

Crown Terrace Methodist Church



Christmas 2013

Dear Friends

‘No room at the inn!’ Not even a pillow for his sweet head. Could this incident in the Christmas story symbolize the whole tragedy of our world today, a global village which by-and-large excludes Jesus Christ from being at home, which hustles him out from his rightful place? It seems the only place left for him to go is the inn of the soul, the secret place of the human heart as so often he is crowded out of everything else.

There is a Christmas carol with the refrain: ‘O come to my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee.’ But what if when he moves towards us, he finds the inn of our soul already thronged with other things. Do we then relegate him to the cold and the grudging shelter on the outside of our lives? Does he find himself once more crowded out from the inn of our soul?

What can we offer the Lord Jesus instead of a room at the inn? Perhaps we offer to build him stately material temples, expending boundless treasure in their erection. Art joins hands with architecture and the structure becomes a poem. Lily-work crowns the majestic pillar. Subdued light, exquisite line and tender colour add their riches to the finished pile. And the soul cries out: ‘Here is a house for you, Lord of glory. Here is the home I have built for you.’

But if the inn of the soul would only listen, there comes back the pained response: ‘What is the house you would build for me, and what is my resting-place? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine,’ says the Lord. ‘But this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word’ (Isaiah 66:1b-2).

The Lord Jesus seeks the warmth of the human heart. There he finds a resting-place for his sweet head.

Enter, then, O Christ most holy;
Make a Christmas in my heart;
Make a heaven of my manger:
It is heaven where thou art.

If we open the door to the inn of our soul, he promises to come in and sup with us, and we with him (Revelation 3:20). Then we can truly join with the church in heaven and on earth and she sings, 'Praise to God, the Christ has come!'

My every good wish to you all this Festive Season,

John

Christmas is the knowledge of God in our hearts that though through the Word made Flesh in the manger in Bethlehem, we know that we belong to God and cannot perish; that we have a perfect, permanent refuge and home.

Church Family News



Births

Angus McMurray Reid, 21st Oct., a grandson for Dot and Willie Primrose



Baptisms

Emmanuella Mmerife on 28th July, daughter of Stanley and Treasure and sister of Beulah.

Seth Ronnie Taylor on 25th August, son of Stephen and Terri and brother of Halie.



Deaths

Hilda Simpson on 7th July

Bob Mitchell on 6th Sept

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Jim McKean and Agnes Jaffray continue rehabilitation at home after their strokes.

Alex and Beryl Booth celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary on 22nd August.

Sam, Belinda and Gideon moved to Paisley. We pray that they have settled well.

Thanks to all who serve the Church in the many and varied jobs that need to be done. Are there others who have a calling and time to help?

Holiday? – Hospital – Heaven?

As most of you will know, our much anticipated week's holiday to Jersey in September did not turn out as we had planned.

Alex and I went along to the Methodist Church in St Helier on the Sunday morning. We were made very welcome at the Communion Service. Then that evening (and I hope there was no connection!) at dinner, I got a piece of beef stuck in my throat. I wasn't choking, but knew that it was there.

The next morning I discovered that I could not keep anything down, not even water. I stayed in our hotel room for the whole of Monday, having been given an A4 instruction sheet by the hotel staff, informing me that I had the norovirus tummy bug and I should stay in my room!

By Tuesday morning Alex and I had both decided that I needed help so we took a taxi to the local A. and E. department. The hospital staff were excellent from the moment we entered. I was admitted to a ward and told I would need an endoscopy, but not until the next day.

Not having been a patient in hospital for a long time made it a new experience for me. They started calling our ward the "holiday maker" ward as at one point we were all people who were visiting Jersey, including a Frenchman who didn't speak a word of English.

I hardly slept at all on my first night and was aware of other people being brought into the ward. The next morning there was a new lady in the bed opposite me. The ward was quiet so I went over to speak with her. Charlotte was from the north of England and was visiting her son who lived in Jersey. She had taken a "funny turn" and had had a bad fall. She was upset at what had happened. Today was also her birthday. I can't remember exactly what I said but Charlotte turned to me and asked, "Do you believe in heaven?" Wow – what a question! "Oh, yes", I replied, "I do believe in heaven. When we come to put our faith and trust in Jesus, in this life, then we have the assurance of heaven." Charlotte had had a Christian upbringing and was wanting some reassurance. We shared a Scripture together from John's Gospel. Charlotte smiled and thanked me.

