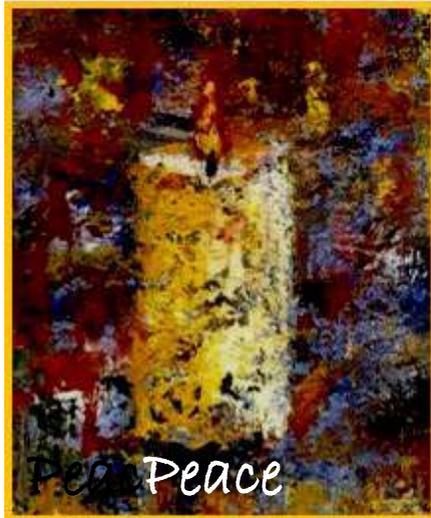


Rodborough Tabernacle News



Dec/Jan 2018/19



**Sharing God's Love:
Serving the Community**

Dear Friends,

We come to advent, opening our church life and our personal life to the idea of God with us. In the world around us the last few weeks of political uncertainty, continuing conflict, unrest in some countries, and sorrow in people's families' closer to home it hardly seems the time and place to be thinking about a small child who by his very presence would change the world forever.

This is what Jesus came into, a world full of anger and pain, born into a country ruled by another, a brutal regime that allowed brutality to exist within it. A world where economy was key, gathering taxes and tributes was a key feature of government.

Into such a world comes the smallest of lights, a candlelight lit by those who want to bring hope into our world, this is our key task- to bring hope and light into the community.

It will take our being proactive to light up the world for those around us. We first might have to see how we can be light in ourselves, are we dominated by the economic news? Wanting to sidestep the political news? Are we mindful of those who worship with us and those who would and yet they cannot grasp the idea of God as having anything to do with them. In what you do and in what you say, hearts and minds can be brought to change; hope can flicker into life.

In the night of Christmas, perhaps we can begin to pray again that the light of God begins to shine through the people we are, flawed, as we are. In the Advent time we can prepare to shine the light of God's love into our neighbours and our friends, with gifts of kindness and remembrance, gifts of love first given to us in the news that is the best news of all.

God is love, and love is made real in Jesus the Christ. New hope in a badly torn world.

Light the candle, give thanks.

God bless and have a Happy Christmas

Eric & Glenis

A Seasonal Bible Story

Several sleepy shepherds sat in sandy scrub, savouring supper and safeguarding snoozing sheep. Suddenly, scores of super beings shone, singing sensationally of sanctity and salvation.

“Seek Saviour,” said some – so stunned shepherds stuttered “S-s-s-certainly,” setting sights on star-soaked shed. Inside, a saintly sister, sired supernaturally, settled in straw, sighed and issued Saviour son. Spouse, shepherds, sheep and sows saw such a special sight, standing silently, not suspecting subsequent shame, scourging and sacrificial slaying.

Sadly, a sadistic sovereign sought spies, saying “Seek and slaughter small sons.” Some seers, sent by Spirit to satisfy star signs, side-stepped sneaky sortie, supplied instead several significant symbols of sanctity.

So, several centuries since, souls seeking secrets of saintliness or solutions to sadness, suffering social strife and sinfulness, should scour Scriptures – and seek succour in same sweet Saviour.

Submitted by Maureen Arthur



Quotation

Christmas is joy, religious joy, an inner joy of light and peace.
Pope Francis

Wednesday Fellowship

After the snow on the morning of Wednesday 21st November it was such a pleasure to be taken to the Isles of Skye and Mull where we saw wonderful scenery in bright sunshine due to our friends, Geoff and Betty King coming to show videos of their holidays taken in such a beautiful part of our country.

Peter started the afternoon by welcoming everyone, especially the many visitors who had come, it was lovely to have them with us. After the notices and birthdays he then went on to talk about how time seems to go faster the older we get, not like years ago when everything seemed to take ages to happen. The difference could be that we have stopped looking forward so much and just live our lives day by day. We do still prepare for the future by doing simple things like getting a flu jab and gratefully receiving winter fuel payments to help us keep warm. Peter said it is good to look forward with hope but sometimes we do look back with despair at things as is commemorated in the book of poems by John Maxwell Edmonds called Looking Back to Battle. His famous words as we have recently been hearing are:

“When you go home, tell them of us and say,
for your tomorrow, we gave our today”.

Now we look forward to Christmas and for Christians in December it is the start of Advent. As written in Isaiah, Emmanuel cries “Be prepared for his coming” but of course, with all the adverts and shopping and business of planning, the real reasons for it all are often forgotten. We then sang the carol – See amid the winter snow – had some prayers remembering those who could not be present but mean so much to us all, we then settled down to watch Geoff and Betty’s films.

