

Magazine of

# December 2022/January 2023



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# Tim's Letter: 'Voices of Advent'

As we enter Advent once again, we've been blessed to have the input of our good friend Brian Merriman in helping us reflect on this season's themes. On behalf of the Northern Area Ministry Team, Brian, along with a small working group from across the churches, have reflected on how we might co-ordinate Advent as an area. The result is 'Voices of Advent'.

What voices do you think of when you recall the 'Christmas' story? And what words strike you about what they say, *and* how they say them? Voices of Advent provides material for the first three weeks to help us reflect on these questions. In our services, and in study (including a special Advent 'Going Deeper'), we will make this journey together. Each week has a set word, and voice, to guide us as we draw close to the Christ-child. They are as follows:

#### Advent 1 (27 Nov): word, 'Revelation'; voice, 'The Shepherds'

What might we hear the shepherds say to us this Advent through the glory of God revealed to them? It mustn't escape our attention that God's pivotal intervention in salvation history was first communicated to a group who many would have considered the lowest of the low! Yet, they were granted seats at the birth of the Messiah when kings were not. What does this say to us? How do we see Christ revealed to us, and to our world, today?

#### Advent 2 (4 Dec): word, 'Expectation'; voice, 'The Sages'

From those toiling on the hillsides, to the seekers of knowledge and wisdom travelling from afar, prompted by a star. They have been named as Magi, Wise Men, and even Three Kings of the Orient! This year we describe them as sages, learned people who followed a sign, expectant of what they might find. Do we travel through Advent with the same sense of expectation and longing, or has the road so often trod lost its mystery to us?

#### Advent 3 (11 Dec): word, 'Adoration'; voice, 'The Singers'

Simeon, Zechariah and Mary all sing out their praises to God as their part in God's saving work is revealed. With hearts so full of joy and hope, they cannot help but erupt into songs of sheer adoration. After the twentieth time of singing 'Hark the herald angels sing', I confess that my mood is not so upbeat. How can I, amid the busyness and challenges of the season, retain that sense of joy and wonder as if, like them, I was facing it for the first time? I still get goosebumps every Christmas morning when we finally get to sing, 'Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning'. Do you?

Through these Voices of Advent may we rediscover, with expectant adoration, the revelation of Immanuel; God with us. 'O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!'

With my sincere best wishes for a blessed Christmas and New Year,

In Christ, Tim

# **Editorial**

We're grateful for many colourful contributions for this edition. The front cover is a detail from 'Wise Men' by Carol Jessop. You can see Marjory Monro's 'Shepherds' on page 16. Marjory and Carol are part of a team of talented artists who have prepared collages for our Advent Service backdrops.

You'll enjoy the first instalment of an eventful and amusing

travelogue by Rosie MacMullen. We have encouraging news of support for refugees and our usual popular (we hope!) features.

## Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year!

#### The Yours Team—Bob Lord, Dorothy Lusmore and Sophie Armstrong

# News of the United Church Family

Revd David Scott died on 21 October. Many United Church members remember David as a good friend of our congregation while he was Rector of St Swithun and St Lawrence. A



Covenant between the two congregations, joint services, 'Space in the City' and 'Manna' were just some of the fruits of that period. We give thanks for David as pastor, preacher, thinker and poet. A gentle, compassionate and an extremely talented man. We remember his wife Miggy and his family.

As highlighted in last month's *Yours*, there was a special service on Sunday 13 November. This was an opportunity to remember and celebrate the lives of those friends and relatives who have died. Some people died in lockdown and as a result the chance to commemorate them was severely limited. The service was well attended and much appreciated. Thanks to all those who contributed to the afternoon.

**Pastoral Links** – the November edition of *Yours* carried an article on the role of Pastoral Links. Please prayerfully consider whether this is something you could do. Do contact me if you would like to know more.

Congratulations to Tulasha Colverson-Grant and Stuart Rutter on the birth of Laurie on 19 October. A first grandchild for Susan and Gordon.

#### Helen McTiffin, Pastoral Co-ordinator

# Decisions Regarding Marriage and Relationships at the November Church Meeting

At our November Church Meeting we made some important decisions about our church's position on marriage and relationships. This was first prompted by the United Reformed Church's conversations on the subject back in 2014/15, and then the Methodist's 'God in Love Unites Us' consultation, the outcome of which came into effect last year.

Each of the resolutions below were adopted by the Church Meeting with no votes against. I am grateful to all those who took part in our dialogue on this subject, at all stages, both past and present, and for the calm, sensitive and caring way in which we have approached this process.