Whilst we didn't really have a "good holiday", I thank the Lord for the care given to me, for the experience of meeting many interesting people and for the thrill and privilege of being able to speak with Charlotte.

Sarah Sim

What the Donkey saw by U.A. Fanthorpe

No room in the Inn. Of course
And not that much in the stable
what with the shepherds, Magi, Mary
Joseph, the heavenly hosts –
not to mention the baby using our manger as a cot.
You could not have squeezed another cherub in
for love or money.
Still in spite of the overcrowding,
I did my best to make them feel wanted.
I could see the baby and I
would be going places together.

There was once a wealthy man and his son who loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire these great works of art. When a certain conflict in a particular part of the world broke out, the son went to serve his country. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son. A month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood there with a large package in his hands. He said, 'Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art.' The young man held out the package. 'I know this is not much. I am not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this.' The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son. The father was so drawn to it that his eyes started to well up. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. 'Oh no, sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It is a gift.' So the father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to see him, he showed them the portrait before any of the other works in his collection.

The man died not that long after. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many people gathered, excited to see the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their own collections. On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer started up. 'We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?' There was silence. A voice cried out, 'We want to see the famous paintings. Forget that one.' The auctioneer persisted. 'Will somebody bid for this painting? £200, £100?' Another voice shouted, 'We did not come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs and the Rembrandts. Get on with the proper bids!' But the auctioneer continued. 'The son! Who will take the son?' Finally, a voice came from the back of the room. It was the long term gardener of the man and his son. 'I will give £10 for the painting.' It was all he could afford. 'We have £10. Who will bid £20?' 'Give it to him for £10. Let's see the masters,' a voice called out. The auctioneer pounded the hammer. 'Going once, going twice, sold to the man at the back for £10!' A man sitting on the second row shouted, 'Now let us get on with the main business.' The auctioneer laid down his hammer. 'I am sorry, the auction is over.' 'What about the paintings?' 'I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal what it was until now. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought it would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who takes the son gets everything!'

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16). We remember his birth at Christmas time. Like the auctioneer, God's message to us is: 'The Son, who will take the Son?' For whoever takes the Son gets everything!

A letter from Graham and Katherine Dalton

Dear Joan,

Will you please pass on our thanks to all our friends at CTM. It was a lovely thought and is a beautiful bouquet with roses, chrysanthemums, carnations and other flowers, and the words on the card were very kind. Please pass on our thanks to all those involved. We do miss Crown Terrace friends of course – after 37 years it would be unbelievable if we said we didn't but we are still convinced that the decision to move at this time was the right one. We are finding our feet here and wee niches are appearing which we hope we can gently slot into. Graham has been asked to help brainstorm with a group from CEMC (Nicolson Square) who are hoping to start some sort of mentoring and I have volunteered to help with reading at the primary school in the village here. Otherwise we are enjoying the proximity to grandchildren and attending their school events and parties (Connie is 4 tomorrow which seems impossible) swimming classes etc. It has been lovely that friends from Aberdeen have been so willing to visit us and we cherish the days that Lorna (Murray), Barbara and Jon, and Paul and Pauline were able to spend here over the Summer. We have plenty of space for visitors and its only a 20 minute tram ride from Waverley or 10 minutes from the A1 so anyone is welcome.

Thank you again to everyone for the lovely flowers and loving words. They are greatly appreciated.

With love from us both,

Graham and Katherine

A letter from Barbara Cresswell

Dear Friends at Crown Terrace

I am writing to thank you for the bouquet of flowers which arrived last Tuesday from the church. They are absolutely beautiful and were a lovely surprise. Thank you so much for the gift.

We are settled in our new home and starting to get involved in things in Melton Mowbray-U3A etc..Having Liz, Jonathan and Sophie so close is a joy. Sophie is now nearly 9 months old and is very cute. She's not crawling yet but loves to be on her feet, walking around with someone holding her hands.

We have, however, been spending quite a lot of time going back and forth to Hampshire to visit Jon's Mum. She had a fall in mid- December and was in hospital for several weeks but is now back home with carers coming to the house to help. Her exact needs have not yet been fully assessed but hopefully should be in the next month and a care package put in place. Jon's Mum is 96 and has lived completely independently, without any help up to now and is finding it difficult to adapt to her current situation. It is very fortunate that we are living here now and not 600 miles away in Aberdeen.

I am going to Sandy Lane Methodist Church which Mike and Elsie know well as it is the one Mike's sister attends. Everyone is very friendly and I'm beginning to remember names with faces. I have also joined a Lent Bible study group which I am enjoying as I miss both my old house group and the Ghana Bible study.