The first one was about the Isle of Skye and Geoff talked about the bridge that had charges at first but now there is free passage over a wonderful construction. Steve was able to tell us that his first wife’s relative had worked on it in the 1990’s so he felt a real connection to it. We were then shown beautiful scenery first around Ord with views of the Cuillin mountains in early morning sunshine. Geoff and Betty love to take long walks so we saw cows, horses, geese and goats, oyster catchers, sheep on the shore, lonely houses, all set in such a peaceful setting. One thing we all thought was really good was

a 'honesty café', actually a table by a fence with flasks of hot water etc so anyone could have a drink and just leave a £1. There was an otter sanctuary, a marble quarry and in Portree, a large salmon farm. We were shown the wonders of the Old man of Storr, a rocky hill which Geoff had managed to show at it's best after a precarious climb. The lovely, white beaches with gently lapping waves and wild flowers showed the contrasts of this amazing island.

We were then shown more captivating views on the Isle of Mull, with animals free to roam, so many birds, butterflies, castles, a wildflower meadow and a cave where the parents of David Livingstone had lived. We even saw fallow deer and a hare and so many sea birds, puffins and of course, seals too. The view of Staffa was magnificent with the tall pillars and then Betty told us the sad story of The Clearances on Mull when crofters had to lose their homes because their landlords, living in London and wanting more money, demanded their land for large scale sheep farming. A visit was also made to Iona which many of us have learnt about from Glenis and Jenny after their time there. We had to come back to reality as the final pictures of cows resting on golden sands and glorious sunsets were shown, there are just not enough adjectives to describe the beauty of everything we had seen.

We are looking forward to having a stall at the bazaar and we thank everyone who have contributed so many toiletries for our stall. We will not have a meeting at the Tab in December as we are having a Christmas meal at the Clothiers on Monday 3rd December. Our next meeting will be on 16th January when Judy Mills will be coming along to talk about "Walks in the Cotswolds".

On behalf of the Fellowship - Dorothy



KNOW YOUR ELDER—4

Andrea Frusher

Born and bred in Stroud, I grew up at Glen Park Crescent, Kingscourt with my mum, dad and older brother. We also had a lovely border collie named Hollie!



I attended Gastrells County Primary School – which I loved. From there I continued my education at Stroud High School for girls – here I achieved my GCSEs and A-Levels. I always knew I wanted to be a part of Healthcare in some way, and landed a full time job with the Home Farm Trust (HFT) at the Old Quarries in Avening, working with adults with learning disabilities. I remained in this position for 12 years. During that time, I moved out of the family home and bought my first house in Hardwicke, where I gave birth to my daughter, Megan, in 2001. I continued to work part time with HFT, moving back to Ebley when Megan was four.

In 2007, I gave birth to my son, Adam. I continued working with HFT, and moved to Frocester Manor to work night shifts. I then decided to become a mature student and completed my diploma in Health and Social Care at Stroud College.

My interests grew around therapy – both physio and occupational. I had a few observational days with physios at Stroud and Dursley. From here I applied for several positions, and was offered a role as Physiotherapy Technician at Cirencester Hospital. I remained here for almost a year, then was offered a role as Therapy Support Worker on the Stroke Rehabilitation Ward at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital to gain more experience. I continue in this role today, and am thoroughly enjoying it

I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, and love to go on relaxing walks with my spaniel, Sid. I also enjoy singing in the church choir, and have recently taken up yoga.

Commitment for Life Moving stories



Zleikha

Zleikha is an extraordinary lady who has many nieces and nephews. She devotes her life to the community and her wider family. She recycles goods, sells embroidery and does a little gardening with small groups. She is trialing vertical gardens because of lack of space in the city because she thinks it is important to see greenery. She volunteers with the Christian Peace Team whilst keeping her shop selling second hand clothes going. On her roof top you can see across the old city of Hebron. The end of her road used to turn into Shuhada street but is now blocked by a wall and fencing. It is a place filled with rubbish and neglect. Visitors are free to walk on the other side of her walled-up street but Zleikha fears she will never do so again in her life time.

© *image Commitment for Life*

Snippets of life in Hebron

In Hebron there is an area called the chicken market. Each part of the market used to sell different items but now so many of the shops are closed. Just one shop is open, selling doves in cages as pets. In the shop sits a young lad, his head is on his hands, with a look of resignation about him. It is almost as if he is thinking about the fact that he probably will not sell anything that day or the next or the next. No one comes to the market anymore. Such is the futility of life in a city being sucked of its trade and vitality.

