

the NEW Messenger

FEBRUARY & MARCH 2019

I live by faith in the
Son of God, who loved me
and gave himself
for me.

GALATIANS 2:20



 Third
Avenue

CHURCH & COMMUNITY

GILLINGHAM METHODISTS | *Part of the North Kent Circuit*

Sunday Preaching plan for Gillingham & Hartlip

FEBRUARY 2019

THIRD AVENUE | MORNING | 10.30AM

HARTLIP | EVENING | 6.30PM

03 FEB JUDITH GERMAN

MARGARET BOWERMAN

**10 FEB REV ROBIN SELMES
HOLY COMMUNION**

**REV ROBIN SELMES
HOLY COMMUNION**

**17 FEB REV ROBIN SELMES
GIRLGUIDING WORLD THINKING DAY**

BRIAN DAVIES

24 FEB IAN WATTON

DEREK GALLAGHER

MARCH 2019

03 MAR REV ROBIN SELMES

MARTIN SMITH

10 MAR DEREK GALLAGHER

**REV ROBIN SELMES
HOLY COMMUNION**

**17 MAR REV ROBIN SELMES
HOLY COMMUNION**

REV ROBERT ZACHAR

24 MAR REV ROBIN SELMES

GILLIAN COLLINS

**31 MAR MOTHERING SUNDAY
LED BY SUNDAY SQUAD**

REV TONY GRAFF

Hello & welcome to the latest edition of the New Messenger...

The months of February and March bring us to a time of reflection and renewal as we enter the period of Lent, leading up to Easter - and it's still **all about love**.

The wonder of Christmas is replaced by romantic love-hearts for Valentine's Day, and then our own hearts are moved to thank our mothers for their love on Mothering Sunday. This Sunday I have been asked to read the beautiful passage about love from 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 from The Message version of the bible. This version of a very familiar passage is worded in a thought provoking way that I found refreshing and re-inspiring, and gives us something to contemplate throughout lent as we prepare for the celebration of Easter.

It is quite fitting that we pass through the period of lent with love and compassion in our hearts. In this magazine, Robin encourages us to look again at how we can focus on our spiritual growth and prepare for Easter with an offering that will make a difference. Ian explores the value of silent prayer and there are many more stories of compassion and love in action in our community: Tea at 2; Oasis; all the good work with our young people; the night shelter for the homeless; updates on our Christmas appeals of stockings and shoeboxes; Action for Children collections; Lola and Trudy's ministry in the old people's home and much more. What encouragement I feel to read about all that is happening at Third Avenue Church and Community. Further afield, but still close to our hearts, we hear about Jason and Adrienne as they begin their ministry in Witney.

Helen Garland

Love never gives up.

Love cares more for others than for self.

Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.

Love doesn't strut,

Doesn't have a swelled head,

Doesn't force itself on others,

Isn't always "me first,"

Doesn't fly off the handle,

Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,

Doesn't revel when others grovel,

Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,

Puts up with anything,

Trusts God always,

Always looks for the best,

Never looks back,

But keeps going to the end.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 | The Message

You can contact us anytime by email: messenger@gillinghammethodists.uk
by post: New Messenger | Third Avenue Church & Community
Gillingham | ME7 2LU or come and chat to any of the team.
Deadline to receive articles for the **APR | MAY** edition will be **20 March 2019**.

A message from our Minister Rev Robin Selmes...

Is it time to Liven up Lent?

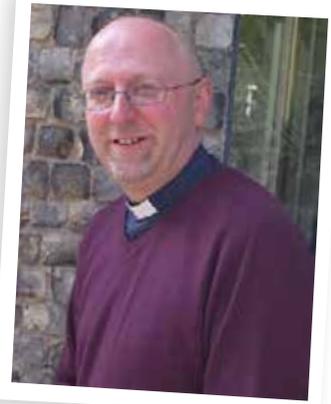
Preparation - they say - is everything. If you want a good result in an essay, you have to read, prepare and plan; if you want good results in a project, it is all planning and preparation; if you want good results when decorating, it is all in the preparation work.

Planning ahead - be prepared

So, if we follow that general rule through, if we want a good Easter, we have to go through careful preparation and that means Lent. Yes, I'm afraid so, Ash Wednesday is fast approaching and so it is time to give up all your favourite treats, chocolate and all sweet things, rich food, takeaways, drink or whatever distracts you from your spiritual growth, it is time to test your self-control and prepare to face Easter.

But is giving up about you or God? I knew of someone who took Lent really, really seriously, they gave up any type of food that was rich in calories, they kept food simple and avoided snacking in between. I was so impressed with their will power that I asked them how they do it, they informed me that Lent becomes the annual trigger, that motivation to lose those extra pounds they put on after Christmas. Is this what Lent is truly about? Where the focus becomes self rather than God? Is Lent all about a new fad diet? Have we really got to that stage? Surely we need to think this through a little more.

A few years ago, I came across a new Christian campaign that encouraged people to reverse Lent, by not giving up something but by taking something on. Each day the booklet



encouraged you to take something on that maybe you might not want to do or like and then recently I have noticed a new wall chart entitled 40 days of Kindness which encourages you to wake up to a new generosity challenge each morning throughout Lent. For instance, leaving something nice to eat on your neighbour's door step or smile at 10 people during the day. Each act is designed to help to stretch and grow your faith and to focus your heart and mind upon God's generosity. Now this is more like it? Isn't this closer to what Jesus would want?

So, what will you give up or take up this Lent?

Think of something that is going to help you to focus on your spiritual growth and prepare for Easter. For me, giving up chocolate no longer works as I often replace it with sweet substitute. Perhaps it is time to take something up? Something that has the potential to last longer than Lent?

Whatever you choose, let's go into Easter and beyond with an offering that will make a difference.

Robin





Lent 2019

Sermon Series

Learn from the Hymns

Four week sermon series Looking at four classic Easter & Lent hymns and their meaning in our lives today

10 MAR

Preacher
Hymn
Theme

LENT 1

Derek Gallagher

All Glory, Laud, and Honour, to Thee, Redeemer, King

Praising God through all circumstances

17 MAR

Preacher
Hymn
Theme

LENT 2

Rev Robin Selmes

The Servant King

Servanthood

24 MAR

Preacher
Hymn
Theme

LENT 3

Rev Robin Selmes

Lift High the Cross

What does it mean to lift our cross today?

31 MAR

LENT 4

Mothering Sunday led by Sunday Squad

7 APR

Preacher
Hymn
Theme

LENT 5

Rev Robin Selmes

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

What do you see when you look at the cross?

A message from our Youth Pastor...

We are a month into a new year and settling back in with all our groups; Youth group, Bible study, Sunday morning groups and the youth café.

Last week I did a labyrinth with 2 of my Sunday groups (Spirit squad and the Chinese church). There is a path that the young people had to follow and at various points there would be an activity for them to focus on. The theme of the labyrinth was promises of God. Activities got the young people thinking about promises God makes in the Bible. Also how at times it can feel like God and his promises are far away, but they are always there.



We re-launched Drop-in as a youth café in September. We have anywhere between 5-9 come most days, and although the numbers growing have been slow and steady, they are growing. The young people who come really seem to value their time and the café and we spend lots of time with them playing games.

One of the current favourites is Killer Killer Uno, where a single game can go on for an hour, and even when you are out, you can be dragged back into the game. It's great fun and a real blessing to get to know these young people.

Please continue to pray for all our young people and all the different areas of our youth ministry.

