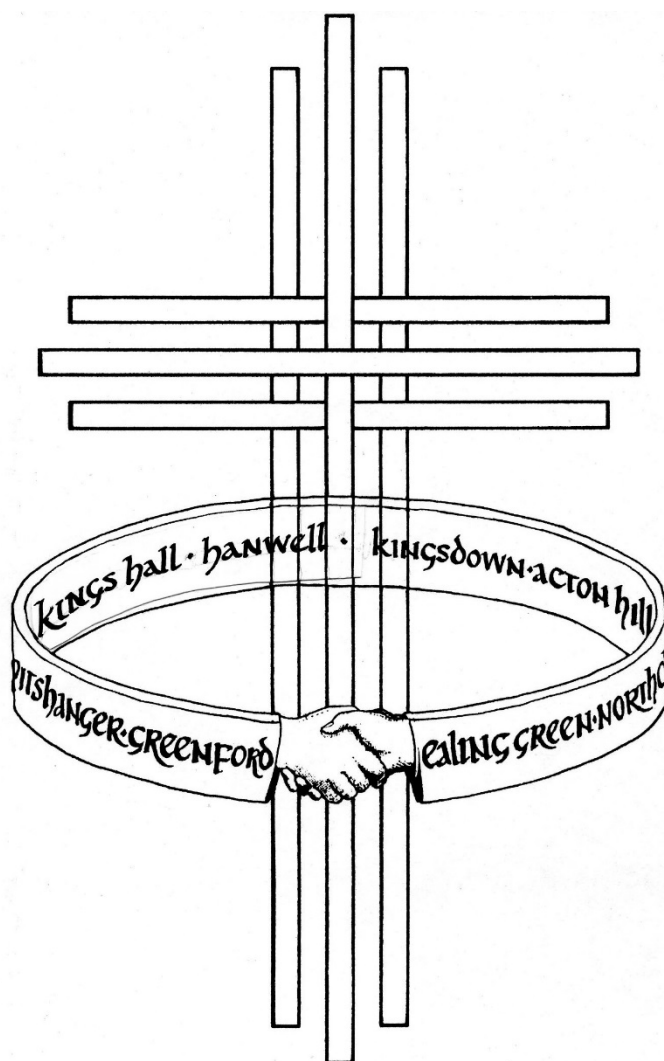


# In-touch

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No 82

December 2017 – February 2018



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The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

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**Circuit website: [www.ealingtrinity.org.uk](http://www.ealingtrinity.org.uk)**

*Front Cover designed by Marion Narain*

## From the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

Have you ever made bread? I love making it but it's so difficult to find the time. It's a slow process filled with times of stillness and waiting: waiting for the yeast mixture to ferment; waiting for the first and second times for the dough to rise. If you cut down on the waiting or are tempted to prod the dough to see if it might be ready earlier, then the bread is not as good. The waiting is necessary and life giving.

Watching television the other day I was struck by a conversation between two presenters who were commenting on how good it was to be able to pay by instalments and therefore to get things straight away rather than having to wait until enough money was saved. "No need to wait," they kept saying, "You can get it and play with it straight away". - No need to wait - our culture and the pace of our society make us uncomfortable with waiting and raise our expectations of getting what we want now. This is even more evident than usual in the run up to Christmas when the carols surrounding us in shops and churches and all the surrounding rush to get ready can blind and deafen us to Advent's call to wait and not to get to Christmas too early.

Yet waiting is fundamentally important to our wellbeing, to living in abundance with ourselves, others and God. Waiting allows us space: Space for listening to the real needs deep within us rather than rushing to satisfy our surface level wants; space to allow God to show us how we and the world can be and should be, giving us hope and challenge; space to realise how God's hope and life might change us; space for growth and for letting go. This space is essential. In speaking about Advent the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, said this, "All those bits of our contemporary culture which are about rushing to get gratification, getting the results straight away, all those habits in our culture which so drive the crises of our culture, whether it's the credit crunch or the environmental crisis, all those things we have to cast a rather cold eye on during Advent and say slow down, take time, let yourself grow and open up, rather like a flower coming to blossom - a time of expectation, a time of excitement, a time of waiting, a time of peace, a time where we're clearing our hearts and our minds a bit so we really can see clearly when Jesus arrives, and feel fully the impact of his coming."

If we can find a way to slow down, to allow Christmas to come in its own time rather than to rush into it early in December, if we can give ourselves space to wait in Advent then we can open ourselves more fully to God's truth, life and love.

May you find space to wait with God this Advent. May God's life, love, challenge and peace transform your life this Christmas and may you travel into Lent with hope and stillness.

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel".



## Space for God, yourself and others

Please find time each day to pray for the Circuit and each other:

### **Be Still and Know that I am God**

Be aware of God's presence and praise God for all God has done and all God is.