It is in this chicken farm area that The Hebron Rehabilitation Committee is working. They have been busy renovating shop interiors. They paint the doors a different colour to the traditional green to show they have been renovated by the Committee. But what is the future for these new lockups when no one shops there anymore?

A Christmas Mistake

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations - extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending. Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six year old. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's "Winter Pageant." I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise. So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down.

Around the room, I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats. As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song. Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas," I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment - songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer.

So, when my son's class rose to sing, "Christmas Love," I was slightly taken aback by its bold title. Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snow-caps upon their heads. Those in the front row centre stage - held up large letters, one by one, **to** spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing "C is for Christmas," a child would hold up the letter C. Then, "H is for Happy," and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, "Christmas Love."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet, girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down - totally unaware, her letter "M" appeared as a "W". The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding

holding her "W".

Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together.

A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood - the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

"CHRIST WAS LOVE"

And, I believe, He still is.

Candy Chand



“Peace on earth will come to stay when we live Christmas every day...”

Helen Steiner Rice

Why I like CHRISTMAS

Christmas is something new that comes
each year to an old world
It is like new fallen snow upon an old tree;
A new flower on an old plant;
New shoes on aching feet;
A new home in an old town;
A new light on a dark street;
New hope in a hopeless situation.

Christmas was introduced by a prophecy,
heralded by the song of an angel,
and announced by the birth of a Savior.
I like Christmas because it sparkles & glows.
It comes only once a year, and still its
radiance warms the child's heart and
fills his mind with pleasant dreams
of joy and happiness

I like Christmas because Christmas is Christ
I see the beauty of the gospel unfold within
my heart, which began in Bethlehem of Judea
when HIS spirit glorified that little town, and
HIS coming sanctified a lowly manger
Christmas bears Christ's name, symbolizes
His love, proclaims his truth, and showers
His gifts upon the world.

Although Earthly Kings ignored him,
and the proud could not understand him,
the common people heard him with
with hungry hearts, and gladly received him

I like Christmas because it meets my
deepest needs! It cures me of greed, and
selfishness, fills my empty soul with
peace and compassion, and renews
my faith and hope in an erring world!

May Christmas time mean more to you
Then gifts on Christmas morn

May you feel the peace the whole world knew

When Christ the Lord was born
May you know the special gladness
And hope that came to men

And may it thrill your heart just now
As Christmas comes again
God bless my friends.

Source : spike-jamie.com

Greetings from Jennie & David Price

On Saturday 24th September there was a notable performance of Holst's "Planets Suite" depicting the seven planets of our solar system. Between each movement there was a fascinating description of each planet - the commentator added "There was no sign of life" which prompted the question "Are we alone in the universe?"

What interested me was not so much the answer to the question but why we give it so great an importance.

Advent is an affirmation that God is coming into our midst which seems to me more than an answer to that question the troubles many. We are not alone in the universe but rather at the centre of the heart of our Creator, the creator of all things.

We had a tiny baby in church recently and there was a surrounding group of admirers. Here was this insignificant little life full of potential. I expect when Jesus was born he had many who would look in wonder at this little baby but would not dream they peered upon the one who would be called the Saviour of the World and that one day we would realize this is God among us and that He would knock at our hearts door and request a share in our lives.

Advent is the time we make preparation for His coming. The question about life beyond shrinks into insignificance beside this wonder.

May God bless you and give you Joy in preparation and celebration
David Price

And from John Cook...

My sister has had published a small book of poems written mostly by our Dad and one by our Mum. She would like the Tab folk who knew them to be aware of the book and she is suggesting that any profits will go to the Tab. With the book will go a c.d. of one poem only that I have written music to and this will go with each book. As yet my sister hasn't suggested a price but anyone interested can contact me.

The book of poems is entitled "Ernest Cook" Selected Poems" chosen by John & Carolyn, his proud children. The Musical track is "Soliloquy".

John Cook

Emmaus Gloucestershire - Operation Backpack

Emmaus Gloucestershire, is launching the 'Operation Backpack' campaign to help rough sleepers survive in the coldest months of the year and are looking for the community to get behind them by donating filled rucksacks for winter protection.

Emmaus Gloucestershire is a charity that provides a home and meaningful work to 31 people who have experienced homelessness. Chief Executive, Joe Feeley, says "We are working to end homelessness and enable people to get back on their feet. But for those who face nights on the streets this winter, clean, warm clothes are essential for both dignity and survival – we are inviting members of the public to help directly."

