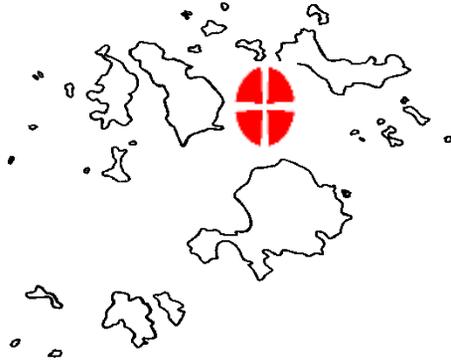


Isles of Scilly



In Touch



Methodist Church Circuit

December / January 2014/15

Chairman of the District

Revd. Stephen Wild M.A.

Minister

Revd. Charles R. Gibbs 422406

Local Preachers

Mrs Barbara Hasler, Mr Len Michell,
Mr Gordon Bird, Mr Christopher Savill

Circuit Stewards

Mrs Christine Savill 422563
Mr Mervyn Bird 423117
Mrs Beryl Read 422977
Mr Len Michell 422409

Circuit Treasurer Mr Christopher Savill 422563

Gift Aid Secretary Mrs Stephanie Bird 423117

Circuit Meeting Secretary

Heather Terry

Church Stewards St. Mary's

Mrs Claire Jenkins Mrs June Lethbridge
Mr Philip Lethbridge Mrs Beryl Read
Mrs Sue Williams Mrs Leigh Kendrick

St. Martin's Mr Derek Perkins

St. Mary's

Treasurer Mrs Sue Williams 422605

Church Council Secretary Mrs Beryl Read 422977

Property Secretary Mrs Anne Gurr 422224

Organist Mr Len Michell 422409

St. Martin's

Church Council Secretary Mrs Jackie Perkins

Church Treasurer Mr Alan Terry

Organist Mr Rodney Ashford 423109

Connexional Link Person Mrs Beryl Read 422977

Some Autumn Thoughts from St. Mary's Manse



This edition of our In Touch magazine is for the months of December and January when, subject to the weather, we arguably experience Scilly at its best. On reading this, you may question my judgment on this matter, so let me give you my explanation of why being on Scilly in the depths of winter is so special, and in many ways unique.

At this time of year it certainly feels like we are living on remote islands far away from the rush and tumble of life on the mainland. The weather conditions can sometimes make travel arrangements testing, but despite the frustrations, this all adds to the unique experience of being a resident on Scilly. Visitors at this time of year are few in number; most of the people you meet are people you know, and often in the depths of winter there seems more time to shop and chat about the ups and downs of island life.

Our island flower growers are busy harvesting and packing their unique island flowers; there seems a sense of purpose and a reminder of how things may have been many years ago on our islands. Those involved in the summer holiday trade now have a little more time for family and friends, and to get ready for the next season, and the tripper boats and pleasure boats are safely stored over the winter. On the Quay at St. Mary's, there is no Scillonian III bringing visitors, and only the Gry Maritha brings those crucial goods to the Co-Op to keep us fed and supplied with essentials.

In our chapels on St. Martin's and St. Mary's, things are different too. Over the winter months we see very few visitors and especially on St. Mary's our numbers in worship are far fewer. All of this reminds us of our remote location, and of the few people who live here, compared to a small town on the mainland. It is a fact that our membership in

this Isles of Scilly Methodist Circuit is the smallest in Britain, with a total of just 63 members.

This unique situation brings both joys and challenges. It is certainly good that we all know one another, and nobody gets overlooked as sometimes happens in bigger churches, and that we can be aware of the needs of all who are part of our tiny Methodist Circuit. But it is also true that it also means that there are far fewer of us to pay the ever increasing costs and to resource the mission of our church.

I expect that church attendance here on the islands is much the same as in most places on the mainland, yet it is still clearly the case that having a Methodist presence is seen as important to many. Our work on the islands among all age groups is still needed, despite the small numbers of Methodist members, and we rejoice that we are still able to offer care to so many.

This year at the Methodist Conference an item on the agenda was 'Statistics For Mission'. In the report given to the conference it was stated that national membership of the Methodist Church in Britain as of October 2013 stood at just under 209,000, which compares to 233,000 in 2010 and 305,000 in 2003; this represents a decline of nearly 30% in just 10 years. Our Circuit is part of the Cornwall Methodist District, and broadly speaking, the District membership reflects the national trend. In 1965 there were 22,963 Cornish Methodists in 557 chapels; yet by 2012, this had reduced to just 6,212 Cornish Methodists in 208 chapels.