### **Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father**

Thank God for the gifts we have received in our churches and our lives.

### **Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound**

Think about the love God has for you, the world and all people, think about how you have separated yourself from that love and hurt God, others and yourself and confess those times and ask for forgiveness.

Know that God forgives you, loves you and calls you to love.

### **Be thou my vision**

Pray for the world, those in need and for God's vision for the world, the circuit and yourself.

In particular this quarter  
give thanks for the life of all our churches,  
for Northolt's growth and their vision for the future,  
for the faithfulness of King's Hall afternoon congregation's to their call and for the future of the church,  
for the stationing process and the future staff team,

### **1 Minute Revitaliser**

Try to pause for at least 1minute every hour.  
Focus on your breathing and think of 1 thing to give thanks for.

## For Thanks and Prayer

We would like to include a regular page in In-touch where our churches can ask for prayer for particular things or situations and tell us all about things to give thanks for.

For starters, please pray for:

- The Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter - Ealing Green, Kingsdown, Hanwell and Greenford are hosting shelters again this winter, and people from our Circuit are volunteering at shelters at other churches. Pray for the shelter guests, the Venue Co-ordinators and the other volunteers.
- The appointment of a new Associate Pastor to support the King's Hall (Urdu/Hindi) congregation.
- A successful outcome of the stationing process to find a new minister for Ealing Green and Kingsdown.

So, please send your church's requests for prayer and things to give thanks for to the Circuit Office in time for the next edition – the deadline is 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018, so you have plenty of time to think!

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## ECG – Equipping, Calling, Going

ECG is an event with a Methodist flavour that has been influential in shaping the spiritual journeys of many Methodists. Next year's event will be in the Scarborough Spa Complex from Tuesday 3rd - Sunday 8th April.

ECG includes worship, Bible study, seminars and workshops along with an exciting 18 - 25s programme developed and resourced by leaders from the 18-25 age bracket and a full programme of children's activities led by Pulse Children's Ministries. There will also be fringe events including theatre from Riding Lights Roughshod, Elevate Dance Company and comedy with Christian comedian and magician, Tom Elliot.

The main Bible teacher will be Rev Dr Elaine Heath, Dean of Duke University and leader of the Foundation for Missional Wisdom. Revd Graham Horsley, Connexional Fresh Expressions Missioner will lead seminars on healthy church exploring themes of discipleship - what it means to be a Spirit-led church and engaging with the wider world with Kingdom values.

You can find out more by going to [www.egcevent.org.uk](http://www.egcevent.org.uk) or by contacting Deacon Ramona Samuel who will be happy to come to your church to talk about ECG.

## Remembrance Rocks

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November, a few days before Remembrance Sunday a few of us got together at Ealing Green for a Remembrance Art Workshop organised by Deacon Ramona Samuel. We talked about what Remembrance means to us including some of our conflicting feelings about the event. We shared stories about how some of our parents or grandparents had had narrow escapes during the First or Second World Wars (we're very grateful they came through otherwise we wouldn't be here now...), and about how other relatives we know through family history lost their lives. Others served in other ways, for example as a 'Bevan Boy' in the coal mines in South Wales – he came through the war but died recently. We remembered them too.

We tried to express some of these feelings through painting stones. Here are the results -



Deacon Ramona intends to organise more 'pray and paint' art workshops. Look out for them – you'll find them thought-provoking and fun.

## From the Circuit Meeting

The Circuit Meeting last met on 12<sup>th</sup> September at Hanwell.

There were several changes to the membership of the meeting with Deacon Ramona Samuel, Penny Pedley (Associate Pastor) and Martin Kingsnorth (Hanwell) joining the Circuit Meeting, and Marion Garnett (Hanwell) and Lyn Sallows (Northolt) standing down. In addition, the Meeting formally appointed Fleur Hatherall and Jane Horwich (both from Ealing Green) as Circuit Stewards. They join Blossom Jackson, Derek Nicholls and Colleen Hicks in that role along with Stephen Sears as Circuit Treasurer. Members of the Circuit Meeting are formally the 'managing trustees' of the Circuit and, as the Circuit is a charity in its own right, are registered as such with the Charity Commission.

The Meeting heard from Ade Benson-Ogundimu who is exploring candidacy for the Methodist presbyteral ministry. Ade described her Christian journey from childhood until the present, and spoke of the new challenge she now felt called to face. The Meeting voted to support Ade in exploring her calling further through the London District Candidates' Committee.

Action is in hand to seek a new Associate Pastor to support the King's Hall (Urdu/Hindi) congregation following the resignation of Pastor Salamat Zindani. A new job description has been drawn up which extends the scope of the position to include involvement in the Southall Schools Project. The Meeting voted to approve the new job description so progress can now be made towards advertising the position.