Emmaus are inviting school groups, businesses, scout groups, guiding groups, families, individuals, work groups, groups of friends, to get together and donate rucksacks packed with essentials for living in the open, including **thermal socks, gloves, hats, scarves, winter sleeping bags, waterproof sleeping mats.**

Shirley Billson, Marketing & Communications Coordinator, explains, "It's really simple to take part. Grab a rucksack and fill it with the items listed on our Facebook event page. If you buy lots of the items from charity shops, you can extend giving, as well as re-using and recycling in the best possible way."

She adds, "Though we need more rucksacks for men, you might want to do a rucksack specifically for a woman - Include sanitary products/wipes/hairbrush/hairbands/nappy sacks (to dispose of sanitary items), or someone specifically for a person with a dog – include dog food, a chew, a small toy. **We're equally grateful if you can just donate one or two of the suggested items.** We also need pyjamas for people who need hospital stays. Our initial target is 150 backpacks. With your help, we can achieve this."

Formerly homeless, Emmaus companion Mark, describes how it feels to be on the receiving end of a backpack, "You go from freezing to feeling ok again. A change of clothes is like changing your soul."

At the church meeting, it was agreed to support the above appeal this Christmas. You don't have to fill a rucksack; you can donate one or two of the items as suggested or the gift of money.

Further details will be included in the Weekly News sheet.

As I see it!!

This evening on TV, I heard Ralph McTell singing 'The Streets of London.' I worked and lived in London from 1971 till 1979. At my second school which was in St John's Wood, in the affluent Borough of Westminster, we used to sing that very song in assembly. In actual fact during my years in London, though I did see some people begging in the streets, it was nothing like the numbers of people you will see in our towns and cities nowadays. Even here in Stroud you will regularly see a couple of people begging in the street. Sadly, the lyrics of Mc Tell's song are as relevant today as they were 40 years ago—what an indictment of successive governments in those 40 years! However, there is one major difference we need to make to the song lyrics. It's no longer just old men and old women who are on the streets—it's young people, children even, and not 'old soldiers' but younger ex-service personnel, whom the MoD fails to support when they are no longer able to serve, often due to mental health problems. Loneliness is a huge problem and not just among the older population—we have an epidemic of mental health illness amongst young people, even in our primary schools. McTell's song,- -with a few changes here and there—could represent the social problems of 2018. However, in 2019, it shall become redundant. Yes, everything will be different, because we have been told by Mrs May that austerity will come to an end. HURRAH!! But I'm not holding my breath—perhaps I'm just an old sceptic---I wonder why!!

Liz Shankland

Blessing of Peace

Every time a hand reaches out
To help another....that is Christmas
Every time someone puts anger aside
And strives for understanding
That is Christmas
Every time people forget their differences
And realize their love for each other
That is Christmas
May this Christmas bring us
Closer to the spirit of human understanding
Closer to the blessing of peace!

Unknown

Remembering

The Armistice concert at Rodborough Tabernacle was poignant and horrifying but also contained amusing moments. The readings taken from newspapers of the period highlighted the changing emotions of the British as the war progressed, with reflections on the futility of war and the long term after affects of losing so many loved ones. It provided a lively history lesson as well as honouring those who gave their lives. Inspired by his father's close relationship with Harry Patch, Mike Issacs produced a CD highlighting the futility of war. Many of the tracks were included in the concert. Also included was moving poetry by the War poets that has been set by a local musician, Caz Besterman. This was sung by 'Christ Church Eucumenical Choir'. Clive Hook led the audience singing songs of that era and John Cook wrote his own dedication to a lost relative, Charlie Knee, scout leader at 1st Rodborough Scouts. Megan Strachan, soprano, sang two settings of 'Pie Jesu' with such feeling. Members of 'Remembering Rodborough' showcased articles from their recent publication, 'Summoned from the Hillside'. It was an evening to remember and to reflect on.



At Friday evenings' concert we remembered and reflected on the past, however there was a change of mood on Saturday afternoon which was more about celebrating the end of WW1 and looking forward with hope to a more peaceful future.

Lyons tea rooms were very popular at the time so we tried to re-create some of that atmosphere - we even dressed up for the occasion! The response was overwhelming, when over 70 people, including many unfamiliar faces squeezed themselves into the community hall to enjoy tea and cakes served by their very own "Gladys" - the name given to a Lyons waitress prior to 1926 when they became known as "Nippies"



Monies raised by both events were donated to the Poppy Appeal.

Thankyou

On behalf of the Poppy Appeal, can I please thank you for your very generous donation of £385 raised at your recent special events. Also thank you for the £47.35 in the collecting tin.

