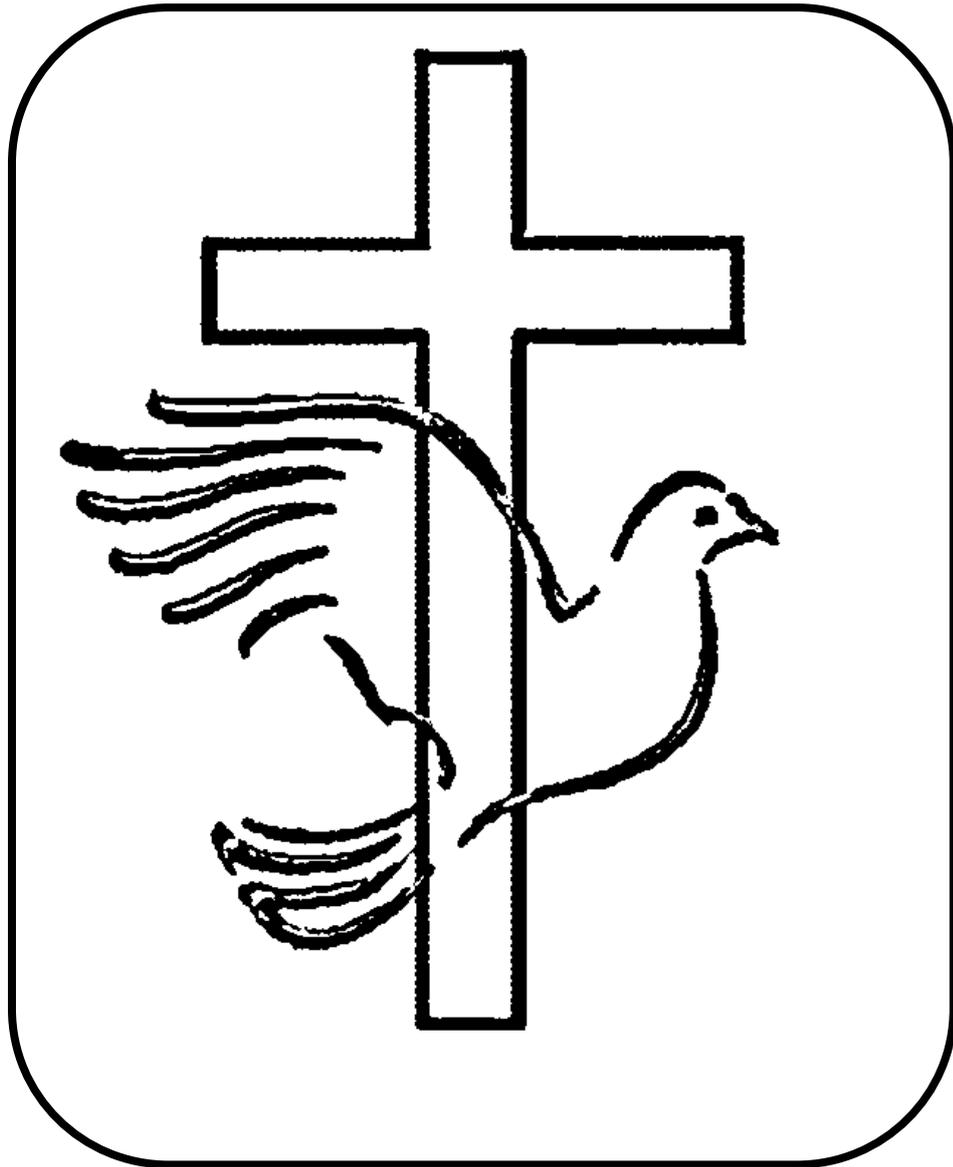

In - Touch

January/February 2019



THE METHODIST CHURCH WITNEY

Small Steps

Dear Friends,

As we step into the New Year our thoughts usually turn to the Epiphany and the journey of the wise men or Magi. A group of unknown, highly schooled, individuals who specialised in the study of the night's sky looking for significant and notable events. Men, and women too perhaps, who were so convinced by what they saw that they were prepared to undertake a long and potentially dangerous journey taking them many miles across foreign lands. I wonder whether there were times when they were tempted to turn back? Did they doubt what they believed they saw and were determined to follow? Did they doubt their own interpretation? Did they argue amongst each other, especially when the terrain was difficult, and they were tired and weary of travelling? What was it that kept them moving forward? For their journey, at best guess, took around 18 months or so, for by the time they arrived, the bible tells us that Mary and Joseph were living in a house and Jesus is described as a child (Matthew 2: 11). When you couple this information together with the fact that king Herod, in his determination to eradicate any potential threat to his reign, ordered all children two years and under, in Bethlehem and all the nearby districts, to be killed (Matthew 2: 16), it is a clear indicator that Jesus is by now a toddler. 18+ months is a long time to travel and for the sole purpose of finding a child, but it appears that this group of strangers knew and understood something that most others refused to accept, and they chose to seek Jesus out. They were obviously wealthy, if the gifts that they left behind are anything to go by, and of course only three gifts are named, but scripture tells us that they opened their treasure chests (Matthew 2: 11), so one wonders what else was given? Wealthy, wise, highly educated individuals, seemingly against all reason, literally put their own lives on hold in order to find Jesus, and after having seen him, returned home, forever carrying their experience with them and able to share it with all they encountered. Don't you wish you knew more about who they were and what they did afterwards?