Nationally, there are many new initiatives in mission, often termed as 'Fresh Expressions of Church'. There is clearly a future for our Methodist Church, although we must be prepared to make changes, and the challenges that are seen nationally are similar to those we face here on these remote yet beautiful islands. We continue to work and

to pray that, through the witness and mission of our church, those around us will discover that our God does keep His promises, especially His promise to us of New Life in truly knowing Jesus. We give thanks for all that is past, and we trust God for all that is to come.

Over Christmas and the New Year important services are held in our chapels on St. Martin's and St. Mary's. On the 21st of December at 2pm on St. Martin's I will be leading the Carol Service that Heather Terry is putting together, and there will be Bible readings given by local St. Martin's children. This is always a wonderful event and a powerful celebration of all our hopes for Christmas. That evening at 6pm on St. Mary's we shall again be hosting the Christmas Carol Service with the chapel lit by candles complete with our wonderful Walking Nativity. In the New Year on January 18th our annual Covenant Services will be held. The service on St. Mary's is at 10.30am, followed by a special New Year's luncheon with our friends from the Parish Church; the service on St. Martin's is at 2pm.

With all this planned, I wonder **what are your hopes for Christmas and the New Year?** What would you like to see happen in 2015 in the wider world? Do you hope that justice will prevail and the cares of the poor and oppressed of this world will be put right? Is your hope for lasting peace in those places of conflict based upon forgiveness, reconciliation, and a working together of all people for the common good of us all?

What are your personal hopes for the future? Do you hope for a long life, good health and prosperity? Do you hope that your children and grandchildren will grow up strong and healthy and with a sense of what is right and what is wrong? Hopes are good things for us to have, but I expect that most of those who will be attending our Christmas services know from their own experiences of life that

sometimes things do not go according to our hopes and expectations.

Some, instead of having hopes, have very real fears. Fears of the effects of global warming, fears about how this planet will feed the vast populations that are expected in the years to come, and fears of economic stability threatening the way of life that we have all become so used to.

At our Christmas Carol Services, we shall no doubt sing the carol 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. In the first verse of this carol we sing '*The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight!*' But, do we really believe this? Do we truly believe that the hopes and fears that we all have can really be met by that helpless baby boy born in a dirty backstreet stable? We have been told many times before that over the centuries many have found lasting hope in the story of Christmas. Is this true? Is it really possible that the birth of Jesus can bring hope to this world today? What do you think? When things go wrong in our lives we certainly need to have hope in something. When we make mistakes, when we make wrong decisions, and when we are let down by others, where do we find hope? Is the story of the birth of Jesus Christ able to bring hope to us today? Christmas is about how God himself made the choice of coming to share in all that makes us human. Christmas is about how 'In Jesus' God came to share in the hopes and the fears of this world, and Christmas is about God reaching out to each of us and saying 'Yes, Things Can Be Different In This World Today!'

My prayer for this wonderful time of year is this: **"Lord God, forgive us for failing to always trust in You. Help us now in the power of your Holy Spirit to think again about the story of Christmas. And Father God grant**

we pray that we shall again find strength for today and hope for tomorrow by truly receiving Jesus as the Lord of our lives. We ask this prayer in the name of He who loves us and knows all that makes us human, for we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen”.

Wherever you may be when you read this letter, may you know the promises of God to be true. May we celebrate all that is good in our own personal lives and in the life of our church, and as we approach another new year, may we be strengthened by His love.

Charlie Gibbs

Could you write a prayer for the Methodists?

The Methodist Prayer Handbook comes out every year and includes prayers for Methodist districts and projects around the world. The editor is always looking for new writers of general prayers for the Handbook. The 2015/2016 Handbook, Pilgrims on a Journey, will look at God’s call to pilgrimage, both journey and destination, our companions on the way and the everyday realities of the road to heaven. The title comes from the second verse of the hymn ‘Brother, sister, let me serve you’, by Richard A. M. Gillard (StF 611).

Prayers should be no longer than 12 lines or 120 words long. Deadline for submission is 12th January 2015. More details can be found at

<http://www.methodistchurch.org.uk/prayerhandbook> please submit your prayer to primi@quantrillmedia.com.