Stephen Sears gave an update on the Circuit's financial position. The results for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 show a higher than anticipated deficit of £175,000 for the year. Furthermore, Stephen considered that the Circuit would not be able to achieve its budget for the 2017/18 financial year (which projected a deficit of £100,000). Whilst the current sale of the former manse in Green Drive, Southall will help alleviate the Circuit's overall financial position, it will not solve its underlying weaknesses. As a result, the future level of assessments paid to the Circuit by our churches will need to be re-considered and churches encouraged to consider how they can maximise their income.

The Meeting approved two grants from the Circuit Model Trust Fund. Firstly a small grant of £416 to Deacon Lemia Nkwelah towards the costs of her joining the London District Mission Visit to Ghana and, secondly a grant of £4,000 to the King's Hall (Urdu/Hindi) church to defray the full cost of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

The next Circuit Meeting will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at Acton Hill starting at 7.30pm.



# King's Hall Urdu/Hindi Speaking Church 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

Believed to be the oldest Urdu/Hindi-speaking congregation in Britain, the King's Hall Urdu/Hindi-speaking church celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 14<sup>th</sup> October. The celebration took place in a packed marquee at Hamborough Primary School in Southall, adjacent to the King's Hall building.



In a service filled with the joyful singing of psalms and songs in Urdu, members of the congregation spoke of their memories of growing up in the church and what it has meant to them over the years – being christened, learning in the Sunday School, being confirmed



and being married. Set in multi-cultural and multi-faith Southall, this church family has played an important part in confirming members' identity as Asian Christians.



At its inception in 1967, the church gave people who weren't so familiar with English the opportunity to worship and hear the Gospel preached in their own language. Now, 50 years on, services in Urdu/Hindi help keep people in touch with their cultural heritage and in so doing, helps deepen respect for the people and teachings of other faiths around





them. In turn this helps the church reach out to people of other faiths in Southall.

Naturally, the church feels the loss of its home in the King's Hall building itself while discussions and negotiations continue towards the redevelopment and eventual re-opening of the building. In his sermon, Rev Alwin Samuel, Bishop of Sialkot stressed that the church is a group of people called by God to give glory to God. It is more than a building, it is 'you and I being built to show God to the world'. He assured the church that God has a plan to bless King's Hall in the future and that their journey of faith continues.



The service was led by our Superintendent Minister and minister for the King's Hall Urdu/Hindi-speaking church, Rev Rachel Bending. Rachel spoke of the need for people to carry the work of the church forward into the future and asked for prayers for the redevelopment of the King's Hall building and for the ministry of the Urdu/Hindi-speaking church while it continues in its temporary home.

Prayers of thanksgiving were led by Chair of the London District and President of the Methodist Conference Designate, Rev Michaela Youngson and the intercessions were led by Deacon Lemia Nkwelah.

The service was followed by an excellent meal in the hall of Hamborough School and the sharing of a marvellous 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake.



Let's all give thanks for the first 50 years of the King's Hall Urdu/Hindi-speaking congregation and pray for its continued witness to the people of Southall in the next 50 years.



## Moving Stories – London District Focus on Migration 2017 – 2019

London is a diverse, vibrant and energetic city. Its excitement, complexity and challenges are exceptional. The mission of the Methodist Church in London is shaped by this exciting and challenging context. As disciples of Jesus Christ we work together to respond creatively to the opportunities and needs of this unique city.



Within this context migration is a key part of the story and a theme with which the churches, circuits and District wish actively to engage so that we might 'change the story' so that migration is celebrated rather than feared and engage with the challenges of issues linked to migration.

As part of this response the District is planning to focus on 'Migration' as a District theme for at least two years, commencing in September 2017.

### Moving Stories – Aims

- to recognise and celebrate that migration is very much part of the Methodist story
- to release creative energy by encouraging the District to work together on a common theme
- to enable all Circuits within the District to engage with the theme
- to learn how church communities have been affected by migration and how they have involved themselves in the issues related to migration
- to celebrate, tell and share stories of migration as we celebrate 'Moving Stories'
- to challenge those in power to tell the good news stories of migration and to better support migrants and the communities in which they come to live.

If you would like a batch of prayer cards regarding Moving Stories, please let the London District Office ([admin@methodistlondon.org.uk](mailto:admin@methodistlondon.org.uk)) know!



## Hanwell Starts ‘Grandparents and Toddlers’ Group

Hanwell has started a group specifically aimed at ‘exhausted grandparents and energetic toddlers’. With grandparents often playing a significant role in look after toddlers while their parents are working, the new group aims to give them an opportunity to chat with other grandparents while their toddlers play in a safe space. The new group started on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October and will meet weekly on Tuesdays from 1.30 – 3.30pm.

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## How Can We Show Our Compassion at Northolt?