Thank you for your continued support,
God Bless,

Helen

Tea at 2

Did you know that

....over 9 million people in the UK – almost a fifth of the population – say they are always or often lonely, but almost two thirds feel uncomfortable admitting to it? (British Red Cross & Co-Op, 2016)

....17% of older people are in contact with family, friends and neighbours less than once a week and 11% are in contact less than once a month? (Campaign to End Loneliness, 2019)

As part of our pastoral care and support of those in our church family and wider community, we hope to create a space to chat - sharing tea and cakes with old and new friends.

As well as inviting friends from our church family who find it harder to get out regularly, we'd like to get to know our neighbours better in the wider community, many who may be alone for much of their week or lonely for other reasons.

We have had two 'Tea at 2's so far, kicking off with a Christmas special in December, complete with mince pies, plenty of cakes and treats plus some joyful carol singing. In January, many of us felt full after the festivities but still managed to drink oceans of tea and eat more cake while listening to one another's stories. We had a cheery baby visit us too, sharing cuddles and smiles. In February, as we are meeting on **13 February** near Valentine's Day, we are having a 'love themed' tea. You can be sure there will be lots of tasty home-made cakes.

I've enjoyed hearing about Chatham Dockyard from one new friend and about the childhood

of another. Friends' lives are so full of interesting things to share from past and present as well as our hopes for the future.

If you have a neighbour, work colleague, acquaintance or someone you meet who might like to join us, please invite them along. There are some personal invitation cards you can leave with them in the foyer.

If you'd like to join us, you are warmly invited to pop in on the second Wednesday of each month to the Foyer (entrance bit) of the main church building. We'd love to meet you.

If you need some help getting here, do tell us and we can put you in touch with someone who can collect you and take you home afterwards. Please speak to Mandy H | 01634 373876 or Mandy S | 01634 360604.

To friends old and new, we look forward to seeing you all again – or meeting you for the first time. As the Message Bible puts it:

'... a sweet friendship refreshes the soul.'

Proverbs 27:9b, and cake is good to share too!

**Mandy H
& Mandy S**



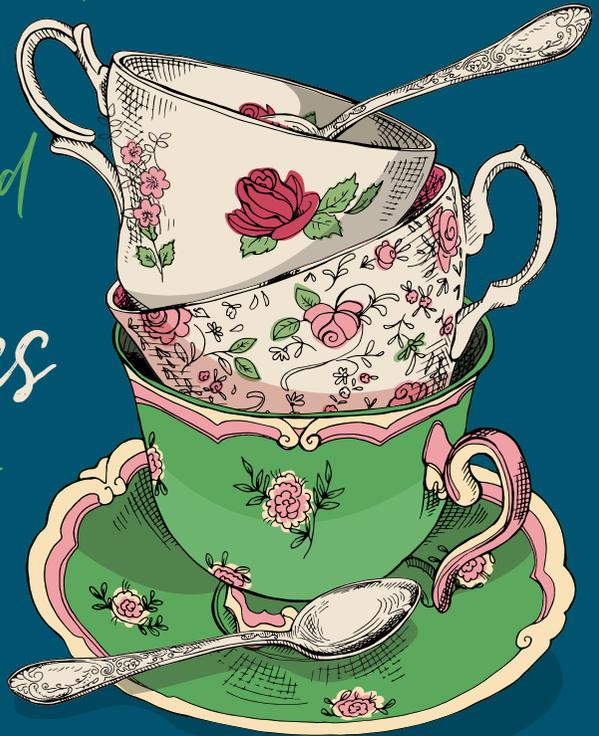
Some helpers at January's tea & 'delicious homemade cakes'.

Tea at 2

Especially for
those living alone or
in need of company

You are
warmly invited
to share
Tea & cakes
with friends

Every 2nd Wednesday
of the month between
2pm & 3.30pm




Third
Avenue

CHURCH & COMMUNITY

100 THIRD AVENUE | GILLINGHAM | ME7 2LU

Everyone
welcome

For the more information contact
Mandy H | 01634 373876
or Mandy S | 01634 360604



Introducing Silence

Exploring the value of Silent Prayer

Ian Watton

As part of my local preacher training I have covered the topic of silent prayer. Following feedback, I have been encouraged to submit the piece attached for a wider audience to benefit from it.

Silent prayer: The time to communicate with God on a personal level. Whether that is in a silent setting, or on an ad-hoc basis with the sounds of life around us, as life dictates. Which is better is largely down to the individual and the settings they find themselves in. Its value in a church service cannot be accurately measured, since each individual will gain something different to the person sitting next to them. The time spent in silent prayer is also difficult to judge for those leading the congregation in prayer – just “how much” is sufficient?

How do we find this silence? For those of us of whom have been in a Church setting since childhood, we were taught to close our eyes and put our hands together for prayers. Is it this stance that allows us to shut out the world? The everyday sounds of keyboard clutter, radio chatter, passing vehicles, mobile phone notifications and even the clunk of a cat flap are magnified when we are quiet and attempting to find that place to say “Hello” to God in and have meaningful time alone with Him.

So where is that place? For each of us this will be somewhere different: a riverside path, a bench in the park, an empty room, the noisy

tube train, stroking the cat that has made your lap its resting place or your home full of the trappings of daily life. Once we have found that quiet place we need to remove the distractions of human life that infect us: Mobile phones, Computers, the TV and other forms of technology.

The other question to consider is when? For it is all very well finding a quiet place to pray, only to have it disturbed by pressures of home or work. There are always demands of time pressed on to us and children do not see silence as a commodity. It's just another chance to ask for a book to be read, to play football in the park, or simply ask “what's for dinner?” If we really want a few precious minutes to talk to God in prayer, then we have to consider the company we keep; other people must be informed that we wish to have quiet time alone, otherwise we risk being interrupted time and time again and will never get to talk to God in silent prayer.

So now that we've satisfied all the above conditions we can get down to the actual praying part. Coming before God with an open heart and mind, and listening in return. For his words to us should surely matter as much as ours to Him.

Silent prayer used in a service is very effective. It allows time for members of the congregation to connect with God, in otherwise busy lives

where time may not normally allow. Structured as part of a service it can be very effective as long as the silence does not become overwhelming. Young children may not be the perfect accompaniment to silent prayer, but even mine can be kept occupied with the pew bible and a packet of crisps.

Silent prayer can be used during the prayers of intercession, and reached by invitation: "In the silence we lift up in your presence, those whose names are on our hearts" Looking out from the pulpit allows the worship leader/preacher to judge the mood in the room. How many are left in silent prayer? When is an appropriate time reached to move the prayers on? This is open to interpretation and down to individual preference of the worship leader/preacher. Although, as a worshipper I have often felt this time for silent prayer is too short, wanting longer to complete the long list I've been storing up. Perhaps I never realised before that prayer doesn't just have to take place within a church setting. It can be anywhere, anytime; with people or alone.

Silent prayer can be a very personal and private matter, and at times also intimate. You are not bound by conventions to speak carefully so that others may misinterpret your words or be offended by what you say. Not everyone encountered in public life may want you reciting prayers at them. Engaging in silent prayer can give the feeling of being closer to and more listened to by God. Although public prayer has its place, the silence within our heads can be viewed as a more personal experience with God in prayer. Silent prayer is also important for those people who may be shy or uncomfortable about saying prayers aloud; equally in public/work environments where religion is not welcomed as it is likely to cause offence. An example of this is a diverse multicultural business (such as Transport for London, wherein there is provided (in some locations) a space for all to pray, pretty much an empty room bar the paint on the walls and the carpet on the floor. So silent prayer is

essential in talking to God, there is no other place for it.

I have struggled all my life when it comes to praying aloud and in particular with repeating the Lord's Prayer aloud. I feel it loses part of its reverence in repeating it parrot fashion, with everyone else in the church service. Reciting this prayer in silence gives me a greater connection than I ever could, broadcasting it at full volume with everyone else. In this instance the silent prayer model has relevance.