Jon is getting stuck into laying out the garden. Today, despite the bitter cold, he is out planting fruit trees and painting sleepers to mark out the vegetable patch, all of which were delivered yesterday. I expect, however, that this afternoon Rugby will take precedence.

Thank you again for the lovely bouquet - I hope it won't be too long before we are back in Aberdeen for a visit.

With best wishes from us both,
Love to you all - Barbara

Christmas at the Castle

The first Christmas I remember was at Caldicot, then in Monmouthshire, now in Gwent.

For most of my two years in Caldicot, there seemed to be very few people around. At home, it was just my mother and I; my father was working in Liverpool, not a safe place for families in wartime.

Our doctors were a married couple called Dr Jones and Dr Davies, not to be confused with our minister, the Rev. Goronwy Jones-Davies. The medical Davieses had a small son called Noel, who told me that if I prayed, I would never die. I checked this with my mother, who replied cautiously, "Well, not for a long time."

Apart from these, the people I knew best were the family at the Castle: the owner, Mrs Cobb, the widow of a flour magnate, said to be "worth" £20,000 a year; her divorced daughter Mrs Beech, living on alimony of a tenth of that sum; and her two sons, Geoffrey, a little older than I, and Tommy, a little younger.

I was not a social climber; it was just that there were not many people of my own age around. I was jealous of the Beech boys, not because they lived in a castle, but because they had a collection of William books that I could not hope to equal, however carefully I saved my pocket money.

But Christmas at the Castle was something else again. Only the keep was inhabited, with its drawbridge said to be the only one in England in working order. But in the keep was a huge Great Hall, with a wood fire regularly supplied with tree trunks to keep it going, and even then requiring topping up with several electric heaters.

So at Christmas the Hall was warm and full of people, enjoying all the traditional Christmas games. No mechanical aids; no radio, and of course no television. Instead, a wonderful lady (I think the housekeeper) playing popular songs with huge chords on a grand piano. Oh! I said sadly to myself, if only I could play like that! But meanwhile, listening to her was part of that first memorably happy Christmas.

A Christmas Journey.

In the “Journey of The Magi”, T.S.Eliot wrote:-

“A cold coming, at the worst time of the year with the ways deep and the weather sharp”

The main difference with our journey from Nottingham to Gower for Christmas over 40 years ago was that we were travelling by car rather than camel. It was certainly cold, the ways got deeper with snow as we came down the A70 towards Brecon and we only managed to continue our journey after stopping about 10.00pm in a lay-by for tea and sandwiches, by putting the car mats under the back wheels. At what should have been our turning at Sennybridge for the road over the Black Mountains to Swansea, there were ominous blue, flashing lights. The police had closed the road, so like the Magi on their return from Bethlehem, we would have to go by another way. At Sennybridge we encountered another couple who wanted to get to Swansea so we undertook to lead them the “other way” along the A40 to Llandovery and down the Towy valley, in fact towards Bethlehem, Carmarthenshire, that is, the alternative route to Swansea. Progress was slow as their car was not in the best of health. It would have been a beautiful troika ride through avenues of trees covered in sparkling snow; instead it was rather more stressful resulting in a stiff neck as I had to keep watch for their following headlights. Slowly, with a few stops to cosset the other car we made it to Pontardulais where we turned for Gower and they went on to Swansea. We made it to my parent’s home at 2.00am in the morning

“Where have you been?” uttered in the ringing tones of a Welsh mam, was, in the circumstances, I agree, a reasonable question. As always the welcome was warm and, to quote Eliot’s analysis of the journey

“It was as you might say, satisfactory”

MDC. 15/11/13

A Yorkshire Christmas

Yorkshire Christmas 1940's – no central heating but somehow we weren't deterred from opening our stockings at crack of dawn, always finding at the bottom an apple, orange and newly minted copper coins. Then the walk to Granny's for Christmas dinner laden with parcels – with rationing on so many goods the contents would be largely homemade. Always chicken (except one year when meat was very scarce and it was rabbit) with bread sauce - Grandad always insisted on mushy peas. Granny presided and always had a few silver sixpences in her apron pocket to ensure each child found one in their Christmas pudding. Clearing then done by men and children while Granny took off her apron (a rare event) in time for the Kings speech. We kids fidgeted throughout eager to open parcels. Parcels opened, torn wrapping disposed of it was time for a light tea . Then the cards came out and we spent the evening excitedly playing 'Newmarket' for halfpenny stakes (no child was allowed to lose more than a shilling!) Later if we could understand the game well enough not to trump Auntie Florrie's Aces the game changed to whist. These memories are still warm and of happy family times and I am glad to report that not one of the family has been attracted to gambling beyond the odd raffle ticket in later life!