On Thursday I was stood outside Waitrose with the dog waiting for my hubby to do a bit of shopping when I overheard a snippet of a conversation between a woman and a young man. I have no idea what she said to him, but his reply was; 'small steps, small steps, I thought I was making good progress, but things have slowed down...' I know nothing about this man, or indeed what he was referring to, but his words kept going around and around in my head, 'small steps'. Whether you are trying to make sense of faith, working through a bereavement, undergoing treatment, recovering from an operation, revising for exams, moving to a new house, changing job, etc. Whoever you are and whatever is filling your mind and flooding your emotions right at this moment, small steps will get you there, eventually! Great leaps are for the very few; small steps are achievable by us all. It took a lot of small steps for the Magi to achieve their goal, but they got there and so can you.

May God bless you in 2019.

With Love

Rev Melanie

News and Prayer Concerns

Newland

The highlights of our last two months have been the Carols and Buffet evening and our Christmas Dinner. The carols were led by Melanie and Jude was our guest at the dinner. A good fairy cleared up and washed all the dishes enabling us all to enjoy each other's company.

On Tuesday afternoons we enjoy a relaxed afternoon playing board games and jigsaws. We had hoped to welcome neighbours but as yet this has not happened.

Our monthly Sunday afternoon service is well attended and appreciated by all who come.

We give a warm welcome at any of our meetings – see programme within the magazine.

We would love to see you.

Shirley Richardson

Davenport Road

As we enter the new year we, the congregation at Dav Rd, have much to be thankful for, in particular the great worship and fellowship we experienced this past Christmas season. Thanks are due to all who helped prepare and organise the events, particularly the party when all ages came together, and those involved in leading and participating in our services. The wonderful Nativity (home written and produced) with a veritable host of angels was particularly lovely and once again we managed to visit every home in Davenport Road/Park Road with little gifts and invitations.

It is with sadness that we report the death of our dear friend and member, Phyllis Smith, who had been in Middletown Grange for a while. She celebrated her 90th birthday earlier this year but her health deteriorated recently and she passed away in November. A wonderful, kind and generous friend to all, whose Christian principles and joy in our fellowship were an example to all. We remember her family at this time.

We pray too for those in our congregation who are concerned about their own health and the wellbeing of their loved ones – of Mary and Jim, Alan and Jill and Sarah, Ken and June, Barbara, Pat and Sylvia and all our older members who begin to find life a little trying.

We pray for those known to us who are recently bereaved and having to adjust to changes in circumstances this coming year. May they know the love and comfort that our Lord Jesus Christ assures us of throughout eternity.

Judith Bucknall

High Street

The Rev Gareth Powell, Secretary of the Methodist Council, preached at a Circuit Service at High Street on the morning of Sunday 24 November and during the service presented Ken Mumford with a certificate for an impressive 68 years of loyal service as a Local Preacher. Well done, Ken, you have earned a rest! During November there was a buzz of activity as shoe-box gifts

were sorted and around 2,000 made ready to be transported by T4U which were eventually sent off to children in Romania. Naomi and Hannah were very enthusiastic about their experiences after attending the Methodist 3Generate weekend event in Southport in November accompanied by friends from Wantage Methodist Church. This is a wonderful opportunity for our young people to meet with others of their own age join in lively worship and attend workshops enabling them to explore their personal faith journeys.

Once again during December the church was busy with classes from six Junior Schools taking part in Experience Christmas. It is a delight to welcome the children and help them understand the amazing message of Christ coming into the world at Christmas and to hear their interesting responses. Pastoral visitors were also busy delivering pots of hyacinths to our housebound and frail members who often find it difficult to get to church. The carol service was a joyful occasion with much appreciated involvement by the orchestra and after a lively morning service on 23 November the 'Blue Service' in the evening led by Jude Levermore was very inspirational and encouraging for those who find Christmas a difficult, sad and sometimes depressing time. Jude also led the Crib Service on Christmas Eve which was well-attended and a happy, lively time enabling the tiny children to dress up and take part in the story of the Nativity.

Please pray for Ron in the JR after a serious fall, and Les undergoing treatment at this time. Also please pray for Ian, Brian, Alun, Cicley, and Sharon, Carmen, Ken and Phyl, Mary, Paul, Nancy, Muriel, Jean, Megan, Dorothy and Ruth all living with their own particular health difficulties as do other church members.

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Nancy's Jenkins', Gareth, who died in November. Gareth, like Nancy, was born and brought up in Wales and originally trained as a teacher but spent many years working for the Inland Revenue in Oxford, where Nancy also worked, and they came to live in Eynsham. We remember Nancy in our prayers and their children Carolyn and Paul and their families

In November we heard the sad news that Audrey Harris, aged 95, had died in The Homestead. A few years ago Audrey had regularly attended Women's Fellowship when she lived in Witney. We pray for her daughter, Debbie, and family in their bereavement.

