

# **Trinity News**



**December 2023  
& January 2024**

# What's On at Trinity (December 2023)

## Regular Events

Day	Event	Contact	What Age
Sunday	10.45 Worship Service in church	alan@trinitymethodist.church	All Ages
	11 a.m. Forward in Faith Worship in the hall.	tchawana82@gmail.com	All Ages
Monday	Bloom Baby Classes	jennifer@bloombabyclasses.com <a href="https://www.bloombabyclasses.com/bloomnorthtyneside">https://www.bloombabyclasses.com/bloomnorthtyneside</a> In the hall	New-born to Walking (15 months approx.)
	1p.m. Trinity Tea Dance	alan@trinitymethodist.church In the hall	Any but mostly 50+
Tuesday	12 noon. Hand in Hand	wallsend@handinhandproject.org.uk In the hall, kitchen and lounge	65 +
	5.15 – 8.30 Girls Brigade In the hall	pam_9@outlook.com N:vestigate - Reception to Year 2 and N:gage - Year 3 to Year 5 @ 5.15 - 6.45 N:counta - Year 6 to Year 8 and N:spire Year 9 + @ 7 - 8.30	Reception to Year 9 5 to 14 years
Wednesday	12.30 Shine a Light Carers	vaoliver58@mail.com In the hall	
	5 - 9 p.m. Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts.	Gemma.milbanke@northumberlandscouts.org.uk In the hall	4-14
Thursday	Fellowship Group 12 to 2 p.m. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month	gail@trinitymethodist.co.uk Usually in the lounge	All Ages
Friday	Bloom Toddler Classes 9 a.m.	northtyneside@bloomtoddlerclasses.com In the hall	
	2 p.m. Line Dancing	stephencmp@aol.com In the hall	Any but mostly 50+
	6.30 Trinity Youth Club	alan@trinitymethodist.church In the hall and lounge	8 to 10s
Saturday	Blue Door Drop In 10 to 12 noon	alan@trinitymethodist.church In the lounge	All Ages

## Ministers Muse

Dear Friends,

Advent is a time of waiting, hoping, and longing. What are you longing and waiting for? Are you holding on to hope?

But perhaps also, for some of us, Advent may end up being a time of cynicism, disillusionment and even despair. A hopeful message about the future might be met with a response such as “Yeah right! As if that’s ever going to happen.”

In the days leading up to the birth of Christ, those listening to the much-repeated hopeful prophecies of Isaiah might have felt equally cynical.

“Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:5-6)

In the years since these words were first heard, there were sometimes in the story of their people that they could look back on, when it seemed that a glimmer of what Isaiah spoke of was seen, but never fully.

And now, under the brutal occupation of the Roman Empire, to many people Isaiah’s dream of the just and peaceful kingdom seemed as far-fetched as ever. And yet for some people, like Elizabeth and Zechariah, Mary and Joseph, and even some humble shepherds, the dream remained alive.

The very idea that God may be at work in a new way through a baby born in an obscure place, to a humble unknown family, would seem utterly ridiculous to the cynical, “Yeah right – as if that’s going to make a difference!”

But to others, their hope caused them to act, to move, to embrace change, scary though it was.

So, this Advent, as we give thanks for the hopeful vision of the prophets and all those who prepared the way, can we choose to be cynical about our cynicism, and allow the light of hope to burn a little brighter within us as we join in the journey to the manger, and beyond.

With every blessing,

*Gavin*

### **The Best Use of Your Bodily Parts**

Use your voice for kindness;  
your ears for compassion;  
your arms for hugs;

your hands for charity;  
your mind for gentleness;  
your heart for love.

## **Bible a Month: China**

***“You will seek me, and you will find me because you will seek me with all your heart”  
Jeremiah 19, vs 13 (GNB)***

China covers an area of 3.7 million square miles, which makes it 40 times bigger than the UK. It is a vast country surrounded by North Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and India . The population is 1,411 million. Languages include Simplified Chinese (written format) and Mandarin (spoken format), local dialects and minority languages. The literacy rate is 96.8%.

Right now, thanks to your support, five Bible translation projects in minority languages are underway in China. And Bible Society is also waiting the approval of the authorities to publish a Bible translation that was completed in late 2021 for communities in the region of China called Inner Mongolia.

During the Cultural Revolution, Bibles were burned., but in 1987 with permission from the authorities we helped establish a Bible printing press, amity Press, in Nanjing city. Since then more than 90 million bibles have been printed there for distribution in China.