#### **RESOLUTION 1: On the 'God in Love Unites Us' Report**

The United Church accepts and give thanks for the God in Love Unites Us report, and the subsequent conversations that have arisen from it. We commit to continuing in open dialogue on the issues the report raises, and to holding the tension between contrary convictions with love and grace.

#### **RESOLUTION 2: On the Principle of Good Relating**

The United Church believes passionately in being an open, inclusive and accepting community, welcoming all people regardless of gender identity (stated or otherwise), sexual preference (including those who identify as asexual), or relationship status (including those who are single).

We believe that all significant relationships should be built on the example of Christ, in whom we see the supreme example of self-giving love, commitment, fidelity, loyalty, honesty, mutual respect, equality and the desire for the mutual flourishing of the people involved. Our church has an important calling, therefore, to point to the presence of God's love within such relationships, and to encourage people to respond to it in the renewing and deepening (by whatever means) of their commitment.

## **RESOLUTION 3: On the Matter of Same Sex Marriage**

The United Church affirms that within the Methodist Church marriage is understood in two ways: that marriage can only be between a man and a woman; and that marriage can be between any two people.

The United Church Meeting therefore approves the decision to register our premises for the solemnisation of same sex marriages under the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

## A Prayer.

Gracious God, whether we view this as a moment of celebration, or a time of deep concern, we pray now for our United Church community, and ask that, by your grace, your love in Christ will still unite us, now and always.

#### Amen.

Tim Searle

# **Our Mission Project–Link to Hope**

During the service on 6 November Tim thanked everyone who took part in the Link to Hope Shoebox appeal and we prayed for those who will receive the boxes.



# 159 shoe boxes are on their way from the United Church.

Many thanks to everyone who wrapped a box or donated goods and/or money.

**Yvonne North** 

# Meet & Greet for Refugees – Update

The Meet & Greet session on a Saturday morning is still going strong, getting particularly busy from the end of October – perhaps the inclement weather is sending people indoors!

We offer hot and cold drinks, cake, biscuits and fruit in a welcoming space where guests feel able to relax and chat. As well as a range of toys and table-top football in Room 1 there are opportunities for colouring, drawing and playing table top games. UNO is particularly popular and we have recently started offering the chance to play Chess and Draughts. Jewellery making with the alphabet beads is always a winner, we are struggling to keep up with the demand for letter A! The table tennis table is well used and means that those volunteers with the necessary playing skill get a good workout.

We have quite a few children and young people with a range of ages who appreciate the chance to get together with others and join in the various activities we have on offer. For those children who live in smaller villages outside Winchester the Saturday morning session can be the only opportunity they have to get together with other Ukrainian children.

It is a joy to be able to offer the space, hear the chatter and the laughter and to have the opportunity to build relationships. To paraphrase a lovely comment that was made to me: 'this is the best coffee in town because it is made with love'.

Many thanks to the volunteers who come along on a regular basis and make the sessions happen; many thanks also to those who provide financial support which enables the sessions to go ahead.

#### Jo Pellatt, Mission Co-ordinator

# Wise Man Musical



John Lofthouse, Opera Baritone, is bringing his original piece of Musical Theatre to The United Church on 3 December. This is a World Premiere!

It promises to be a Christmas Cracker of a show.

All net proceeds from the concert will go to the church's 'Refugee Meet & Greet' fund, allowing families to meet weekly at the church to play, socialise, speak their home language, and share experiences.

Buy your tickets from **Ticket Source** or on the door for £10.



# We have Moved House

As many of you know Swanage holds many memories for our family. My parents had a caravan here when I was a teenager, so we had many family holidays here. Our three daughters had most of their holidays here and now our grand-daughters enjoy time here. Over the past three years we have visited for a week most months. Every time we discussed moving to the sea.

Our life in Winchester was very comfortable with many friends and lovely neighbours. We had been in Winchester for 30 years! It was a huge decision, but in January we seriously thought about moving. We decided to start the process and photos were taken by the agent. Then we put it on hold – we were not really sure! We then decided to host a Ukrainian guest so were very busy in other ways.

In July we decided to test the house market. We had thirteen viewings and sold our house in a week. Amazing! Had we made the right decision?

There were many sleepless nights and the search began to find a house. After viewing houses that we knew were in the right location we found our house. Our buyers were renting and the one we found had been a holiday property so there were only two of us in the chain. It was obviously meant to be as we moved within three months!