We also continue to remember our housebound friends and others who sometimes find it difficult to join us at church: Pino and Sylvia in Mill House; Elsie in Beech Court, Eynsham; Sharon in Merryfield House; Marjorie in Meadow View, Standlake also Gill, Joyce and Michael, Dorothy, Yvonne, Dot and Margaret living in their own homes. We pray for them and trust that they are well cared, are aware of our loving, caring thoughts for them and the peace and comfort of God's presence with them daily.

Anne Crawford

Experience Christmas

When my friend's son, Joe, was about 5, he came home from Junior Church and said: 'Do you know – the Christmas story is about that baby Jesus AGAIN?!'

Many of the year 3 children who came to Experience Christmas are not very familiar with it, some have never heard it before, while those from Blake and the Batt have heard it all before. We asked what they thought was the most important thing they learnt that morning and here are some of their responses:

- God is with us
- It's not all about presents, to me it's about Jesus
- That God loves US
- Jesus does not need a precious gift, only our hearts
- Love is more than I thought it was
- I loved everything. Maybe I can come again sometime
- Love is a gift
- Jesus brings love and Christmas is about caring
- Jesus is a gift
- Myrrh makes smelly dead people smell nice

The wisdom of 7/8 year old children!

I wonder what was important for you, or did it all wash over you as something old and familiar?

So, a few things for you to ponder as we go into a new year:

- I wonder what struck you this year, maybe from a carol, or a verse from the bible?
- Do you believe that 'God is with us'? What difference does it make to you?
- What is love for you?
- What gift would you give to Jesus?
- In what way is Jesus a gift to you?
- Who might be in need of your gift of love?

As you journey through 2019, may you also journey deeper into the mystery that is God.

Brenda Woods

SPACE2B

You will be very welcome to join us in Witney 9.25am to 10.30am on Wednesdays for a bit of chat followed by a Bible study, topic for discussion and led quiet prayer. Afterwards enjoy a cup of tea/coffee. For more info contact Brenda.

Thursdays at High St

Prayer: Thursdays 9.30-10.10am
A quiet time to reflect on the needs of others, our church fellowship and concerns worldwide.

Thursday Holy Communion

17 January and 21 February
10.30-11.15am

Holy Communion, with hymns, prayers and a short message.

3Generate 2018

On 23 November a group from Faringdon and Witney circuit and Wantage travelled up to Southport for 3Generate 2018. The weekend was full of fun and worship, with many workshops allowing us to explore our faith in different ways. One workshop that Hannah and I went to was called 'Sharing your faith in the Digital Age' which encouraged us to be more active in sharing our faith on our social media. We also went to workshops that explored Israel and Palestine clashes and mental health in the Methodist church. As well as a session called 'The Big Chatter' which encouraged us through film clips to discuss different topics such as racism and equality and what we think the church should do to help these issues. Feedback from the mental health workshop and 'The Big Chatter' will be put together to form the 3Generate Manifesto which will then go to Methodist Conference.

One thing that makes 3Generate so incredible is the worship. On Friday night, we went to worship with a Gospel choir which set us up for the weekend – allowing us to sing and praise God using Gospel songs. On Saturday morning some of our group went to worship with Urban Praise Project, while I was leading worship using media. Being able to lead worship at 3Generate was such an amazing experience and one I want to repeat and continue to do. Stevie and I also explored Taizé worship which was relaxing and reflective. We ended the Saturday night with late night worship with Urban Praise project which is a worship band that combines pop songs with worship songs – creating an amazing atmosphere of praise and fun. On the Sunday morning we worshipped through a bible study which encouraged us to ask questions, a prayer session which was led by the youth president and finally with Urban Praise project again which was another worship that I was leading. This worship really uplifted us as we helped to pack up before heading the five hours back home.

3Generate is becoming a really important part of the Methodist Church and one I hope you will all continue to encourage. This year there were 1200 young people and around 600 volunteers and I hope that it will continue to grow, as it allows young people to explore their faith in many different ways. Naomi

As a volunteer helper I travelled north in an excited contingent of much younger people to 3Generate this year. Being in a boisterous crowd of young people who had experienced the event last year was but a tiny taster of what awaited us at Southport...some nearly one and a half thousand all packed into Pontin's holiday camp.

I was allocated to the special needs/quiet spaces team: every venue has an area to meet the need for escape from the action! Folk with learning or social interaction differences (such as autistic children) have a safe space to withdraw to. My primary task was to look for those who required such facilities as well as try to preserve them in some sort of calm and quiet order from those who just wanted to 'try out' ear defenders or mix the playdough into an overall muddy colour!

My rota placed me at a variety of worship and prayer activities involving drama, art and creative sessions (messy but very original and impressive), familiar children's stories given a Christian twist, worship with puppets. Highlights for me: firstly, managing a table loaded with touch/feel/see/smell items that may lead to worship and prayer. People had a variety of insights....Church is like a Rubik's cube because it's hard to work out! There was plenty of space for people to record thoughts and connections. Second was the wonderful Taizé worship that Naomi spoke about.

