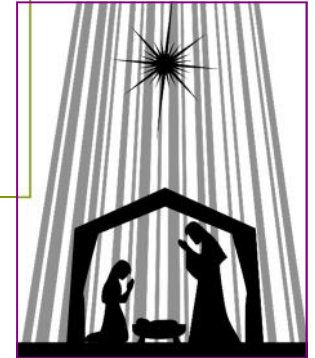


ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

SHARING GOD'S LOVE WITH ALL



News & Notices—December 2018

2nd December

9.30-10am Prayer for the Community

10.30am Jenny Brooks

9th December—Family Service

10.30am Rev Phil Snelson/John Atkin

16th December

10.30am Rev Brian Kennard : HC

23rd December No Service

Christmas Eve 4.30pm Candlelit Service

Led by Rev Phil Snelson

Christmas Day Celebration Service 10.30am

Led by Paul Wilson

30th December

10.30am John Atkin

Eastcote Baptist Chapel 3pm

Service on 1st Sundays

On Duty at 10.30am

Dec– Stretton/Bell

Jan-Gulliford/Roz/Sue

Northampton Methodist Circuit Team Ministry

Superintendent: Rev Romeo Pedro

Rev. Phil Snelson Deacon Richard Beckett

Rev Francis M'ltiiri

Rev Brian Kennard Rev Alan Sharp

Contact point is Circuit Office: 01604 702 178

Wootton Trinity Church, High Street, Wootton, NN4 6LP

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To book the Chapel rooms please ring

Kate Stretton on 830115

Please also contact Kate if you would like to place flowers in the Chapel in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a birthday, anniversary etc.

[www.astcotemethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.astcotemethodistchurch.org.uk)

For items or suggestions for this newsletter  
please contact::

Ann Atkin, Church Secretary on 830907

[ann.atkin51@btinternet.com](mailto:ann.atkin51@btinternet.com)

Dear Friends,

Centuries of hope in God's promise have come to fulfilment when the Messiah was born!

Luke's account of Jesus' birth (Gospel) begins by placing the event during the reign of Caesar Augustus. Luke very deliberately points out that it is during the rule of Augustus, the "saviour, god and peace-maker", that Jesus the Christ, the long-awaited Saviour and Messiah, the Son of God and Prince of Peace, enters human history.

Typical of Luke's Gospel, it is the shepherds of Bethlehem - among the poorest and most disregarded of Jewish society who become the first messengers of the Gospel. From the Christmas story in Luke's Gospel, we have a romantic image of shepherds as gentle, peaceful figures. But that manger scene image is a far cry from the reality: The shepherds of Biblical times were tough, earthy characters who fearlessly used their clubs to defend their flocks from wolves and other wild animals. They had even less patience for the pompous scribes and Pharisees who treated them as second and third-class citizens, barring these ill-bred rustics from the synagogue and courts.

And yet it was to shepherds that God first revealed the birth of the Messiah. The shepherds' vision on the Bethlehem hillside proclaims to all people of every place and generation that Christ comes for the sake of all of humankind.

It was while they were busy doing the ordinary work of their lives – that the angels appeared to them.

She is rather small! Petite, soft-spoken and sophisticated. But in my mind, she towers above everyone else. Her name is Chrissie Olivier.

**Lunch Club** - is for the retired and will usually be held on the 2nd Tuesday each month. **Please note that in November it will be held on 6th November.**

Maureen Corbett can be contacted for more details on 830296.

New members are welcome.

**The Well Group** - An ecumenical ladies group which offers a time to socialise and share a meal for Christian women or those interested in the Christian faith. Meeting 12-2pm, including a simple lunch.

No meeting in December.

Contact Alison Brierley on 830770 or Ann Atkin on 830907 if you would like to join us.

**Monday Club (Reception, Years 1 & 2)**  
**'Sunday School' after school 3.15-4.15pm at Pattishall Primary School**

Organised and run by John Atkin and Jackie Bell – helpers needed, speak to John on 830907, if you are interested.

**Book Group**—Last Wednesday in the month at 8pm—variety of books—contact Kate Stretton on 830115 for more information.

PICK UP YOUR COPY OF THE CHRISTMAS HOPE MAGAZINE AT CHURCH.



