

THE LINK

The Magazine of Portsmouth Methodist Church

Trinity



Copnor



Eastney



January / February 2020

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www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk

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Message from The Manse

Happy New Year! Expect many people to refer to '20/20 vision' this year, so let me be one of the first. Of course, as the year turns, we naturally turn our thoughts to the year ahead of us. It's an important year in the life of the Methodist Church. In the summer Conference will vote on "God in love unites us" the report on Marriage and Relationships. Before that each District Synod will have an indicative on the report. Many circuits and individual churches will also be having consultations. There are three in this circuit, the first being at Drayton United Church at 10.00 on January 25th (see December Link for details of the others). The Church Council will also have the choice as to whether we have a church consultation. Each centre has copies of the report and accompanying study guide. There are also guides produced by two groups within Methodism, one from Dignity and Worth supportive of the proposals outlined in the report and the other from Methodist Evangelicals Together, opposed to changes to the church's definition of marriage. Engagement with the issues is important, firstly because the process is giving everyone a chance to have their voice heard but secondly if the proposed changes are accepted then each Church Council will eventually need to decide whether same-sex marriages can be carried out in its buildings.

That's not the only proposal/vision for the future up for discussion this year. Another report 'God for all' encompasses many aspects of growth and evangelism. The church nationally is proposing to commit significant resources to a wide-ranging new approach. This can also be read on-line. This too will potentially have an impact locally. It may be that a missionary is welcomed to Portsmouth.

Both these reports remind us that society changes and the church is faced with the challenge of responding to changing circumstances, whilst continuing to respond to God's call on our lives. In Portsmouth Methodist Church my belief is that we need to develop our own vision for the future. Without a future vision there is limited prospect of a future at all. As the KJV version of Proverbs 29:18 put it - "Where there is no vision the people perish". We should continue to discern God's will for us, to evaluate our discipleship as followers of Jesus Christ and be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that the year 2020 will indeed be a year of vision for the Methodist Church, locally and nationally.

John



J. John at the Guildhall, April 4th and 5th. If you want a flavour of what you and the friend you invite might hear, then check out his story of the little kitten and prayer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgQqBC-WTzs>

Tickets are £5 each and John has a number for Saturday 4th April.

Forums

As we enter a new year, a reminder that the Forum meetings are open meetings which anyone can come along to. This particularly applies to the Mission and Outreach and the Worship and Spirituality forums. These are a chance for you to come and share ideas about mission and worship. The next meetings are on January 21st (M+O) 7.30 at Trinity and January 28th (W+S) 7.30 at the manse.

Covenant Service on January 12th.

For the first time this is a joint Portsmouth Methodist Church service, to be held at Copnor. It will be followed by a bring and share lunch. Please come along if you are able, to this particular Methodist expression of discipleship and commitment.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

On January 19th Trinity will be hosting the CHIMES (Churches in Milton, Eastney and Southsea) joint service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It's a wonderful opportunity to worship together with our brothers and sisters from other local churches. The service starts at 3pm.

Prayer Points

Please hold in your prayers

- The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and particularly the service at Trinity on January 19th
- The consultations on 'God in Love unites us'
- The J. John 'Just One' event, ask for the name of the person to invite and continue to pray that they would be open to that invitation.

Around our Centres

Preachers for January and February

<i>Date</i>	<i>Copnor</i>	<i>Eastney</i>	<i>Trinity</i>
<i>January</i>			
5th January	Deacon Laura Evans Family Friendly Service	Rev John Mills Holy Communion	Mr Neil Wingrove
12th January	Rev John Mills Covenant Service Commissioning of Sunday School and Pastoral Visitors	Service at Copnor	Service at Copnor
19th January	Mr Andrew Wilcock	Mrs Wendy Corney	Rev Dr Beryl Wright 3.00 p.m. Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
26th January	Mrs Pam Stone 12:30 Rev John Mills Zimbabwe Fellowship	Mr Neil Wingrove	Rev John Mills Family Friendly Service
<i>February</i>			
2nd February	Rev. David Rice 6.30 p.m. PMC Holy Communion	Rev John Mills	Local Arrangement
9th February	Rev John Mills	Cmdr Mark Barton	Mrs Lynne Matthews
16th February	Rev Dr Beryl Wright	Local Arrangement	Mrs Imelda Temple
23rd February	Local Arrangement 12:30 Rev John Mills Zimbabwe Fellowship	Deacon Laura Evans Family Friendly Service	Rev John Mills Holy Communion

