



In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ***Luke 1 26:31 NIV***



HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS



**Sharing Life**  
**Sharing Faith**

*Dear friends..*



Christmas is all about expectancy. Remember that feeling you used to get as a child? The excitement? The anticipation? In your mind, you had already begun to count down the days until that long-awaited morning. For days you would stare at the Christmas presents under the tree. You imagined all of the possibilities. You rested confident in the promise of what was to come. All of the waiting and expectancy would eventually give way to that glorious moment when you would drag your parents out of bed on Christmas morning and rush downstairs to devour your presents. Whether it was a Rubik's Cube, an Etch-a Sketch, a Scalextric set or a Barbie doll, I was always thrilled! As I look back, I recognize that never once was I disappointed. The wait had always been worth it.

Funny how a few letters in a word can change its meaning. For I have come to believe how we experience Christmas depends greatly on whether we approach it with expectation or expectancy. Many will approach Christmas with high expectations – dreams of having the family together, of love and laughter, of expensive presents and the best food and drink. But it often fails to deliver. Old wounds surface, turkeys get burnt and presents disappoint. Expectations are dashed. But for those who approach Christmas with a spirit of expectancy, then they are fully prepared for whatever may come and look for the blessing that God might bring from any situation. Far from being disappointed, people who live with expectancy often find themselves surprised with joy.

Centuries before the first Christmas ever arrived God lovingly gave humanity a precious promise. "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son and they shall call His name Immanuel." For centuries Israel lived in expectancy, awaiting the arrival of the promised Messiah. And just like my parents, God did not disappoint. Jesus would far exceed our every expectation. Remember this Christmas season that God never forgets His promises or fails to fulfil His Word. His promise is worth the wait. He will not fail you. Your expectancy will not be disappointed, for you are loved, more than you will ever know. This Christmas, may you expect Jesus to be born again in your heart...the One who was worth the wait.



*Christ's blessings, Rev Amanda*



After a couple of confirmed cases of Covid within the membership of IMC over the past weeks, the Leadership Team have issued the following request: **it is now expected that face-masks will be worn throughout the church building, only to be removed by those seated in the first four rows of chairs, who wish to sing without their masks.** A row of chairs has been removed to make the demarcation between the areas easier to recognise. If you arrive at church having forgotten your mask, there will be some disposable ones available. To ensure good ventilation, the doors will remain open. With winter approaching, you are encouraged to dress warmly, and consider bringing a blanket or fleece with you. The one-way system will remain in-tact and you are asked to avoid congregating in hallways, as social distancing cannot be maintained.

**We are all working together to keep us as safe as possible, thank you for continuing to play your part in this.**

If you have any questions, please approach any of your stewards.

### Church Workdays



We are pleased to be able to hold the monthly workdays once again on the **second Saturday of the month.**

We meet from 9.30 to 12 approx. so feel free to come for whatever time you can spare. There is always a break for coffee, cake and fellowship halfway through the morning. **Future date is:** Dec 11th



### Churches Together in Ivybridge

There will be an Advent Taizé Service Sunday 5th December at St Austin's Priory, Cadleigh @ 4.30pm

### *From the Editor*

If you would like to include anything in the **January Newsletter**, please let me have details by 13.12.21 in either of the following ways:

- ◆ send it by email to: [imc33chris@gmail.com](mailto:imc33chris@gmail.com)
- ◆ Put it through my letterbox or send it to: 33 Julian Road, Ivybridge. PL21 9BU - please put your name on it



## **DECEMBER 2021 Services**



### **IVYBRIDGE**

<b>December 5</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Revd Amanda Roper Communion</b>
<b>December 12</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Dr Phil Walsh</b>
<b>Joint open air Carol Service at Erme Court 6:00 pm</b>		
<b>December 19</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Revd Amanda Roper Carol Service</b>
	<b>5:00 pm</b>	<b>Christingle Service</b>
<b>December 24</b>	<b>11:15pm</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Communion</b>
<b>December 25</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Christmas Day Service</b>
<b>December 26</b>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>	

### **BITTAFORD**

<b>December 5</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Revd David Youngs</b>
<b>December 12</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Revd Amanda Roper Communion</b>
<b>December 19</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Miss Sue Bolt Carol Service</b>
<b>December 24</b>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>	
<b>December 25</b>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>	
<b>December 26</b>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>	



## DECEMBER NEWS

If you have anything you would like to include in the **Church News** please let Judy know by ringing her on **01752 894829**

The dark nights are upon us but this month holds the shortest day and then we are heading to Spring which is a great thought!!

We send our warmest love, sympathy and condolences to **Alison White** and all her family as they come to terms to life without Pat, Alison's Mum. **Pat** had been poorly for sometime but showed amazing perseverance through out her illness and died peacefully in hospital. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her and we pray the whole family would know God's peace and comfort at this time.