There are restrictions on religious activity in China but many local authorities trust us so when a church in China asks for help, bible Society often gets the green light to support them. This means Bible translation and literacy programmes, the provision of gospel outreach materials, and support for Bible students and training pastors all happens. It takes a local translation team more than a decade to complete a full Bible and during that time they need to be supported, i.e. paid a modest salary. Your giving means Bible Society can plan far into the future and launch these long-term projects. Thank you!

### **Prayers**

- Praise God for the spiritual revival taking place in communities in south-western China as a result of them receiving the full Bible in their own language. Pray that revival will sweep through the entire region.
- Thank the Lord for the more than 20,000 people whose regular giving through Bible a Month enables Bible Society to plan ahead and support long term translation projects.
- Pray for strength and wisdom for the translation teams working on the five current translation projects.

*From the Bible a Month newsletter, Winter 2023-24..*

## **Eyewitness Report from China by Arleen Luo, Manager of Asia and Chinese Mission.**

Arleen Luo tells us about her recent visit to remote villages in the mountains of south-west China to see how the Wa ethnic minority community are engaging with their newly translated Bibles. Bao Bao'ai was one of many she met whose lives have been transformed.

Bao Bao'ai was born into a Christian family, but during China's cultural revolution, when Bibles were destroyed, he was left disconnected with his faith. And when his wife fell ill, he resorted to superstitious healing rituals. "I offered prayers to idols, sacrificing chickens, pigs and bulls heads" Bao'ai said. The rituals didn't work. At that time there were few Scriptures available in Bao'ai's village and those that were there were written in an old script that few people understood.

But in 2016 a translation of the full Bible arrived in the Wa language. This translation, made possible by the regular giving of Bible a Month subscribers, transformed the entire community.

Bao'ai says, "When I didn't have a Bible, I lacked a clear understanding of God's will and guidance. Relying solely on my own thoughts and ideas, I made decisions that were not pleasing to God. After reading the Bible, I felt a surge of strength and empowerment. It was as if I had awakened from the darkness and gained clarity."

Now, small Bible Study groups are widespread in the villages. Bao took his son who was a drug addict to one of these groups. His son repented of his sins, and his wife returned to him. Witnessing the remarkable transformation in the son's life, she came to faith too. Now Bao'ai's whole family study Scripture together.

"We immersed ourselves in its pages, reading it day after day as a family, to the point where the Bible has become worn and weathered. Reading the Bible has been immensely beneficial to me personally. Previously I did not know God and his will. Now I know him better. I have taken it upon myself to lead my son and daughter-in-law in this journey of studying and understanding God's word.

Translating a Bible is no easy task, especially in a remote area of China. First, a Bible Society team visits a region to learn of the Scripture needs from our church partner. Where there is a need for Bible translation, we will then come in to support their local translation team. Then we need to support that team over many years as they translate the entire Bible. This will include conducting Bible translation workshops and training, providing translation consultation, supporting the translators' living allowance. During our next follow up visits we gauge the next step in the translation of Scriptures for the community, and this is often pastor training coupled with the translation of a Study Bible. Our goal at Bible Society is not to just translate the Bible into as many languages as possible, but to see whole communities engage with the scriptures.

# Colours of Christmas

For as long as we can remember, red and green have been the colours associated with Christmas, and are the colours that we traditionally decorate our homes with during the holiday season. But few people realize why these complementary hues represent the popular holiday or where its origins begin. This traditional colour scheme has a history rooted in symbolism, and religion. Here's what you need to know about the classic red and green Christmas colour palette.

## Celtics and the Winter Solstice

It started centuries ago with ancient Celtic people who revered red-and green-coloured holly plants for surviving the winter. They believed that holly kept the earth beautiful during winter, so they decorated their homes with it during Winter Solstice celebrations to bring protection and good luck to their families. This tradition transformed into a similar version of today's festive red and green Christmas decor.

## Symbols in Christianity

Throughout the Bible, red and green symbolize the life of Jesus. Red is the blood of Jesus Christ, and green is the evergreen tree, representing eternal life as it stays this colour throughout the winter. These two colours also represent the leaves and holly berries embodying the crown of thorns on Jesus' head on the cross.

Although red and green dominate the Christmas season, additional colours are still significant at this time of the year, like white, gold, silver, and blue. Here are a few other common colours and their meanings.