Looking Back ...

Copnor's Walking Nativity

The walking nativity was attended by around 450 people. The initiative was organised by Portsmouth Methodist Church and Copnor Ward Councillor Neill Young and took place on Saturday 7th December.

The walk started at St Nicholas Church, Battenburg Avenue, and finished at our Copnor Centre with a tableau nativity scene and refreshments. It entailed adults and children walking and carol singing along a designated route with brief stops along the way to collect the various characters from the Christian nativity story and to hear parts of that story... complete with live donkeys!

Rev John Mills said 'It was wonderful to see so many people engaging with the story of the birth of Jesus. The carols, the characters in costume, and the donkeys all played their part in recreating the nativity scene in the heart of our community.'



Councillor Young said 'This is the fourth year running we've organised the walking nativity and it's great to see people were looking out for it and joining in. It was a great way to kick-off the festive season and a very enjoyable afternoon for all involved.'

Find out more at

www.facebook.com/copnorwalkingnativity

Dates for your Diary

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is observed from the 18th to the 25th January 2020 which is the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Trinity is hosting a Special Service at 3 pm on Sunday 19th January 2020 to which folk from all the churches in Eastney, Milton and Southsea are invited.

The materials for the 2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by the Christian churches in Malta and Gozo (Christians Together in Malta) and the theme is Unusual Kindness.

Please come and join us. There will be refreshments after the service.

God in Love Unites Us

During this Connexional Year there is an opportunity to study and discuss the Conference Report 'God in Love Unites Us'. Copies of the report and study guide are available at all the Portsmouth Methodist Church Centres.

Events have been arranged around the circuit to discuss the report. These are at Drayton on Saturday, 25th January at 10.00 am, Petersfield on 15th February at 2.00 pm, and Portchester on Saturday, 14th March at 10.00 am.

Open Church Project

As previously, our Eastney Centre is involved in the Open Church Project. This time guests will be using the centre overnight on Tuesdays 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th February. Volunteers are needed ... there is a briefing meeting for volunteers at Eastney on Tuesday 14th January at 7.30 p.m. Any questions? Please contact our Minister Rev John Mills.

Trinity Centre AGM

Trinity Centre AGM and Centre Management Meeting is being held on after the morning service on 23rd February. This is an important meeting for those who attend at our Trinity Centre and it is an opportunity to hear about and contribute to the life of Trinity within the Portsmouth Methodist Church.

Community

Phoenix Players Production

The Phoenix Players, based at Trinity Theatre, are performing the traditional pantomime 'Robin Hood' from Wednesday 19th February through to Sunday 23rd February. Evening performances (Wednesday to Saturday) are at 7.30 p.m. and there are matinees on the Saturday and Sunday at 2.30 p.m. Tickets, starting at £8, are available from the box office 08454 676462 or online at <http://ticketsource.co.uk/bookit>

And finally ...

The Wise Men

One of the things I love about Christmas is that in the biblical account God uses different ways to meet people. For example, he uses an angel to tell Mary, a dream to speak to Joseph, bands of chorus singing angels for the shepherds, and what would have been seen as the science in the stars for the Magi, so by personal touch, emotion, great praise or by deduction and logic God finds a way of meeting us all with the good news.