We continue to pray for Kathy, Karen, Brian, Margaret, Sally and all those struggling with health issues of any sort especially for those waiting for hospital appointments. It's a worrying time for all the family when one member is ill and so we think of all in these situations.



Please pray for Brenda H and her family as they face a short time left together.

**After contributing the news section for more years than I care to remember, I wonder if there's anyone who would consider taking it on? It's not an arduous task but with Judy's help and mine I hope someone might feel it's their calling. Thank you. Val**

**Stewart Edward and Kathy Blackwood** would like to pass on their thanks for the cards/messages of condolence they received following the very sudden death of Stewart's sister, Lesley Macdonald, on 17 October 2021, at the age of 66 (who was also Kathy's cousin) and the death of Kathy's sister-in-law, Jean Blackwood, on 1 November 2021, at the age of 99.



## POEMS for FAITH

December, 2021

### Bio

John Donne (1572-1631) was a soldier (he fought with Sir Walter Raleigh), a Member of Parliament (for Brackley/Taunton), an Anglican priest (finally becoming Dean of St Paul's Cathedral) and, of course, one of the greatest English poets.

### Background

This month's offering is a rhyming sonnet. One of seven sonnets collectively known as 'La Corona' (The Crown). Together they cover the life of Christ from His Annunciation to His Ascension. In the third of these entitled 'Nativity' Donne touches on the gestating Jesus, His exclusion from an inn to stall, the Star and Wise Men, Herod and escape to Egypt.

It might help us to think of the poem in two parts. The first eight lines deal with Donne addressing Mary, and the second six lines beginning 'Seest thou, my soul' deal with the poet's own faith as it is impacted by the infant Jesus. I also suggest this poem repays at least three slow readings.

### Poem

Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb,  
Now leaves His well-belov'd imprisonment,  
There He hath made Himself to His intent  
Weak enough, now into the world to come;  
But O, for thee, for Him, hath the inn no room?  
Yet lay Him in this stall, and from the Orient,  
Stars and wise men will travel to prevent  
The effect of Herod's jealous general doom.  
Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith's eyes, how He  
Which fills all place, yet none holds Him, doth lie?  
Was not His pity towards thee wondrous high,  
That would have need to be pitied by thee?  
Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,  
With His kind mother, who partakes thy woe.  
Grierson H.J.C. (ed) 'The Poems of John Donne Vol 1.'  
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912) p.319 – Public Domain

## **Reflection**

Take time to quietly meditate on Donne's idea of the bigness of God being laid in Mary's womb – of Him Who is everywhere contained in a manger. To you, is this wonderful or simply absurd? Donne also speaks of Jesus's time in Mary's womb as a 'well belov'd imprisonment', where He chose to become 'weak enough' before entering our world. What do you think about these poetic ideas? And finally, how would you feel about kissing Jesus and going with Him into Egypt, fleeing for your life – an asylum seeker from harm?

## **Action**

- (1) Pray for persecuted Christians in places like Eritrea, Sudan and Syria who feel the need to flee their nations.
- (2) In the past, Amanda and I have been able to support asylum seekers who have escaped countries such as North Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan. Are there any asylum seekers you may support in your local area?
- (3) Consider becoming more informed about persecuted Christians worldwide by joining organisations like 'Open Doors' or 'Release International'.

**Copyright: Mark Roper, November 2021**

**The church property includes 5 assorted Pyrex and 1 pottery oblong cooking dishes .. family size.**

**These are used not only for church meals such as Alpha, but also on Tuesdays for the lunches.**

**They are normally kept in the a cupboard in the library area of the concourse.**

**Unfortunately, they seem to have sprouted legs and gone walkabout!**

**If anyone has any information regarding these dishes please speak to any one of the stewards who would love to hear from you.**



### **Dear Ivybridge Methodist Church**

I just wanted to say thank you to you all for your incredibly generous donation of **£931.35**.

In regards to COVID we would appreciate your prayers that vaccinations are processed for families of our sponsored children. I have put something below which may give you some more ideas on how things are in the countries we are serving in. We have been given an amazing £1,191,058 to our COVID fund for which we give thanks with all our heart. What an amazing gift. Compassion is monitoring the vaccine development, availability, and approval in each country where we work.

We understand that the vaccine will be available for citizens in our field countries starting from this year (2021). Most countries plan to provide vaccinations to their citizens free of charge as supply becomes available. However, vaccine trials for children under the age of 12 have not yet been fully completed. Therefore, we do not expect COVID-19 vaccinations for children under the age of 12, including children in our programme, to be available until later in 2021 at the earliest.