### White

In the Bible, white refers to purity, light, and holiness associated with Christmas time. Additionally, white is the colour of freshly fallen snow seen in winter months.

### Gold and Silver

Gold and silver are also typical hues found in Christmas decor. They represent the gifts from the wise men to Jesus, which included gold. Gold is also the colour typically used in art for the Star of Bethlehem the wise men followed to Jesus' birth.

### Blue

In Christianity, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is typically depicted in art wearing blue signifying her importance as the mother of Jesus. This is because, in Biblical times, blue hues of dye were extremely rare and expensive, and only the wealthy could afford them. Additionally, blue also is associated with winter ice and snow.

*From the Internet*

## **I've had a good life really.**

I've had a good life really. My master was a kind man, and his wife was very beautiful. We all lived quite comfortably, and everything looked great until the Romans decided we had to move to Bethlehem. I didn't understand much – after all I'm only a donkey.

I did know that the mistress was about to have a baby, and that we all had a long way to go. I was to carry her while the master walked. Some parts of the road were very rough and there was a lot of traffic – everyone seemed to be on the move. I tried to be very careful and not to miss a step so that the mistress and her baby would have as smooth a ride as possible.

When we got to Bethlehem the master tried everywhere to find somewhere to stay. There were so many people and we arrived late in the evening. We were all so very tired. While the master was talking to yet another inn keeper, I noticed his stable and I was so tired that I tried to get in to it. The inn keeper saw that and said the family could stay there, so we all went in and gratefully sank to the floor.

Not long afterwards, the mistress had her baby, and wrapped him up in a piece of cloth which they had brought with them. The only place they had to use as a bed was my manger, but I didn't mind that. This all seemed to be a special night.

We were all settling down hoping to get some sleep, when there was a knocking at the door and some shepherds came in bringing some sheep. I didn't understand what they said or how they knew about the baby, but it was obvious they thought he was very special.

We stayed in Bethlehem, and everything settled down for a while. Then there was a bit of a stir in the village. Three very rich men had arrived, and they were asking around looking for a newborn baby. When they saw us they behaved very oddly. They were rich and powerful men, and we were poor carpenters. They left some special gifts for the baby, and then they went back home after they had had some discussions which I didn't understand, but they needed some directions.

The next morning the master said we had to pack up and go to another country and there was no time to lose. Well, that's what donkeys do. I carried the mistress and the baby once again, this time in a great hurry. It seemed that some soldiers were chasing us, but we managed to get to safety – just in time. We heard afterwards what the soldiers did in Bethlehem.

That was a long time ago and I had retired as I thought. One day, two men came and saw my new master and said someone needed me. They took me to a wandering preacher, and I thought I sort of recognised him. They put him on my back and lead me into the city. There was a great celebration. People were throwing palm leaves in front of us and making a huge fuss. It was great to receive such a welcome. There were a few people who didn't seem very happy about it all, but the crowd didn't pay much attention to them.

Now I have gone back to retirement.

## **Preventing aid to those in need is a death sentence.**

Unless humanitarian access is granted to Gaza, and there is a cessation of violence, thousands of people will suffer.

Our partners tell us that the medical supplies are running out, and that food and water are increasingly scarce. Yet since the conflict broke out, no aid – not a drop of water or a grain of wheat – has entered Gaza.

Following the violence that escalated on the morning of Saturday October 7, at least 1,300 Israelis have been killed by militants and nearly 3,000 Palestinians have died in Gaza following days of airstrikes and bombardments by Israel.

The situation facing civilians in Gaza has been made even worse by a full siege, which is depriving more than two million people, half of whom are children, of food, water and electricity.

### **Why do civilians in Gaza need humanitarian aid?**

Thousands have been injured and killed because of airstrikes that have caused widespread destruction of homes, schools, healthcare facilities and telecommunication installations.

Hospitals, already at breaking point, are now overwhelmed by casualties. With Gaza's only power plant run out of fuel, our partners have confirmed cuts are affecting hospitals, closing food supply to shops and access to water and sanitation services.

It's thought that one million people, around half the population, have now been displaced inside Gaza, including over 300,000 people who are sheltering in UN-run schools.

One of our partners whose centre has been transformed into a shelter told us, *'We have been evacuated to Khan Yunis... It is not easy at all. This is the first time in my life I have experienced what it means to be a refugee. What it feels like to be evacuated from your home and not knowing when you will come back.'*

Words alone simply cannot paint the picture of the scale of human suffering in Khan Yunis. Hundreds of thousands of people fled there in recent days to seek refuge from the worst of the violence but were met last night with airstrikes.