Have you ever stopped to really think about the wise men, we know very little about them? We are told they came from far away in the East so it would not have been a short trip. Therefore, they must either have left well before Christ was born or arrived well after his birth. Could their friends have mocked them before they left, - you are going to do what – follow a star; and of course it meant they would only know what direction to go at night so did they travel just at night or just take star sights and set their direction for the next day. And of course, we do not know that there are three of them we just know that it is plural and that they brought three gifts.

Yet of the Christmas story it is the wise men that have the best physical evidence in Bethlehem. The church built over the site of the stable, unlike the claim church of the Holy Sepulchre, is not really disputed, why? Well, when King Chroses of Persia invaded Israel in AD614 to try and conquer the country, the Jews combined forces with him to try and destroy the Christians. They managed to destroy most Christian sites but when they came to the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, Chroses was hit with a problem. There above the door was a mosaic showing the three magi from Persia, it was against his and his soldiers' religion to destroy their images and thus the Church of Nativity was left intact. Now that church was already the third one on the site. With one built by Constantine's Mother, which was then rebuilt by the Roman emperor Justinian in AD527. So, the physical links to the site go back at least until the first century, when of course there would have been people around who had known Christ and his parents.

Often in art and understanding the Magi are taken to represent the gentiles and they are traditionally given the names of Caspar, Melchor and Balthazar. Indeed, in the orthodox churches these initials are written above doors as they equally represent the phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat*, (may Christ bless the house). In art from over the centuries they have often been used to represent Europe, Arabia, and Africa (these being the only continents known at the time). This symbology is often reinforced by the paintings showing them

arriving on horse, camel and elephant, bringing respectively their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

What is recognised in the visit of the Magi is that it was not just for the Jews that Jesus came, but for all mankind. So however, God reaches you whether by personal touch, emotion, great praise or by deduction and logic as he did with the wise men. God is asking for recognition as to which of the two kings – King Herod and earthly power or King Jesus and eternal power - you are going to follow.



(This golden reliquary in Cologne Cathedral allegedly holds the last mortal remains of Melchor, Caspar and Balthazar)

Deadline

Items for the March Link should be handed in by **Sunday 16th February** please.

Where in the World

After my last, rather too difficult, question, I thought we'd better move nearer to home. This picture is of a relatively modern construction within the UK, but can you tell me it's name and where it's located (the city will suffice). Answer in the March issue.



(The picture was taken in February 2016)

What, Where and When

Please note that some meetings may not take place or be rescheduled over the New Year period.

<i>When</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Where</i>
Monday		
2:30 p.m.	Craft Club	Trinity
6:30 p.m.	Girls Brigade	Copnor
Tuesday		
10:00 a.m.	Trinity Tots (during term time)	Trinity
10:30 a.m.	Bible Study (Fortnightly - ask for dates)	Eastney
2:30 p.m.	Friendship Group	Wesley Rooms
6:00 p.m.	Brownies (during term time)	Trinity
Wednesday		
10:00 a.m.	Coffee Morning (with small table top sale)	Trinity
12:00 noon	Fellowship Lunch including a short act of worship (1st Wednesday of month only)	Trinity
2:30 p.m.	Ladies Club	Trinity
7:30 p.m.	Bible Study (Fortnightly - ask for dates)	Manse
Thursday		
10:00 a.m.	Chat and Tea (Over 50s social group)	Trinity
12:00 noon	Soup and Pud on 6th February Praise and Ploughmans on 16th Jan and 20th Feb	Eastney
1:30 p.m.	MHA 'Munch Hub'	Eastney
6:00 p.m.	Boys Brigade	Copnor
Friday		
1:30 p.m.	MHA 'Sing'	Eastney
7:00 p.m.	Guides (during term time)	Copnor
Saturday		
10:00 a.m.	Coffee Morning (with small table top sale)	Trinity

The Wesley Rooms at the Copnor centre welcomes visitors Monday to Saturday between 10.00 a.m. and 12.30 a.m. for tea, coffee, and light refreshments. If you are in the area, do drop in!