

INSIGHT



***HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE***

January - March 2022



I am the New Year,

I am an unspoiled page in your book of time,
I am your next chance at the art of living.

I am your opportunity to practice what you have learned
during the last twelve months about life.

All that you sought the past year and failed to find is hidden in me;
I am waiting for you to search it out again with more determination.

All the good that you tried to do for others
and didn't achieve last year is mine to grant
providing you have fewer selfish and conflicting desires.

In me lies the potential of all that you have dreamed
but didn't dare to do,
all that you hoped but did not perform,
all you prayed for but did not yet experience.
These dreams slumber lightly, waiting to be awakened
by the touch of an enduring purpose.

I am your opportunity to renew your allegiance to Christ who said,
"Behold, I make all things new."

I am the New Year.

Author unknown

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

Most people by now will have packed away their 'Christmas' for another year. Trees and lights and decorations have been dismantled, nativity sets carefully packed away. Perhaps all traces of the Christmas celebrations put back in storage, out of sight or mind until next December comes around. And as we move into the new year my thoughts have already turned towards preparing materials for the season of Lent. It probably seems really strange to you that here I am straight after Christmas talking about Lent and, in turn, Holy Week and Easter. Yet of course they are totally and completely part of the one story, and we do well to reflect on that one story as a whole story; the story of God's love made visible. Christmas is all about the 'incarnation', God coming to us in human form and flesh. But of course, it is the springboard of discovering the reality of God being everywhere ever present, and for every human being. From the moment of Christ's birth God breaks into our living in a new and exciting and, dare I say, challenging way. We are encouraged to now understand God as fully involved and concerned about our everyday living, and every moment of our living. John, the gospel writer, tells us that 'the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.' Not just for a few short weeks of the Christmas season, as if we pack him away and go back to how we were before. God, in Jesus made his dwelling amongst us then, in order to remain with us for all time.

So we do well to not 'put Jesus away' at the end of our Christmas celebrations but invite him into our living of every day on this new year, into all the joys, challenges, excitement, stresses that we might experience so that he can be our strength, comfort, encourager and sharer of our joys.

This is now the time then when we move from the images of 'sanitized' nativity scenes and stories, of the sweet, inoffensive, safe words of the Victorian carols we love so much such as 'the little Lord Jesus no crying he makes' and 'O little town of Bethlehem how still we see thee lie'. I am not suggesting we shouldn't sing these, but we do need to move on from them to the real, deep, costly message of Christmas that finds its culmination in the cross and resurrection of Jesus. This is where we learn of the height, depth and breadth of that love that brought him to the earth

in the humility of a vulnerable babe. 'For God loved the world so much, says John 'that he sent his one and only Son, so that *everyone* who believes in him might not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16). That means that God has come to right all that is wrong, all that destroys life, all that separates us from his love. This is God's Kingdom. This is the work of the baby in the manger, the man on the cross, the risen exalted Son of God.

Don't be afraid to look at the cross through the crack in the stable door, for there you will discover the full story of God's love. A love that promises to never let us go.

So as we journey on through January and the year ahead I pray that you will know God's loving presence with you wherever you find yourself. And in knowing his presence that you will discover just how much is his love for you.

God bless,
Debbie

REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU



REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

Church leaders have reacted to the news of the death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

The Revd Sonia Hicks, President of the Methodist Conference, said:

“As a Black Christian, I grew up aware that the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu did not not allow the presuppositions of other people to define his own self identity and self worth, even under apartheid. That awareness fuelled my desire for a more just and inclusive world for all. I pray for those mourning his loss today and hope that his work for justice in South Africa and the world over continues to burn bright.”

As the late Archbishop said: “There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”



Barbara Easton, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, said:

“It is with huge sadness that we learn of the death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Tutu was a man whose deep Christian devotion enabled him to see each and every human being as the expression of the image of God in all its beloved and beautiful diversity. This fired a passion for justice, truth and healing which brought him to the forefront of the leadership of national life in South Africa and on the world stage. “His faith gave him the strength to do, to dare and to defy.”