We love the house and feel very at home already. Our criteria – to be in Swanage and to be able to walk to all we needed. The location is perfect – two minutes to a pub, three minutes to the United Reformed Church and an open all hours shop, eight minutes to the sea and High Street. The Church is very active and welcoming. Richard has joined a golf club and has started Gig rowing. We have taken up sea swimming – mostly Ann – a great way to meet a large group of lovely ladies (+ a few men) We have a group 'WhatsApp' so we never swim alone. On Friday there were about twenty of us in the sea – it was sunny!

We do miss Winchester and all our friends but are enjoying the new adventure here. If only Winchester was by the sea! It is so lovely to go shopping then enjoy a coffee with a sea view.

Last week we had a trip on the Flying Scotsman. Swanage has a huge sense of community, far more than we knew about.

I cannot believe we have only been here for just over a month. We are so pleased we took the plunge to follow our dream. It is easy to stay with what feels safe, but it is exciting to try something new. We are waiting to see what voluntary work we will get involved in as there is so much to choose from. Maybe we will take a chance and do something brand new. We will take our time to decide. Another adventure.

Keep in touch.

Best wishes to you all.

#### Ann and Richard Coleman



# Rosie's Trip to Italy Part 1: 'Are We Nearly There Yet?'

By 7.30 am I was waiting by King Alfred's statue for my holiday coach. As the departure time came and went I did the usual panicky hunt through my bag. Was I in the right place? At the right time? Fishing out my mobile, I was dialling the help number when a taxi drove up and, without checking who I was, the driver dashed off with my case leaving me to follow across the road.

Without any explanation I was deposited at Fleet Service Station where I sipped a coffee and smelt the pines while waiting outside for the imminent arrival of my coach. Forty minutes later it arrived. 'Hip hip hooray I'm on my way!' I thought, not knowing another stop for six delayed passengers would mean half an hour added to the time. The change-over to our Luxury Coach took place at a huge station-like building, with passengers herded like cattle, stretching our ears to hear the tannoy announcements. When ours came I joined the stampede to follow our driver.

A petite woman, she hardly looked strong enough to handle a large coach and my heart sank a bit as I saw she was wearing stiletto-heeled black sandals. Climbing aboard Delilah, our exotically named chariot, I kept a nervous eye on these inappropriate shoes as we set off for Dover.

A two hour wait at Customs meant that we missed our ferry but by mid-afternoon I was salivating at the smell of fish and chips. Having had no chance to eat anything but one blackberry muffin since my six o'clock muesli, I tucked in and enjoyed watching the white cliffs receding. Stretching my legs on the ferry was a relief. Approaching Calais, I rushed down to the Car Deck but in the scrum found myself on the wrong side. Scuttling past large vehicles I was finally reunited with Delilah. Phew! Driving through France and Switzerland was just a blur in the darkness. I watched *The Lion King* for the umpteenth time till it was time for the lights to be dimmed. 'In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the lion sleeps tonight' went round and round my brain. In Delilah, the passengers were not so lucky. The seats did not recline, as I had hoped, so it was hard to get comfortable. I wrapped a scarf round my head to block out my neighbour's laptop screen and curled up as best I could, trying not to hear those phoning home. 'I'm on the coach, Mum', etc., etc.

I did finally drop off but had a rude awakening. Mother and Son were a strange couple from rural Wales. She had infuriatingly been late back on the coach at every stop and never apologised. He was a solidly-built lad with an uncommunicative manner and they sat in front of me. I jerked awake in the night to find him with his arms hanging down over the back and staring into my face.

It was a bit of a shock, but I shook off a feeling of unease and settled again. I had taken my shoes off and much later felt a soft, strange object underfoot. Gingerly I picked it up. Dangling from my fingers was a WIG! A rather old and smelly wig which I now realised had been aggravating my cough.

Mother and Son were both fast asleep so I slipped it between the seats and placed it on her armrest. Luckily she replaced it thinking it had just slid off her head and no-one noticed. I never did let her know I knew her secret and she stayed bewigged and red-headed for the rest of the week.

Next day was uneventful and when we reached the hotel, a full 21 hours since I left Winchester, I thought, 'Well, I've survived. Now for the Wonders of Rome and Pompeii!' Little did I know what fate had in store.

#### **Rosemary MacMullen**

# Creator God, You Are There

Those of you who joined the service on 30 October led by Howard Sharp will remember him using the following as a prayer. Several of us were moved by the words and talked about it after the service. Some were alert enough to spot that the prayer and the fourth hymn we sang were the same! Howard jokingly referred to the good old Methodist tradition of repetition!

If you missed the service, which includes a thought provoking and inspiring sermon, you can find it on our website <u>ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/</u>.