*Janet Bettaccini, Northolt*

On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July our God’s Squad (formerly known as Jesus Kids) led our service having ‘Compassion’ as their theme. They reminded us of the meaning of compassion choosing the definition taken from the Cambridge Dictionary which says: “Compassion is a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering of others and a desire to help them.”

As a congregation, we were encouraged to reflect on ways in which we at Northolt could show compassion in our local community and beyond. God’s Squad (GS) started by reminding us that 18 members of our congregation at Northolt joined together several years ago to fund, on an annual basis, a nine year old Ghanaian girl called Kakra so that she could go to school and be looked after via a Christian organisation called Compassion UK. In fact Kakra is cared for by the Salvation Army in Ghana and funded via Compassion UK with whom they liaise closely. We send letters to Kakra and receive letters in return so we know a little more about her now. (She likes football!) One of our Ghanaian members (who also likes football) often translates for us! We wanted to help a young girl for whom a formal education may not have been possible in her country of origin, so now, Kakra has this exciting opportunity to influence her own future.

We were then asked to reflect a little more in case we could think of other ways in which we tried to show compassion. We donate food and toiletries weekly to Ealing Food Bank and wondered if this would ‘count’! We also support Hanwell Homeless Concern who prepare up to 70 hot meals three times a week in churches in Hanwell for the homeless. Pastor Williams’ congregation who meet in our church on Sundays also, is a regular contributor to this cause too. Our non-perishable Harvest gifts are going to Hanwell Homeless Concern this year.

Bright Hour (attended by a number of our church members and many who attend other or no churches), organize a Tea Party each year to raise funds for Marie

Curie Nurses who look after terminally ill people in their homes. Marie Curie nurses show immense compassion.

Our 'Knit and Natter' group has knitted small teddies for children in Ealing Women's Refuge and continues to knit small bonnets for the babies in the local premature baby unit and other items for good causes. We felt this group was also showing compassion.

Our church family supports Ealing Winter Night Shelter by providing warm clothes and/or sleeping bags.

We were reminded that we fill and send Christmas 'Shoe Boxes' to under-privileged children in other countries worldwide via the Christian organisation Samaritan's Purse. (A timely reminder for this year!)

We try to respond to Disaster Appeals (most recently the Grenfell Fire Appeal) and each year we hold a fund raising event to support Christian Aid.

Via a local Rotary Club, we recycle ink cartridges, old mobile phones, spectacles and used stamps to support the charities Water Aid, Vision Aid Overseas and Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Greenford Methodist Church join us in this venture, thank you Greenford.

As in all churches across the Circuit, we make a donation during each communion service to the Church Benevolent Fund to help local people in difficult and stressful situations where a small input of cash can ease a situation.

We try to share fellowship with people who are unwell, lonely or housebound through pastoral visits and pray together in our Prayer and Fellowship Groups.

Some of our Church members support Action for Children (formerly National Children's Homes) by raising funds from having collecting boxes at home.

We try to support others less fortunate than ourselves in other parts of the world through World Mission collecting boxes.

So, on reflection, our Northolt congregation does try to show a little of God's compassion in our everyday church life. However, with all the tragedies around the world (threats of war, the results of famine, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and other natural and man-made disasters we have heard about recently), we need to pray that we can play our part in distributing God's compassion further.

# Christmas Additional Services around the Circuit

## Circuit

1<sup>st</sup> Dec 7.00pm 'Waiting with Joyful Expectation' at Greenford

## Acton Hill

17<sup>th</sup> Dec 11.00am Carol Service  
24<sup>th</sup> Dec 7.00pm Christmas Eve Communion  
25<sup>th</sup> Dec 9.30am Christmas Morning Worship  
31<sup>st</sup> Dec 10.45pm New Year's Eve Service

## Ealing Green

17<sup>th</sup> Dec 6.00pm Carol Service  
24<sup>th</sup> Dec 4.00pm Christmas Eve Worship  
25<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.00am Christmas Morning Worship

## Greenford

24<sup>th</sup> Dec 11.15pm Christmas Midnight Service

## Hanwell

17<sup>th</sup> Dec 6.00pm Carol Service  
24<sup>th</sup> Dec 11.30pm Christmas Eve Communion  
25<sup>th</sup> Dec 11.00am Christmas Morning Worship

## Kingsdown

17<sup>th</sup> Dec 6.00pm Carol Service  
24<sup>th</sup> Dec 11.00pm Christmas Eve Communion  
25<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.00am *to be advised*

## King's Hall

2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2.00pm Christmas Singing Programme  
25<sup>th</sup> Dec 1.00pm Christmas Day Worship  
1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1.00pm New Year's Day Worship

## Northolt

9<sup>th</sup> Dec 4.00pm Carol Service  
25<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.00am Christmas Morning Worship  
31<sup>st</sup> Dec 10.30pm New Year's Eve Service

