then exclaimed decidedly, "They'll be mine for sure."

When she bent her mind to her work she could always do it well, no matter what it was. The lady who had, before this, found her such a difficult child to teach, now had no trouble. If Dinah showed the least sign of her former laziness the word SKATES was enough to make her concentrate on her lesson instantly.

As the New Year began she received a box marked with her name in large printed letters: - MISS DINAH MORRIS - "If she can read what is on the outside of this box she can have what is inside."

And as Dinah could by now read every word plainly and quickly, she had for her very own the fine roller-skates which the box held. And sitting curled up in the sun, doing nothing, is **not** the thing she likes to do best





JANUARY

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR IN THE GARDEN when almost everything is resting or preparing for rebirth in the Spring
as also is **F W Gardener**.

However, as you sweep up the Christmas tree needles here are a few random tips stolen from the "Top Tips" page.

1. Have your houseplants got dusty leaves? Use a banana skin to clean the leaves. The dust will stick right to it, and the juice is healthy for the plants.
2. Dry your banana skins in the sun and dig them into the soil as an instant nutrient.
3. Grow roses from cuttings by pushing the stalks into a small potato. The nutrients will help the roots flourish and grow.



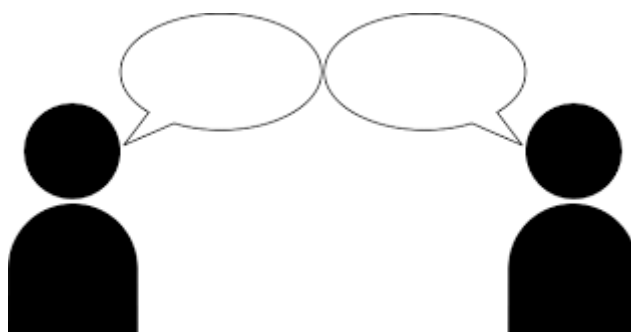
“The Methodist Way of Life”

Hopefully, most of you will have received your Membership Ticket by now and with it a booklet and card about a “Methodist Way of Life’

As our ticket reminds us each year, 'The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ to live out its discipleship in worship and mission'. A Methodist Way of Life provides a set of commitments and practices that seek to encourage and equip us to better live our lives in response to God's love. Many of us may find this easier in the company of others but how can we manage to talk and share our thinking about the questions raised in the booklet during this prolonged time of isolation? Perhaps in pairs or a small group using one of the following?

- WhatsApp groups
- Telephone conversations
- Zoom meetings
- A chat in the park

After all - “Where two or three gather in my name, there am I in the midst of them”. Matthew 18:20.



Gill's trills

- not mine at all, but New Year quotes from well-known people -

C.S. Lewis

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

George Eliot

"It is never too late to be what you might have been."

Alfred Lord Tennyson

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true."

Socrates

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

Eleanor Roosevelt

"With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts."

T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

"Last year's words belong to last year's language. And next year's words await another voice."

Alfred Lord Tennyson

"Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, 'it will be happier.'"

John Wesley

"Beware you be not swallowed up in books! An ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge."

I have only one resolution. To rediscover the difference between wants and needs. May I have all I need and want all I have. Happy **New Year!**

Ken's pen

TO BORIS

We're the experts who study the virus,
So you and your team should admire us.
But if after so long
You think we were wrong,
Then just like old Trump, you can fire us.

During the reign of George 3rd, a peasant woman was working in a field near Weymouth, on her own carrying heavy sheaves of corn. She noticed a carriage draw up and a posh-looking gentleman walked slowly across the field to her. He raised his hat, and asked "Why are you all alone. There are horses tethered by the gate, and tools lying around. What's going on?"

"The rest have gone off to see the king" she replied. "They say he might be driving down to Weymouth today." "And didn't YOU want to see the king?"

"Oh, yes, sir" she said "but I'm a poor widow with five children. I can't afford to lose half a day's pay".

"Quite right." said the stranger, who took out his purse and gave her two gold sovereigns, raised his hat again as politely as before, and said "When the others come back, tell them that as you couldn't go to see the king, the king came to see you."

We remember, at Christmas, that, as we cannot see or know for sure what God is like, He sent His Son, Jesus. So, as we look through the Gospels we can catch a glimpse of God, as revealed in Jesus. One who loves, forgives and understands us all.



A motor-cyclist swerved, went through a hedge, and finished with a smashed bike and some injuries. A little girl who had seen what happened went to him and said "Please, would you mind doing it again. My little brother laughed like anything!"

Walker's talk

Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.

When I married Miss Right I had no idea her first name was Always.

My wife got 8 out of 10 on her driving test: the other two guys managed to jump out of her way.

My wife and I were happy for 25 years; then we met.

Women spend more time wondering what men are thinking than men spend thinking.

Sometimes I wake up grumpy; other times I let her sleep.

Those of you who read the "Thought for the week" may recall two recent ones which, I'm glad to say, prompted further thoughts sent in by Peter Radcliffe:

Pete's tweet

Forks & Sisters - Your article immediately reminded me of the death knell a fork became to American spies operating in Europe during WWII. The USA uses its eating irons at a main meal in a very different manner from the rest of the world. The fork takes precedence during the eating exercise. German intelligence knew this so ruthlessly kept watch at local munching parlours. Several brave people lost their lives simply because old habits die hard. It is a bit like a Brit hopping off a plane in Europe and driving immediately on the wrong side of the road

Your comment being one of three sisters invoked memories of Chekhov's "Three Sisters" written in 1850. Knowing that the author is renowned for dry as dust narratives, I studiously avoided this type of art work. Perhaps a little hypocritical of me to state the above but this is often a problem for a science minded person. So Gillian, I much preferred your rendering of three sisters. For the record if interested, the work takes about two hours to read at 250 words per minute. If you finish the book before me don't wait!