## In the Darkness of the Still Night

In the darkness of the still night,

In the dawning of the daylight, In the mystery of creation, Creator God, You are there. In the breath of every being, In the birthing and the growing, In the earth and all its fullness, Creator God, You are there.

#### In the homeless and the hungry,

In the broken and the lonely, In the grieving of Your people, Creator God, You are there. In the tears and in the heartache, In the love through which we serve You, In the anguish of the dying, Creator God, You are there.

#### In our hearts and in our thinking,

In the longing and the dreaming, In the yearning of our heartbeat, Creator God, You are there. In the love for one another, In the sharing of our being, In receiving and forgiving, Creator God, You are there.

#### In our joys, our hopes, our healing,

In awakening to revealing, In Your call and our responding, Creator God, You are there. In our prayer and in our service, In our praise and in our worship, In Your love that is eternal, Creator God, You are there.

#### Margaret Rizza (b. 1929) Singing the Faith 109





# **Advent Art**



The Shepherds by Marjory Monro. The first of four collages from our talented team of artists for Advent services.

# **Christmas Tree Trail**

By popular request we are once again decorating the church with small Christmas trees. This year is a little different; not as elaborate as sometimes, as fewer people were available to help prepare. It will be a prayer trail reflecting on our Advent theme: 'What can we learn from the Shepherds, the Sages and the Singers in the Christmas Story.'

It's an opportunity to come and take a break from the Christmas shopping in our peaceful upstairs church, decorated for Christmas, and take time to reflect. For opening times see the next page.

#### Pat Fry and Yvonne North

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at the \*United Church Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RZ

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Come and take a break from the Christmas shopping in our peaceful upstairs Church, decorated for Christmas.

Follow our Christmas Tree trail to ponder what we can learn from the Shepherds, the Sages and the Singers in the Christmas Story.

Open: 29 November – 22 December (except 19<sup>th</sup> December) *during Coffee Bar hours:* weekdays 10 am – 12 noon, Saturdays 11 am - 1 pm.

Ask at the Coffee Bar for step free access.

# Drama at the Winchester Christmas Market



You are all invited to a creative retelling of the nativity story told with humour and insight into the meaning of Christ's coming. Philip Glassborow, he of the Winchester Passion, has written a thirtyminute drama to be performed at the Cathedral Christmas Market.

The performances are:

- Sunday 4 Dec at 1500 + with a call to evensong and 1800
- Friday 9 Dec at 1800,
- Saturday 10 Dec at 1530 and 1800,
- Sunday 11 Dec at 1500 and 1730.

Come and enjoy, bring your friends, come and join in the audience singing of carols at any of these performances (words will be on screens).

The production team are: Philip Glassborow, Clare Carson, Emily Pacey, Allegra Mutanda, Isobel Tutt Leppard, Chris Thompson and Howard Mellor.

Blessings to you all, *Howard* 

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Chair, CTiW 01962 809438 <u>hmellor49@gmail.com</u>

# Gloria!

Winchester Cathedral Saturday 3rd December 2022 at 7.30 pm

Dvorak: Mass in D Finzi: In Terra Pax Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Waynflete

bingers

London Mozart Players Andrew Lumsden, conductor Kiandra Howarth, soprano Anna Harvey, mezzo-soprano Thomas Elwin, tenor James Newby, bass-baritone

Tickets: £15.00 - £47.00 Buy from Winchester Cathedral Whatson online or call 01962 857275

Registered charity no: 285107





# **Celebration** Monday 12th December

# 2 - 4 pm

# at the **United Church** Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RZ

Vintage Fun is a monthly afternoon of friendship over a cup of tea. Each afternoon will offer a variety of activities,

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# News of the Wider Church

Sunday morning church attendance has become 'less of a priority' for families since the pandemic, according to a new study.

The research was carried out by Liverpool Hope University together with Care for the Family, Evangelical Alliance, Hope Together, Parenting for Faith, Share Jesus International and the National Institute for Christian Education Research. It found that engagement with church had fallen in 40 per cent of families surveyed. Responses from church leaders confirmed the findings with around half (48 per cent) reporting families in their congregation now engaging less than they did before the pandemic.

However, the research also revealed that families' faith at home has tended to improve during the pandemic, despite their engagement with church reducing. The report said that much of this connects with the issue of Sunday morning church attendance – most church leaders questioned expressed this as their main focus, but the pandemic has shown the value of faith nurture in the home.

The report is based on the findings from an online survey (February 2022) completed by 175 church leaders and 209 parents of children aged 0–16, and in-depth interviews (between April and June 2022) with 36 children (aged 7 to 11 years old) and 18 Christian parents.