A friend of mine, when asked, said that when she is praying through the night for any person this is how she prays (in silence). Starting with the words "Oh wonderful counsellor who loves us unconditionally please hear this unspoken silent prayer as we place into your hands...(names)...those who are in need of your love and peace in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen." She added, when I pray like this I feel God surround me and the person or people mentioned in the prayer. I find it comforting to feel this and I feel blessed by God knowing that I am listened to and answered.

The value of this example cannot be measured or quantified, since it so deeply personal and adaptive. No amount of written prayers, I feel, could come close to this moment when the names of those in need of prayer can be given in the stillness found in the night time. With the knowledge that the prayers are being received and acted upon by God and the answers being applied to those individual(s), with the healing words that they bring. Prayers said aloud, in contrast, can lose their meaning in a hectic world or be lost to someone else's opinion.

Written and silent prayers can be used equally to effect when interacting with social media; when wishing to connect with a number of people whom may benefit from it, but at the same time limiting the readership – such as the closed prayer group operated by my Church on Facebook. Prayer requests are posted and some may post an open prayer in answer to it.

Others simply click on a “thumbs up” to show they are praying for that request. The silent prayers sit in partnership with the written prayers. Each having its own value to the poster of the prayer request; the person in question draws comfort knowing that the church community within the group are praying at that moment for them/their situation. (The actual details of the request are often not written down, as God already knows the reason for the prayers; written or silent).

In conclusion, silent prayer has its value

everywhere we look. It should not be overlooked but embraced as a vital communication tool with God. For some it is important to pray silently, where spoken prayers have no relevance or are awkward to perform, the reasons for prayer private and intimate; between themselves and God only. For others it leads to a state of peace and calmness, with a breath of wind blowing their troubles away. All in all wherever silent prayers are said, all are heard by God.

Ian Watton

A Request

“Could you get a card for my husband, to send to me for Valentine’s Day?”

“I don’t want to see it, but I will pay for it.”

A strange request you might think, the shop assistant thought so too, but obliged.

The card was given, appreciated, loved, as was the husband concerned.

This scene happened many times, Birthdays, Anniversaries, Christmas, dementia has many such stories.

Memories are precious, treasure them.

“Have I told you this before?” nervously asked. The answer might be, *“over and over again”* and I might know it word for word, but it deserves listening to, and does it matter if it is a repeat? At least it is communication. Dementia in all its various forms can be so isolating.

How to keep alive relationships, shared moments, family history, how to love, when all there is now, is frustration, sadness, and loss. It is too easy to exclude, to ignore, and to stop trying. God says, *“I have called you by name, you are mine.”* (Isaiah 43 v.1)

He knows us each one, and even though these words are said to a nation, they are words with a personal ring. So when names, places,



events, are swallowed up in a dreadful illness, I am still known to Him.

As a volunteer visitor with the Chaplaincy at Basingstoke Hospital, visiting mainly the elderly person’s wards, I see people who have a past. They were once as fresh faced as the young nurse, who tends to their needs now. They were mechanics, lorry drivers, cashiers, farmers. They still are, mothers, aunts, sisters, and many grandparents.

They wait for the next chapter in their lives. Many are anxious, some fearful, and some not really understanding what is happening. They all need a listening ear, a ready smile, a kindly touch.

God says *“I have loved you with an everlasting love,”* (Jeremiah 31 v 3)

His is the promise to hold onto, through all the confusion, uncertainty and pain, this disease brings. May God help us, to continue to love, to care for, and to pray for each other, as we continue our own pilgrimage

God bless you.

Margaret Garland

woman to woman

CONFERENCE 2019

March 30, 2019
LONDON

Premier
ChristianRadio

Harvesters
MINISTRIES
Opening the Way

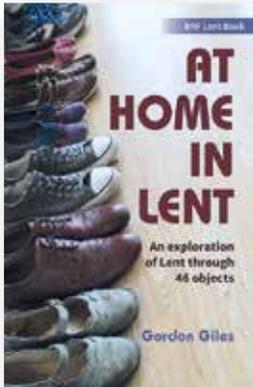
Take time out from the busyness of everyday life to join a couple of thousand women for an amazing day of testimony, teaching, worship and prayer.

If you would like to go to this conference at The Methodist Central Hall, Westminster please contact Helen Young or Karen Willing for more information.

Be Real

The theme for the conference is "*Be Real*", so we will hear inspiring women share stories of struggles and victories in the Christian life. The event will be held on Saturday 30th March 2019 at Methodist Central Hall Westminster from 10am to 9pm.

Book & Film reviews... *from Parish Pump*



At Home in Lent | an exploration of Lent through 46 objects **Gordon Giles | BRF | £8.99**

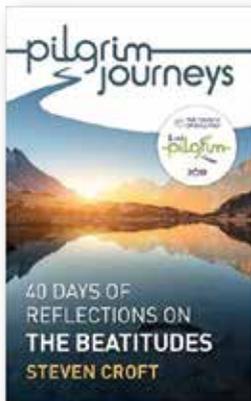
Here is an original way of approaching Lent: inspired by Neil MacGregor's Radio 4 programme, 'A History of the World in 100 Objects', Gordon Giles spends each week in a different room gleaning spiritual lessons from everyday household objects.

As a result, you may discover that finding God in the normal pattern of life – even in the mundane – transforms how you approach each day. Running as a thread through it all are the seven R's of Lent: regret, repentance, resolution, recognition, reconciliation, renewal and resurrection.

Home Freed: the Theology of Decluttering | Jane Brocklehurst **Kindle edition - Amazon | £1.99**

Clutter begins in the mind, with a certain attitude toward material possessions. Decluttering with other people is as much a ministry as a job. If we own nothing at all, it makes us miserable because none of our basic human needs are met. Having food and clothes and a secure place to sleep are essential to well-being. So, it's logical to assume that the more we own the happier we will be, right? Well, no. Perhaps surprisingly, having too many things also makes people miserable.

Drawing on the ancient wisdom of the Bible, Home Freed looks at the spiritual effects of living with clutter and explores historical reasons why material over abundance has become a lifestyle issue for so many people in Britain today. There is practical advice on what to do about it, drawn from ten years' decluttering experience, including a flow chart designed to make it easier to decide what to keep, and what to do with the rest of it. See your possessions differently and set yourself free.



Pilgrim Journeys | 40 days of reflections for Lent 2019 **Steven Croft | CUP | £4.99**

Here you can explore the unexpected and often challenging vision Jesus sets out in this crucial part of His teachings. Each day provides a short reflection on a Bible reading, an invitation to pray and a suggestion of how you might respond to the Beatitudes' challenge to live as God intends, both as an individual and in community.

The booklets are helpful for anyone seeking to grow in the Christian faith. They are especially suitable for those preparing for baptism or confirmation – including those using the Pilgrim discipleship course.



**MOVIE
MOMENTS**

Nick and Carol Pollard from EthosMedia.org share thought-provoking reflections on the latest films.

Rediscovering joy and wonder

Children have a natural sense of joy and wonder. But, as Mary's magical umbrella says in *Mary Poppins Returns*, 'grownups forget, they always do.' Why is this? And how can that joy and wonder be rediscovered?

In this long-awaited sequel, Michael Banks, the young son in the first film, is now grown up with children of his own. Tragically his wife has died, and his life is falling to pieces. 'The magic vanished since you went away' he sings to her memory. He has abandoned his hope of becoming an artist and taken a mundane job at the bank.