One big feature of the whole event is the election of the next youth president and youth representatives. This was well organised with a ballot that would have satisfied a UN electoral inspection team. I was privileged to spend several hours monitoring this and making sure that voters (especially the really young ones) knew the process, how to mark their ballot papers and lastly where to put them.

I was most impressed by the importance given to safeguarding and that the event managed the care and wellbeing of such a huge number of young people superbly.

There was little 'downtime' for volunteers but there was a never ending supply of tea, coffee, and soft drinks supplemented by high calorie (ie very fattening!) snacks. A small but perpetually cheerful staff provided these in a small area set apart. They appeared to work 18 hours a day! All our days began with prayers at 8am and finished, again prayerfully, at 11pm.

Travel back south was perhaps a little quieter than our journey to Southport two days previously with Richard our indefatigable driver.

And if you are uncertain if the church has a future...attend 3Generate as a volunteer in 2019. You will come away knowing it has. However, to coin a phrase, that future may well be 'not as we know it, Jim'; but maybe a lot more exciting!

Stevie

Circuit study

Free and open to all

Come and share

Davenport Road Methodist Church

- 16 February - 7.1 Salvation History and the Life of Christ
- 16 March - 7.2 Church History and the Story of Methodism
- 27 April - 7.3 Focus on Preaching (Part 3)

Worship:
leading &
preaching



Saturdays 10-12 noon

Knit and Natter

High Street Church Coffee Bar **every Tuesday from 10.30am-1pm**

If you can't knit someone will show you how...

and if you don't want to knit just come for a natter!



Christmas Shoeboxes in Witney

High Street Methodist Church Shoebox Team have supported Teams4U for the Christmas Shoebox Appeal this year. We would like to thank everyone who gave their time and skills to knit blankets, scarves, hats and mitts and all those who gave donations of money and top up items. Thank you also to Women's Fellowship and all those who helped with checking and packing cartons. Thanks to you we managed to send 1,928 boxes full of love.

The Celebration evening was inspiring and enjoyable. Dave Cooke who started teams4U in 1990 talked to us about the children who receive the boxes. We then watched a DVD showing the conditions these children live in from day to day and Dave read out a poem which I would like to share with you.

I want to live and not to die
I want to laugh and not to cry
I want to feel the summer sun
I want to sing when life is fun
I want to fly into the blue
I want to swim like fishes do
I want to reach out friendly hands
To all the young in other lands
I want to laugh and not to cry
I want to live and not to die



This year our boxes went to Eastern Romania; the first drop was to an area near the Danube to orphanages and a home for children with disabilities. The second drop was to remote villages, Tulcea and Sulina, which are only accessible by boat as there is no road.

Marie Cotton

Don't ask me to remember

Do not ask me to remember,
Don't try to make me understand.
Let me rest and know you're with me,
Kiss my cheek and hold my hand.
I'm confused beyond your concept.
I am sad and sick and lost.
All I know is that I need you
To be with me at all cost.
Do not lose your patience with me.
Do not scold or make me cry.
I can't help the way I'm acting,
Can't be different, though I try.
Just remember that I need you,
Though the best of me has gone.
Please don't fail to stand beside me,
Love me 'til my life is done.

Thanks to Margaret Wright

The New Year

The beginning of another year can often bring mixed emotions. Some of us may have just experienced the best year ever and look forward to an even better one ahead. Others may have just trudged through one deep struggle after another and look ahead with dread at what the future will bring. Whatever has been your experience; an easy stroll through green, flower studded meadows or a hard, exhausting climb up a winding narrow path, or a mixture of the two, one truth rings clear for everyone – you have not been alone, and will not be alone, whatever the coming year brings. Christmas celebrates the birth of God on earth and powerfully brings home that God is with us, always and whatever and though the world around us shifts our God never changes.

Loving God, we pray that you may lead us each step of this New Year. We ask that you will guide our decisions We ask that you will open doors needing to be opened and close the ones needing to be shut tight. We ask for your help to keep you at the forefront of all we do so that we may always do the right, just and loving thing.

We ask for your wisdom, for your strength and power to be constantly present within us. We pray you would make us strong and courageous for the road ahead. Give us ability beyond what we feel able to do, let your gifts flow freely through us, so that you will be honoured by our lives, and that through us others will be drawn to you.

We pray that you will keep us far from the snares and traps of temptations. That you would whisper in our ear when we need to run, and whisper in our heart when we need to stand our ground.

Forgive us for the times we have worked so hard to be self-sufficient, forgetting our need for you and your love. Forgive us for letting fear and worry control our minds, and for allowing pride and selfishness to wreak havoc in our lives. Help us to do better.

Keep your words of truth planted firm within us, help us to keep focused on what is pure and right, give us the power to be obedient to your word. Give us the courage to call out those who do wrong, to stand up for what is good and true, to confront bigotry and prejudice and speak truth to power.

Help us to be generous and kind, to look to the needs of others and not be consumed by only our own. May we be lovers of truth, may the fruits of your spirit be evident in our lives - your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Shine your light in us, through us, over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Enable us to reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. Set us on your way with joy, hope and a sense of adventure, whoever and whatever we are.