Those of us who only knew him through his writings take heart from his wisdom and insight, which was both accessible and deeply challenging; people who had the good fortune of knowing him speak also of his joyful exuberance, pastoral grace and irrepressible, infectious laugh!”

"My thoughts are particularly with his family at this time. He will be much missed."

The Revd Michaela Youngson, Assistant Secretary of the Methodist Conference, said:

"Today I give thanks for the life of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He was a beacon of hope and persistence in the midst of the horror of apartheid. He took a stance on LGBTQ+ rights that put him at odds with many in his church, yet he remained committed to sharing God's inclusive love

Our prayers are with the people of South Africa and in particular with our partners, the Church of Southern Africa, as they continue to bear witness to the transformational power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Methodist Church UK website

BLASPHEMY! Do you occasionally break the 3rd Commandment?

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord (or his son or his son’s mother in vain”. But we get reports in the Bible that despite God’s exhortation, people did still blaspheme - in Leviticus we find “And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death”; and it used to be a criminal offence in many Western states. Although many of those laws may still exist on the statute books as technicalities, they are not now enforced, or at least not with any real punishment, in most western countries. In the UK the obsolete blasphemy law was repealed in 2008.

The word *blasphemy* derives from a Greek term meaning "speaking evil," but in the Christian religious tradition the word refers to verbal offences against sacred values or beliefs. A seventeenth-century Scottish jurist epitomised blasphemy by calling it "treason against God." The concept of blasphemy has never remained fixed. It has ranged from the ancient Hebrew crime of cursing the ineffable name of God to irreverent statements that outrage the religious sensibilities of others.

Many expressions in common parlance are oaths in disguise - “**minced oaths**”. These are euphemistic expression formed by misspelling, mispronouncing, or replacing a part of a profane, blasphemous, or taboo term to reduce the original term's objectionable characteristics. Some examples include *gosh* (for *God*), *darn* and *dang* or *drat* (for *damn*), *heck*

MY FAVOURITE HYMN - Janice Hyde

Janice explains her choice in her own words.

There are so many hymns I like that it is very hard to choose a favourite. I often break into song when driving and on a particularly nice morning will sing 'The world looks very beautiful and full of joy to me.' The favourites that immediately spring to mind are 'Lord for the Years' – which used to be my school hymn – and 'Now thank we all our God' which David and I had at our wedding. On that occasion we sang it to the modern tune, which disappointed my father, but now I too prefer the traditional tune. We also chose it for Sally's christening as she really was a miracle gift from God after my serious operation when I was expecting her.

Other favourite hymns include 'Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder': the first two verses seem to sum up how I feel about the world around us. And as a lover of the sea there is always 'Eternal Father, strong to save.' I have been involved in Girlguiding since I was seven and have had a warrant as a leader for 57 years. I have also been connected with Women's World Day of Prayer so 'The day thou gavest Lord is ended' draws both these strands of my life together, and family too. It is lovely to think of the circle of prayer surrounding the world, linking people from the same organisations and family and friends.

So if I had to choose just one hymn ... well, that's very hard but it would probably be 'Now thank we all our God.' (StF 81)

David and I came to live in Hertford immediately after our marriage in June 1967 and we joined the Methodist Church the first week. Owen Thomas was on our doorstep the evening we got back from our honeymoon, before we had even had time to unpack! We used to attend the evening service in those days but at Harvest we went in the morning and were welcomed as newcomers! We were running the Youth Club by then but of course the congregations from the two services rarely met. I had sung in my school choir and joined the church choir fairly early on, having been a member of the choir at our church in Chingford. I know I was already a member when I was expecting Caroline so I must have been a member now for at least 53 years. I also enjoy being part of the flower arranging team at the church and many other roles; I'm a pastoral visitor and was actively involved in setting up the Oasis Coffee Shop ten years ago.

As mentioned, I have been very active in Girlguiding, having been privileged to serve in many roles and am at present Chairman of the County Trefoil Guild and on the Region Executive. Obviously my family are my real passion, but I am sure that can be said for many of us, and I love gardening. I am never happier than when I can walk around my garden each morning, when it is dry enough, with that first cup of tea.