When his youngest son brings Mary Poppins home, saying 'I was flying a kite and caught a nanny', Michael's immediate thought is that he cannot afford her. But Mary is undeterred, she is on a mission once more to save the Banks family.

At first the children are sceptical but, when she takes them on a fantastical underwater adventure through the bubbles of their bath, they realise that Mary is no ordinary nanny. And this is no ordinary sequel. *Mary Poppins Returns* takes these adventures deeper than the first film. They don't just provide a spectacular visual and musical treat, they also provide opportunities for the children, and us as the audience, to reflect on important life lessons. In her upside-down repair shop, Mary's cousin Topsy invites them to look at life from a different perspective. In the magical music hall Mary sings 'the cover is nice but it's not the book... so open it up and take a look.' In the spectacular dance routine by lamplighters, Mary's friend Jack teaches them to look up for a light to guide them home.



This beautiful sequel will undoubtedly reawaken the joy and wonder many of us experienced in the first film. But, perhaps its extra depth and meaning might also reawaken our joy and wonder in life. If we, like Michael, have become worn down by the cares and worries of this world, perhaps we also need to rediscover what it means to look through the eyes of a child.



**ETHOS
MEDIA**.org

EthosMedia.org provides free resources to help people explore spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues through the latest feature films.

'The Presentation in the Temple'

by Guercino

God *in*
the Arts

The National Gallery at Trafalgar Square in London houses one of the finest collections of European paintings in the world. It is home to 2,300 works spanning the centuries of artistic creation. During this year we shall be journeying through the gallery to explore one of those treasures each month.

By Rev Michael Burgess.

This month of February opens with the celebration of Candlemas. On the 2nd we recall that special moment of enlightenment when Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple. They meet Simeon, who represents the waiting people of Israel – a nation looking for a better world now that the holy city was in the hands of Roman invaders.

Simeon clung to the hope that God would come to bring freedom and a new life. When it came, there was no fanfare, no warning. St Luke in his Gospel tells us of an ordinary family from faraway Nazareth who go to Jerusalem to perform the religious duties for the firstborn son. But in their encounter with Simeon we see and hear something extraordinary.

The scene is captured in this beautiful painting of 1623 that hangs in the National Gallery: 'The Presentation in the Temple' by Guercino. The artist Giovanni Barbieri had the curious nickname Guercino which means 'Squinty.' Why squinty, we are not sure, for all is clear and lyrical in this work.

At the base of the canvas we see the turtle doves with two ducks, but the heart of the scene focuses on Mary, Joseph and Simeon linked by the Christ-Child. Notice the gentle hands of Mary, the strong, supportive hands of Joseph, and the outstretched, waiting hands



of Simeon. He may be an old man, but he is ready to welcome the babe, who is offered as a sign of hope and light for the future. A candle burns at the right side to emphasise the light shed by this meeting of infancy and old age.

St Luke by tradition was an artist himself, depicting the stories of his gospel with the deft strokes of a painter. In this scene the words of the evangelist and the skill of a 17th century Italian artist tell us that, at whatever age we are, we can also find light and hope as we offer our hands and our hearts to welcome the Christ-Child.

FOR AGES
11-17

from personal revelation to

KINGDOM REVOLUTION

The Methodist Church
South-East District



Youth Conference 2019

19-22 August 2019 | £100 | Grosvenor Hall | Ashford
Kent | TN25 4AJ

For booking information please email sedyc.info@methodistsoutheast.org.uk

Quotes | With Lent coming, we consider prayer...

Kneel before you leap
George Allen

*Anything is a blessing which makes us
pray* | **CH Spurgeon**

*Satan is far more anxious to keep us off
our knees than he is to keep us off our feet!*
Ivor Powell

*Too many people pray like little boys who
knock at doors, then run away*
Anon

*Tears are often the telescope by which
men see far into heaven*
HW Beecher

*A prayer in its simplest definition is
merely a wish turned God-ward*
Phillips Brooks

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer
Tennyson

*The Lord's Prayer is not, as some fancy,
the easiest, the most natural of all
devout utterances. It may be committed
to memory quickly, but it is slowly
learned by heart*
Anon

*A clenched fist produces anger;
an open hand produces harmony*
Anon

*A mother can touch a whole generation
just by loving her own child well*
Anon



WAGGGS

LEADERSHIP

110 YEARS OF ADVENTURE



CELEBRATE WORLD THINKING DAY 2019

with the Gillingham East
Girlguiding District

ON SUNDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2019

at 10.30am



CHURCH & COMMUNITY

GILLINGHAM METHODISTS | Part of the North Kent Circuit

Parking available in the Robert Napier
School Car Park Opposite

14th Gillingham



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

World Thinking Day 2019

Gillingham East Girlguiding District are really looking forward to joining the Third Avenue congregation on 17 February at 10.30am for our Thinking Day Service. As a district and with the help of Robin we have been working together towards our 2019 Thinking Day Badge and are excited to be able to share with you some of our Thinking Day activities with you all during the service. If you are a member of Girlguiding either past or present please come along to celebrate and renew your promise with us.

Brownie News

This January, our Brownies were fortunate to get limited tickets to join Girlguiding members from across the UK for a very special nationwide Girlguiding-only screening of Disney's *Mary Poppins Returns*. We saw the film at our local Odeon with hundreds of other, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from around our area. Our Brownies excitedly munched their popcorn watching the special Girlguiding trailers and then became totally mesmerised as we were all taken into the wonderful world of *Mary Poppins*. We also have a special Girlguiding *Mary Poppins* badge to remember the day.



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

BRING SOME HAPPINESS TO SOMEONE IN NEED THIS CHRISTMAS



Shoe Box Appeal 2018
Thank you for filling shoeboxes

14th Gillingham East Brownies
15 boxes

shooboxappeal.org

Transforming lives through Christian care for body and soul



Hartlip

Methodist Church & Retreat Centre

Since the last issue Advent, Christmas, New Year and Epiphany have been and gone.

We have services some of which have been very well attended, others less well mainly due to short or longer term illness.

Our Carol service saw a full church and a fairly full back room too. The theme this year was 'Gifts', in a lively service planned, as in recent years, by Heather Gallagher. There was much present opening alongside the more traditional aspects of a Carol service. I believe a good time was had by all.

The following week saw us meeting in the morning instead of the evening so that the majority of us could join Third Avenue Church for their evening Carol Service. I was privileged to be asked to preach at this service. It is now becoming a tradition that this service is one built around favourite carols chosen by the congregation .

There was one more service before Christmas itself and then as many as could joined the village to share together on Christmas Eve.

As I write we have had two services this year, one on an Epiphany theme and this year Epiphany actually fell on the Sunday itself followed by our first Communion service of the year led by Robin. This was our Covenant service, when we rededicated our lives to God. At this service we also dedicated our new, recently purchased, 'Singing the Faith' hymn books and used them for the first time.

A Happy and blessed New Year to you all!

Margaret Bowerman





At 7am: The guests and night-sleepers have breakfast together. After this, guests and volunteers sweep and clean the venue ready to depart. The nightsleepers complete the contact book.

At 8am: The guests and volunteers leave the shelter. The beds and bedding are

collected for transport to the following night's venue. One of the volunteers contacts the next day's team leader with the details from that night's contact book, and any other details they need to know.

It is easy to think that we do not have a homeless problem in Medway. However, the latest figures indices there are 1059 homeless people in Medway and a number of these will be sleeping on our streets every night, others will be sofa surfing or living in vulnerable housing. They could even be you or me if we suffer an unfortunate life event such as job loss, inability to pay the mortgage, family breakup or addiction problems.