Anne Evans

Festivals of Hope

It was the period of the cold war. I had been a child during the 1939-45 war, and I felt deeply the strains in international relations in the years following the war. Interviews galore, or so it seemed, greeted my application to study with a view to being ordained. At some point in each interview I was asked why I wanted to go down that path. My answer was the same each time. I wanted to pursue a different route and I saw that route in Jesus. The way the nations went about things did not seem to me likely to lead to peace or to solving the massive economic problems of poverty, hunger and reduced opportunity for many in this country and throughout the world. I wanted to pursue a different route and that, I thought, was the purpose of the church.

Such was the idealism of youth, but over sixty years later I would still give the same response. That is why this season of the year is so central to my faith. It is composed of three festivals. Advent with its promise of hope. Christmas with the birth of hope into the world in the life of Jesus - an oppressed Palestinian peasant. Epiphany marks the beginning of the sharing of the message of Jesus. It is truly a time for gratitude and rejoicing.

It is easy to look at the daily news and to say that after 2,000 years little progress has been made. There is not much peace and goodwill in the world despite glimpses of sometimes sacrificial charitable and voluntary good work, but there is no real change in how international relations are conducted. The spread of identity politics is another frightening threat. Even so, I still find immense hope and promise in the message of the Christmas season.

I believe in a humble but not a meek and mild Jesus, who through his life pointed the way to a new future which he called the Kingdom of God. Jesus was prepared to stand with and befriend the weakest in society. He took on the self-regarding authorities. He lifted up people who were confused or whose lives were broken by harsh experience. He loved people and went on loving, even when the authorities set up a corrupt trial and ordered his execution

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany is a wonderfully hopeful and gracious season of the year, the season in which God shows the way for the world. It is, therefore, also the most political Christian festival - not political in the Party sense, but in the sense of being

about how humans live together. No one is made to feel they are a second class citizen. Social goals are shaped so that everyone is respected. The unity of the human family is more important than all the divisions of race, gender, nationhood and religion. All the grace and brain power available is used in planning the direction of a future based on the light God gave to the world.

In 2019,

'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy;'

Part of a prayer attributed to St Francis

John Sutcliffe

Prayer for the New Year

Lord, we thank thee for this place

In which we dwell:

For the love that unites us;

For the peace accorded us this day;

For the hope with which we expect the morrow;

For the health, the work, the food,

And the bright skies that make our lives delightful;

For our friends in all parts of the earth.

Give us courage, gaiety, and quiet mind.

Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies.

Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavours.

If it may not, give us the strength

To encounter that which is to come,

That we may be brave in peril,

Constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath

And in all changes of fortune.

And, down to the gates of death,

Loyal and loving to one another.

Amen

Robert Louis Stephenson—submitted by Maureen Arthur



“The Joy of Teaching”

Then Jesus took his disciples up the mountain and, gathering them around him, he taught them, saying:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven
- Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.
- Blessed are they that mourn, they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for justice- it shall be given to them.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for my sake, your reward is great in heaven.

Then Peter said, "Do we have to learn all this?"

And Andrew said, "Do we have to write all that down?"

And James said, "Are we having a test on it?"

And Phillip said, "I haven't got any paper"

And Nathaniel said, "I've lost my pencil"

And John said, "I bet it's just us that's got to learn this!"

And Thomas said, "Can you photocopy this to save us copying it out?."

And Matthew said, "Please Jesus, can I go to the toilet?".

Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to see Jesus' lesson plan and enquired, "Where are your aims and objectives of this lesson?"

And Jesus wept.

Submitted by Liz Shankland



Flower rota



Dec

- 2 Diana Davis in memory of Don Frusher
- 9 Dorothy Gillings in memory of old Tab members
- 16 Rose & John Cook in memory of Rose's mum.
- 23 Peter & Brian Fletcher in memory of their mother, Enid
- 30 Jean Miller in memory of all loved ones.

Jan

- 6 Christine O'Brien & Family in memory of Doug's Parents and all loved ones
- 13 Marilyn Brown in memory of all loved ones
- 20 Juliana Daniels in memory of Dad.
- 27 Gill Gyde in memory of all loved ones

Rodborough Scouts Recycling Projects



We collect

Jewellery & Watches (in any material even if damaged or broken)

Currency – Any coins or banknotes, UK & foreign (even if out of circulation)

Mobile Phones

Cameras (old film, digital and video)

Stamps (Loose, single, albums, first day covers, presentation packs, collections, postcard collections)

Gadgets (Sat-Navs, Ipods, MP3 players, games consoles, games & accessories, Laptops & Tablet Computers).

The items are recycled so reducing landfill and reducing the need for new resources and we get paid for the items we send in which we use towards activities in the Scout Troop.

Items can be given to Theresa or put in a bag outside the scout hut during term time.

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