The words of Janice's favourite hymn: 'Now thank we all our God', were written by the German Lutheran pastor, Martin Rinkart, in 1636 and translated by Catherine Winkworth two centuries later. The traditional tune was probably composed by Johann Cruger and harmonised by Felix Mendelssohn in 1840.

'Now thank we all our God Who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.'



Jackie Lawn

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An elderly woman walked into a church.

The friendly usher greeted her at the door and helped her in.

"Where would you like to sit"? he asked politely.

"The front row please," she answered.

"You really don't want to do that" the steward said,

"today's preacher can be really boring."

"Do you happen to know who I am?" the woman inquired.

"No." he said.

"I'm the preacher's mother," she replied indignantly.

"Do you know who I am?" the usher asked

"No" she said.

"Good" answered the usher.

**GOODBYE to Barbara Askew
from a tribute by her daughter
Mary**

Mum was born on 18th March 1932 in Preston Lancashire where she spent most of her life, bar a brief time in Salisbury during the War when her father was posted there. She went to the girls' grammar school where she met her great friend our 'Aunty' Evelyn who was one of her bridesmaids and whose family we spent every Boxing Day with growing up. Her passion was history and she devoured history books and was thinking of reading history at Liverpool University. Instead she went to Southlands College near Wimbledon to train as a teacher.



As a child Mum enjoyed holidays in Cumbria with her cousins then with her husband Dennis and later with us. She had fond memories of her grandparents and of sneaking off to explore taking the farm dog, Rascal, with her which she used to get told off for. She learned to ride and recently talked about the thrill of galloping on her cousin's part Arab horse. I think her cousins took the place of the siblings she didn't have.

Mum met dad at the local tennis club. She had already become friendly with his mum on the bus who kept telling him about the lovely girl she had met. Apparently when they eventually met at tennis his first words to her were "So you're Barbara". The rest as they say is history. They were married in 1957 and were together happily for over 50 years. They loved to celebrate the milestones, having a big party and dance for their Silver Wedding, a garden party for their Ruby and a lunch for family and friends for their Golden Wedding. Dad brought out the fun side of mum and they complemented each other well.

I was born in 1966 and Susan three years later. We had a happy childhood with lots of lovely memories of family holidays and outings together. Mum's enthusiasm for reading across a wide range inspired us

both with a passion for books of all genres. She loved a good crossword, something she passed on to Susan, but I have less patience for them! We can both blame her though for our love of a good murder mystery on TV.

Mum enjoyed teaching and was a leading primary maths teacher saying she was able to explain it as she had found maths so tricky herself. She also taught sewing both at school and to adults at night school.

In her early fifties mum took early retirement and embarked on a new career as a town councillor and then mayor. She genuinely loved helping people and trying to make a difference, regardless of party politics. She was a real go-to point in the local community, known for her ability to get things done. One of her projects was working with the local aid in sickness charity and she also got involved with the RNLI and the WRVS, serving lunches to her "elderly" ladies well into her seventies. She also had great fun at the mayoral events and Conservative dinners with dad.

Dad was a homebody but mum wanted to travel the world and was able to do this with friends Aunty Evelyn and Sheila. They went on cruises all over Europe and to Egypt, Russia, America, India and China. Mum continued cruising well into her eighties and fulfilled her ambition of sailing up the Amazon a few years ago undaunted by the fact Sheila was unable to go and going on her own. She had a whale of a time and even managed a short jungle trek. Together mum and dad explored Britain and beyond, particularly enjoying stays in the Lake District where they liked to walk. She especially loved the display of colours at this time of year.

You also can't talk about mum without mentioning her cats. She grew up with cats and had fond memories especially of a ginger cat called Rusty. Her mum also had a Siamese cat which mum said used to jump on her back when she was washing up and dig its claws in. Growing up we had a much-loved cat named Paddy who put up with Susan and me dressing him in dolls clothes and pushing in a pram. After he died mum began her adoption of rescue cats starting with a kitten we named Matty. She brought Matty's successor Kitty to Hertford with her and when Kitty died adopted an elderly cat, Tilly and then Daisy. She was still looking for Daisy's successor.

Mum's faith was important to her and the Methodist Church has been a huge part of her life, influencing her choice of Southlands College. Her grandfather was a Methodist local preacher and she regretted never hearing him preach. She played an active role in the church in Preston and was a member of their 'young wives' group long past being able to class herself as one.