We confess again our need for you. We ask that you make all things new, in our hearts, in our minds, in our lives, for this coming year.

To you be glory and honour, in this New Year, and forever.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Anon / Ad RL

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18 - 25 January – the octave of St Peter and St Paul

Resources for 2019 have been prepared by Christians from Indonesia, the largest country in South East Asia, which is made up of more than 17,000 islands, 1,340 different ethnic groups with over 740 local languages, united by one national language, Bahasa Indonesia. With some 86% of its 260 million people estimated to be Muslim, it has the largest Islamic population of any country. About 10% of Indonesians are Christian. Indonesians have lived by the principle of gotong royong which is to live in 'solidarity and by collaboration', regarding all Indonesians as brothers and sisters.

But gotong royong sits ill at ease with the neo-liberal approach to economics that has led to economic growth, and corruption infecting politics and business, often with devastating effects on the environment. Meanwhile those who are supposed to promote justice and protect the weak fail to do so. As a consequence, a country rich in resources bears the burden of many people living in poverty. Particular ethnic and religious groups are often associated with wealth in ways that have fed tensions.

The Christians of Indonesia found that the words of Deuteronomy, 'Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue...' (Deut:16:18-20) spoke powerfully to their situation, a context of ethnic and religious diversity. Although there is a strong emphasis upon the need for a unity that is found in diversity, a unity built on solidarity and collaboration, yet there are also issues of economic injustice and how religious pluralism can face challenges in the face of radicalisation. They also recognised that there is a need for justice throughout the world.

'Every year, Christians across the world gather in prayer for growth in unity. We do this in a world where corruption, greed and injustice bring about inequality and division. We are called together to form a united witness for justice and for Christian unity that becomes a means of Christ's healing grace for the brokenness of the world. Only by heeding Jesus's prayer 'that they all may be one' can we witness to living unity in diversity.'

Fr Tom Orians

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace, give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all our hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord, that, as there is one body and one spirit and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one God and Father of us all, we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity and may with one mind and one mouth glorify you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

From the Common Book of Prayer

Look out for the local events marking the week

Cloudy with a chance of heavy thunder

There's a woman in the supermarket queue who hates me. Perhaps hate is too strong a word, especially when talking about a stranger who knows nothing about what lies under my roots. But she thinks I tried to jump the queue ahead of her and rejects my presence, my explanations, my kind entourage, made up of my elderly dad and my baby, and dismisses my explanations with hurtful words.

The exchange is over in a matter of two minutes, but this unexpected interaction leaves me with tears of sorrow burning inside, the mark of a sensitive heart that has lost the ability to cry somehow. I spend the rest of the day in a state of alert, imagining potential threats, like a wild animal waiting for their prey in the jungle. I know too well this is not a productive state to be in, not conducive to peace of mind, but I seem unable to shake the shadow within for a few hours.

Then somehow, I remember the acts of kindness I have received during the years. Random moments that show me once and again the power of an open heart to give and receive love, kindness and peace. I think of my dad making me a drink of freshly squeezed orange juice when I was a child. I think of my mum making sure there were always books for me, a voracious reader, in the small flat I grew up in. I think of my sister who brought my now elderly and somewhat frail parents over in the autumn so they could meet their baby grandson. I think of my brother, whose kind words I miss very much. Of my husband and my children, who surround my every day with love. I think of the friends past and present who have shown extraordinary kindness and willingness to listen and help when it was needed, so everything could fall into place, like a perfectly completed jigsaw.

And it feels so liberating to not care what a stranger in the supermarket thinks about me anymore. There is a thread woven with the love I receive yesterday, today and tomorrow. A thread so strong that it will guide me out of the shadows throughout my life. A bunch of memories so meaningful, so powerful, that they will set me free into the everyday, with a smile and an open heart, ready to give and receive love, in this earth and beyond.

Eva Oliver

**1st Sunday
every month**

4-6pm

High Street Methodist Church

Fun Food Fellowship



**6 January:
Epiphany Party**

**3 February:
Lord's Prayer**

**3 March:
Community**

All are welcome at Messy Church! If you've never been, we'd love you to come along. You don't need to bring a child! We finish by sharing a meal.

Valentine's Day

Every 14 February chocolates, flowers and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St Valentine. About 150 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged every year, making it second only to Christmas in terms of cards being sent. As with many traditions the history of Valentine's Day and its patron saint is shrouded in mystery but we do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that the modern St Valentine's Day contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

The Catholic Church recognises at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than married ones, he outlawed marriage for young men but Valentine defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one story, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first valentine greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl - possibly his jailer's daughter - who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed 'From your Valentine'. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasise his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and, most importantly, romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, perhaps thanks to this reputation, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France.