### **Our partners in Gaza are ready to respond when access is allowed.**

Wilfully impeding relief supplies constitutes a war crime under international law. It amounts to a death sentence for those trapped in Gaza. Thousands of innocent civilians in Gaza are being increasingly imperiled not only by airstrikes, but by hunger and thirst, as its people endure a second week of total siege.



## **What will happen in Gaza without humanitarian access?**

'Without humanitarian access, Christian Aid and our partners will be prevented from acting on the scale required. Aid can only reach those most in need in Gaza at scale once the crossings open and the bombs stop falling,' explains William Bell. (Christian Aid's Head of Middle East Policy) As the crisis continues to unfold, the people of Gaza are in need of:

**Food      Shelter      Sanitation      Protection.**

However, right now, it's extremely dangerous to move around, and supplies of essentials are running perilously low. To respond at scale, we need unfettered humanitarian access.

Our established partners in Gaza are ready to respond with medical relief and community-led initiatives as soon as humanitarian access is allowed. Without it, thousands of people face serious illness and death, as supplies of food, health equipment and clean water run out.

Christian Aid Website, October 2023.

## **Meditation of Mary (Nick Fawcett)**

Was it all a dream? A figment of my imagination? It feels like it now, I have to say. But at the time it was all too real- wonderful, exhilarating, yet at the same time terrifying. "Blessed are you, Mary, for you have found favour with God". My heart leapt when I heard that- me, Mary, singled out for special blessing, chosen by God himself. But then the angel spoke again, "You will conceive, and bear a son, and call him Jesus". Well, that took some getting used to, believe me. The last thing I was expecting! And yet, strangely, I didn't put up with resistance- just the one token query: "How can this be?" And then meek, docile submission. I marvel now, looking back, yet at the time it seemed perfectly natural, as though no other response would do. Why?

Well to be honest, I suppose I never really believed it anyway. I wondered, of course I did. And half accepted, yet if you'd pressed me hard enough there was always a little doubt at the back of my mind, the questions I couldn't dismiss- had I misread the signs, imagined the whole thing, or simply been listening to too many old wives' tales?

But that wasn't the whole reason, for to tell the truth, despite everything, I wanted to believe it, more than you'll ever know. Wouldn't you have with a promise like I was given? "He was great and will be called the son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" Need I say more? If a child was unexpected, *that* was mind-boggling- a ruler over Israel, Gods promised deliverer, born of my womb, flesh of my flesh. It was too much, beyond anything I could bring myself to imagine, and yet too wonderful to dismiss altogether. Was it all a dream? Well, you might think so, but I don't, not anymore, for as I speak these words I am sitting in a stable, looking down into a manger and there gazing up at me is my little boy, Jesus.

It happened, you see, exactly as I was promised just as the angel said it would, and if God was right in that, then why not the rest too? How can I not believe?

## Living In Hope

It's amazing how in town suddenly a number of shops have opened up selling just things to do with the Christmas season. Everywhere you turn someone is trying to sell you wrapping paper, novelties or cards. One such shop had its name painted in bold letters - All You Want For Christmas. Ah! That sounds good! I went in to browse and see what they had that I might want. What I would really like is a nice big fat cheque made out to my name, but I couldn't see one anywhere! But the idea of getting what you want set me thinking. Hopes, wants, expectations.



Advent is a time of looking forward with hope. Children are encouraged to write a letter to Santa Claus saying what toys and games they would like to receive. Some write long letters with long lists of things they want. Others are not so fortunate. There was once a young 10 year old boy called Santiago who lived in a part of Bahia Blanca in Argentina. He was given a sort of wooden chopping board by his parents for his birthday and his reaction was a big smile and 'thank you' and he said that he looked forward to using it to cut up food. It is the custom to use a wooden board to serve up and use at a barbecue instead of the usual plate so now he had his very own. He was then handed another gift that his very poor parents had managed to save

up for. His reaction was priceless as he opened it to discover not a wooden tablet but a tablet that he had really hoped for but knowing how poor they were never expected in his wildest dreams that he would ever receive.