Despite being quite shy mum had a talent for making friends and talking to people. When she eventually decided to move to Hertford to be closer to us we initially tried to discourage her from leaving her friends. Her reply was she wanted to do it whilst she was still active and able to make new ones. I think she certainly achieved this joining this church, the U3A and participating in card making where she met Sylvia and Jackie, easy exercise and the church women's fellowship with Doris and Ron which she regularly hosted. She also started going to monthly Sunday lunches with her lovely friend Avril, whom she met at Townswomen's Guild. I know mum really valued her friendship and looked forward to their weekly meets for lunch in town and the coach trips they were able to go on. She made good friends with Joan and Barry at church and always looked forward to their weekly outings together to Oasis to catch up on all the goings-on over coffee. Having chosen to live in a flat she also made good friends with her neighbours.

She was so lucky to join such a supportive and friendly community here. One of the things that has brought comfort to us is all the lovely messages and cards from her Hertford friends and knowing mum really was a valued member of the church and town community. I popped into the hairdresser she used to let them know what had happened and they had heard from various people already. She was also well-known in the local charity shops and I had a lovely chat with her friends there. The Coffee Lab used to have her usual cake ready as she walked in and she enjoyed coffees and lunches in the Salisbury where she had planned to hold her 90th birthday in March.

Mum was also a proud grandparent to Robert, Rebecca and Hannah. I struggled after Robert was born but mum was always there to support me, either by phone or in person. Rob and I spent a lot of time travelling to Preston by train when he was a baby and mum also came to stay and

help. She stayed with us after Rebecca and Hannah were born too playing with them and taking them to playgroups to give me time to myself. As they got older she was there to see all their school plays and concerts usually leading the applause and embarrassing them by starting standing ovations.

We had a lovely family holiday with her and dad after Susan's wedding and enjoyed Christmas away more recently with her and Susan and Tom. When mum moved to Hertford she was able to have a more personal relationship with the children and started a tradition of inviting them individually for tea and usually a game of Scrabble. When Rebecca decided to take sewing as a GCSE mum had her and her friend Victoria round each week to help them. It gave her a lot of pleasure to be able to pass on her skills to the next generation.

We remember our mum with lots of love and will miss her dearly. We found a note she had written recently and kept by her which read "To be alive in hearts we leave behind is not to die".

Mary

Love is a fruit in season at all times and within reach of every hand. Anyone may gather it and no limit is set. Everyone can reach this love through meditation, spirit of prayer and sacrifice, by an intense inner life. The biggest disease today is not leprosy or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for and deserted by everybody.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

A four-year-old child's elderly next door neighbour had recently lost his wife. On seeing the man sitting in his garden crying, the little boy went through the gate, into the next-door garden, climbed on to his lap, and just sat there.

When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbour, the little boy answered,

"Nothing, I just helped him cry."

WHERE ARE YOU NOW? Barbara and Catherine Evans-Routley

We left HAEBEA in the summer of 2018 to go to Barbara's new post in Dudley in the Black Country. Most people know Dudley from its Zoo and Castle and Lenny Henry...But it is also a place steeped in industrial history. There are the limestone caverns and a network of canals which go under most of the town. The Manse itself sat over Dudley No 1 canal and tunnel. Also, there is a UNESCO World heritage site right in the centre of Dudley as some of the geology is the oldest in the world; treasure for fossil hunters!

The manse we lived in was built by Dorothy Round's father as her wedding gift. For the tennis fans among you, you will know that she won Wimbledon ladies singles three times in the 1930's and partnered Fred Perry in the mixed doubles winning twice more. Understandably, she became famous locally and a lot of the older ladies played for the Dorothy Round Shield whilst at school.

Her husband was a local GP, so the house was purpose built with two main doors. One for the surgery and one for the family. A lot of church members remembered it being the doctor's surgery. Dorothy was a Methodist, and so when she finally moved into care in her later years it was sold to the circuit as a manse.