While some maintain that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial, which probably occurred around 270, others claim that the Christian church may have decided to place Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to Christianise the pagan celebration of Lupercalia. Celebrated on the ides of February, ie 15 February, Lupercalia was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

To begin the festival, members of the Luperci, an order of Roman priests, would gather at a sacred cave, the Lupercal, where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog, for purification. They would then strip the goat's hide into strips, dip them into the sacrificial blood and take to the streets, gently slapping both women and crop fields with the goat hide. Far from being fearful, Roman women welcomed the touch of the hides because it was believed to make them more fertile in the coming year. Later in the day all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The bachelors would choose a name and become paired for the year with the chosen woman. These matches often ended in marriage.

Lupercalia survived the initial rise of Christianity but was outlawed at the end of the 5th century when Pope Gelasius decided that it was unchristian and declared February 14 as St Valentine's Day. It was not until much later, however, that the day became definitively associated with love. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of Valentine's Day should be a day for romance.

Valentine greetings were popular as far back as the Middle Ages. The oldest known valentine in existence is a poem written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. In the UK, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the 17th century and by the middle of the 18th, it was common for friends and lovers of all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes. By 1900 printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings.

RL Various sources

Organ Recital



2019 is the year of the 100th birthday of our organ at High Street, and the celebrations begin with a recital given by Nicholas Morris at:



3pm Sunday 10 February

The program will include works by Bach, Handel, Guilmant, Elgar and Walton. It promises to be an enjoyable and interesting afternoon.

Nicholas' particular link with Witney is that he is a great-great-great-grandson of Charles and Sarah Early, in whose memory the organ was given in 1919. Nicholas was an organ scholar at Queens' College, Cambridge and is now Assistant Director of Music at St George's, Hanover Square, London. He has given recitals at several cathedrals including St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Entry is free, and tickets are not required. There will however be a retiring collection in aid of the Organ Fund for the overhaul of the last two air reservoirs. Three have already been done, thanks to generous gifts and grants.

Keith Crawford

High Tea at High Street

4pm in the Coffee Bar at High Street Methodist Church, Witney

- **Sunday 20 January**
- **Sunday 17 February**

Open to all for company and good food. If you would like to join us contact Brenda. Booking is essential. There is no charge! Supported by Witney Rotary Club and Witney Lions.



Twin your Toilet!

In our world every two minutes a child under the age of five dies because of dirty water or poor sanitation. 1 in 3 people across the world don't have somewhere safe to go to the toilet. Bad sanitation is one of the world's biggest killers: it hits women, children, old and sick people hardest. Around half the people in the world have an illness caused by bad sanitation.

In poor communities, many teenage girls drop out of school because of lack of proper toilets, especially when they have their periods.

Women and girls are especially vulnerable not only from snakes as they squat in the open, but from sexual assault.

Providing people with clean water and basic sanitation is one of the most cost-effective ways to release people from poverty: for every £1 spent on water and sanitation, more than £5 is returned through saved time, increased productivity and reduced health costs.

You can twin your toilet for as little as £60. The money enables an impoverished family to construct their own latrine and you get a certificate complete with photo of the latrine with GPS coordinates so you can look up your twin's location.

Perhaps this will be your New Year's Resolution...to help flush away poverty!

More info at www.toilettwinning.org or 0300 321 3217

Spring Sowing

Planning your garden for next Spring?

Plant three rows of peas: peace of mind
peace of heart
peace of souls

Plant four rows of squash: squash gossip
squash indifference
squash grumbling
squash selfishness

Lettuce: let us be faithful
let us be kind
let us be patient
let us really love one another

Turnips: turn up for meetings
turn up for services
turn up to help one another

Thyme: time for one another
time for family
time for friends

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love.

Then there will be much to gather from your garden because you reap what you sow.

Anon



Newland Methodist Chapel

Meetings and Speakers
January – February 2019

1st and 3rd TUESDAYS

THURSDAYS WEEKLY

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS MONTHLY

Thursday 10 January 7.30pm	Reverend Melanie Reed New Year – New Beginnings'
Tuesday 15 January 2.30pm	Newland Friends
Thursday 17 January 7.30pm	Reverend Sue Spankie
Saturday 19 January 10-12 noon	Coffee Morning Tea, Coffee and Cakes
Thursday 24 January 7.30pm	Jude Levermore
Sunday 27 January 3pm	Reverend Melanie Reed Covenant and Sacrament of Holy Communion
Thursday 31 January 7.30pm	Dennis Neville
Tuesday 5 February 2.30pm	Newland Friends
Thursday 7 February 7.30pm	Reverend Ness Whiffin
Thursday 14 February 7.30pm	Characters of the Bible
Saturday 16 February 10-12 noon	Coffee Morning Tea, Coffee and Cakes
Tuesday 19 February 2.30pm	Newland Friends
Thursday 21 February 7.30pm	Reverend Melanie Reed
Sunday 24 February 3pm	Reverend Rose Westwood Sunday Worship
Thursday 28 February 7.30pm	Paul Spicer

High Street Women's Fellowship

2nd and 4th Mondays at 2.30pm in the Wesley Room
followed by tea, biscuits and a chat.

Monday 14 January	Rev Sue Spankie
Monday 28 January	David Sarbutts: An Australian Odyssey
Monday 11 February	TBA
Monday 25 February	Sheila Green



An invitation to all ladies (and gentlemen!) to an informal, friendly afternoon
with hymns, prayers and an interesting informative talk.