(Colossians chapter 3 verse 17)

The Magi

(submitted by Peter Radcliffe)

T S Eliot is better known for his Cat poems. However, Journey of The Magi is one of his favourite chez d'oeuvres. Although described as a poem it is more a short piece of riveting prose. The bible simply narrates the start and finish of a long expedition starting somewhere in Iraq and finishing in Bethlehem. The nature of such an arduous undertaking is highlighted in this poetic work. The theme is a poignant reflection in later life from one of the three. In January it takes its worthwhile place in the canon of English literature. It can easily be stripped off the internet and occupy a few delightful minutes of your time. Eliot was born in America but switched to England in 1914. He converted to Catholicism and subsequently wrote this poem in 1939.

I have a good friend at GUC who possesses this CD, narrated by the author himself. It contains an addendum musing why this poem was written. I borrowed the CD and sat down with Rev Darlene McCarley to listen and extract the maximum benefit from it. If anyone would like to enjoy this reading in similar fashion once this pandemic ends I can easily twist my comrade's arm for another short loan. I just keep twisting her arm until she says, "yes"! Merrow has my contact details.

Another recommendation fitting this festive season is a short fictional story called, "The Story of the Other Wise Man" written in the late 19th century by American, Henry van Dyke.

Artaban was the fourth magus due to rendez-vous en route to Bethlehem. Alas, he gets waylaid for the best and most humanitarian of reasons and so misses both meeting his three friends and visiting the young Christ child. The rest of his life is spent trying to catch up but never succeeds – or does he?

Wikipedia tells us more about him:

A priest of the Magi named Artaban, one of the [Medes](#) from [Persia](#), like the other Magi, sees signs in the heavens proclaiming that a King had been born among the Jews. He sets out to see the new-born ruler, carrying treasures to give as gifts to the child - a sapphire, a ruby, and a "[pearl of great price](#)". However, he stops along the way to help a dying man, which makes him late to meet with the caravan of the other three wise men. Because he missed the caravan, and can't cross the desert with only a horse, he is forced to sell one of his treasures in order to buy the camels and supplies necessary for the trip. He then commences his

journey but arrives in Bethlehem too late as the child, with his parents, has fled to Egypt. He saves the life of a child at the price of another of his treasures.

He then travels to Egypt and to many other countries, searching for Jesus for many years and performing acts of charity along the way. After 33 years, Artaban is still a pilgrim and a seeker after light. He arrives in Jerusalem just in time for the [crucifixion of Jesus](#).

He spends his last treasure, the pearl, to ransom a young woman from being sold into slavery. He is then struck in the head by a falling roof tile and is about to die, having failed in his quest to find Jesus, but having done much good through charitable works. A voice tells him "Verily I say unto thee, Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me." (Matthew 25:40) He dies in a calm radiance of wonder and joy. His treasures were accepted, and the Other Wise Man found his King.

(Habukkuk chapter 2 verse 14)

Our now retired Rev Kath Benny used this bitter sweet story as a basis for a GUC festive sermon. It was well chosen.



.....As an unrelated aside, I would also suggest that ministers don't actually retire, they simply stop getting paid!

Top Tips for the New Year

1. Simple cure for insomnia - just get a good night's sleep!
2. Go to bed early at least once a week.
3. Run the cut end of an avocado under cool water to prevent browning.
4. Remove marks on wooden furniture using a walnut? Cut it in half and rub it into the scratch (Pecans, Brazil nuts and almonds all work too) then rub the area with your fingers to help the oils from the nut soak into the surface of the wood. Buff it up with a cloth, and it's done.
5. Never mind furniture polish. Just grab some olive oil and lemon juice and mix them in a 2:1 ratio. Go over your wood surfaces with it and your furniture will shine.
6. Forgotten the charger for your USB device while travelling? Most hotel TVs have a USB port and as long as you have a USB cable you can get your devices (including tablets, smart phones, and even MP3 players) charged by plugging it into your TV!
7. If you sit for several hours a day, find a simple routine to stretch out your hips and chest.
8. If a recipe calls for onions and garlic, don't put the garlic into the pan until the onion is nearly translucent or the garlic will burn. (Garlic cooks in about 30 seconds!)
9. Tell the people you love that you love them more often.

Come on readers, send in your favourite tips!

Let's not forget our advertisers who are all facing challenging times.

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Prayers worth sharing



Celtic Blessing of the New Year

God, bless to me the new day,
Never bestowed to me before;
It is to bless your own presence
You have given me this time, O God.

Bless to me my eye,
May my eye bless all it sees;
I will bless my neighbor,
May my neighbor bless me.

God, give me a clean heart,
Let me not from sight of your eye;
Bless to me my family,
And bless to me my means and my home.

Carmina Gadelica

Words from P.7

Clock; Twelve; Eve; Midnight; Big; Ben; Arms; Lang; Syne; Countdown; Ends; Beginning; New Year's Day; January; Party; Friends; Family; Fireworks; Champagne; Resolution; Coal.