

Brightstar



December / January

2012 / 13

Brightstar is the newsletter of Seaton Road Methodist Church
Felixstowe, IP11 9BT

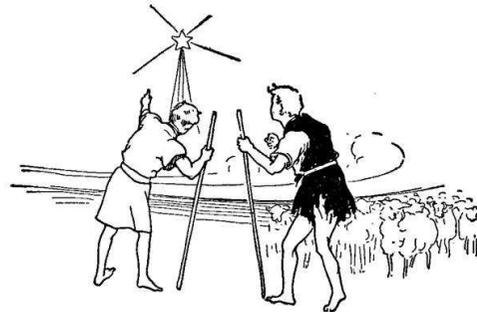
Contact our minister, Rev David Kemble on 01394 282023
or email through our website at www.seatonroad.org.uk

Dear Friends,



I like the unexpected nature of the Christmas story, God incognito slips into Bethlehem unrecognised. An infant rough sleeper soon moved on by the violence of Herod and forced to seek asylum in Egypt, turns out to be the light of the world. What an ignominious start.

The glory of God can be seen in the picture. There are lights in the sky, singing shepherds and searching wise men. It is as if the plan is dependent upon the mysterious incarnation remaining secret so that it can be discovered at the right time by faith but heaven is so full of excitement by what it sees happening on earth that it simply cannot contain itself. Songs are sung in the sky, stars shine in the night, prophets prophesy and Mary ponders. Heaven and earth combine to praise as the widest extremes of the divine and helpless infant humanity are joined. God wearing a nappy and lying in a donkey's dinner can only find a few shepherds on the hillside awake enough to share the moment.



There is something profound, moving and very attractive about the starkness of the story. We can understand the bewilderment of Zechariah that leaves him dumbstruck, silent until John is named. We can understand the human and spiritual excitement of Elizabeth when the unborn John the Baptist kicks for the first time as Mary speaks. With Mary our souls want to cry out in wonder at the humble greatness on display and rejoice in God. The world will never be the same again but hardly anyone has noticed.

We can even understand the insecurities of Herod. He is right. The baby does represent a power that is ultimately greater than the terror of the tyrant.

This baby is a threat to the dominance of self-interest, to the right of the powerful and wealthy to tread on the poor without fear of justice. This baby and the values of the kingdom he brings challenge and inform the very core of what it is to be human.

The infant refugee, the gloriously transfigured man on the mountain, the bleeding broken man on the cross, the quiet resurrection stranger in the garden, our ascended inspirational Lord, all challenge us to awe and work. There are still too many refugees who need our humanity. There are still too many difficult births that threaten Mother and child. There are still too many rough sleepers who need our compassion. There are still too many Bethlehems divided by tyrant walls that need our campaigns for justice, change and reconciliation. Will you follow Him? There is so much of His work of love still to be done in many areas of His world! Please remember the Felixstowe Mission Area project this year as we support Motherhood in Mali with our prayers and monetary gifts.



Yet in the dark streets shining there is an everlasting light reaching out and longing to embrace you and me. There is an unconditional love waiting to be welcomed into our lives, our church and our world. My dear friends for you Jesus Christ came into the world; for you he lived and showed God's love; for you he suffered death on the cross; for you he triumphed over death rising to newness of life; for you he prays at God's right hand...all this for you before you could know anything of it... *'We love because God first loved us'*.

Much Love at Christmas and into the New Year

David & Elizabeth

Services for December/January:

2 nd December 9.45 a.m.	Mrs Mary Dixon Coffee will be served after this service
9 th 9.45 a.m.	Mr Roger Theobald
16 th	Café Worship! Breakfast from 9.15 a.m. Worship at 9.45 a.m.
18 th 7 p.m.	Carols by Candlelight
23 rd 9.45 a.m.	Rev David Kemble
25 th 9.45 a.m.	Christmas Day Celebration
30 th 11 a.m.	Mission Area service at Trinity (no service here at Seaton Road)
6 th January 2013 9.45 a.m.	Mrs Heather Bentley Coffee will be served following this service
13 th 9.45 a.m.	Rev David Kemble
20 th	Café Worship! – Rev David Kemble Breakfast from 9.15 a.m. Worship at 9.45 a.m.
27 th 9.45 a.m.	Mr Chris Finbow

From The Vestry :

Great Expectations !

What are you expecting this Christmas?

The most hopeful personality I ever met was our dog 'Honey'. Like most dogs she was eternally hopeful. Hopeful for food if you went into the kitchen, hopeful for 'walkies' if you put your coat on, hopeful that today would be the day you finally saw sense and let her on the sofa after many years of being misguided enough to refuse!