Come and join us!

Love

Romantic love is in the air in spring but far from being timeless and universal, the idea of romantic love is in fact a modern construct, one that emerged in tandem with the novel. In *Madame Bovary* (1856), Gustave Flaubert tells us that Emma Bovary only found out about romantic love through 'the refuse of old lending libraries'. These books 'were all about love and lovers, damsels in distress swooning in lonely lodges...troubles of the heart, vows, sobs, tears, kisses, rowing-boats in the moonlight, nightingales in the grove, gentlemen brave as lions and gentle as lambs, too virtuous to be true, invariably well-dressed, and weeping like fountains.' But, in our preoccupation with romantic love and society's elevation of it as a life goal, we risk neglecting other types of love that may, especially in the longer term, prove more healing and fulfilling.

The ancient Greeks identified seven types of love. They are described thus:

Eros

Eros is sexual, passionate love, and is the type most akin to our modern construct of romantic love. Eros (Cupid in ancient Rome) is the winged god of love and fertility firing his arrows to make people fall in love. The ancient Greeks considered eros to be dangerous and frightening as it involves a loss of control, as it is passionate and intense. According to Socrates, eros is an exalted and beautifully idealistic love that in the hearts of the spiritually mature can be used to 'recall knowledge of beauty', but it can be misused, abused and indulged in, leading to impulsive acts and broken hearts. Eros is primal and powerful that burns out quickly, unless sustained by other aspects of love.

Philia

The ancient Greeks valued philia or friendship, dispassionate virtuous love, far above eros because it was considered a love between equals. Its hallmark is shared goodwill. Friendships founded on goodwill are associated not only with mutual benefit but also with companionship, dependability and trust. It is loyalty among friends and camaraderie among teammates. For Plato philia arises from eros, and that in turn feeds back into eros to strengthen and develop it, transforming it into a shared desire for a higher level of understanding of the self, the other, and the world.

Storge

This is a kind of philia pertaining to the love between parents and their children; it is primarily to do with kinship and familiarity and does not necessarily depend on personal qualities. It differs from most philia in that it tends, especially with younger children, to be unilateral or asymmetrical. Storge love can even be found among childhood friends that is later shared as adults.

Agape

According to the Greeks agape is the most radical type of love. It is selfless, unconditional, bigger than ourselves, a boundless compassion, an infinite empathy, a universal loving kindness. It can be called charity or altruism, an unselfish concern for the welfare of others. It is the purest form of love that is

free from desires and expectations, and loves regardless of the flaws and shortcomings of others.

Ludus

The Greeks thought of ludus as a playful form of love, for example, the affection between young lovers; it has erotic overtones but has more in common with philia. It is playful and uncommitted and can involve activities such as teasing and flirting. The focus is on fun, with no strings attached. Ludus relationships are casual, undemanding, and uncomplicated but, for all that, can be very long-lasting.

Pragma

Pragma is a love that transcends the casual which has aged, matured and developed over time. It is a kind of practical love founded on reason or duty and one's longer-term interests. Pragma is evident in couples who've been together for a long time and in friendships that have endured for decades. Unlike other types of love, pragma is the result of effort on both sides. It's the love between people who've learned to make compromises, have demonstrated patience and tolerance to make the relationship work.

Philautia

The Greeks understood that in order to care for others, we must first learn to care for ourselves. Self-love can be healthy or unhealthy. Unhealthy self-love is self-obsessed and akin to hubris. In ancient Greece, a person would be accused of hubris if they placed themselves above the gods and that hubris led to destruction, or nemesis. Today, hubris denotes an inflated sense of one's status, abilities, or accomplishments and as it disregards truth, hubris promotes injustice, conflict, and enmity. Philautia is self-love in its healthiest form and promotes the understanding that only once you have the strength to love yourself and feel comfortable in your own skin, will you be able to provide love to others. Healthy self-love is akin to self-esteem, which is different from self-confidence. As Aristotle put it, 'All friendly feelings for others are an extension of a man's feelings for himself.' You cannot share what you do not have. If you do not love yourself, you cannot really love anyone else either.

Of course, there's overlap between all these types of love. For Plato, love aims at beautiful and good things, because the possession of beautiful and good things is called happiness, and happiness is an end in itself.

Love is patient and kind: it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up and its faith, hope and patience never fail. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.' Matthew 22:37-40

He whom love touches not walks in darkness. (Anon)

RL Various sources

Anniversaries in 2019 – an eclectic selection!