Bonny Seruga

Dear Anne, Mary and Val.

I thank God and our Lord Jesus Christ for you, and Scilly Methodists church, am using this platform to reach my dearest friends and former sponsors whom I lost contact with for a long time. They stood with me for a long time and helped me finish my diploma at University. I always looked for a way to at least say thank you to them, and to tell them that may God bless them but can't find one. I am now a man, still trying but at least I was given hope, by God through UCDF, through Aunt Ruth and Tom Rees. Please, if you can reach them for me, tell them that I LOVE them, I pray for them and I wish to see them prosper and to sing praises in Heaven with them. I surely don't know whether I have broken any rule but am glad that if they receive my message I will be relieved, even so get feedback from them and from you. May the Lord Bless Mummy Kate Rees, Scilly Methodist and the whole UCDF sponsors out there.

Bonny Seruga *This message was e mailed to the editors*

Christmas on St Mary's

Over Christmas we have a number of events happening which you might like to note in your diaries.

6th December: At 4:30 there will be an advent event with crafts and some songs

Before 19th December: Decorating of Christmas Trees for the Church window sills. If you would like to do a tree, window sills are available. Just come along in the week before and have a go.

19th December: This is likely to be the Christmas concert. Please look out for details

21st December: Walking Nativity and Candlelit service at 6pm. Children are invited to bring toys which will be distributed through Church Food Banks in Cornwall. Mince pies and coffee are being served after the service.

Methodists fight Ebola – and offer this prayer

The current outbreak in West Africa is the worst Ebola outbreak since the virus was discovered in 1976. The Methodist Church in Sierra Leone (MCSL) has been at the forefront of the fight against Ebola. To date, the Methodist Church in Britain has sent two grants totaling £22,500 to Sierra Leone to aid with the epidemic.

The Ebola virus was also the focus of a prayer now offered by the Methodist Church. It is for use for anyone who is praying for people affected by the virus.

O Lord, God of our salvation, we have cried out day and night before you.

Let our prayers come before you; incline your ear to our cry.

For our souls are full of troubles and our lives draw near to the grave.

We are counted with those who go down to the pit; like people with no strength,

Give ear, O Lord, to our prayers and attend to the voice of our supplications.

In the day of trouble we will call upon you, for you will answer us.

Preserve our lives, for you are our God; save your servants who trust in you!

Be merciful to us, O Lord, for you are good and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon you. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Community Day

11th January
St Mary's Methodist Church

Open to everyone

On the 11th January 2015, instead of the usual service, we are going to have a community day. In order to plan this there will be a meeting on 2nd January at 7 pm at the manse. Even if you can't make it to the meeting but have some ideas or are willing to help in any way, please let Sonia, Mary or Charlie know.

Responding to Ebola

All We Can, the relief arm of the Methodist Church, has stepped up its response to the escalating Ebola crisis in West Africa. It has made an emergency grant of £10,000 and opened a humanitarian appeal fund for donations to support the relief effort in Sierra Leone and Liberia and help prevent the spread of the virus. Angela Mugore, Director of International Programmes and Partnerships commented: "Our emergency partner organisations are working hard in extremely challenging conditions to reduce infection rates, establish quarantine zones, and provide humanitarian assistance to affected communities."

To donate, visit www.allwecan.org.uk/

Billy Graham's Prayer For Our Nation

THIS MAN SURE HAS A GOOD VIEW OF WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR COUNTRY!

'Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values... We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self esteem. We have abused power and called it politics. We have coveted our neighbour's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, Oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Amen!'

Commentator Paul Harvey aired this prayer on his radio program, 'The Rest of the Story,' and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired. With the Lord's help, may this prayer sweep over our nation and wholeheartedly become our desire so that we again can be called 'One nation under God!'

Think about this: If you forward this prayer to everyone on your e-mail list, in less than 30 days it would be heard by the world. (It's worth a try!) 'One Nation Under God!'

Submitted by Gordon Bird

Christmas box appeal

Every year the school takes part in the Operation Christmas Child appeal by Samaritans Purse. In total well over 60 boxes went from school and some boxes donated from members of Chapel. Mary Leathers and Sam Grossett organise this event every year.