Like everyone else, we adapted to life under COVID restrictions in March 2020. No face-to-face meetings and learning to use Zoom. Both of us caught COVID at the very beginning of the pandemic (ironically from church) but fortunately do not seem to have had any lasting effects.

Sadly, after a difficult couple of years Barbara curtailed her appointment and we found ourselves moving to East Sussex to be part of Central Sussex United Area, which essentially is the mirror Area to HAEBEA. David Chapman was the Superintendent here before he moved to Beds, Essex and Herts as Chair. Barbara is Superintendent and co-chair with a URC lay-chair. It is very busy and hard work but a very beautiful part of the country.

The move happened in the summer of 2020 just as the end of the restrictions of the first lockdown. It was certainly an interesting time to be moving as we couldn't visit the manse in advance. However, it went well.

We are having great fun exploring the area now pandemic is allowing us to be out and about. Firework season is a big event here- Lewes, which is part of Barbara's Area does it in style – you may have seen pictures in the national news. Here in Hailsham (where we are now living) the Bonfire Society had their event in mid-October. It was good fun and no Health and Safety to be seen!!

We have the coast with Beachy Head, the Seven Sisters and Cuckmere Haven- all are stunning. Then the South Downs with its hills and beautiful little villages. We are so fortunate. Likewise, we have discovered ice cream shops (see picture!) and enjoy a walk along the seafront and pier in Eastbourne. Barbara has taken up sea-swimming and Catherine holds the coat and cups of tea...

Catherine is still doing a weekly commute to Warwickshire as sadly her mum is not very well. Her brother keeps an eye over the weekend and she does the mid-week care. However, she has settled into a lovely little church on the edge of Eastbourne and will become their Lay Reader in the New Year once all the paperwork is completed.

We have extremely fond memories of our time in Hertfordshire. There was fun and laughter in the coffee shop, and evenings putting the world to rights with the banner making group.



Thank you for being part of our lives.

Where we are now!

Catherine Evans Routley

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2022 will be on Friday March 4th at Holy Trinity Church, Bengoe, at 10:30 am.

World Day of Prayer 2022 (formally known as Women's World Day of Prayer) is a worldwide prayer initiative with material being provided each year by women from different parts of the world, and held on the First Friday of March each year.

This year the World Day of Prayer in Hertford will be celebrated in Holy Trinity Bengoe on March 4th. The service has the international title of **'I know the plans I have for You'** - Jeremiah 29:1-14 - which has been prepared by women from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. All are welcome, we plan to start is 10:30 am and of course there will be coffee and cake, and an opportunity to chat.

Holy Trinity is in New Road Bengoe and is on bus route 333 out of town, there is usually plenty of parking in New Road.

Contact David Cramphorn (01992 53464) towerworks32@gmail.com for details or to volunteer to be part of the celebration.



WHAT'S ON

Edward Elgar *THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS* on Saturday 26th March at 7.30pm in All Saints' Church, Hertford. Hertford Choral Society with The Aurelian Ensemble and soloists, conducted by Manvinder Rattan. Elgar's most popular choral work which he described as 'the best of me', is his interpretation of Cardinal Newman's poem describing the journey of a man's soul after death, and includes the priests sublime invocation to gerontius to 'Go forth' and the choir's exultant 'Praise to the Holiest'. Tickets £16 reserved, £12 unreserved from tickets@hertfordchoral.org.uk, by phoning 017936 719498 or from choir members.



HYMNS & CAKE It is hoped that this popular event, part of Hertford Churches Together's 'Lent Events', will happen again this year,. Look out for details in the weekly Notice Sheet.



BEREAVEMENT CAFÉ An informal, monthly drop-in for adults who want to meet, share experiences and chat with people who have also been through bereavement. Hosted by friendly local people, set up by volunteers from Holy Trinity Church, Bengoe. Third Thursday of every month, 6.30 - 8.00pm at The Secret Garden Café, 89 The Avenue, Bengoe. For more information email info@parishofbengoe.com or ring 01992 413691



QUIZ NIGHT The Friends of Wildeshausen, one of Hertford's Town Twinning Groups, are arranging a Quiz Night in St Andrew's centre on Saturday 2nd April at 7.30pm. More details in the church notices. Don't worry, the questions will be in English!