It seems to me that our 'Expectations' are founded on previous experience. Honey had experienced food when we went into the kitchen, she had experienced 'Walkies' after a coat was put on and so it was with glee that she jumped up full of expectation when either were in the offing. Even the disappointment of immediate failure didn't put her off. She always had hope in her heart. I know dogs that have been ill-treated fail to do these things but lie literally doggo and withdrawn.

So what has this got to do with Advent and Christmas? Well I think Mary's acceptance of the Annunciation was based on her experience of trusting a loving God. If God thought it was a good idea then she was prepared to go with it. The prophets and the shepherds all knew that God too and so the bits of God's plan for the Christmas story fell into place.

So what kind of God do we know at Seaton Road and what does that mean for our expectations. We know a God who has been very good to us over many years. He has blessed us with skilled leaders and with good experiences as a church. He has

enabled us to come through tough times together. He has been with us as we have raised extraordinary amounts of funding for new porches and new roofs and the like.

More recently He has enabled us to become part of an Ecumenical Scheme which involves caring for the vulnerable in the community through Walton Parish Nursing. This scheme is unique in the whole country and God has blessed 'little old us' to be part of it along with Maidstone Road and St. Mary's.

We have an increasing reputation for wonderful holiday clubs .We have new faces at lunch club, at computer club, at badminton club and at church. Need I go on?

From where I stand, I see a God who is very active both in our church family and in our community.

It's not always easy following God's lead as Mary certainly found out, but I believe we are all privileged to have this experience . Many don't!

So I for one am looking forward to not only a Christmas in the hands of this God whom I trust, but also to a future that is as secure in its message of Salvation and hope as it has always been!

I pray that we may all be on the lookout for God's blessings this Advent and Christmas time. On past experience, my expectations are that it should be a great one if only we have the courage to play our part!

Heather B

Christmas Post Box

The Christmas Post Box is now in service! Just put your pile of cards in the post box provided – they will then be sorted and given to the right people (please include surnames to avoid any confusion and only 'post' cards for people who actually attend church). For this service we are simply asking for a donation to the work of JMA (Junior Mission for All, part of the Methodist Church's World Mission group) . Last 'collection' will be on **16th December** to ensure time for sorting.

Welcome Packs

Churches Together in Felixstowe have put together a 'Welcome Pack' for anyone new moving into the area. The pack contains information on the local churches in the area and some general information about Felixstowe (library, doctors etc.)

Seaton Road, together with Maidstone Road Baptist and Walton Church, have now been given a supply of 'Walton' packs so if YOU are aware of someone new moving into a house near you please inform one of the stewards. The idea is that someone from one of the churches will visit them, with the pack, and give them a personal welcome to the area on behalf of all the local churches.

Carol Singing

Kirton Methodist Church invite anyone to join them carol singing around Kirton village on:-



Sunday 9th December - Meet at Kirton chapel at 4pm

Sunday 16th December – as above

Monday 17th December – as Sunday but starting at 6.30pm.

Waiting for Christmas

‘Waiting for Christmas’ is the name of the latest Felixstowe based venture to raise money for Tearfund through primary school aged children singing Christmas songs.

Many of you will have CDs of previous recordings such as ‘One Christmas’ or ‘Heaven Invites you to a Party’, just two of the seven previous projects to be undertaken over the past 19 years, during which time a massive £96,000 has been raised for Tearfund and organisers are hoping this will be boosted by a further £50,000 from the 2012 project.

‘Waiting for Christmas’ has involved 75 schools and hundreds of 7 – 11 years olds from all over Suffolk, as well as raising awareness of the poverty and injustice in Malawi.

Look out for the CD and DVD, available to purchase, and performances will take place at the Spa Pavilion every evening between 2nd and 8th December.

Circuit Superintendent Appointment

Over the past year or so the Circuit Stewards and the Circuit Invitation Committee (including Mike Peck from Trinity as the Felixstowe Mission Area representative) have been working hard on finding a Superintendent Minister to replace Rev Alan Taylor when he retires next year.

On 17th November the Rev Derek Grimshaw was appointed as the new Superintendent Minister of the Ipswich Circuit from September 2013 and will also be the minister of Museum Street, Ipswich and Bramford Methodist churches.

Please pray for Derek, his wife Karen and their family as they prepare to join the Ipswich Circuit and also for Alan and Dorothy as they prepare for their retirement.