The Medway Winter Night Shelter is a project run by the 'Churches Together in Medway' and the Strood Community Project to help homeless people with a connection to Medway during the coldest and most difficult time of the year. We opened the shelter in 2016 and we currently work with 16 churches.

We at **Third Avenue Church & Community** have been supporting this project now for 3 years. We host the night shelter on a Saturday evening between January 5th and February 9th. The number varies weekly and the maximum we have hosted on any one evening is 10. Throughout Medway the shelter will run until the end of March. To learn more about the Medway Winter Night Shelter Project or to volunteer please go to our website:

www.medwayshelter.weebly.com or email medwayshelter@gmail.com

Tony Crowcroft

The typical Shelter Day looks something like this...

Up until 4pm: Guests register at the designated registration point in Chatham.

Between 4pm and 6pm: Team leader liaises with the registration teams to collect new registration forms and details of new guests (and any other issues that have arisen during the day.)

At 6pm: The catering team arrives at that day's venue and begins preparing dinner for up to 16 people (having been told that morning how many roughly to expect). The beds, bedding and other equipment is delivered.

At 7.30pm: The team leader, guests and that night's sleepers arrive at that night's venue. The Team Leader welcomes each guest and ensures that they are all fit and safe to enter. New guests are inducted into the life of the shelter and its rules. Tea and coffee are served and they settle in to wait for the evening meal.

At 9pm: After dinner, when all the tables are put away, and the washing up is done, the catering team leave. The night-sleepers organise the guests in the putting up of beds and settling in for the night. Board games, books etc are provided for entertainment. Some venues may have a TV/DVD player.

At 11pm: Lights out until 6:30am

At 6:30am: The guests get up and begin putting away their beds, bedding etc in preparation for breakfast. The breakfast team arrive.



Dear Third Avenue

Further to our appeal for items to fill Christmas stockings for all of the patients in the hospital, we would like to thank you for your contributions. Due to your generosity we gave out 426 stockings to the patients in the hospital on Christmas Day. This was very much appreciated by staff, patients and their families.

Please pass on our thanks to all the members of your church and thank you once again for helping to make this possible.

Yours faithfully

Lynda Cooke | Lead Chaplain | Medway Maritime Hospital

We are celebrating "Action for Children" on Sunday 10th February. Our Local Representative - **Laura Hanratta** is coming to speak. There will be envelopes available on that Sunday.

All Action for Children boxes are due for emptying during March. Please bring them to Lynda Watton before the end of March. Thank you

Lynda Watton



Never be weary of doing good

You are never tired, O Lord, of doing us good;
let us never be weary of doing You service.
But as You have pleasure in the well-being of Your servants,
let us take pleasure in the service of our Lord,
and abound in Your work and in Your love
and praise evermore.

A prayer of John Wesley

Update on Church Life

Often I hear there is a lack of communication within churches. Communication is vital in building up trust, gathering support and ensuring that new ideas are surrounded with prayer. At Third Avenue we try to use a variety of different ways to announce what is going on, from meetings to the weekly notice sheet and magazine. We have also at times used slots within a Sunday service to share good news and future work. In fact, someone once said it is impossible to over communicate, with this in mind so we are always open to new ways of informing people what is going on. One new way is that we will be providing a quarterly update within the magazine which will inform everybody what is going on and future work that needs your prayers.

What's going on?

The **new website** was launched in September. Thank you to Mark and his team for their hard work in producing a quality website. The new web address is **www.gillinghammethodists.uk** One feature on the new site is that the weekly notice sheet and magazine can now be read online.

Weekly Notice sheet | At the request of several people we now include the readings for the following Sunday. Thank you to Anne and now Becky who has taken this role on.

The Mission Team | From September we are going to introduce a charity of the year. We will be shortly looking for nominations which will then be voted on at the Annual General meeting on 19 May .

In September, the Youth drop in was relaunched under the new branding of a **Youth café**.

A new group **Tea at 2** has commenced on the second Wednesday of each month at 2pm. All are welcome but especially those who are living alone or in need of company.

We are also looking to launch a new **Holiday Club** in the Summer.

The **Finance & Property Team** have been busy looking after the building, thank you



for the ongoing work they do, most of which is often unseen. They are currently looking at how we can use the church foyer space to accommodate more groups and further our mission in this community.

This year we are also planning to produce a new **Welcome leaflet**. Hence if you have any thoughts as to what should be in the leaflet then please speak to one of the leadership team.

Please continue to surround all of these with your prayers as we further God's work within this Church and the wider community.

Rev Robin Selmes



‘Should I stay or should I go?’ (The Clash). Since the Referendum in June 2016, we have seen families, our nation and Parliament divided by different opinions over Europe. But ‘at the heart of the Christian message is Jesus’ command to love our neighbour. This includes those with whom we agree and disagree: at home, in Europe and further afield.’ (CofE Bishops, December 2018).

As we celebrate St Valentine’s Day this month, how can we conduct this debate in a loving way? The Apostle Peter reminds us: ‘Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor.’ (1 Peter 2:17).

Respect everyone: However much we may

disagree with another person’s perspective, we should respect them as people. This applies even if they don’t respect our views!

Love the church: Among the family of believers there should be an even greater respect for each other! The way we treat each other not only reveals the depth of our love; it will also cause people to glorify God and want to be part of the family.

Fear God: We must demonstrate our allegiance to God by putting Him first and following His leading. Of course, this doesn’t stop Christians from having different opinions to each other.

Honour those in authority: We are called to honour those who are in authority over us ‘for the Lord’s sake’ (13). Even when we disagree with their decisions and actions, we should keep our respect and not speak ill of them.

Peter is calling us to live with the freedom to make up our own mind on Europe, while listening to what others say (16). ‘A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.’ (Martin Luther).

Parish Pump

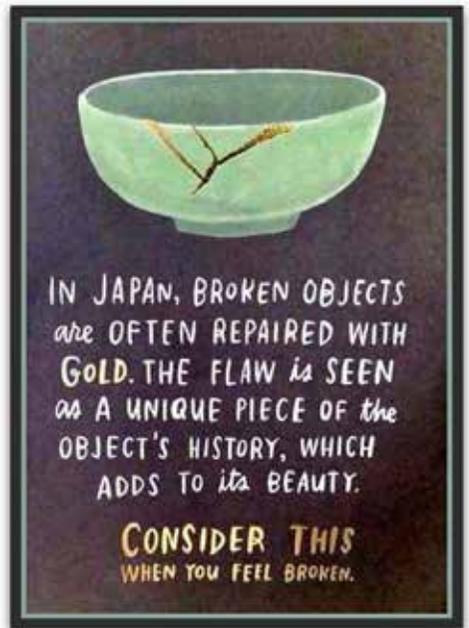
The Bible Verse of 2018

A Bible app, **YouVersion**, has named Isaiah 41:10 as the most popular verse of 2018.

That verse has been posted, bookmarked, and highlighted more times than any other on the app (which has been downloaded more than 350,000 times around the world).

Isaiah 41:10 reads: ‘So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.’ The verse also came top in Chile, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Perus, South Africa, Spain and the United States.

But in the UK, for 2018, we preferred Jeremiah 29:11: ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’



At **Third Avenue** we try to lead by example and to be a beacon in our community, therefore we have been looking at the environmental impact of our buildings and activities within. This has included upgrading to energy efficient LED lighting, fitting draft excluders, recycling plastics etc and even making our own compost! As well as looking at moving to environmentally friendly cleaning products.