## Pitshanger

25<sup>th</sup> Dec 9.30am Christmas Morning Worship

## Ash Wednesday Services: 14<sup>th</sup> February

United Anglican-Methodist Service at Holy Trinity, Southall at 10.30am  
King's Hall (Joint) outside the King's Hall, Southall at 6.00pm  
Greenford at 10.30am

# **Ealing Trinity Methodist Circuit**

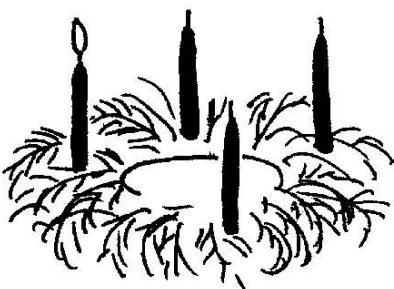
## Waiting with joyful expectation

### ***An informal celebration of Advent for the whole circuit***

in Greenford Methodist Church Hall

on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017

at 7.00pm



*Everyone welcome*

Light refreshments available

*Further information from  
Penny Pedley, Ramona Samuel or Yemi Jaiyesimi*



## Did the right man get the statue?

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

In September I read reports about two Russians published on the BBC News website on the same day. The first was about Mikhail Kalashnikov to whom a nine-metre tall statue was unveiled that day in Moscow. This also made the 6 o'clock news of Radio 4 and was reported that week in *The Economist* magazine. The other was about Stanislav Petrov described as 'the man who saved the world' although nobody was unveiling a statue of him that day. I daresay you've heard of Kalashnikov but probably not Petrov.

Mikhail Timofeyevich Kalashnikov (1919 – 2013), the son of Siberian peasants was the designer of the AK47 rifle (AK for "Avtomat Kalashnikova" – Kalashnikov's Automatic and '47 for the year the prototypes were completed). He began designing the rifle in 1941 whilst recovering from a shrapnel wound in response to complaints from Soviet soldiers about the superiority of German rifles over their own weapons. In the context of the Second World War he regarded the rifle as a 'defensive weapon'. However, its lightness and reliability subsequently made it the rifle of choice for rebels, terrorists and, perhaps most horrifyingly, child soldiers. In all, it is estimated that AK47's account about a fifth of all firearms.

In later life Kalashnikov deeply regretted how the rifle he designed had been distributed uncontrollably around the world and how it been used. He even wrote to the Orthodox Patriarch describing his "unbearable spiritual pain".

Kalashnikov's feelings notwithstanding, the Russians are clearly very proud of Kalashnikov's rifle. The statue of Kalashnikov stands on the Garden Ring Road, one of Moscow's main thoroughfares. It depicts him clad in a bomber jacket cradling his rifle 'like a baby' as one on-looker put it. At the unveiling Vladimir Medinsky, the Russian culture minister described Kalashnikov as the 'manifestation of the best qualities of Russian man' and his rifle as a 'true cultural brand of Russia'. An Orthodox priest even sprinkled the statue with holy water. Somehow I suspect Kalashnikov would have been turning in his grave at this celebration of his weapon.

Now, let's turn to the other man.

Stanislav Yevgrafovich Petrov (1939 – 2017) has been described as "the man who single-handedly saved the world from nuclear war" for his role in an incident that took place in September 1983 while he was serving with the Soviet Air Defence Service. Put like that, you might think a statue would be the least that could be done to commemorate what he did.

At the time, East – West relations were very tense. This was period when the United States was deploying nuclear armed cruise missiles in Britain and Pershing 2 missiles in West Germany, whilst the Soviet Union was deploying SS20 nuclear missiles in Eastern Europe. If that wasn't enough, only a few weeks before the

incident took place the Soviets had shot down a Korean Airlines 'jumbo' jet which had strayed into Soviet airspace.

On 26<sup>th</sup> September 1983, Petrov was on duty at the secret Serpukhov-15 early warning centre near Moscow monitoring surveillance of US missile launch areas by 'Oko' satellites. The early warning system itself was a newly installed system designed to detect a nuclear attack by the US on the Soviet Union. To Petrov's horror the system started indicating that the US had launched first one missile then five others towards the Soviet Union. Standing orders were that he should inform higher command immediately. With only a few minutes between missiles being launched and reaching their destination Soviet higher command would have had little time to decide what to do. At that time responding in kind would have been the obvious thing to do – launch missiles in the hope that they would have been off before the incoming missiles had chance to destroy them. The result would have been nuclear catastrophe.

Petrov did not obey standing orders, for which we can all be eternally grateful. For a few moments he felt like he was 'sitting on a frying pan'. He simply could not believe that what he was seeing was real. Rather, he decided it must be a system failure, so he phoned the duty officer twice to report a malfunction – the first time when the system detected the first missile, and the second after it indicated a further four had been launched. He then waited 15 unbearable minutes. Ground radar would confirm a missile launch after about 10 minutes with missiles reaching their targets after about 12 minutes from launch. Nothing happened. There was indeed a fault in the system - it had falsely detected sunlight reflected from clouds over North Dakota as missile engines.