In the Christmas story, everyone involved travels to a time and place where, wonderfully, God himself would meet them. I wonder if you've ever considered who travelled the furthest?

Mary and Joseph journeyed from Nazareth to Bethlehem: not so far normally, but when you're nine months pregnant, certainly an uncomfortable distance. The shepherds came from the hillsides nearby, with a sense of wonder and celebration at the good news; the wise men travelled from the East to worship a special king from God – not sure how far, but it's thought they may have been travelling for up to two years following the star! And the angels came all the way from heaven to bring messages and sing his glory.

Who travelled the furthest? I think it was Jesus. The Bible tells us

*Though he was God, Christ gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.*

This Christmas why not ponder all these journeys and reflect on your own journey of life and faith. Are you at a wise man point in your journey, or a shepherd point or even a Mary and Joseph point or maybe something else? We invite you to join us in worship of our God who gave up everything to be with us.

Rev Phil Snelson

We were going through a very tough time as a family during the last three years of my senior school education and it affected me deeply. I found catharsis in creative writing. I envisioned a better life and the words kept flowing onto every paper I set my hands to.

I also felt increasingly isolated from my peers.

The only place I felt safe and able to express myself without fear of being rejected was in her class.

She touched me on my shoulder and looked me in my eyes and then she said: "You are so gifted. You must not stop writing. Your English is so good!" She was my English teacher in the late 1980's.

This woman – so small in stature – lifted this heavily depressed soul from the dungeons of self-pity and isolation. She gave me permission to be me ... and she believed in me! I will always be grateful to her.

You see – she did not do anything extraordinary! She simply did the ordinary well. In that moment this ordinary teacher was used by God to do an extraordinary thing. She did nothing more than live her life with faithfulness and love, but God used the small seeds of her daily routine to change a life forever.

In that moment, I came to believe that no matter where you live and no matter what circumstance you find yourself in, God can reach into your life and give your life purpose and meaning.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus – friend of the lowly and the marginalized, the one who identifies with the poor, the one who used the side-lined shepherds to be his mouthpiece, and the one who equips the voiceless to herald Good News for all – it is my prayer that we shall be a

Chrissie Olivier to those around us. My prayer is that we shall do the best we can in our ordinary day-to-day lives and work to build others up and propel them into a life of peace, hope, joy and love.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas

Romeo.

Rev Romeo Pedro



### **ADVENT BIBLE STUDIES**

Will be held at Holy Cross Pattishall on Mondays 2pm on 3rd, 10th, 17th December led by Rev Karen Jongman Based on Colossians Chapters 1-3.

In the Northampton Methodist Churches there are bible studies at :

Harpole on Thursdays 11am-12midday

Roade on Mondays 1pm (lunch at 12.30pm)

Park Avenue on Wednesdays 7.30pm

For all dates and information pick up a leaflet at church.

### **CHRISTMAS SERVICES/EVENTS**

FAMILY SERVICE 9TH DECEMBER 10.30— including decorating the Tree

CHRISTMAS CRACKER CHILDRENS WORKSHOP  
2pm Saturday 22nd December followed by  
CAROLS IN THE BARN for everyone at approx 4.15pm

Book places for the Children's Workshop via Pattishall School or John Atkin on 830907. Numbers are Limited.

Sunday 23rd December—No Service at Astcote

**CHRISTMAS EVE 4.30PM CANDLELIT SERVICE**  
led by **Rev Phil Snelson** followed by festive refreshments.

**CHRISTMAS DAY 10.30AM CHRISTMAS FAMILY CELEBRATION** led by **Paul Wilson**.

We hope you will be able to join us at one or all of these services.

OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING THIS YEAR WILL BE IN AID OF CANCER RESEARCH



At our Service on 30th December we will be joined by the congregation of Roade Methodist Church.

### **BIBLE STUDIES JANUARY 2019**

We are invited to join our friends from Holy Cross on Mondays 2pm from 7th January to look at the Ten Commandments. Meeting at Jean Pugh's home, Holmeview, Greenway, Eastcote—see poster in the kitchen.