

Fareham Methodist Church

Newsletter February/March 2018

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Dear friends,

The beginning of the year might cause us to reflect on the theme of 'journeys'. The season of Epiphany remembers the long journey that the wise men made to the infant Jesus and the dangers that they came across on their way. The account in Matthew's gospel ends with the writer telling us that having crossed Herod and then met Jesus and offered their gifts the wise men 'left for their own country by another road'. The return journey could have proved to be simpler or even more treacherous – we simply don't know. The New Year may have started simply for you or already contained events that you least expected.

No sooner have we finished reflecting on the incarnation and the wonderful truth that God is with us, we are asked to prepare for another journey as we embark on the Lenten season before Easter appears on the horizon at the beginning of April. The Lenten journey begins on the 14th February and there are Ash Wednesday services at Fareham at 10am or at Lee at 2pm

And how might we prepare for this journey? I wonder if when you are going on holiday for a few days or more whether you are minimalist or maximalist in what you take with you? In our house we have both! Some who want to take everything (and the kitchen sink) and others who see no need to take more than one change of clothes (if only they could get away with it).

I would suggest that the journey of Lent lends itself more to the minimalist approach. Some people see Lent as an opportunity to have a spiritual 'spring clean' – to declutter and travel a little more lightly and try to shed some of the extra baggage that we so often lug around with us. If we choose to travel light, we potentially create some more space for God so that God might be able to *speak to us* and *work in us* more powerfully and purposefully. So Lent always holds the potential to transform and change us. May we be open to this potential as we continue our Christian journey. Love, Claire

Vestry Jottings: After enjoying a very busy Christmas period, when we were pleased to invite some new people to our activities, we are now back to the bread and butter events of normal life.

We now have to prepare ourselves for Claire's Sabbatical break which starts at Easter. During that time she will not be available under any circumstances through any medium. Ministerial cover will be available, and details will be published nearer the time. We are looking forward to our Barn Dance in March. Please see the details on the poster in the Welcome Area, and sign up for what you will be bringing in the way of food to share with everyone.

As we start to plan for the Easter celebrations, which is the highlight of the Church's year, the question has to be asked, who will you bring with you? Over the last 12 months we have had quite a lot of new people who have attended one or more of our functions, and the comments are usually in the line of "What lovely premises you have here", "I didn't expect it to be so comfortable, not like a Church at all", "I was made to feel so welcome". Unless we want to be prosecuted by the monopolies commission, then we need to share our good fortune with more people, so I ask the question again, who are you going to bring with you? Andrew Wilcock

Rave in the Nave: What a climax to the Nativity Play! I was watching the children during the last song rather than look at the words; there was joy on their faces. It had been a humorous rendering of the Christmas story but with a profound message. I hope it will have a lasting effect on those taking part. Well done Alison. Eric Wheeler
Thanks should be given to everyone involved in any way in producing the Nativity Play. It was such an enjoyable Service. Lynda Young

From the Circuit: The new **Portsmouth Methodist Church** will come into being later in the year. The 3 Churches on Portsea Island – Copnor, Eastney and Trinity have agreed to form one new Church, with 3 mission centres where they will live out their calling to Worship, Outreach and Evangelism. There will be a chance for us all to celebrate with the new Church after Easter.

Christians Together in Fareham: Three Choirs Concert Dear All, Thank you so much for a fantastic afternoon at Fareham URC on 14th January. What a wonderful selection of music and singing and what an amazing turnout! Please can you pass on our thanks to all involved with making it such a successful event. I am told we raised over £1400 which I know will be much appreciated and a real blessing for the work of supporting asylum seekers in Fareham. With love and prayers, Rachel (Chair of CTIF)

Lynda Young and Linda Brooks also expressed their appreciation of this concert, Linda Brooks calling it a Magnificent, Merciful Magnitude of voices.

Walk of Witness – Friday 30th March: As before, the plan will be church members to gather together at your individual church and then walk to the Podium together. Please make sure that your ETA is 10am or a little before. Obviously, people are welcome just to meet at the Podium by 10am if that's better for them. This year we will stay at the Podium for the whole service.

Good News from and for Young People: Christians Together in Fareham have met together for the benefit of the young people in the area. Two Saturday Night Specials at Fareham Leisure Centre are planned on February 3rd and March 17th for the 11+ age group. There is also an Activity Afternoon for the same age group on Monday 12th February at Fareham Community Church.

The young people in our own church are meeting together to plan a First Sunday evening service, the first of which is at 6pm on March 4th. We hope they will be supported in this new venture with a good congregation, do come along if you can! Kevin Foster

Women's World Day of Prayer: Services will be held this year on Friday 2nd March at St Philip Howard Church, Bishopsfield Road at 2pm and 7.30pm. The material has been prepared by the women of Suriname and all are welcome to attend.

Organ: We are fortunate to have a lovely Allen Organ and a useful electric piano. These instruments may need repairing or even replacing in the future and we need funds to do this. So we are setting up a new Organ Fund beginning on Sunday 4th March, 2018. There will be a box at the back of the Church for any money that you would like to donate, or a donation can be given to our Treasurer, Mike Petter. Thank you very much, Jill Race.

Thanks: I would like to offer a big thank you to all involved in catering in 2017, from refreshments at Parents & Toddlers to the magnificent "Away Days". The lunches and the outreach of Monday mini-market, Coffee Centre, Messy Church, Café Church and Christmas Tree Festival. We all enjoy these events, but I would like to draw attention to the mountain of work involved – planning, shopping, preparation, clearing & washing up and tidying. Only when all this is finished can our weary workers head for home and a rest. With appreciation, Scott and Una Peters.

Thanks for flowers have been received from Sally Bashforth, Lynda Young and Graham and Sheila Dyer. These and the visits are much appreciated.

Focus: From April Roxanne will be producing a Focus magazine. The first issue will be out on 1st April, and the deadline for anything to be included will be 1st March, and then the 1st of every month after that. Information should be sent digitally where possible to roxanne.mclean@googlemail.com. If that isn't possible a hard copy can be left at church in the Focus pigeon hole.