Petrov's response was partly gut reaction and partly logic. The prevailing assumption was that any attack would be 'all-out', that is a massive attack designed to destroy as much as possible, if not all of the Soviet Union's missiles before it could respond. An attack using just a small number of missiles therefore made little sense. Also, Petrov was basically a scientist with a civilian training. A career soldier would probably have passed the message up the chain of command without thinking. Whilst there were safeguards against going to war on the say-so of one man, the times were very tense and nervous. One shout could have been enough to set off an unstoppable chain of events.

The military top brass and the scientists and engineers who had spent billions setting up the surveillance system were horribly embarrassed. Although Petrov did receive some praise from one general, the main response from his superiors was to criticise him for failing to fill in the operations log that night. However commendable his actions may have been, in Soviet Russia showing up the 'system' was simply not acceptable. In any case, a few months later he left the Soviet Air Defence Service for a job as a research engineer and to care for his wife who had cancer. When he left Serpukhov-15, his colleagues bought him a television set - that was all the reward he got.

Petrov's story remained secret until 1998 when it finally came out. He was commended at the UN, received the Dresden Peace Prize, toured the USA and starred in a documentary. Back home, however he continued living in his small flat in Fryazino, north-east of Moscow, a man embittered by the treatment he had received from his compatriots.

The statue to Mikhail Kalashnikov says quite a lot about the atmosphere in Russia today and how the country's military past is being used by Vladimir Putin to bolster Russia's view of itself as a great power. Kalashnikov designed a deadly weapon, Petrov did his bit to avert nuclear catastrophe. Who deserves a statue more? I think you'll agree, it isn't Kalashnikov.

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## Born in Song

*Donald A G Burling, formerly at Acton Hill*

"Born in Song" - these are the opening words of a hymn to be found at No 486 in *Hymns & Psalms*, and at No 21 in *Singing the Faith*. You are unlikely to find it in other hymn books, since it particularly celebrates the early days of Methodism – although it is true that as the verse continues, "God's people have always been singing".

The preaching of George Whitefield and John Wesley brought the gospel to people whom the respectable churches had largely neglected, and thousands of them came into the joy of salvation for the first time. Naturally they felt like singing. The poetic genius of Charles Wesley and others translated the fundamentalist Christian doctrines preached into words that could be sung and were easy to remember. Both John and Charles Wesley were committed members of the Church of England and never challenged its doctrines and practices, nevertheless the very success of their evangelism provoked hostility from fellow Anglicans. 200 years later when the young Methodist preacher William Booth began to reach out to the drunks and prostitutes in London's East End, he came up against opposition from fellow Methodists, who by that time had become respectable and part of the religious establishment. Both revivals were characterized by lively singing.

I was brought up with Exclusive Brethren who disapproved of all kinds of "worldly" entertainment. Anyone who showed interest in music was likely to be regarded as unspiritual, yet the quality of our singing, unaccompanied but with plenty of improvised harmonization, was often admired by outsiders. Our hymn tunes, like most at the time, had simple rhythms, and were printed in four-part harmony, with chords that came naturally. When a few of us got together in one of our homes, as often happened, we would usually spend some time singing hymns round the piano.

Recently there has been a fashion to write worship songs with syncopated rhythms, which made them better suited for performance by singers than for congregational singing. There is nothing wrong with including a performance by a choir or soloist in

a worship service, but it should be seen as incidental rather than a main part of the worship. If it is to be more than a show off by the performers, it is very desirable that the words sung should come across clearly – something easier to achieve for a soloist than for a choir. Songs can be used as a means of preaching the gospel – for more on this subject see my website [www.sermonsinsong.wordpress.com](http://www.sermonsinsong.wordpress.com). More commonly singing has helped to create an atmosphere as a prelude to preaching, this is characterized by the campaigns of preachers such as DL Moody in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Billy Graham in the 20<sup>th</sup>.

There is good evidence that singing benefits health in several ways. This is sometimes cited as a reason why people who go to church are on the whole healthier and live longer than those who don't (not, one would hope, the only reason).

We are in an age where songs are popular but singing is not. Thousands of passive musicians gather at music festivals to listen to others singing. Because professional quality music is available at the touch of a button, the temptation is to leave it to the experts. So many people say they can't sing, but have they ever tried? In some churches although by no means all, congregational singing can seem to be half-hearted. Too much attention to technical perfection in the choir can detract from the joyful spirit of worship. Instrumental accompaniment can help to keep singers together and in tune, it should be loud enough to be heard but not to drown out the voices. St Paul urges us to speak to one another "In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in your hearts to The Lord" (Ephesians 5 v19). Let us learn to overcome our inhibitions and sing as if we are enjoying it. Perhaps it will encourage others to come and enjoy it with us.