Shoe boxes are filled with small toys, toiletries, hats, gloves and scarves. The boxes need to be labeled as to whether they are for a girl or boy and what age range the box is aimed for. These are given to children around the world based on need and regardless of their background or religious belief. As such they are an unconditional gift of love. Where appropriate a little booklet of Bible stories may be offered and the children may be invited to join a discipleship course.

Grand Sale of Books
Saturday 6th December
10:30-12:00 Noon
At
St Mary's Methodist Hall
Support NCH Action for Children

Refreshments served

Find a bargain book

A very warm welcome to all
For more details phone Gwen Clarkson on 423106

Action for Children Payments.

I did not report on the annual income for AfC in September, as I thought it best to wait until all seasonal efforts had ceased. So below you can see a breakdown of income for fourteen instead of twelve months.

Congratulations to Gwen for the inspired idea of selling her abundant crop of blackberries, £81 was a really good result. I would like to express thanks to all who have contributed in any way towards the £482-05 total, which does not include the St. Mary's Carol Service offertory or the Christmas Day collection. The blessing of a glorious summer has certainly allowed for books to be placed outside on most days between May and the end of October.

If any readers of In Touch would like a home collection box please let me know, but I am also happy to accept polythene bags containing loose change. It all adds up in the same way!

Finally I pass on the gratitude of Action for Children, who always send a letter of thanks after I have banked some cash.

Heather Terry

Teddies for Tragedies

A dozen teddies have just gone away and we hope will be given to deprived children in troubled places in time for Christmas. Very many thanks to the knitters and bag makers. Another boxful will shortly be going off to our contact with ECDF, the Ugandan Charity we support. This will have been superb outreach!

Gwen Clarkson



Birthday Greetings for December go to Louis Asten, Keith Grossett, Pauline Jackson Cocking, Gladys Perkins, Merryn Smith and Josh Smith.



We also wish a Happy Birthday to those with **January Birthdays** – Gordon Bird, Stephanie Bird, John Goody, Martin Parker, Anthea Roberts, Margaret Smith, Tony Thomas, William Thomas, Nathan Thomas and Liz Turner.

To make you smile

Mother in a storm

One cold winter night, during a violent storm, a mother was tucking her small frightened boy into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he said with a tremor in his voice: "Mummy, will you stay with me tonight?" Mummy smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. "I can't, dear," she said, "I have to sleep with Daddy." A long silence – and then came his shaky reply: "The big coward!"

Thought after the weather last year and so far in November this would be appropriate

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Any contributions will be gratefully received. *The magazine uses material from the Parish Pump, a resource for editors to which we subscribe.*

The Everlasting Turkey

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard
As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.

On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,
The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.

On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,
But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.

On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.
The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince
When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.

On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,
For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.

On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,
He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.

On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,
Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,
And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.

On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,
The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.



JANUARY SERVICES

St. Mary's

4th	09:15 11:00	All Age worship Parish Church Revd. Charlie Gibbs/ Canon Paul Miller
11th		see notice about Community Day look out for information about timings
18th	10:30	Covenant Service Revd. Charlie Gibbs/ Canon Paul Miller
	18:00	Len Mitchell
25th	9:15	Leader: Mervyn Bird Preacher: Len Michell
	11:00	Mary Ratcliffe
	18:00	Revd. Charlie Gibbs

St. Martin's

4th	11:00	Len Michell
11th	11:00	Revd. Charlie Gibbs
18th	14:00	Covenant Service Revd. Charlie Gibbs/ Canon Paul Miller
25th	11:00	Revd. Charlie Gibbs

Park House

4th	4pm	Beryl Read
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PRAYER CHAIN

In the first instance please contact Rev Charlie Gibbs 422406 and then me, Mary Ratcliffe 423030. I will then pass on the prayer request to the first name in each of the groups.

Mervyn & Stephanie Bird **423117**
Sue Williams 422605
Merryn & Vicki Smith 423360

Claire Jenkins **423546**
Margaret Snowball 422896
Gordon Bird 422550
Sonia Crompton 422854

Barbara Hasler **422208**
Len & Sylvia Michell 422409
Pam Thomas 423115
June Lethbridge 422404

Beryl Read **422977**
Gwen Clarkson 423106

For the Prayer Chain to be effective it is essential that requests are forwarded to the person in the column beneath your name, if that person is not available please ring the next person on the list. If anyone else would like to join in this special ministry please contact me on 423030. We thank God that we can be channels of His grace.