Our church partners may provide non-monetary support to those we serve who wish to get vaccinated though, for example by arranging transport to a vaccination site or by providing education resources. The availability of vaccine supply varies greatly across our field countries. As more vaccines are approved and more funding is secured for low-income countries' vaccination programmes, we anticipate the availability of opportunities to get vaccinated to increase. We understand that there are some concerns that untested or unproven vaccines may be offered and used in lower income countries. We are continually monitoring the efforts of the World Health Organization, their international partners, and reputable vaccine manufacturers to bring approved and safe vaccines to these countries, including those where



we work. We are working to educate those we serve on the importance of vaccine safety and approval. We are encouraging those that are interested in being vaccinated to get a vaccine that has been approved for safety and efficacy by a reputable regulatory agency and only from reputable healthcare agencies. I hope this helps. If there is anything else we can do to help please do let us know. God bless you and thank you again.

*Dameon Harvey*  
Facilitations Assistant  
Compassion UK  
T: 01932 836490

### **Releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name**

#### **COMPASSION UK – Letter writing**

The art of lettering writing seems old fashioned, but I believe it can actually carry the gift of life.

Psalm chapter 10 verse 17 says: “You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry.”

And how does the Lord encourage us? Through His word, the blessing of the Spirit and by fellowship, this is how we interact with each other.

I was prompted to write this article, when I unexpectedly received a ‘phone call from Jenny who works for Compassion UK responding to IMC’s generous Easter Appeal gift.

At some point in our conversation, Jenny began to explain that Compassion are contacting sponsors who have not written to their children in over 2 to 3 years. We both agreed that while the financial support is important for the children, it is that regular word of encouragement from someone who believes in them that makes the financial contribution truly valuable. She suggested that sponsors should write a minimum of two letters a year, but ideally four.

George W Bush, President of the USA sponsored a child through Compassion under a pseudonym and in his first letter wrote: “Dear

Timothy, I want to be your pen pal,” he then went onto write “I am an old man, 77 years old, but I love kids; and though we have not met I love you already,” and then “I live in Texas – I will write you from time to time – Good Luck.” Interestingly George W Bush corresponded with Timothy for 10 years and Timothy only discovered the true identity of his sponsor many years later. (NB 1)

Encouragement is widely acknowledged as a critical factor for life and even for building successful companies. Gallup’s question 6 (of 12) that has been used as an organisational development tool around the world is interesting. I quote, ‘There is someone at work who encourages my development.’

I Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 11 Paul says: “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

Without our Saviours love, usually expressed through His people, where would each of us be?

***NB 1 this is taken from article on the BBC News website dated 19 December 2018***

## **Quiet Morning**

**Saturday 15th Jan 2022**

**9.30am – 12.00noon at IMC**



On **Saturday 15th January** we are again opening the church for people to spend some quiet time with the Lord.

The morning will offer an opportunity for quiet individual prayer and the hope is that whether you stay for 10 minutes or the whole morning you will feel enabled to spend some time in God’s presence and will leave with a sense of His peace in your heart. Various prayer stations will be set up to help you focus on different themes but this is not a ‘prayer meeting’ it is a time for individual quiet meditation, peace and rest where you are free to just come and ‘be’.

Please feel free to bring your own flask of refreshment. We hope you can join us!

# Wise and Wonderful

....is a fellowship group, open to all.  
We meet from 2.30 to about 4,  
on alternate Fridays in term time,  
in the hall and café of the Methodist Church.

## Programme

### November 26

With the Met Office in Kenya  
Speaker Tricia Grace-Norton

### December 10

Celebrating the Christmas Story  
with readings, drama, carols and mince pies

### Spring 2022

#### January 7

New Year party  
with some easy games and a very nice spread

#### January 21

Speakers from the Trevi Trust

#### Dates for the rest of the term:

February 4 and 18

March 11 and 25

April 8

#### A NOTE ABOUT MASKS

We'd like you to arrive in a mask, if you can, but to feel free to remove it once you are seated. We'll use the hall as well as the café whenever possible, to create space between us, and we'll do our best with the ventilation.

For more information, please ring one of us:  
Judy 894829      Val 893614      Sue 896444  
Christine and David 892858      Maureen 94579

We look forward to seeing you



## Church Contacts

### Minister:

Revd Amanda Roper

Tel: 01752 651910

email: [mandaroper@btinternet.com](mailto:mandaroper@btinternet.com)

### Senior Stewards:

Reg Tel: 01752 893614

Alison Tel: 01752 691039

### Room Bookings:

Pam and John

Tel: 01752 894083

email: [imcbookings@gmail.com](mailto:imcbookings@gmail.com)

### House Group Information:

Helen Tel: 01752 892810



### Church Address:

Fore Street  
Ivybridge  
PL21 9AB

Ivybridge Methodist Church registered charity 1192612

Visit our website at

[www.ivybridgemethodistchurch.co.uk](http://www.ivybridgemethodistchurch.co.uk)

where you can see a **colour version** of this Newsletter.

If you wish to contact Tony regarding the website you can do so at

[mrmerrit@icloud.com](mailto:mrmerrit@icloud.com)