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## **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**

The 2017 – 18 Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill is now in full swing having started on 5<sup>th</sup> November with a recital by the pianist An-ting Chang. Concerts are normally held on the first Sunday of the month (although there are some exception this season) at 4.00pm. Programmes at the door cost £6.00 or £5.00 for concessions and £2.00 for children. The programme for the rest of the season is:

3 <sup>rd</sup> December	Improviso Chamber Ensemble
21 <sup>st</sup> January	Haruko Seki - piano - <i>please note the date</i>
4 <sup>th</sup> February	Robert Bridge - piano
4 <sup>th</sup> March	Fatima Lahham - recorder
15 <sup>th</sup> April	Karis Stretton- piano - <i>please note the date</i>
6 <sup>th</sup> May	Helen Karikari - soprano
3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Andrew McIntosh - baritone
1 <sup>st</sup> July	Passepartout Duo - piano duet

# Wimborne Minster - A Minster Worth a Visit

Ray Garnett, *Hanwell*

My main two-week summer camping holiday this year took me to the north of Poole, near Bournemouth into the area of Wimborne Minster. Besides being a lovely town in its own right and a winner of the RHS Britain in Bloom gold in 2012 and silver in 2015, (while there I didn't see a scrap of litter on the streets), the historic town has a lovely selection of shops and a market. At its heart and set in the centre of the town is the Minster. For thirteen hundred years the church has been a centre of pilgrimage and prayer where you can sit and quietly absorb the atmosphere of the 12<sup>th</sup> century building with its 8<sup>th</sup> century foundations. Its crypt was built in 1340.



If you are ever near Wimbourne it is well worth a visit (entrance is free although there are donation boxes scattered round the building). The Minster is set on a number of floors each offering different interests to be admired. While I was there the organist was playing gentle background music to add to the atmosphere of visitors looking round. The organ has over 3,000 pipes, the latest addition being spectacular long trumpets which descend over the heads of the congregation. The trumpets were added in 1965. I would have loved to have heard *Trumpet Voluntary* played on them.

The west end of the Minster houses the baptistry along with an astronomical clock dated about 1320 which tells the time and the phase of the moon. The west tower houses 13 bells and has a beautiful and magnificent stained glass window depicting 12 saints.

The Minster is also known for its chained library, only one of four in the UK. You have to climb up a steep narrow spiral staircase to visit the library and its unique and ancient collection. Its oldest book is dated 1495 although most books arrived in 1686.

Over more recent years the Minster has been beautified with more stained glass, colourful altar clothes, robes and kneelers together with a wildlife garden. Votive candles are available to light beside the pulpit towards the front of the nave.

Near the entrance/exit door there is a lovely sizeable shop offering lots of unusual and appealing goods for keepsakes and presents.

If ever you are in that area, I thoroughly recommend a visit. More information can be found at [www.wimborneminster.org.uk](http://www.wimborneminster.org.uk). The Parish Office can be found at postcode BH21 1HT (tel: 01202 884753).

# Remember in Winter 2017

*Compiled by Mary Newman, Pitshanger*

Then shall the light break forth as the morning and thine health shall spring forth speedily

*Isaiah 58: 8*

Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

*Psalms 30*

A rabbi asked his people how they knew when the day had started. One of them answered, "It's when you see two trees on the horizon and can tell which is a fig tree and which is a sycamore tree."

Another had a different response: "It's when you see two animals on the horizon and can tell which is a sheep and which is a goat."

"No," said the rabbi: "It is when you look into the face of another human being and see in that face a brother or sister – then you know that the night has ended and the dawn has come."

It is a profound story. If there is one thing that we always need to sustain, it is hope that joy will come in the morning.

*Rev. Canon Andrew Wright.*

*Taken from the magazine of the Mission of Seafarers and kindly sent to me by my friends Valerie and Geoff.*

## Some Thoughts about St. Joseph

I recently read an article by the author Bel Mooney in which she said that on Fathers' Day her daughter sent her step-father (Bel's husband) a card which said simply, "It's in the Love, not in the Blood." As Bell said, "This was making a powerful statement about real love, which has nothing to do with genes."

When God sent His only son into the world on that first Christmas Day he not only chose Mary to be mother of the child, He also chose Joseph to be Jesus' earthly father; a man who knew that the baby Mary was carrying wasn't his but who accepted him willingly and even fled into Egypt to protect his wife and son and brought him up as his own.

Those of you who have an adopted child or a step-child may identify with the words on that card; "It's in the Love, not in the Blood."



## **Some Thoughts about Heaven**

One Sunday about a year ago, I was talking to my friend Barbara on the phone. She lives in Somerset and goes to a nearby Baptist Church. I was surprised when she told me the readings they'd had that day were the same as those we'd had at Pitshanger, Luke ch 20: 27-38, and the sermon was about Heaven. I asked Barbara what she believed about Heaven and especially about non-Christians and how they fitted into our beliefs.