Extracts from Wesley's Journal

March 29 1774. Newcastle-under-Lyme

'Abundance of people were soon gathered together who surprised me not a little by mistaking the tune and striking up the march from Judas *Maccabeus*... Many of them had admirable voices, and tolerable skill. I know not when I have heard so agreeable a sound: it was indeed the voice of melody... But we had one jarring string: a drunken gentleman was a little noisy, until he was carried away.'

August 9 1768

'I began reading prayers at six, but was greatly disgusted at the manner of singing: 1. Twelve or fourteen persons kept it to themselves, and quite shut out the congregation;
2. These repeated the same words, contrary to all sense or reason, six or eight times over;
3. According to the shocking custom of modern music, different persons sung different words at one and the same moment; an intolerable insult on common sense, and utterly incompatible with any devotion.'
Although at least three organs were introduced into chapels during Wesley's life-time, most Methodist services would have been unaccompanied, especially if held outside. Wesley preferred plain tunes sung in unison as text repetition, and different words sung at the same time obscured the meaning of the hymn.

April 6 1781

'I came just in time to put a stop to a bad custom, which was creeping in here: a few men, who had fine voices, sang a Psalm which no one knew, in a tune fit for an opera, wherein three, four, or five persons sung different words at the same time. What an insult upon common sense, what a burlesque upon public worship. No custom can excuse such a mixture of profaneness and absurdity.'

April 8 1787 [at Bethesda Chapel, Dublin]

'...the hymns were sung by fifteen or twenty fine singers; the rest of the congregation listening with much attention, and as much devotion, as they would an opera...'

George MacDonald 1824-1905

“The most Christ like man of letters of his day” was a contemporary’s view of MacDonald. The son of a poor Aberdeenshire weaver, he spent his childhood in a cottage so small that he had to sleep in the attic. It was a happy time which he described in several novels of Scottish rural life.

After studying at Aberdeen University, MacDonald trained for the ministry in London and became minister of a Congregational Church in Sussex. But owing to a theological disagreement, the deacons lowered his salary to force him to leave. He was short-listed for a second pastorate in Manchester but was not appointed and he decided to devote himself to writing. With a growing family he returned to London and was helped out of poverty by Lord Byron’s widow. Lewis Carroll and Lord Tennyson were associates. MacDonald’s most popular novel “The Princess and the Goblin”, written for children, is a fairy story in which spiritual realities break through into everyday life. C.S.Lewis and J.R.R.Tolkein were greatly influenced by MacDonald’s writing.

Table Tennis

As careful observers will already have guessed, this season has seen some significant changes in team composition. Following what we hope will be a temporary respite from league play for first team members Heng Zhou and Dennis Oon, the team captain Martin Richens transferred to University Harriers to give him the certainty of retaining first division play for next season. Our former B team players now make up our only team in the league this season, and playing in division one will struggle to make significant impact. Nonetheless no whitewash defeats have yet been suffered, and the players will ultimately benefit from the experience. A respite is also likely for the polishers of silverware.

Nigel Herbert.

Wednesday lunch in aid of Action for Children





DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE
Sunday December 8 th	11:00	Toy service followed by bring and share lunch	CTM
Sunday December 8 th	18:30	Film night: The Miracle Maker	CTM
Wednesday/ Thursday December 11 th /12 th		OAK Christmas lunch	St Mark's
Sunday December 22 nd	11:00	Nativity All Age Service	CTM
Sunday December 22 nd	18:30	Carols and Lessons	CTM
Tuesday December 24 th	16:00	Children's Christingle Service	CTM
Tuesday December 24 th	23:30	Midnight Service and Communion (Coffee and mince pies from 23:00)	CTM
Wednesday December 25 th	11:00	Christmas Day All Age Service	CTM
Sunday January 5 th	11:00	Covenant Service	CTM
Sunday January 12 th	11:00	OAK Morning Service followed by soup and sandwich lunch	CTM
Sunday January 12 th	18:30	OAK Evening Service	CTM
Sunday January 19 th	15:00	Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity Service at St John's	St John's
Tuesday January 21 st	19:30	Church Council	CTM