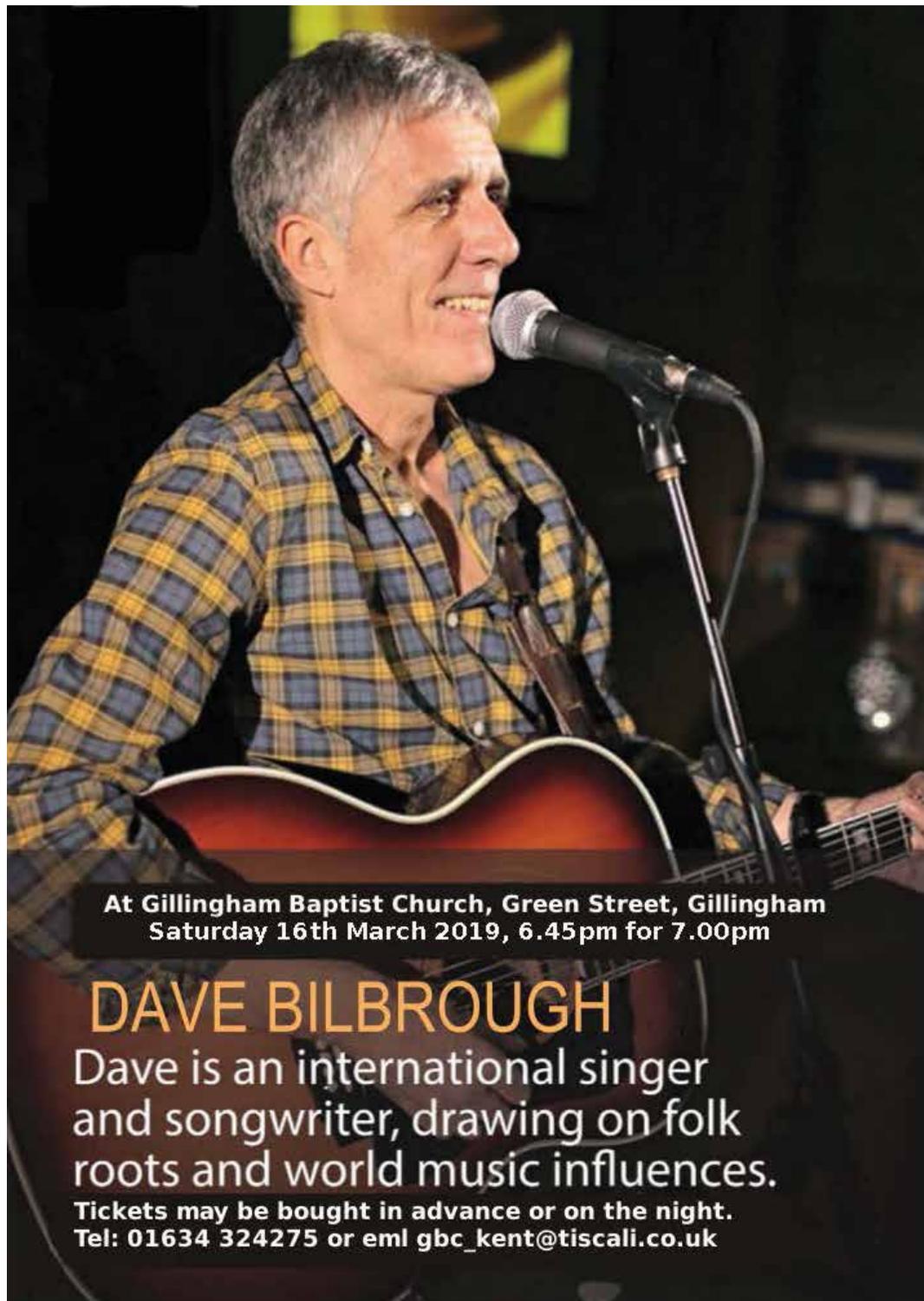


Each year we buy 6000 disposable cups!

We've been using compostable paper ones for a while now, but, although a step in the right direction, even these use energy and resources in their manufacture and recycling.

Paper cups will always be available, but have you considered bringing your own suitable cup/mug for your Sunday morning brew?

Before and after our Sunday worship some 80-100 servings are made, accounting for over 4500 cups each year. If even half of these can be saved by bringing your own cup, or refilling your paper one, then this will have a positive impact both environmentally and financially. **Thank you**



**At Gillingham Baptist Church, Green Street, Gillingham
Saturday 16th March 2019, 6.45pm for 7.00pm**

DAVE BILBROUGH

Dave is an international singer and songwriter, drawing on folk roots and world music influences.

**Tickets may be bought in advance or on the night.
Tel: 01634 324275 or [eml gbc_kent@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:eml_gbc_kent@tiscali.co.uk)**

Drama Group News...



Since writing my last article for the Messenger, our members have been having a couple of weeks rest over the Christmas/New Year holiday period but we are now back in rehearsal & as keen as ever! We did manage to fit in our annual dinner at Sittingbourne Golf Club where 30+ members & friends enjoyed playing 'silly games' & having a good laugh.

As you all know this year's panto is **Robin Hood** by Vicky Orman and by the time you read this, the show will be ready to go, we hope! Unfortunately, our archers are still having problems with their shooting abilities but I'm sure all will come good in the end (NB. check accident insurance).

The dates are **Friday 15th, Saturday 16th & Saturday 23rd February all at 7.30pm**. Also a matinee on **Saturday 23rd at 3pm**. Tickets priced £7 Adults & £5 Children (16 & under) are now

on sale from Sally Murphy | 01634 855343, Keith Jackson | 01634 852712; online or from any member of the Drama Group. Booking forms to order tickets are available in the Church Foyer.

Do come & join us for some good family entertainment. We look forward to seeing you.

Keith Jackson | www.stpaulsdramagroup.co.uk

Stop Press : Our next production will be the musical 'South Pacific' on 5th & 6th July - more details in next magazine.



Remember : the clocks 'spring forward'
one hour at 1am on Sunday 31 March

Greetings from Birmingham,

So it's now over 16 months since I left Third Ave, and life has been good. Adrienne and I are happily married and enjoying our journey together. The Methodist church has been incredible and loving, and I've made some great friends here. If you can believe it I only have a few months left at college before being sent out into the real world. And the Methodist church is sending me to Witney, near Oxford.

I'm scratching my head a bit with my 'probationer' appointment. The town itself is beautiful, I'm pretty sure they must use scissors to cut the town green. It's definitely a bit more posh than I expected. Both Adrienne and myself were a bit confused at first as we didn't feel called to such a place, but God reminded us that He loves everyone, and the Kingdom needs announcing in all places.

And when I look at the church I look at it with equal fear and excitement. Indeed the first miracle is that I will only have one church, a rarity indeed. The membership is 200 strong. The church building is on the High Street and it is huge! It's on two floors and has more rooms than you can count, including a small theatre area. Bookings mean that around

3000 people a week walk through the doors of Witney High Street Methodist Church, so a great opportunity for witness. To help me out the church employs a centre manager, a financial manager and wait for it.....a PA to the Minister! God knows me well!

But we have to be more than this. And as I was shown around I couldn't keep one eye from being drawn to the High Street. It is a busy retail area and I feel called to offer a public ministry on the High Street, hopefully including conversation, prayer and maybe even a public offering of communion (enter Theological debate here) if I am allowed.

Anyway that's enough from me. Please know that I still miss you all dearly and Gillingham will forever be home.

Jason Cooke



Our local preachers value your prayers as they preach in different Churches around the Circuit...