1519: 20 September Ferdinand Magellan circumnavigated the globe

1619: In the summer the Jamestown settlement established the first representative government for white men in the British American colonies. That same summer, the first enslaved African people arrived; the new rules did not apply to them

1919

3 April RMS Queen Mary is ordered from John Brown and Company Shipbuilding and Engineering by Cunard Line

28 June the Treaty of Versailles was signed five years to the day that Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo – the event that triggered WW1. The Treaty ended the war between Germany and the Allied Powers

6 July The British dirigible R34 lands in New York, completing the first crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by an airship

13 July The same airship R34 lands in Norfolk completing the first airship return journey across the Atlantic in 182 hours of flight

6 November Einstein's theory of relativity was confirmed by a British astronomer observing a solar eclipse

17 November King George V proclaims Armistice (Remembrance) Day.

28 November Lady Astor becomes an MP and is the first woman to sit in the House of Commons

1929: 24-29 October Wall Street Crash triggering the Great Depression

1939

1 July Women's Land Army re-formed to work in agriculture

1 September Germany invades Poland

3 September Britain and France declare war on Germany

23 September death of Sigmund Freud, who changed the way we think about psychology

1944

June 6, D Day, this was the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany. That day, Allied troops stormed the French beaches of Normandy and so began the liberation of Europe

20 July Operation Valkyrie, the failed plot to assassinate Adolph Hitler

26 July The first German V-2 rocket hits the UK

1949

4 April Twelve nations sign the North Atlantic Treaty creating the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

27 July Initial flight of the de Havilland Comet, the first jet-powered airliner

1969

12 January Led Zeppelin's debut album released

9 April The first British-built Concorde 002 makes its maiden flight from Filton to RAF Fairford

22 April British yachtsman Sir Robin Knox-Johnston completes the first solo non-stop circumnavigation of the world

June 28 Gay and trans customers at the Stonewall Inn in New York City fought back against a police raid. This led to the first gay pride parades in the US and in many other countries

July 20 - Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walk on the moon

15-18 August - Woodstock Music Festival, half a million young people gathered to listen to Santana, Sly and the Family Stone, Jimi Hendrix and more

1 September 1 a coup brings Muammar Gaddafi to power in Libya

26 September The Beatles release Abbey Road

15 October the Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam, a nationwide coordinated series of protests and teach-ins.

10 November 'Sesame Street' premieres in the US. The children's TV show has since become iconic, with generations of people tuning in

1979

30 April London Underground's Jubilee Line is opened by the Prince of Wales -

1989

1 April Margaret Thatcher's new local government tax, the Community Charge or poll tax is introduced in Scotland

15 April 96 Liverpool FC fans die as a result of a crush at Hillsborough Stadium, home of Sheffield Wednesday, in the FA Cup semi final

9 October The fall of the Berlin Wall

17 December 'The Simpsons' debuts in the US. The critically acclaimed animated sitcom is the longest running American sitcom ever

1994

7 April-18 July 800,000 Rwandans die as Hutu tribal militants kill members of the Tutsi tribe.

10 May Nelson Mandela becomes President of South Africa. 'The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement!' Nelson Mandela spoke these words when he was sworn in celebrating what South Africans as a people had accomplished in overturning apartheid and working to establish a 'united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa.'

14 July The Queen opens the £150 million headquarters of MI6 on the banks of the River Thames in London

21 July Tony Blair wins the Labour Party leadership election

1999

31 March 'The Matrix' starring Keanu Reeves forever changes cinema when it debuted. The sci-fi film received universal acclaim for its then-state-of-the-art visual effects and innovative storyline

1 July The Scottish Parliament is opened by Queen Elizabeth II and legislative powers are transferred to the new devolved Scottish Executive in Edinburgh

2009

20 January Barack Obama is sworn in as the first African-American president of the United States

25 June death of Michael Jackson. His memorial service in July was watched by 1 billion people. He is still regarded as the best pop artist of all time

Various sources

Dates for your Diary

January

- Thursday 17 10.30am at High Street. Holy Communion
Saturday 19 10-12 noon at Newland. Tea, coffee, cake. All welcome!
Sunday 20 4pm at High Street. High Tea. All welcome
Sunday 27 3pm at Newland. Covenant service with Rev Melanie Reed

February

- Sunday 3 8.30am at High Street. Holy Communion
4pm at High Street. Messy Church
Sunday 10 3pm at High Street. Organ Recital
Saturday 16 10-12 noon at Newland. Tea, coffee, cake. All welcome!
Sunday 17 10.30am at High St. Church Anniversary Rev Helen Cameron
4pm at High Street. High Tea. All welcome
6pm St Mary's. Church Anniversary with Rev Helen Cameron
Thursday 21 10.30am at High Street. Holy Communion
Sunday 24 3pm Sunday worship with Rev Rose Westwood

March

- Sunday 3 4pm at High Street. Messy Church

Not The Thing You Do

It isn't the thing you do; it's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you a bit of heartache at the setting of the sun.
The tender word forgotten, the letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent, are your haunting ghosts at night.
The stone you might have lifted out of a friend's way,
The bit of heartsome counsel you were hurried too much to say;
The loving touch of the hand, the gentle winsome tone,
That you had no time or thought for with troubles enough of your own.
The little acts of kindness, so easily out of mind;
Those chances to be helpful which everyone may find –
No, it's not the thing you do, it's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you the bit of heartache at the setting of the sun.

Margaret E Sangster

High Street Methodist Church Church Anniversary Sunday 17 February

10.30am Worship and Holy Communion at High Street
6pm a united service at St Mary's Church

With Rev Helen Cameron, District Chair