In our home for many years, we have made wish lists. Maybe it's because of working in shanty towns and seeing how little some people have to live on but to us at least it's preferable to give/receive something that is actually wanted and hoped for rather than something that will be put in a drawer and never used or recycled. We do put enough items on the



lists so there is a choice and we still don't know what we will actually receive so the surprise element is still there. But it seems to me that so many of the lists to Santa are written with more than just hope. Things are not just hoped for but actually expected to the point that parents have been known to search all over and pay anything in order to get the required gift. Is this the real hope that is enshrined in Christmas? Is this the advent message that we are giving our children? Businesses are hoping for more profit this year than last year. It seems that hope for the world has become a matter of wealth and ownership of material things that tomorrow are discarded. As the Queen song says 'I want it all and I want it now.'



God came to humanity on that first Christmas, not as a big Santa Claus laden with toys and gifts, but as a baby to bring real hope to the world and a way to live, sharing love with all. Enjoy the gifts but remember why we give presents to those we love. Beyond the material gifts, what is our hope this Christmas? What are my hopes for myself and my family? Success at work, health, wealth, more things or something

money can't buy? Of course we need things - that's essential in 21st century Britain but we are really rich in a deeper sense if our hope is in something or someone beyond material wealth.

*From the blog of Mavis Andradez.*

## Mystery carols

Can you decipher the REAL titles of these exaggerated titles of very familiar Christmas tunes? Don't peek at the answers until you've had a go! (*Answers on page 15*)

1. From dark till dawn, soundless and sanctimonious.
2. Celestial messengers from splendid empires
3. In a distant bovine diner.
4. Universal elation
5. Ornament the enclosure with large sprigs of berry-bearing evergreen.
6. O miniature Nazarene village.
7. May Jehovah grant unto you hilarious males retirement.
8. Those of you who are true, come here!
9. Are you detecting the same aural sensations as I am?
10. The diminutive male of less than adult age who plays a percussion instrument.
11. Primary Yuletide.
12. Heavenly cherubs announcing in song- listen!

## **Prayers of intercession**

Creator God, have mercy.

**Creator God, we pray for your world. Have mercy upon it.**

We pray for the countries being torn apart by war: for the fighting in Ukraine. And that there will be no escalation in the war between Israel and Gaza by other factions getting involved. Be with those working to seek the release of hostages.

**Creator God, have mercy. Blanket your world with peace.**

We bring before you your Church. Many countries victimise your followers. They face great dangers; imprisonment or death.

**Creator God, have mercy. We pray your strength and safety upon believers in danger.**

We pray your hand on the COP28 conference, beginning at the end of this month. Help all in the fight to combat climate change. Help us to maintain your creation for future generations.

We pray for the Icelandic people experiencing earthquakes and those evacuated due to the threat of volcanic activity.

**Creator God, have mercy. Sustain your world.**

We pray for all young people in education. Help those children skipping school due to bullying and violence. We pray for teachers nurturing young talents. Open doors of opportunity.

**Creator God, have mercy. Help all to grow in wisdom and knowledge.**

We pray for the exploited. For all lured into modern slavery by false promises made by unscrupulous people. We pray against those using social media for their own ends, for those stirring up dissent.

**Creator God, have mercy. Open the eyes of the vulnerable and bring awareness.**

We pray good health on our King as he enters his 76<sup>th</sup> year. May he grow in wisdom.

We pray for our government, at odds with itself over the dramatic reshuffling. Bring cohesion to the corridors of power.

**Creator God, have mercy. May those in power serve humbly.**

We pray for our communities; for all those working towards making them safer places to live and work. We pray for the lost, the lonely and the hungry.

**Creator God, in this winter season help us to use well all that you give us. Help us, your children, to bring light and warmth into the lives of those around us.**

**Amen**

*Roots Nov 23*

## Christmas Groans.

What is green, covered in Christmas lights and Christmas bulbs, and goes ribbit? A mistle-toad.

What is every parent's favourite Christmas song? Silent Night!

Why did Rudolph have to attend summer school? Because he went down in history.

How did Joseph and Mary weigh baby Jesus at birth? They had a weigh in the manger.

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas? It's Christmas, Eve!

Why did the scarecrow get a big Christmas bonus? Because he was outstanding in his field.

Elves use what kind of money? Jingle bills.

What happened to the man who stole an Advent Calendar? He got 25 days!

What did the wise men say after they offered up their gifts of gold and frankincense? Wait, there's myrrh.

What do you call Santa when he stops moving? Santa Pause.

What do snowmen eat for dessert? Ice crispies.

How do you help someone who has lost their Christmas spirit? Nurse them back to elf.