10 FEB	MANDY HARRIS	DENE HOLM
17 FEB	DEREK GALLAGHER TRISH ROBB JUDITH GERMAN	ST LUKE'S STROOD BURHAM
24 FEB	COLIN WALDOCK	UNION STREET
03 MAR	TRISH ROBB	STOKE
10 MAR	MANDY HARRIS	UNION STREET
17 MAR	BRIAN DAVIES MARGARET BOWERMAN	ST LUKE'S SITTINGBOURNE
27 MAR	TRISH ROBB KAREN WILLING	STROOD UNION STREET
31 MAR	JUDITH GERMAN	BEARSTED

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: *“When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.”* So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-16



Lola News...



Lola herewishing everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Trudy and I have been very busy over the festive season. I've loved all the extra walks, delivering cards and gifts. We also went to a children's Christmas party at Pembroke House, organised by the home for local children. One resident dressed up as Father Christmas as the real one was a bit busy to come along that afternoon. A good time was had by all.

When the big day arrived I enjoyed a special chicken and sausage dinner and as you can see I had to sleep it off a bit. Actually, Trudy said we needed to walk off all the extra calories, which was fine by me as I'm always ready to explore outside.

Take care all and bye for now,

Woofwoof.... love Lola x



Every
Friday
Open to all

Oasis

A safe place to explore & share,
to exercise & relax, to talk & be heard

Talking Point
12pm to 1pm

An open time to explore and discuss issues that affect our lives today with an emphasis on how the church and faith may help.

 **Chrysalis**
1pm to 1.30pm

A time for gentle exercise and relaxation, particularly for those who suffer with arthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic or general aches and pains.

Listening Ear
from 1.30pm

A time for fellowship and chat over a cup of tea and a piece of cake. A chance to talk and be listened to.


**Third
Avenue**
CHURCH & COMMUNITY

*You are welcome to join
all the activities or just some,
the choice is yours*

the **BIG** ? Questions

Our monthly
DISCUSSION GROUP

A place of open discussion & exploration
on the questions of **Life and Faith**
the first Tuesday of every month

Living out your faith TUES 5 FEB

*Repentance... A permanent
change in direction* TUES 5 MAR



All are welcome

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple/ Candlemas

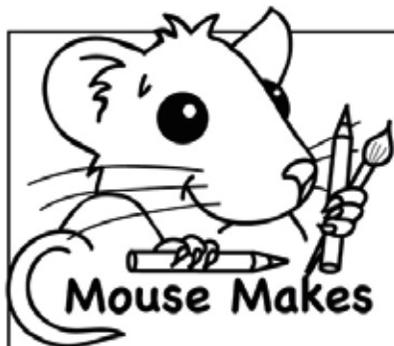
Candlemas, 2 February, comes exactly 40 days after Christmas. In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. (Luke 2: 22-40) So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day.

Candlemas	New	Boy	Jewish
Forty	Testament	First	Temple
Days	Important	Public	Festival
After	Age	Appearance	Presentation
Christmas	Baby	Mary	Described
Light	World	Candles	Lighting
Early			





Take time out for some 'mindfulness' and colour in this amazing quote...



Mouse Makes

WHAT IS LOVE?

Cross out every other letter to find the Bible verse, then look it up.

OHNKEWJLOSHCNP
CGHUADPBTFEKRA
FJOMUORD
VWEURDSKEV
TOEGNP

God's love is...

Change each letter to the letter before it in the alphabet.

"Hpe mpwfe uif xpsme tp nvd
uibu if hbwf ijt pomz tpo tp
uibu fwfszpod xip cfmjfwft
jo ijn nbz opu ejf cvu
ibwf fufsobm mjgf."
Kpio 3:16



How does God show he loves us?

Look at this in a mirror!

su rot evol siH bewore boG
God showed His love for us
otni no2 ylno aird gnirid yl
yð æneid his only son into
the world, so that we
ew tsrt os ,bhow ertt
etil evst trlgim
mih rgnortt
e:4 nrol 1

HOW LONG IS GOD'S LOVE?

Cross out all the xxx to find out!

xxGxixvxexxtxhxaxnxkxsxxtxoxxtxhx
exxLxoxrxdx,xfxoxrxxHxexxiixsxg
xoxxoxdx,xxHxixsxsxxtxeaxxdx
fxaxsxtxxlxoxvxeexnxdxu
rxxexsxfxoxrxxevvxxexr.
xpxsaxxxlxxx
1x3x6:1

"The steadfast love of
the Lord never ceases"
Lamentations 3:22



Sudoku

Easy...

Intermediate...

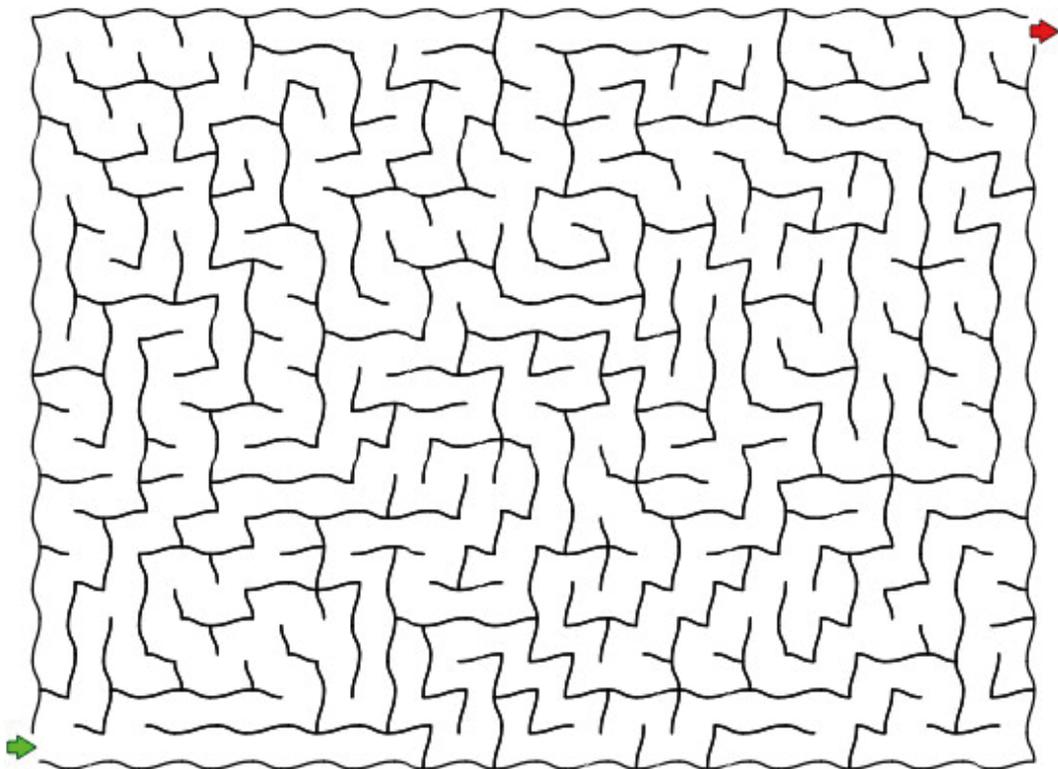
			7			4	6	2
9	6	7		4				
	4	2		6	1	9		3
	7			3		2		9
2		4		7				5
7		1	4	8		3	9	
				1		7	8	5
8	9	3			7			