 Parish Nursing
Ministries UK

You are invited to

A CONCERT

**of Songs, Carols and Readings for Christmas
by the ORWELL CONNECTION CHOIR**

Tuesday 11th December

7.30pm

at Maidstone Road Baptist Church

Free entrance

Light Refreshments

Retiring collection in aid of Walton Parish Nursing



You are warmly invited to

**Mince Pies at the Manse!
Tower Rd Felixstowe**



**Wednesday 19th December
10am onwards**

David & Elizabeth

Wishing you peace and joy this
Christmas

Churches Together in Felixstowe

Brief minutes of Forum Meeting held on 7th November at Christ Church

The meeting was opened and closed with prayer by Rev Mark Kichenside

People:

- Margaret Condick paid tribute to Shirley Hanton from the Quakers who had died in August
- Rev Napoleon John will be leaving St Mary's, Walton in January to take up a post in Bromley, Kent.
- Rev Ken Martin (URC) has been made redundant from the Seafarers' Centre.
- Ranelagh Road Christian Fellowship has a new leadership team: Heather Cooke, Eileen Batty, David Rowe and Rick and Val Taylor.
- Captains Richard and Nicky Waters are the new Salvation Army officers. They have come from South Wales.

Felixstowe TV - Rev Mark Reid asked for volunteers for a group to produce a weekly religious programme for Felixstowe TV as they are now under new management and looking for the station to be more community-based. If anyone has camera, sound, editing, presentation type skills and would be interested please contact Mark Reid: e27mark@yahoo.co.uk

CTF are still looking for a treasurer – any offers to Margaret Condick

Recent and Future Events

- Praise on the Prom has had to be cancelled the last two years because of the weather. The provider of the bouncy castle had not made a charge and it was agreed to make a goodwill payment of £70.

- “Waiting for Christmas” - Ted Payne gave a presentation on the project (*see separate article in Brightstar*)
- Christmas Posters - all churches were asked to display posters ‘Hope is born at Christmas’
- Joint Carol Singing - Christ Church are heavily involved in the “Waiting for Christmas” project and will not be able to lead CTF carol singing on the Triangle this year. URC are carol singing on Saturday, 15th December from 10-12 at Great Eastern Square to raise money for Shelter and would be pleased to have members of other churches join with them.
- Nativity Display – will be displayed in an empty shop in town and will have a list of church Christmas services.
- World Aids Day - This will be a vigil at St Edmunds Church on Saturday, 1st December from 9am to 5pm, followed by a communion service at 5pm.
- Unity Service (Sunday 20th Jan 2013): The theme for the 2013 service is “What does God require of us?” (Micah 6:8). Retired Methodist minister and former Moderator of Churches Together in Suffolk, Alan Ashton, will be the preacher.
- Week of Prayer - Sue Hockenhill is coordinating the programme for the week, 18th-25th January 2013. As for the past two years, churches will host prayer events during the week to which all churches are invited.

The meeting then split into small groups to consider the following questions about the week of prayer:

What works well?

What could be done differently?

What’s the best way to get the information to the congregation?
(ideas on how to publicise)

How do we encourage other people in our congregation to take part?
(What ways has your church found that work well?)

How to get the information into a leaflet without it looking too busy.

The rest of the year: What could CTF be doing in the rest of the year to bring us closer together?

Serving/Evangelising our Local Community

- Costa Project: Penny Brinkley's vision was to use the Costa coffee shop as somewhere to invite non-Christians. Costa was very happy to make their coffee shop available, provided a reasonable amount of trade resulted, and where this had happened elsewhere it had proved successful. Up to now there had been little interest shown in the project by the churches.
- Praying for Town Pastors: Barbara Lamberton spoke about the Town Pastors project which needs more volunteers particularly as Base Pray-ers. (*if you feel you can help please speak to David, Robin or Mary*)
- Inter-Church Prayer Group meets on the second Monday of the month at the Boost HQ 10 -11.30am. More people would be welcome and you can come and go as you choose.
- Hope Trust have run a 6 week bereavement support group which will be repeated in early 2013. They have started a new weekly drop in at Old Felixstowe Community Centre and film mornings in November. From January 8th 10-11.30am weekly OTAGO exercise classes will be held at Walton Community Hall. Services continue to be held in residential homes. Hope Trust is always looking for volunteers and fundraisers. (*If you are interested in any Hope Trust activities please contact Paul or Sheila Taylor 01394 272592*)
- Homelessness and Poverty in Felixstowe is a growing concern. Guest speaker Vanessa Wiseman spoke about the Food Banks which had been opened in the area and was interested in developing one in Felixstowe. Was there a role for the churches in Felixstowe to work together?
- Parish Nursing - Andrew Marfleet reported that the three churches in Walton were now working together to provide the Parish Nursing service and funding was secure. They were currently recruiting a second nurse. The 'Orwell Connection'

concert at MRBC on 11th December would include a collection for Parish Nursing

Other Matters

- CTF now have a banner which is available for churches to borrow for events.