What do you call an elf that runs away from Santa's workshop? A rebel without a Claus!

What do you call a reindeer ghost? Cari-boo!

What is it called when a snowman has a temper tantrum? A meltdown.

Why are elves such great motivational speakers? They have plenty of elf-confidence

What reindeer game do reindeer play at sleepovers? Truth or deer.

What did Santa say when he stepped into a big puddle? It must have reindeer.

What is Santa's dog's name? Santa Paws!

Where do Santa's reindeer stop for coffee? Star-bucks!

What's every elf's favourite type of music? Wrap!

What do Santa's elves learn in school? The elf-abet.

What do you call an obnoxious reindeer? Rude-olph.

What do grapes sing at Christmas? 'Tis the season to be jelly.

What's the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the ordinary alphabet? The Christmas alphabet has Noel.

Who is never hungry at Christmas? The turkey—he's always stuffed.

## Points to Ponder

- Your present circumstances don't determine where you go; they merely determine where you start.
- Slow breathing is like an anchor in the midst of an emotional storm: the anchor won't make the storm go away, but it will hold you steady until it passes.
- You can't reach for anything new if your hands are full of yesterday's junk.  
*Clergy Coaching Network*
- There is power in space, in a breath, in a pause before you respond. You get to choose. Hate or love, anger or empathy: frustration or opportunity: lonely or together: irritation or understanding. Be kind. Pause. *Clergy Coaching Network.*
- Never stop doing little things for others. Sometimes those little things occupy the biggest part of their hearts.
- When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.  
*Jimi Hendrix*
- Imagine all the people living life in peace. You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be as one.  
*John Lennon*
- An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.  
*Mahatma Gandhi*
- Peace is not absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.  
*Ronald Reagan.*
- You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.  
*Indira Gandhi*
- Do your little bit of good where you are; its those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world. *Desmond Tutu.*
- Welcome each other in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God's glory.  
*Romans 15, vs 7.*
- Don't judge according to appearances. Judge with right judgement.  
*John 7, vs 24.*
- One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone. *Mindful Christianity*
- Some things are better left unsaid. Which I generally realise right after I have said them.

## Smile!

- Honestly, its not the way I look that reveals my age. It's the way I use complete sentences when I text.
- 5 ants rented an apartment with another 5 ants. Now they're tenants.
- When the invisible man and the invisible woman got married, I had no idea what they saw in each other. Their kids weren't much to look at either.
- Anyone else reached that age when you gain weigh if you breathe?
- A new restaurant for Elvis Presley fans only has opened. It is called, Love Meat Tender.
- 3 Wise Women would have asked directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, brought practical gifts, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and there would be peace on earth!
- It was a sad and disappointing day when I discovered my Universal Remote Control did not, in fact, control the Universe (not even remotely).
- Tried calling the Tinnitus helpline....no answer. It just kept on ringing.
- People who use German words in conversation really annoy me. I wish they'd keep Schtum.
- Looking for a lightning rod installer who doesn't charge the earth.
- Found out my 1<sup>st</sup> girlfriend was a ghost. To be honest, I had my suspicions when she walked through the door.
- More bad news today: my obese parrot has died. Well, I suppose it's another weight off my shoulder.
- Working at the Job centre has to be a tense job - knowing that if you get fired, you still have to come in the next day.
- While many complain about life in general, and the cost of living etc, I am sitting on a sofa that costs £5000, lovely and cool in front of an air con unit costing £2300, watching the latest film on a smart 70ins TV that costs £4000. Right now, I'm so happy with no worries and not a care in the world. Not even the staff at John Lewis, who keep asking me to leave, can spoil my day....
- My friend composes songs about sewing machines. He's a Singer songwriter, or sew it seams !
- News just in. Another case for Inspector Corner of The Yard. A local artist was found dead in his home last night. The police are holding an investigation, but details are sketchy.
- "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt" *Mark Twain*

## Two large pots

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck...One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.

At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house".

The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? "That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding.

You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them. SO, to all of my cracked pot friends, have a great day and remember to smell the flowers on your side of the path!

## Christmas dinner

A 4 year old child was asked to give thanks before Christmas dinner. The family members bowed their heads in expectation. He began his prayer, thanked God for all his friends, naming them one by one. Then he thanked God for mummy, daddy, brother, sister, grandma, grandpa, and all his aunts and uncles. Then he began to thank God for the food. He gave thanks for the turkey, the stuffing, the gravy, the cranberry sauce, the mince pies, the Christmas pudding, even the brandy butter. Then he paused- and everyone waited- and waited. After a long silence, the young boy looked up at his mother and asked, "If I thank God for the sprouts, won't he know that I'm lying?"