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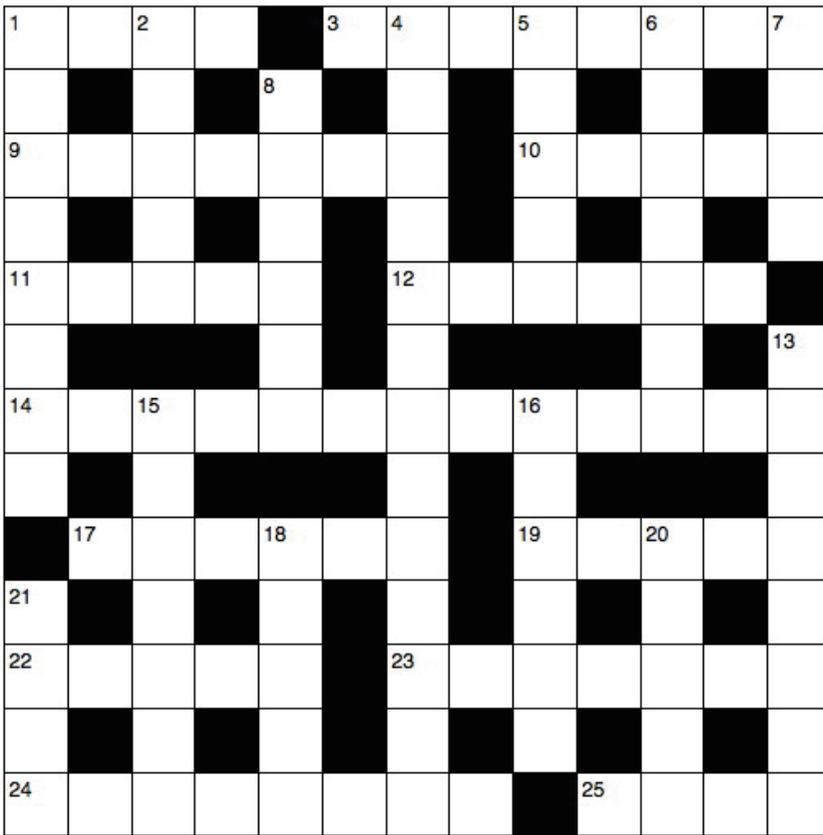
7		5					1	
1			2					
					9	5	4	
9				1				8
			5		8			
6				7				4
	7	3	4					
					3			6
		1				8		3

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Maze...



Crossword



Across

- 1 Salary (Isaiah 19:10) (4)
- 3 Question Jesus asked of those healed of leprosy, 'Were not all ten — ?' (Luke 17:17) (8)
- 9 Wide, elevated level area of land (Joshua 13:9) (7)
- 10 'So you also must be — , because the Son of Man will come... when you do not expect him' (Matthew 24:44) (5)
- 11 '[He] said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He — — , and his hand was completely restored' (Luke 6:10) (3,2)
- 12 'Who has gathered up the wind in the — of his hand?' (Proverbs 30:4) (6)
- 14 Not born again (13)
- 17 'Again and again he — the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins' (Hebrews 10:11) (6)
- 19 Mails (anag.) (5)
- 22 'He — — here; he has risen' (Matthew 28:6) (2,3)
- 23 Defeated (Judges 20:43) (7)
- 24 Soldiers' quarters (Acts 21:34) (8)
- 25 'Pillars of marble' were how the Beloved described those of her Lover (Song of Songs 5:15) (4)

Down

- 1 Totally destroyed (Genesis 7:23) (5,3)
- 2 What the Philippian jailer was told to do with his prisoners Paul and Silas (Acts 16:23) (5)
- 4 Object of ridicule (Job 12:4) (8-5)
- 5 In most years, the month in which Easter falls (5)
- 6 For example, Caesarea, Joppa, Tyre, Sidon (7)
- 7 '[Jesus] was in the desert for forty — , being tempted by Satan' (Mark 1:13) (4)
- 8 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power — to our God' (Revelation 19:1) (6)
- 13 Mend dots (anag.) (8)
- 15 Purifier (Malachi 3:3) (7)
- 16 Attacked (1 Samuel 27:8) (6)
- 18 The good Samaritan to the innkeeper: 'When I return, I will reimburse you for any — expense you may have' (Luke 10:35) (5)
- 20 How Matthew described the crowds who followed Jesus (Matthew 4:25) (5)
- 21 For example, one of 25 Across (Judges 19:29) (4)

Manner of speaking

'Are your father and your mother in?' asked the vicar when the small boy opened the door.

'They was in,' said the youngster.

'But they is out.'

'They was in. They is out. Where's your grammar, young man?'

'She's gone upstairs, for a nap.'

Rice

A man who had been dating a girl for a number of years took her out to a Chinese restaurant.

As they studied the menu he asked: 'How would you like your rice, fried or boiled?'

She looked at him sadly. 'Thrown.'

The mystery of marriage

First woman: I don't see Charlie half as much as I used to.

Second woman: You should have married him when you had the chance.

First woman: I did.

Valentine present

Man in car showroom: I've come back to buy that car you showed me yesterday.

Sales assistant: That's fine, I thought you'd be back. Tell me, what was the dominant feature which made you decide on this car?

My wife.

Cold weather

'It was so cold where we were,' boasted the Arctic explorer, 'that the candle froze and we couldn't blow it out.'

'That's nothing,' said his rival. 'Where we were it was so cold that our words came out in chunks of ice and we had to thaw them to see what we were talking about.'

Poster found in a church in France...translated

"When you enter this church it may be possible that you hear "the call of God".

However it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile.

Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet space and talk to Him. If you want to see Him, send Him a text while driving."

Heaven's reward

A taxi driver and a minister from the same village died and went to heaven. St Peter met them at the gate. He gave a kindly smile to the minister, but threw his arms around the taxi driver, and several angels rushed out to carry the taxi driver in triumph through the pearly gates.

The minister was miffed. He wanted to know why his welcome was so much less, considering he had spent his life working for the Kingdom of Heaven. 'Indeed, you did,' said St Peter soothingly, 'and you did a good job. But sadly, you came nowhere near to what this taxi driver achieved for us up here in Heaven.

'But – but – he has never preached even once,' protested the minister.

'True, but while over the years your ministry inspired about 30 people to pray with real fervour, this taxi driver inspired thousands. Anyone, in fact, who got into the back of his taxi for a drive.'

Puzzle solutions...

Word Search...



Crossword...



Sudoku Easy...

3	1	8	7	9	5	4	6	2
9	6	7	2	4	3	5	1	8
5	4	2	8	6	1	9	7	3
6	7	5	1	3	8	2	4	9
1	8	9	5	2	4	6	3	7
2	3	4	9	7	6	8	5	1
7	5	1	4	8	2	3	9	6
4	2	6	3	1	9	7	8	5
8	9	3	6	5	7	1	2	4

Intermediate...

7	9	5	8	4	6	1	3	2
1	3	4	2	5	7	6	8	9
2	8	6	1	3	9	5	4	7
9	5	7	6	1	4	3	2	8
3	4	2	5	9	8	7	6	1
6	1	8	3	7	2	9	5	4
8	7	3	4	6	1	2	9	5
5	2	9	7	8	3	4	1	6
4	6	1	9	2	5	8	7	3

There is no charge for this magazine, but if you are able, a contribution of at least **60p** would help towards the cost of production and enable us to distribute to the wider community

Many thanks

Rev Robin Selmes

GILLINGHAM METHODISTS | *Part of the North Kent Circuit*
 Church Office | 100 Third Avenue | Gillingham | Kent | ME7 2LU
 01634 575139 | church@gillinghammethodists.uk
 www.gillinghammethodists.uk





St Paul's Drama Group

Proudly presents



ROBIN HOOD

A Pantomime by Vicky Orman

Third Avenue Community Hall
100 Third Avenue, Gillingham

Friday 15th / Saturday 16th February at 7:30pm

Saturday 23rd February 3.00 pm and 7:30pm

Adults £7.00 Children (16 & under) £5.00

Box Office and Information 01634 852712

www.stpaulsdramagroup.co.uk