If you would be interested in representing Seaton Road at CTF please speak to Rosemary Cross or Mary Pattinson

Mary

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18th – 25th January 2013

Look out for the programme of events in various churches during this time and try to get to a church you haven't been to before.

CTF Unity Service

What does God require of us?

Sunday 20th January 2013, 6.30pm, at St. John's Church Felixstowe.

Preacher: Rev Alan Ashton, retired Methodist minister and former Moderator of Churches Together in Suffolk.

Daily Bible Reading Notes – Are you getting your spiritual vitamins ??

Why Bible Notes?

We as a church are often called the Body Of Christ. We decided that if the body is to be fitter then each part needs to be fitter too.

As a society we are obsessed with physical fitness and healthy eating. As Christian's shouldn't we also make Spiritual fitness a priority?? I have been

ordering Daily Bible notes of different sorts, for Seaton Road people month by month since 2008 (I know others get their own too.)

Daily Bible notes can be a source of inspiration, even if you cannot do them every day.

What Bible Notes ?

As last year, I will put a selection in the vestibule. Feel free to take some and try them. Please free to add to the selection if you have some you recommend. Make an early resolution to up your spiritual fitness in 2013.

When and How ?

Please let me now if you would like to join us by Sunday Dec 9th. Thank you,

Heather Bentley (01394 279998)

Postscript for those already part of the scheme.

It is much easier to convert the orders to annual ones, where people are settled on their choice, although payment would be as you receive them, as before.

Please could those already receiving orders let me know if they are:

- Happy to order for the year
- Wish to continue on a month by month basis
- Wish to change or stop their order.

DATES

December



4th Tuesday - Kids' Club 6 –7.15pm

8th Saturday – Trimley Christmas Concert
Geraldine&Friends
6pm

11th Tuesday – Maidstone Road BC 'Orwell Connection' Concert for
Walton Parish Nursing 7.30pm

15th Saturday – Decorate the church for Christmas 10am

15th Saturday – Mission Area 'Messy Nativity' at Trinity
11am-1pm.

18th Tuesday – Seaton Road Carols by Candlelight 7pm

19th Wednesday – Mince Pies at the Manse all day from
10am.

22nd Saturday – Trinity Christmas Coffee Morning 11am – 1pm

24th Monday – Kirton Carol Service 7pm
Trimley Carol Service 7pm
Trinity Midnight service 11pm for 11.30pm.

25th Tuesday – Seaton Rd Christmas Family Celebration
9.45am

30th Sunday – Mission Area Service at Trinity 11am
(NO service at Seaton Road)

January 2013

8th Tuesday - Kids' Club 6 – 7.15pm

18th – 25th Week of Prayer for Christian Unity –
various prayer events.

20th Sunday – St John's Felixstowe
CTF Unity Service 6.30pm

February

13th Wednesday – Seaton Road Church Council 7.30pm

March

9th Saturday – Circuit Arts & Crafts Festival at
Museum St. Ipswich

23rd Saturday – Seaton Road Family Barn Dance 6.30pm

July

12th – 14th - Seaton Road Church Family Weekend at
Ditchingham

Over our Christmas events this year we shall be supporting the Methodist Relief and Development Funds' 'Motherhood in Mali'; a project helping to make child birth in Mali a safer and happier experience.

New Rates for Hall Hire

We are very keen to let our hall for more events and meetings. To this end we have simplified our charges for 2013.

The new rates are:

£10 per hour (up to a max of £30) plus £5 for use of kitchen, per session

A session is a morning, afternoon or evening.

Enquiries should be referred to Malcolm Bentley. Please spread the word that our hall is available.



Barn Dance

Saturday 23rd March

Live Music & Food

Book the date now !



Christmas prayer.....

*Build a stable in my body
Place a manger in my heart
Fill it with your love
As if it were a new born child*

Amen

Richard Becher



Lewis Eric Mattison, with his family and friends, baptised here at Seaton Road by Rev David Kemble on 24th November.

Brightstar

The next Brightstar will be the February 2013 edition. Heather Farthing will be taking back the reigns of editor for the next 6 months. Heather has asked that, as she will be unavailable to work on the magazine at the end of January, all contributions need to be with her by **Sunday 20th January** at the very latest (please note this is a week earlier than the normal copy deadline).