#### Protest against Barclays Bank

Vicars have joined fellow climate protestors outside Barclays banks on highstreets up and down the United Kingdom. They claim the banking chain is the UK and Europe's largest financier of fossil fuels, investing nearly £20b last year. Protestors stood outside 100 branches across the UK, holding banners, handing out flyers and pretending to 'die' from the impacts of climate change. The clergy belong to a sub-group of Extinction Rebellion, Christian Climate Action (CCA).

Two Christians in Birmingham have spray painted the windows of one branch, which now bares the words 'Europe's biggest fossil fuel financier'. Another CCA member in Lincoln blocked traffic by sitting in the road.

# Seven million adults engage with church through community projects

More than seven million people have had contact with their local church for community support services such as food banks, parent toddler groups and lunch clubs, according to a new survey for the Church of England.

Polling by Savanta ComRes shows that 30% of those in contact with their local church – or 13.7 per cent of all UK adults – have done so through community services such as a parent toddler groups, lunch clubs and food banks.

The figures also show that twice as many agree (47 per cent) as disagree (23 per cent) that the local church is an important part of their community and just over a half (52 per cent) agree that the Church is an important part of British society. The survey of more than 2000 adults over the age of 18, took place between 1 and 3 July 2022.

Many of our churches are now opening up as 'warm spaces' through the 'Warm Welcome' campaign, as people struggle to pay their energy bills.

# Brief Encounter with Ian and Margaret Childs

# What is the first news/historical event you can recall from your early life?

**Ian:** The assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963. I didn't take much interest in news events prior to that time.

**Margaret:** I remember being dressed up as the Duke of Edinburgh for a street party to celebrate the Queen's coronation. My younger sister was the queen. Better still, my grandfather bought a television to watch the coverage.

#### What is your favourite saying or quotation?

lan: Worse things happen at sea.

Margaret: Count your blessings.

#### What have you changed your mind about?

**Ian:** Water privatisation. Although I have never been a fan of privatisation, in the particular case of the water industry, I thought it might allow investment to come in and solve the pressing problems of a crumbling infrastructure. How wrong can you be!

**Margaret:** Glad to be coming back to Church as the Covid numbers are dropping.

#### What is your favourite piece of music?

**Ian:** The slow movement of Beethoven's 7th symphony. From a very quiet beginning it gradually builds to an awe-inspiring and powerful crescendo.

Margaret: Anything composed or arranged by John Rutter.

If you could spend a day in one city or place at one moment in history, where and when would that be?

**Ian:** West Berlin, on the evening that the Wall came down. I was there a week or so later, when all you could hear as you approached it was the sound of hammers chipping away!

**Margaret:** Going punting on the Cherwell on a lovely summer's day with lan, when we were young.

#### What would people be surprised to know about you?

**Ian:** That my ideal holiday is Disney in Florida, and not walking in the Cairngorms as one of my colleagues supposed!

**Margaret:** I am reliably informed that we are not as quiet as we appear to be.

# Which person (or sort of person) would you most like to spend a day in the shoes of?

**Ian:** Somebody high in political life. Then I might be able to understand the pressures that they face.

Margaret: A confident non-worrier.

#### Where do/did you feel closest to God?

lan: In a wood, among the trees and birds.

**Margaret:** I had an unforgettable spiritual experience by a lake on Fraser Island in Australia.



# **Comedy Corner**









The deadline for February *Yours* is **Monday 16 January.** All contributions welcome. Send to **yours@ucw.org.uk**.



# Services for December 2022

In-person and live-streamed

4 DECEMBER

- 10.30 am Morning Worship (HC) Revd Tim Searle
- **11 DECEMBER**
- 10.30 am Morning Worship Tom Belshaw and Pat Fry

#### **18 DECEMBER**

10.30 am Carol Service (AA) Revd Tim Searle

#### **25 DECEMBER**

10.00 am Christmas Day Service Revd Tim Searle

AA: All Age Worship HC: Holy Communion.

UCW website: ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/

YouTube: tinyurl.com/ucw-services



# Services for January 2023

In-person and live-streamed

1 JANUAF	₹Y			
10.30 am	Morning Worship	Mrs Margaret Axford		
8 JANUARY				
10.30 am	Covenant Service (HC)	Revd Tim Searle		
15 JANUARY				
10.30 am	Morning Worship	Revd Tim Searle		
22 JANUARY				
10.30 am	Morning Worship	Churches Together Exchange of Pulpits		
29 JANUARY				
10.30 am	Morning Worship	Revd Tim Searle		

HC: Holy Communion.

UCW website: ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/

YouTube: tinyurl.com/ucw-services