Her father was a Methodist minister and she told me that he used to say that Christians who had been "friends with God" whilst on earth would fit easily into Heaven. For people who had not been "friends with God" on earth they would feel like strangers in a place they didn't know anything about.

We all have our ideas of what Heaven is like. I wonder whether yours is similar to that of Barbara's father.

## **Do You Love God's Word?**

Those of you who read 'Word for Today' will have read this on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2017, under the heading "Do You Love God's Word?" - 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away' (Matthew ch 24: 35)

"After hearing a discussion on various translations of the Bible, one man said, "I prefer my mother's translation, because she translated it into everyday life." When I read this it reminded me of my own mum. And I hope it will remind you of yours.

## **A Prayer for All Who Are Grieving the Loss of a Loved One**

Lord Jesus, I need you very much,  
Please give me strength to face this day  
to meet people and situations  
with a calm spirit  
to accept tears and smiles  
with understanding  
to do what has to be done  
with confidence  
to leave without worry those things  
which are too much for me.  
Lord Jesus, I don't want to be  
so blinded by my own grief  
that I fail to comfort others. Amen

*Anon, taken from a little booklet called 'I will help you...'*

'I will forgive their sins and will no longer remember their wrongs.' *Hebrews 8:12*  
*GNB*

In her sermon at Pitshanger on 13<sup>th</sup> August Rev Shirlyn Toppin told the story of two young, very good friends who were walking across a desert when they had a heated argument. During the falling out one of them slapped the other one. The second man wrote in the sand, "Today my best friend slapped me."

They walked on through the desert and came to an oasis, where they jumped into deep water to cool down. The man who had been slapped got into serious difficulty and was drowning, when his friend went to his aid and managed to rescue him.

The rescued man picked up a stone and wrote on it, "Today my best friend saved my life."

The wind and rain blew and the message in the sand was swept away. The writing on the stone was permanent, unaffected by wind and rain.

We don't know, but I wonder if the second man took the stone home to remind him of the debt he owed his friend. How often do we remember the things which people have done to upset us; maybe forgetting years of kindness we have received from them?

### **The Love of God**

Could we with ink the ocean fill  
And were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill  
And everyone a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry,  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky.

*Taken from the Kingsdown Messenger. Thank you, Betty, for giving me a copy so regularly*

### **A Prayer for Winter**

Lord Jesus, our brother and our Saviour,  
come into our hearts with your love,  
with your joy, your hope, and your peace.

Help us to reflect your love for all  
by loving and serving all we meet.  
Lord Jesus,  
come into our lives,  
and share your gifts with all people

Blessed are you, Lord Jesus,  
forever and ever. Amen

*From the National Liturgy Office.*

## A Prayer this Christmas

Heavenly Father, we pray for all who are in a special need this Christmas. We remember those who have lost a loved one this year; husband, wife, son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother or friend.

We pray for the sick, the disabled and their carers; for people who struggle to pay their bills and for organisations which give advice and support to people in debt.  
Amen

## Readings for Winter

Psalm 92      A song of praise

Psalm 27      David sustains his faith by the power of God

Luke ch 6: 27-38    Jesus speaks about kindness and forgiveness

Acts ch 20: 32-35   Paul commends God's word to his friends

Some of you will remember Dawn, the Salvation Army Captain who, with her husband was in charge of the church in Leeland Road until recently. This was a quotation she said she had seen on Facebook:

'Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.'

The Salvation Army give so much help and hope to so many; rainbows in many people's clouds.

Deep peace of the running wave to you;

Deep peace of the flowing air to you;

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you;

Deep peace of the shining stars to you;

Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

## A Celtic Benediction



*Nativity: Verona Cathedral, Italy  
West façade tympanum*

## Circuit Directory Update

### Forthcoming Events around the Circuit

[as notified to, or discovered by, the Editor]

#### December

1<sup>st</sup> Fri 19.00 **'Waiting with Joyful Expectation'**  
Informal Advent celebration in Greenford church hall  
*Light refreshments available*

#### January

11<sup>th</sup> Thurs 19.30 **Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting at Hanwell**

#### February

1<sup>st</sup> Thurs 19.30 **Circuit Policy Group at Kingsdown**

15<sup>th</sup> Thurs 19.30 **Circuit Meeting at Acton Hill**

#### March

3<sup>rd</sup> Sat 10.30 **Ealing Animal Charities Fair at Hanwell**  
16.00 *Lots of stalls – guest speakers – free admission*

Articles for **'In-touch' Issue No 83 (March - May)** should be sent by e-mail headed **'In-touch'** to the Editor, **Gerald Barton**, or as hard copy to the Circuit Office.

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