## Quote

I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us, and we change things.

Mother Teresa.



## Offering prayer and blessing for Epiphany Sunday (7<sup>th</sup> January)

The wise ones brought gifts to Jesus, each with a symbolic meaning- gold to acclaim him as king, frankincense to recognise his priesthood, myrrh realising he'd be slain like a sacrifice. All gifts have meaning- they might mean love, obligation, thanks, or a debt being repaid. We are told in Scripture to give, and to give cheerfully. We give to a range of charities and good causes, and we give thanks for the work of the Church. In Church we find peace. In Church we find balm for our souls as we are fed by Christ's own hand, taught God's Word and have our rough edges knocked off as we are built into community. We give in a variety of ways- in the plate using cash or envelopes, directly to the bank, with a legacy. What matters is we give.

Giving God, we return to You something of what You have given us. Help us to use these gifts wisely; knowing that, in all things, you desire to reveal your generous love that reaches all. Amen

### *Blessing*

Now the song of the angels is stilled, the star in the sky has gone, the magi are home, the shepherds are back with their flock, so now the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among others, and to make music in the heart. Go now and attend to Christmas' work.

The blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you as you work now and always. Amen.

## Christmas Card Slides On Welcome Screen

As we did last year, we will be putting "Christmas Card Slides" on the screen before and after Sunday services.

Please add your name and message to the list at the back of the church or email them to [alan@trinitymethodist.church](mailto:alan@trinitymethodist.church).

Any donations will be going to Action for Children.

Alan

## Mystery Carols Answers

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 Silent night                          | 7. God rest you merry gentlemen. |
| 2. Angels from the realms of glory      | 8. O come, all you faithful      |
| 3. Away in a manger                     | 9. Do you hear what I hear?      |
| 4. Joy to the World                     | 10. Little drummer boy           |
| 5. Deck the halls with boughs of holly. | 11. The first Noel               |
| 6. O little town of Bethlehem           | 12. Hark the herald angels sing. |

## Sunday Rotas

Sunday	Door Steward	Flower Rota	Flowers Donated To
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mick Watson	Renata Burley	During the last month the communion table flowers have brought our prayers to – Lorna Morgan, Sylvia Aston & Shirley Filmer.
December 10 <sup>th</sup>	Anne Humphrey	Gwen McCarthy	
December 17 <sup>th</sup>	Derek Ormston	Susan Bewley	
December 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>3 p.m.</b> Sylvia Aston	Church	
December 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>10 a.m.</b> Mick Watson		
January 7 <sup>th</sup>	Maureen Mills	Gwen McCarthy	<b>The 2004 Flower Rota is now on the lounge notice board. Please add your name to the rota if you wish to donate the flowers.</b>
January 14 <sup>th</sup>	Derek Ormston		
January 21 <sup>st</sup>	Howard Hedley		
January 28 <sup>th</sup>	Sylvia Aston		

Sunday	Preachers	Church Steward
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Deacon Gail Morgan. Toy Service.	Alan Barker
December 10 <sup>th</sup>	Rev Gavin Hume and Deacon Gail Morgan – Communion Service.	Mark Burdon
December 17 <sup>th</sup>	Mr Tim Rogers.	Margaret Storey
December 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>3 p.m.</b> Deacon Gail Morgan. <b>Carol Service</b>	Pamela Fender
December 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>10 a.m.</b> Deacon Gail Morgan. <b>Christmas Morning Service.</b>	Susan Bewley
December 31 <sup>st</sup>	NO SERVICE TODAY.	
January 7 <sup>th</sup>	Ms Sam Cree.	Alan Barker
January 14 <sup>th</sup>	Rev Gavin Hume and Deacon Gail Morgan – Communion Service.	Mark Burdon
January 21 <sup>st</sup>	Mrs Margaret Storey.	Margaret Storey
January 28 <sup>th</sup>	Deacon Gail Morgan.	Pamela Fender

YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR

Christmas

CAROL SERVICE

on Christmas Eve

at 3pm

afterwards tea and sweet mince pies

also come and join us on

Christmas Morning

to celebrate the

birth of Christ at 10am